

**VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ONE PARTY DOMINANT  
SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF MEXICO AND  
SOUTH AFRICA**

**By**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACDP	-	African Christian Democratic Party (South Africa)
ANC	-	African National Congress (South Africa)
AU	-	African Union
BDP	-	Botswana Democratic Party (Botswana)
BEE	-	Black Economic Empowerment (South Africa)
CD	-	Democratic Current (Mexico) <i>(Corriente Democrática)</i>
CEN	-	Central Committee (Mexico)
CFE	-	Federal Electoral Commission (Mexico)
CIU	-	Co-ordination and Implementation Unit (South Africa)
CNC	-	National Campesino Confederation (Mexico) <i>(Confederación Nacional Campesina)</i>
CNOP	-	National Confederation of Popular Organisations (Mexico) <i>(Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares)</i>
CODESA	-	Convention for a Democratic South Africa (South Africa)
COPE	-	Congress of the People (South Africa)
COSATU	-	Congress of South African Trade Unions (South Africa)
CTM	-	Confederation of Mexican Workers (Mexico) <i>(Confederación de Trabajadores de México)</i>
DA	-	Democratic Alliance (South Africa)
DP	-	Democratic Party (South Africa)
EZLN	-	Zapatista National Liberation Front (Mexico)
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	-	Growth, Equality, and Redistribution (South Africa)
GNP	-	Gross National Product
HDI	-	Human Development Index
ID	-	Independent Democrats (South Africa)
IFE	-	Federal Electoral Institute (Mexico)
IFP	-	Inkhata Freedom Party (South Africa)
INC	-	Indian National Congress (India)
ISI	-	Import-substitution industrialisation
KMT	-	Kuomintang (Taiwan)

MK	-	<i>Umkhonto we Sizwe</i> (South Africa)
MP	-	Members of Parliament
NAFTA	-	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCOP	-	National Council of Provinces (South Africa)
NDR	-	National Democratic Revolution (South Africa)
NEC	-	National Executive Committee (ANC)
NEDLAC	-	National Economic Development and Labour Council (South Africa)
NEPAD	-	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NP	-	National Party (South Africa)
NPA	-	National Prosecuting Authority (South Africa)
NNP	-	New National Party (South Africa)
NWC	-	National Working Committee (ANC)
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	-	Pan African Congress (South Africa)
PAN	-	National Action Party (Mexico)
PCAS	-	Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Service (South Africa)
PEC	-	Provincial Executive Committee (ANC)
PFP	-	Progressive Federal Party (South Africa)
PNR	-	National Revolutionary Party (Mexico)
PR	-	Proportional representation
PRD	-	Party of the Democratic Revolution (Mexico)
PRI	-	Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico) <i>(Partido Revolucionario Institucional)</i>
PRONASOL	-	National Solidarity Program (Mexico)
RDP	-	Redistribution and Development Plan (South Africa)
REC	-	Regional Executive Committee (ANC)
SACP	-	South African Communist Party (South Africa)
SANCO	-	South African National Civic Organisation (South Africa)
SANNC	-	South African Native National Congress (South Africa)
SASC	-	South African Student Congress (South Africa)
SCOPA	-	South Africa's Public Accounts Committee (South Africa)
TANU	-	Tanzanian African National Union (Tanzania)
TAC	-	Treatment Action Campaign (South Africa)



- UDF - United Democratic Front (South Africa)
- UDM - United Democratic Movement (South Africa)
- UMNO - United Malays National Organisation (Malaysia)

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. GENERAL COMMENT

In 1997 Zakaria (1997: 22) sounded the warning of the rise of illiberal democracies<sup>1</sup> as he noticed democratically elected governments, especially in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia that routinely ignored “constitutional limits on their power” and deprived “their citizens of basic rights and freedoms.” The concern with this phenomenon was that it did not occur in supposedly authoritarian regimes, but in democratic systems; a system which implies both popular participation and government in the interest of the citizen. Within these regions, collectively known as the developing world, there is a further observable trend; an increase in one party dominant systems (Bogaards 2004: 173). This party system is accepted to occur within a democratic regime as it is instituted and maintained through regular elections and the dominant party enjoys popular support. However, this party system tends towards the centralising of power and a concomitant distancing of the government from society.

This first chapter will introduce the study by identifying and demarcating the research theme, explicating its relevance in terms of the contribution of the research; identifying the research problem and pertinent research questions; providing an overview of the literary sources; outlining methodological aspects of the investigation and providing a structural overview of the study.

#### 2. RESEARCH THEME

Pempel’s (1990) classic study of one party dominance in *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* focused on advanced industrial democracies, where liberal democratic principles were already entrenched. Thus civil liberties were recognised, the media was relatively free, opposition was viable and legitimate, and there was electoral contestation. In his case studies there had been meaningful

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<sup>1</sup> A liberal democracy incorporates a limited government, protection of civil and political liberties as well as a system of regular and competitive elections.

alternation of power and further alternations were a future possibility. Pempel (1999: ix) asserts though, besides his case studies, there are ‘less democratic’ examples of one party dominant regimes “built around an inherent scepticism toward power sharing.” A clearer understanding of the meaning of ‘less democratic’ is found in Zakaria’s (1997) seminal article *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*.

Zakaria (1997: 23-24) recognises that in the West democracy has meant liberal democracy, where free and fair elections are accompanied by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of civil and political liberties. Thus democracy, as the rule of the people, refers to the means of selecting governments. Whereas its liberal counterpart, referred to as constitutional liberalism, emphasises individual liberty and the protection of an “individual’s autonomy and dignity against coercion, whatever the source” (1997: 23). To summarise, a democracy is about the attaining and accumulation of power, but constitutional liberalism relates to the restraining or balancing of governmental power.

A liberal democracy thrives when citizens value political participation; whether they actively participate or not, they need to acknowledge the necessity for there to be political space for them and others to exercise their voice. In addition, a healthy democracy requires that the ruling government too, acknowledges and ensures space for citizens to participate. If other actors besides the ruling elite do not win sometimes – whether it be a battle for anti-retrovirals to combat HIV/AIDs or the need for government to take strong action against crime – they will either exit the system (not vote, leave the country) or resort to undemocratic measures (violent protests). A liberal democracy requires a release valve where citizens can express their concerns and receive feedback from the governmental system. However, for there to be democratic stability this political participation needs to be tempered with an acknowledging and acceptance of political authority. A balance must be attained between the power of governmental authority and the power of citizens as it is exercised through civil and political society. Underlying this relationship must be a political culture of tolerance, mutual respect, bargaining, and co-operation. In other words, a democratic political culture creates the necessary environment in which conflict and consensus can operate, while at the same time, maintaining the stability of the democratic system.



Calling a country democratic if it holds competitive, multiparty elections which results in majority rule is inadequate. As Zakaria (1997: 30) cautions, some elected governments claiming to represent the will of their people, on the basis of the vote, have tended to encroach on the space and rights of other elements in a society, an “usurpation that is both horizontal (from other branches of national government) and vertical (from regional and local authorities as well as private businesses and other nongovernmental groups).” In the last century the greatest threats to human liberty “have not been caused by disorder but by brutally strong, centralized states” (p. 32).

To ensure a healthy balance between a government’s power accumulation and the protection of civil and political liberties there needs to be ‘voice and accountability’. ‘Voice and accountability’ is recognised by the World Bank’s *Worldwide Governance Indicators* (Kaufman *et al* 2007: 3) project as one of six aggregate indicators of good governance. ‘Voice and accountability’ is defined as “the extent to which a country’s citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.” If there is voice and accountability it means that civil liberties will be upheld. Important agents in ensuring voice and accountability are civil and political society, which will from hereon be referred to as agents of accountability. If these counterbalancing forces are given sufficient space to operate in a society it will translate into an accountable political system. Thus, in essence a liberal democratic government is maintained where countervailing forces (agents of accountability) ensure that power is not abused by the ruling government.

## 2.1 CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

Whereas Pempel’s (1990) classic study of one party dominance in *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* and Arian and Barnes’ (1974) *The Dominant Party System: A neglected model of Democratic Stability* focused on advanced industrial democracies, this research focuses on party dominance in industrialising countries. A significant difference between the one party dominant systems that Pempel studied, and the countries that Zakaria identified as becoming illiberal, is that the former’s case studies are industrialised or developed countries,

whereas the latter are either developing or underdeveloped. Historical, social, political and economic differences are recognised; creating a specific context within which one party dominant systems operate in industrialising countries. These differences render the study of the quality of democracy during one party dominance in developing or underdeveloped countries imperative. The studies of Arian and Barnes (1974) and Pempel (1990) found the one party dominant system to be a model of democratic stability and argue that if a dominant party combines its rule with political competition and the protection of civil liberties it can serve as a good foundation for a durable liberal democracy. However, constitutional liberal principles are often not entrenched in Latin American, Asian and African countries, as they tend to have histories bound in authoritarian rule. Thus, a one party dominant system, where power is accumulated around one party, has significant, potential consequences for the health, viability and prospective for liberal democracy in developing countries, where there are limited or no underlying constitutional liberal principles. Due to the massive contextual differences between developed and developing countries, it is doubtful that the same conclusions of party dominance can be drawn. Thus, the first contribution of this thesis is to the field of party systems, in particular one party dominant systems. It is however, acknowledged that it is not the first study of party dominance in developing countries. Giliomee and Simkins (1999) embarked on a comparative assessment of dominant party regimes in South Africa, Mexico, Taiwan and Malaysia in their book *The Awkward Embrace: One Party-Domination and Democracy*. They too highlight differences between these countries, which they recognise as ‘semi-industrialised’ countries, and dominant parties in advanced industrialised countries. They argue that there is a significant difference between a one-party dominant regime and a liberal democracy (p. 2). In addition, they identify several variables that affect the ability of the dominant party to deepen the democratic process (p. 44-45). Amongst these variables are whether there is broad-based economic development, the character of the dominant party and leadership of the dominant party. This research adds to this by providing answers to important questions such as: How and why do one party dominant systems differ in developed versus developing countries? Do one party dominant systems lead to illiberal democracies in developing countries and, if so, why? If, the political space of civil and political society to operate as well as the protection of the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary are

indicators of voice and accountability, what happens to these societies and institutions within one party dominant systems?

The research further recognises that since unchecked centralisation is the anti-thesis of a liberal democracy the potential pathologies<sup>2</sup> of a democracy are especially concerning in a one party dominant system, where the dominant party can boast the support of the overwhelming majority and does not have the real threat of the ballot box. According to Friedman (1999: 99), a one party dominant system is a democracy in which regular elections take place, opposition parties are free to organise and express themselves and civil liberties, for the most part, are respected. However, this thesis argues that this definition is limited and does not properly illustrate that there are varying degrees of protection and recognition of civil and political liberties in one party dominant systems, depending on the *type* of system. Thus, in the field of one party dominance this thesis asserts that it is necessary to further classify one party dominant systems. In particular, two types of one party dominant systems are identified: the hegemonic system as previously seen in Mexico and the dominant system as evidenced in South Africa. These two types of one party dominant systems are properly explained in chapter two, suffice to say a hegemonic system occurs in an authoritarian regime, whereas a dominant system occurs in a non-authoritarian regime. Therefore, the thesis also challenges previously held conceptions of democracy as being exclusively non-authoritarian. Its second contribution is thus recognising the need for further classification of one party dominant systems and reconsidering the understanding of democracies as non-authoritarian.

This thesis narrows its focus by investigating one party dominant systems in two developing<sup>3</sup> countries, namely Mexico and South Africa. It is thus a focussed

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<sup>2</sup> It is the fallibility of the democratic system, in which one party dominant systems exist, to the self-interest and weaknesses of man that makes it potentially harmful, therefore the need to curb the prospect of accumulating too much power by any one centre of power.

<sup>3</sup> The terms industrialising and developing, used interchangeably in this thesis, function as a means to distinguish between those countries identified by Pempel, which he refers to as advanced *industrialised* countries and those, namely Mexico and South Africa, identified for this thesis. The terms are considered to refer to countries generally lacking a high degree of industrialisation, economic growth, advanced technology, widespread literacy, and high living standards among their populations as a whole. These countries are, nevertheless, progressing in some or all of these areas. The broader classification of *the South*, has many variations of development within it. Under-developed or least-developed countries, which are predominantly agricultural, have limited development prospects for the foreseeable future, and are often dependent on development assistance, are differentiated from

comparative study. The importance of such a comparative study is that it fills a gap in the field of comparative politics. Besides a brief spurt of research in the 1990s (for example Fig 1992 and Giliomee & Simkins 1999) there has been little comparative research of South Africa/Africa and Mexico/Latin America, despite their both being examples of regions with developing countries. Within the regions there has been concerted efforts at researching one party dominance; for example in Africa the works of Boogaards (2004) and Mtimkulu (2006) are relevant, and in Latin America studies of Mexico's hegemonic party have been conducted by Greene (2007), Langston (2002), Magaloni (2006) and Nacif (2006). There have even been focused comparative studies of Malaysia and South Africa's party dominant systems (Kassner 2006), and India's Indian National Congress and the ANC (Reddy 2006), but besides the work of Giliomee and Simkins (1999) there are no comparative studies of South Africa's and Mexico's party systems.

Mexico and South Africa share many similarities such as a colonial history, years of authoritarian rule, vast inequalities and a developing economy – while, nonetheless, displaying many differences: South Africa has a history of racial segregation, which continues to permeate throughout its politics and its socio-economics. On the other hand, Mexico's population is relatively homogenous. In addition, party dominance arose in Mexico whilst it was still an agrarian society, whereas South Africa's ANC has dominated within the context of being a middle-income country. Despite their differing starting points, in the heyday of Mexico's party dominance, during the 1960s, it was undergoing a process of industrialisation. Since the focus of this research is of Mexico over this period, it is argued that it is still relevant to consider this a study between two developing countries. In addition, since the African continent is often considered to be 'unique' in its history and politics, it is worthwhile to look beyond the region, to challenge this perception. It is expected that South Africa will have much to learn from Mexico's experiences with one party dominance.

To summarise, this study makes three general contributions, firstly, it adds to a better understanding of one party dominant systems in developing countries and their impact on the prospects for liberal democracy in these countries. This is of particular

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developing countries, which are progressing in terms of their economic growth and social development. They are also referred to as middle income economies.

importance in light of Zakaria's observation of the rise of illiberal democracies. If it is found that one party dominant systems lead to an eroding of the quality of a democracy then this knowledge would give us some base for drawing lessons across developing countries. Secondly, it contributes to an improved understanding of one party dominant systems, by proposing classifications of these systems. In doing so, it also challenges current understandings of democracy as emanating from exclusively non-authoritarian regimes. Thirdly, it aims to enhance the field of comparative politics, by illustrating the value of comparative studies between Latin America and Africa. There is much to be learnt about Africa from regions and countries outside of Africa.

## 2.2 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS: ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS AND 'CONSTRAINED' DEMOCRACIES

As a broader category, it is emphasised that a one party dominant system is a democracy and, thus, enjoys a majority of the electoral support. It is thus distinguished from a one-party system, which is undemocratic, and only one party has the legal right to participate in politics. What distinguishes the one party dominant system from other democracies is the monopoly of power by one party. It results, to a large extent, in an uncompetitive democracy and an often unresponsive ruling party. The party dominant in the system wins the elections by a majority and the outcome of the elections is, to a large extent, a given.

Since the party wins its position through democratic elections its dominance is, generally, not attained and maintained through force or deceit<sup>4</sup>. Duverger (1954: 308) defines such dominance as a question of *influence* rather than strength. Thus, due to the very nature of a democratic system, regardless of party dominance being strong or weak, such dominance requires maintenance and strategy. Dominance is not a given and must therefore be continually maintained. The methods used to ensure dominance may include:

- Delegitimising the opposition;
- Corporatism (agreements/pacts between elites);

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<sup>4</sup> Force and deceit were evident in Mexico's hegemonic system although the PRI only used these techniques as a last resort to ensure its continued dominance.

- Patronage;
- Relying on and emphasising ‘kinship’ contacts between the citizens and government, for example through continually highlighting a shared past;
- Instituting national projects;
- Centralising of political and economic power;
- Controlling the selection of political leadership, in the interest of the ruling party;
- Manipulating elections and electoral systems;
- Preferential party funding practises;
- The monopoly or near-monopoly of the public policy agenda, and
- The creation or perpetuation of an enemy to unite against, whether the enemy is real or not.

It is noted that these methods of maintaining power are not necessarily unique to one party dominant systems, and tend to also be evident in the changing nature of party systems worldwide. For example, gerrymandering is used to manipulate electoral outcomes in advanced democracies with First Past the Post electoral systems. Rather, what distinguishes the one party dominant system from other party systems is the accumulation of many or most of the above methods of control, with the intention of establishing political, economic and ideological monopolies. These monopolies have a propensity to result in a blurring of the party-state distinction, an encroaching on the space of civil and political society and a highly centralised and unresponsive government. The concern with the above methods is their inclination to result in a constraining of the operational space of agents of accountability, upsetting the balance between power accumulation and power restraint, which ultimately may result in illiberal democracies.

If political parties are effectively constrained, then what may occur are what Diamond (1999b: 15) calls ‘pseudo-democracies’: regimes “that have multiple parties and many other constitutional features of electoral democracy but that lack at least one key requirement – an arena of contestation sufficiently fair that the ruling party can be turned out of power.” But, there are democracies that go further than deliberately constraining the operating of political society; they limit the functions and independence of civil society and the judiciary as well, resulting in what is referred to as a ‘constrained democracy’. The democracy becomes constrained because

competitive and accountable politics is limited. A constrained democracy teeters on the edge of becoming illiberal. Whereas Mexico was an illiberal democracy, which eventually became a liberal democracy, South Africa was declared to be a liberal democracy in 1994. The question is whether it will remain so.

### 3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Bogaards' (2004: 192) findings from his study *Counting parties and identifying dominant party systems in Africa* indicated a growing trend of one party dominance in Africa and thus he called for "an urgent need for systematic research into the nature, sources, conditions and consequences of dominant party systems in Africa." This thesis seeks to understand the influence of the *nature of the party system*, in particular the one party dominant system, on the viability and sustainability of liberal democracies in developing countries. The overarching research problem is to determine what a one party dominant system means for liberal democracy in developing countries? If voice and accountability, in the form of civil and political society, are part of what counter-balances governmental authority and thus ensuring a liberal democracy, what are the influences of the one party dominant system on these agents of accountability?<sup>5</sup> Is South Africa on the continuum towards an illiberal democracy? If so, how then, can this 'constrained democracy' be freed from its shackles to ensure an accountable and liberal democracy, and what can be learnt from Mexico?

Following on from the research problem are subsequent critical questions:

- Why have multi-party elections in Mexico and South Africa resulted in one party dominant systems? What are the causal factors that made the emergence of a one party dominant system possible?
- What are the contextual differences, and the implications thereof, of one party dominant systems in developing versus developed countries?

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<sup>5</sup> Although this thesis will focus on political and civil society as agents of voice and accountability, it is acknowledged that there are other sources of voice and accountability. For example, within South Africa's dominant party, the African National Congress (ANC), there is internal debate and contestation. The ANC speaks with two voices: as a liberation party it speaks as one voice, where debate is constrained and democratic centralisation is promoted. On the other hand, there is debate happening within the governing Tripartite Alliance (the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions).



- What is the importance of ‘voice and accountability’ in one party dominant systems? If this indicator of a liberal democracy is reflected in the accountability roles of civil and political society, the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers, are these institutions constrained in one party dominant systems?
- How does the dominant/ hegemonic party view agents of accountability (institutions of democracy) and what role/s does it assign to them?
- Why and how is dominance/ hegemony maintained in democratic systems?
- What conditions are needed for one party dominant systems to become more balanced and accountable?
- Since Mexico has experienced an alternation in power what lessons can be learnt by South Africa?

Following on the above questions an assessment is made of the future prospects for accountable politics and a liberal democracy in South Africa.

### 3.1 EXPLANATORY PROPOSITIONS

It was expected, and confirmed, that a constraining of the operational space of agents of accountability (political and civil society) would be evident during one party dominant rule. In South Africa, where democracy was created out of an oppressive illiberal system, a distrust of agents of accountability is evident. In addition, a combination of an illiberal history (apartheid) and current illiberal ideologies (the training of many of South Africa’s current leaders in the Marxist-Leninist ideology and the pre-dominance of the racial ideology of Africanism) is culminating in a gradual move towards a more illiberal and authoritarian system. On the other hand, it is expected that the nature of the current international political economy, where an open economy is promoted and widely deemed necessary for survival, one party dominant systems, like South Africa, will have additional constraints on their actions, inhibiting their move towards illiberal democracy. In the current political economy, countries are more subject to global influences and monitoring, this is especially true for industrialising countries which need to grow economically.

## 4. LITERATURE SURVEY



#### 4.1 ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS AND AGENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The theoretical dimensions of this study are found largely within the field of political dynamics: party systems and institutions of democracy. The one party dominant system – as a specific type of party system – its nature; its characteristics; the methods of consolidating dominance; its manifestations and the implications for liberal democracy forms the theoretical foundation for this study. The different academic offerings: Arian and Barnes (1974), Blondel (1968), Boogaards (2004), Coleman (1960), Giliomee & Simkins (1999), Pempel (1990), Sartori (1976), Southall (2005), Van de Walle and Butler (1999) and Ware (1996) and so forth, on one party dominant systems as a type of party system, are critically assessed to determine: distinguishing criteria for identifying party dominance, the different types and levels of one party dominance, how dominance is consolidated and what it means for liberal democracy.

Secondly, agents of accountability, or otherwise referred to as institutions of democracy, namely: political society (political parties and the legislature), the separation of powers, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, and civil society are analysed, especially in terms of their relationship to the dominant/hegemonic party. Then the following questions are answered: do agents of accountability have sufficient operating space within a one party dominant system? How does the dominant party view these agents of accountability and what role does it 'assign' to them? Thus the writings of Diamond (1999), Duverger (1972), Horowitz (2003), Lijphart (2002) and Lipset (2000) are further important resources.

#### 4.2 MEXICO AND SOUTH AFRICA

With its wide support base due to its history as the victorious liberation movement, the initial party dominance of the South African government system by the ANC in 1994 was a given. Receiving an overwhelming majority in the subsequent 1999 and 2004 elections have confirmed its dominance. Thus there has been an increasing interest in South Africa's one party dominant system and the implications thereof. Academic commentators, including Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer (2001), have

applied the concept of ‘party dominance’ to South Africa, while Southall (2005: 74-76) cautions that although there is evidence of a dominant party system the ANC’s dominance is limited by constitutional counterweights, its inability to impose itself on society and evidence of vigorous internal debate. Thus, Southall (2005: 64) argues for a ‘weak’ version of the dominant system. The works of the above researchers has been primarily consulted as well as the research of Butler (2002), Giliomee (2005), Lanegran (2001), Mattes (2002), Mtimkulu (2006), Reddy (2006) and others. It is asserted that these resources are only the beginning of the research needed on South Africa’s dominant party system; necessitating this investigation.

Since the study concerns an assessment of the relationship between one party dominant systems and agents of accountability, research pertaining to political and civil society in South Africa is consulted namely: Butler (2004); Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer (2001); Gumede (2005); Habib and Taylor (2001); Hamill (2004); Lodge and Scheidegger (2006); Maloka (2001); Maré (2003); Mattes (2002); Pottie (2001); Southall (2003b); and Southall and Daniel (2005).

After over 70 years of hegemonic party rule Mexico experienced an alternation in power, thus making it an appealing case study. The research of Greene (2002 and 2007) is consulted as he has focussed much of his work on one party dominant regimes and opposition party strategies in Mexico. Mexico’s move to competitive elections has generated the interest of academic commentators in Mexico, the USA and around the world; these writings (Camp 2003, Domínguez and Lawson 2004, Hiskey & Canache 2005, Klesner 2005, Langston 2002, Magaloni 2006, Solinger 2001, Solt 2003 and Weldon 1997) are included in this study. In addition, the book, the *Awkward Embrace*, edited by Giliomee and Simkins (1999) provides a number of important comparative studies of South Africa and Mexico’s one party dominant systems.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research problem is essentially a “predictive” question (Mouton 2001: 54), namely: what will be the effect of one party dominant systems on the quality of democracies in developing countries? Thus, do one party dominant systems lead to good or poor quality democracies, where a good quality democracy is defined as a liberal democracy, within the specific context of developing countries? To answer this question the method of research employed is comparative: identifying similarities and differences and then accounting for them (Brown 2006: 2). According to Hague and Harrop (2004: 69) “[t]he comparative approach can with justification be regarded as the master strategy for drawing inferences about causation in any area of study... All investigations of cause and effect are by nature comparative.” The benefits of a comparative study include a broadening of our understanding of the political world, which can lead to the potential for explanation and prediction (Mouton 2001: 154). This study investigates the relationship between party systems (one party dominant systems) and political systems (democracy). It is nevertheless, recognised that a comparative study is prone to a number of weaknesses (Mouton 2001: 155). Firstly, the knowledge requirements for a comparative study can be considerable, and thus it is important to rather know what needs to be known than attempt to know everything. Secondly, it is practically impossible to isolate the impact of a single variable. It is thus acknowledged that the quality of a democracy is not only influenced by the party system, but also by other factors such as a country’s history, economic background and political culture. A political comparison can never be as precise as it could be in a controlled laboratory setting. Thirdly, the degree of comparability can never be perfect. For example Mexico and South Africa, though similar in some key aspects, also have significant differences, which will affect the outcomes of the research. Nevertheless, if despite these differences, they have both experienced one party dominance, how then do we account for the development of this system?

There are a number of techniques which can be used in comparative politics, namely, case studies, involving the focussed study of one country; focused comparisons between a small number of countries; and statistical analysis, which is the systematic analysis of variables taken from a large number of countries. The scope of the thesis is delimited to the comparison of two countries: Mexico and South Africa, and is thus a focused comparison. The study concentrates on the intensive comparison of a specific aspect of politics, in this case one party dominance.

Since Mexico had a one party dominant system for over 70 years and has already experienced an alternation in power much can be gleaned from what has already been written on this system and its effects. Thus, Mexico is the point of departure for this comparative study. Due to this already established wealth of knowledge on Mexico's one party dominant system, there will be a predominant reliance upon secondary source. A further reason for this dependence on secondary sources is a language limitation. Mexico is a predominantly Spanish-speaking nation, thus making interviews and using raw data such as government documents difficult for the author. However, a trip to Mexico supplemented these secondary sources, as merely reading sources does not always provide one with nuances behind what is written. The intention of the visit to Mexico, besides accessing resources, was to experience Mexican culture and to spend time with local experts in the field and academics who had experienced and analysed the one party dominant system. A previous trip to Indiana in the United States was also used to collect Latin American sources and consult with Latin American scholars. On the other hand, South Africa's one party dominant system is relatively young and thus necessitates the additional collection of primary sources. The similarities and differences between these countries are accounted for through an initial study of their respective contexts: historical, political, international and socio-economic. The following institutions are subsequently analysed to determine similarities and differences: their party systems (one party dominance), electoral systems, legislature and opposition parties (political society), and civil society. In addition, a brief history of each country is offered in order to contribute to understanding why one party dominant systems have occurred. Since Mexico has experienced an alternation in power, patterns concerning the reasons for such an alternation are identified.

Differing from statistical analysis, which uses a quantitative assessment, focussed comparisons utilise the strategy of qualitative comparison. The research is therefore accomplished via a qualitative, critical analysis rather than quantitative research. A qualitative study is defined as an "inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (Cresswell 1994: 2). Such research is essentially "interpretive research" (p. 147), thus, the author needs to

acknowledge that it is value-laden, since it incorporates the views and assessments of researchers, informants and the author. From the outset, it is acknowledged that analysing South Africa, whilst being a South African brings with it the subjective values and biases of the author. Being intricately affected by South Africa's political system and having a vested interest in its future democracy makes the author's assessment subjective. In addition, being a female South African makes the author wary of political leaders who appear to be misogynists due to their insensitive dealings with women.

There are several data collection types for qualitative research, namely, observations, interviews, documents and audiovisual materials (Creswell 1994: 150-151). Since the chief aim of this research was to test the impact of one party dominance on 'voice and accountability', it led to the question: How can 'voice and accountability' be measured? Baker (2000: 201) recognises general numerical indices on democratic health that include issues of accountability. The *Freedom House Freedom Rating* is one such example. It has a score for Political Rights based on the results of eight items – three on free and fair elections; three on Parliament's effectiveness and opposition parties; and two on questions concerning freedom from dominance and the rights of minority groups. The weakness though of this resource is that it has a limited number of indices, thus potentially hiding important information. For the purpose of this study the *Freedom House Freedom Rating* for Mexico and South Africa was consulted in addition to others. Other examples include Joseph/Africa Demos' 'Quality of Democracy Index' and Monga's (1997) 'Democratization for Africa Index'. However, a key tool used for this study was a democratic audit. This method was first devised by David Beetham and the Democratic Audit UK. Baker (1999: 273) stresses the importance of such an approach since it is "concerned not with *if* a country is democratic, but with *how* democratic it is," thus it serves to assess the *quality* of a democracy. The audit approach is a systematic, qualitative assessment of a regime's performance based on observations, interviews and an analysis of published information.

An *accountability audit* is used for this study, answering and addressing the following areas and questions:

*Horizontal accountability*

Horizontal accountability refers to the obligation of office-holders to be accountable for their actions to other agencies of the state, for example, the judiciary and Parliament. It affirms the need for the separation of powers of the state: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. It differs from vertical accountability in that the actors involved, are for the most part, political equals (Morlino 2004: 18). Horizontal accountability is an affirming of constitutionalism and the rule of law, thus ensuring that no individual is placed above the law. In practice, it is evidenced in the monitoring of the executive by the opposition in Parliament, by judgments emanating from the court system and checks by other state-accounting offices (p. 18). In ascertaining horizontal accountability in one party dominant systems the following is assessed:

1. The powers of the legislature (political society) to scrutinise legislation and non-elected executive personnel: how effective is Parliament in keeping the executive accountable?
2. How influential, independent and effective are opposition parties?
3. How independent and effective is the judiciary and is there rule of law?

These elements of horizontal accountability are assessed within the framework of the dominant or hegemonic party's methods of consolidating dominance. For example, as the dominant party uses electoral mechanisms to ensure its continued dominance, what happens to the ability of opposition to garner electoral support?

#### *Vertical accountability*

Vertical accountability refers to the acts of individuals and aggregated interests, in the form of civil society organisations that are directed towards the government and officers of the state, keeping them accountable. Morlino (2004: 17) states that this type of accountability occurs at elections and is thus periodic in nature. This thesis contends otherwise. Although elections are an important expression of the will of the people, they are an insufficient mechanism for ensuring constant feedback. An independent media and other efficacious civil society organisations keep the government in check between and during the elections, requiring a system of constant feedback. Assessing vertical accountability will be done through investigating the following:

1. Civil society organisations that represent specific interests and critiques to government: how influential and autonomous are they?

Again, civil society will be assessed within the context of the methods of external and internal control as used by the dominant or hegemonic party.

Thus, in line with the method of a democratic audit, this study utilises primary and secondary data.

### **Primary data**

(a) The analysis of policy documents, speeches and constitutions. In the case of South Africa, primary research material consists of the ANC's policy documents and conference resolutions, as well as its weekly newsletter *ANC Today*, official government documents and commentaries made by government officials and members of political parties.

(b) Document analysis is supplemented with interviews, for example interviews conducted by the author during a visit to Mexico in January 2008, and interviews conducted in South Africa, as well as scripts of interviews conducted by Pdraig O'Malley of key actors in South Africa for his book *The Heart of Hope*. Concerning research conducted in Mexico, the author's limitation of being unable to speak Spanish meant she was only able to conduct interviews with English-speaking people. However, the author managed to conduct an insightful interview with Lic. Juan Carlos Luna Velázquez and Filipe Gonzalez from PAN, Mexico's current party in government and previously the official opposition under PRI rule. Since the key aim of the study of Mexico was to learn from 'lessons learnt', the other interviews conducted were with acknowledged experts in the field, such as Prof. Joy Langston<sup>6</sup> from CIDE University; and Prof. Eric Magar<sup>7</sup>, Prof. Federico Estévez<sup>8</sup>, Prof. Jeffrey

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<sup>6</sup> Research Professor of Political Science at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) in Mexico City and is recognised as a specialist in the study of the PRI. See: "Strong Parties in a Struggling Party System; Mexico in the Democratic Era. In *Party Politics in New Democracies*, (2006) edited by Paul Webb and Stephen White; *Elite Ruptures: When do Ruling Parties Split?* In *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (2008), edited by Andreas Schedler; *Breaking out is hard to do: Exit, Voice and Loyalty in Mexico's One-Party Hegemonic Regime. Latin American Politics and Society* (2002); and *Rising From the Ashes? Reorganizing the PRI's State Party Organizations after Electoral Defeat. Comparative Political Studies* (2003).

<sup>7</sup> Head of department at ITAM University, Mexico City. See: *Patterns of Executive-Legislative Conflict in Latin America and the U.S. Paper* (1999) presented at the First International Graduate Student Retreat for Comparative Research and *The deadlock of democracy revisited: A model of executive-legislative relations in separation-of-power regimes, paper* (1998) presented at APSA.

<sup>8</sup> Professor at ITAM University. See: *The erosion of party hegemony, clientelism and portfolio diversification: The Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (Pronasol) in Mexico, paper* presented at APSA



Weldon<sup>9</sup>, Prof. Alejandro Moreno<sup>10</sup> and Prof. Alexandra Uribe Coughlan<sup>11</sup> from ITAM University. In addition, during the author's visit to the United States she was able to glean from the knowledge and expertise of the following academics at Indiana-Purdue-Fort Wayne University: Prof. James Lutz<sup>12</sup>, Prof. Mike Wolf<sup>13</sup> and Prof. Rick Weiner<sup>14</sup>. In order to ascertain the impact on voice and accountability in South Africa, members of Parliament from the African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance were interviewed as well as members of civil society. The aim of the interviews was to determine whether there is *horizontal and vertical accountability*.

The following is an example of an interview schedule<sup>15</sup>. The schedule was initially drawn up for MPs from opposition parties, but it was adapted to the interviewees, for example alternative questions were posed to representatives of civil society organisations and MPs from the ANC:

#### Interview schedule

##### A. To test whether there is *voice*

1. Does your party have fair (space and fair representation) coverage in South Africa's media? If not, why not?
2. Is there adequate opportunity for your political party to voice its opinion and represent its constituency in parliament?
3. Have there been instances where your party has been unfairly silenced by the ruling party?

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(2002) and Poverty, Vote Buying and Democracy: Strategies of Electoral Investment in Mexico (2007), co-authored with Beatriz Magaloni and Alberto Diaz-Cayeros.

<sup>9</sup> Professor at ITAM University, recognised as a specialist in Mexico's party system, in particular its executive (presidencialismo) and legislature. See: Executive-Legislative Relations in Mexico in the 1990s. In Dilemmas of Change in Mexican Politics (2004); The Consequences of Mexico's Mixed-Member Electoral System, 1988-1997. In Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: the Best of Both Worlds? (2001); and The Political Sources of Presidentialismo in Mexico. In Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America (1997).

<sup>10</sup> Professor at ITAM and Head of the Department of Public Opinion Polling, *Reforma* newspaper in Mexico City. See: Political Cleavages: Issues, Parties, and the Consolidation of Democracy (1999); and Attitudes toward Democracy: Mexico in Comparative Perspective. International Journal of Comparative Sociology (2002).

<sup>11</sup> Political science professor at ITAM.

<sup>12</sup> Head of political science department at Purdue University in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

<sup>13</sup> Assistant professor at Purdue University in Fort Wayne and a specialist in electoral systems, in particular the American electoral system.

<sup>14</sup> Professor at the Department of History at Purdue University in Fort Wayne, Indiana and specialist in Latin America. See: Race, Nation, and Market: Economic Culture in Porfirian Mexico (2004).

<sup>15</sup> It is acknowledged that many of the questions used are based on Baker's (1999) democratic audit.



4. Do you believe the ANC recognises the right for your party to exist and represent alternative voices?

B. To test whether there is *accountability*

5. Is there political space to be critical of the ruling party?

6. Is there effective and open control of non-elected executive personnel by the legislature?

7. What are the powers of the legislature to scrutinise legislation and public expenditure? How effectively are they used by the legislature? Does the ruling party abuse its parliamentary majority?

8. Appointments within public institutions: to what extent are there equal opportunities and is the system free of patronage, prejudice and bribery?

9. Sub-national government autonomy: how autonomous are the provincial and local governments and how accountable are they to the electorate as opposed to merely being an administrative arm of central government?

10. The independence of the courts: to what extent are the judiciary appointed independently, given security of tenure and granted freedom from interference?

**Secondary data**

In line with a democratic audit, the study also utilises secondary information sources. In other words, written sources that “discuss, comment, debate and interpret primary sources of information” (Mouton 2001: 71). The study of Mexico’s one party dominant system is primarily conducted through a literature review. Due to limited resources on Latin America in South Africa’s local libraries, the author’s trips to Mexico City, Mexico in 2008 and Indiana, the United States in 2006 were vital to the thesis. A month’s stay at ITAM University in Mexico enabled the author to access numerous books and journals relevant to the subject. A previous visit to Indiana-Purdue-Fort Wayne University and Indiana-Bloomington University also provided access to resources on Mexico. The entrenching of South Africa’s dominant party since 1994 has spurred a number of political analysts to evaluate its implications; these sources have also been consulted.

5.2 LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

According to Landman (2000: 17) there are two levels of analysis in political science, namely, the micro (individual) level and the macro (system) level. The micro-political level assesses the activities of individuals, for example the behaviour of voters during elections. Macro-political analysis, however, examines structures of power, economic processes and the interaction between states. This study utilises macro-political analysis since it is institution-centred – an analysis of party systems, electoral systems, political parties, civil society and the relationships between them.

### 5.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In addition to limiting the study to two case studies, it is further limited in terms of the scope since the primary aims are to understand whether and how the arena for contestation and dissent is restricted during dominance and how that arena can be opened again. Focus is given to the relationship between the one party dominant system and agents of accountability. The study is also limited by time frames, studying South Africa from 1994 to December 2008<sup>16</sup>, with 1994 indicating the beginning of the African National Congress's rule, 2004 being the official yardstick for the entrenchment of party dominance, and the end of 2008 being the year following the ANC's pivotal national conference in Polokwane. A history of the ANC is also discussed, as it provides salient clues for understanding the party's current policies and actions. Mexico is studied from 1929 until 2000, with 1929 as the year in which Mexico's hegemonic party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was founded and 2000 heralding the first alternation in power. Although focus is given to the 1960s - the heydays of PRI rule. A brief historical overview is given for both countries, highlighting their authoritarian, illiberal roots and supplying explanations for the initial entrenchment of party dominance.

## 6. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

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<sup>16</sup> It is necessary to limit the time frame as South Africa's politics are currently in a state of flux and such a study would be limitless unless expressly limited. April 2008 has been chosen as this time frame includes the ANC's Polokwane Conference at the end of 2007, the removal of Mbeki as president and the formation of the Congress of the People (COPE). This Polokwane Conference has certainly impacted South Africa's political landscape; for example, it eventually led to the resignation of Thabo Mbeki as president and the formation of the new political party, COPE, at the end of 2008. Although these developments will be alluded to, the time period will be maintained as far as possible.

Below is a short description of the chapters included in this thesis.

*Chapter two* focuses on the theoretical dimensions of one party dominance; distinguishing it from other party systems, identifying the key characteristics of one party dominant systems and categorising the different types of one party dominant systems. Furthermore the different contexts found in developing versus developed countries will be highlighted. It is important to highlight these differences as they have implications for the type of one party dominance that will arise.

*Chapter three* provides a theoretical discussion of the concept of democracy, in general, and a liberal democracy, in particular. The history of democracy is traced and two key strands of democracy are identified. Ultimately the aim of the chapter is to identify a good quality democracy and its elements. Emphasis is then given to the role and importance of agents of accountability (political and civil society) in ensuring a liberal democracy.

*Chapter four* engages with the case studies, Mexico and South Africa, demonstrating to what extent they are comparable in terms of their historical, socio-economic, international and political contexts.

*Chapter five* focuses on the impact of Mexico's hegemonic system on voice and accountability. Of importance is understanding why and how the hegemonic party, the PRI, maintained dominance for 71 years. Hegemonic party rule is then analysed to determine its impact on accountable politics, and agents of voice and accountability. And finally, Mexico's transformation into a liberal democracy is examined.

*Chapter six* is an analysis of South Africa's dominant party system and the impact this party system has on voice and accountability. With reference to the findings from Mexico, the implications of the one party dominant system on South Africa's *quality* of democracy are assessed. In addition, an investigation is made of the methods used by the ANC to ensure its continued, dominant control and the implications thereof.

*Chapter seven* provides concluding evaluations, assessing how the thesis has contributed to the study of politics, in particular, evaluating the relationship between

party systems (one party dominant systems) and political systems (authoritarian or non-authoritarian). Lastly, the future prospects of South Africa's democracy are considered.

## **7. CONCLUDING COMMENT**

As has been noted, there is a growth in the number of one party dominant systems, especially in Africa, however, there has not been sufficient reflection and study of these party systems and their implications for the development of liberal democracies. In particular, the field of comparative politics does not provide adequate study of these party systems in the developing world, particularly when considering these countries comprise more than half of the world's population. This gap is intended to be addressed in this study.

Chapter two will focus on the theoretical dimensions of the study in order to locate the one party dominant system within party systems, and to understand the contextual differences between developed and developing countries, in which dominance occurs.

## CHAPTER TWO

### UNDERSTANDING ONE PARTY DOMINANCE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In December 1997 Kim Dae Jung won South Korea's elections, in March 2000 Chen Shui-bian won Taiwan's and in July 2000 Vicente Fox won Mexico's. What makes these election wins extraordinary is that they were opposition-party presidential candidates ushering in an alternative ruling party to the previous decades of one party dominance. These electoral victories are widely considered to be victories for competitive politics - an important component of liberal democracy. Since party dominance is accepted to occur within a democratic regime, it is important to understand what its implications are for the *quality* of democracy in general and the future of liberal democracy in particular. Thus, this is an investigation into the relationship between the nature of the party system - the one party dominant system - and the type of democracy that will result in developing countries. In preparation for delving deeper into the relationship between liberal democracy and party dominance this chapter will unravel the concept *one party dominance*.

In addition, it is important to distinguish between one party dominant systems found in advanced industrialised countries like Sweden, Japan and Italy, where Pempel focused his studies, and those of developing countries like Mexico and South Africa - the focus of this research. But before this is done the one party dominant system needs to be located within its larger field of study, namely party systems. What makes the party dominant system different from the multi-party system? And, how does it differ from the one-party system with which it is often confused?

#### 2. LOCATING THE ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEM WITHIN PARTY SYSTEMS

Political parties still remain an integral element in the study of political science as they form an important linkage between the government and society. Next to elections, the presence of a vibrant and viable political society in the form of political parties has become a principal measuring yardstick of the health of a democracy. In

democracies, political parties are defined as “any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections candidates for public office” (Sartori 1976: 63). According to Weber (1947: 407) the term political party is “employed to designate an associative type of social relationship, membership in which rests on formally free recruitment. The end to which its activity is devoted is to secure power within a corporate group for its leaders in order to attain ideal or material advantages for its active members. These advantages may consist in the realization of certain objective policies or the attainment of personal advantages or both.” Political victory thus means that the victor can realise party proposals, attain power and personal advantage. In a one party dominant system the idea of a group of people organising for the purpose of winning government, is insufficient, since an alternation in power is unlikely and the opportunity for parties besides the dominant party to rule are remote. Thus, the understanding of a political party needs to be broadened to include: attaining access to public office through elections for the purposes of representation, keeping the ruling party to account and seeking access to power to influence policy. They therefore fulfil a number of important democracy-inducing functions: mediation between government and society, forming government and constituting effective opposition. Chapter three continues the discussion of political parties, within the broader category of political society. It also highlights the roles of political parties in democratic societies.

Although the occurrence of parties is not a sufficient measure of democracy, it is still a necessary indication of democracy. Nevertheless, as a yardstick for measuring democracy the political party is problematic. Firstly, in a one party dominant system, the reality of an alternation in power is remote; thus the purpose of winning government becomes obsolete. Secondly, political parties have short-comings: manipulation of voters, corruption, and using parties for personal gain at the expense of the electorate. Thirdly, their existence does not automatically imply a liberal democratic society, as they are evident in both authoritarian and non-authoritarian systems. It is acknowledged that political parties may even become tools of tyranny and repression especially where the party system moves to a one-party system. The negative experience of Germany’s Nazi regime and one-party state, and the human rights abuses in communist regimes led to an appraisal of the one-party system. “[I]t

was discerned that democracy was bound up somehow with the existence of at least two parties” (Brown 2000: 251). Despite their shortcomings, the importance of political parties in the democratic process have been emphasised by writers such as Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995), Duverger (1954), Friedrich (1946) and Schumpeter (1947). However, distinctions need to be made between the one party dominant system, the one-party system and the multi-party system<sup>17</sup> to properly understand the potential and limitations of the political party.

There is widespread agreement that the number of parties in a system- one, two or multiple – is significant (Arian and Barnes 1974; Duverger 1954). The number of parties and the way in which they relate to each other is associated with different types of party systems. A party system is thus this “network of relationships” (Heywood 2002: 258). Three important criteria are used in distinguishing party systems. The first factor is the number of parties competing for power. Secondly, their relative size, as reflected in their electoral support and legislative strength. And, the third consideration is how these parties relate to one another; the dynamics between the parties. As will later be shown, although a dominant party may dominate in votes, seats and electoral strength, its ultimate power lies in that it can govern alone, without having to co-operate with or concede to opposition parties.

## 2.1 ONE-PARTY SYSTEM

Since ‘system’ implies an interaction amongst a number of parties, the term one-party *system* is contradictory. Nevertheless, the term does help with distinguishing between party systems. In this type of system a single party holds all the political power through the exclusion of all other parties. These parties function as permanent governments with no legal means of removing them from power. This is thus an authoritarian system since the single ruling party sustains its “monopoly of power

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<sup>17</sup> The two-party system is purposefully not discussed as it is easy to distinguish it from a one party dominant system. On the other hand, the one party dominant system is often confused with the one-party system, since one party dominates, and the multi-party system, since more than one party participate in the electoral process. Governments of one party dominant systems also tend to refer to their political party systems as multi-party systems.

through barriers of entry to new competitors” (Nacif 2006: 92). The first type of one-party system is found in communist regimes. The ruling party makes use of the *nomenklatura* system to control the state, economy and society. Effectively this means that only party-approved candidates may fill senior posts. Apparently, this nomenklatura system continues today in China (Manion 2004). This highly centralised system is justified by the claim that the party provides the working masses with ideological leadership so as to attain their revolutionary destiny. Its other defining characteristic is the belief that the needs of the party, the people and the country are presumed to be interchangeable and identical: what is good for one is alleged to be good for all. The party thus leads for the people. This vanguardism has been criticised for being elitist and leading to authoritarian governments. A second type of one-party system is largely found in the developing world and is associated with anti-colonial nationalism and state consolidation. For example, in Ghana, under Kwame Nkrumah, the ruling party justified its proclamation of a monopoly of power in 1960 by reference to the need for nation-building and economic development to overcome the legacies of colonialism. Nkrumah dismantled Ghana’s post-independence multiparty democracy, declaring the system to be socially divisive.

In both types of one-party systems, the outcomes have tended to be the entrenching of authoritarianism and corruption. It is noted that there are possible exceptions, such as Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, which has been referred to as a *one party democracy* (Cliffe 1967). In 1965 Tanzania became a *de jure* one party state, although a real element of choice was introduced into the 1965 elections, where the ruling party, Tanzanian African National Union (TANU), gave equal sponsorship to two candidates in each constituency allowing the voters to choose between them (Hoskyns 1970: 194). Post-independence TANU could certainly boast an overwhelming support, with very little opposition, justifying Nyerere’s proclamation of a one-party state. Nyerere envisioned a one-party state as a necessary step towards building democracy. However, even in this case, according to Mazrui (1999), “the political experiment of the one-party state produced good political theory but bad political practice. The theory that the one-party state could be as democratic as the multiparty system and was more culturally suited to Africa was intellectually stimulating but failed the test in practice.”



The primary problem with one-party states is that they tend to reduce links between the state and civil society (Thomson 2004: 112). Parties and civil society organisations are supposed to act as intermediaries between the governed and the governors. But, where these intermediaries are silenced or disregarded, leaders tend to fail to remain in touch with the people and thus legitimacy<sup>18</sup> is lost. To overcome the legitimacy gap client-patron<sup>19</sup> networks are established. Furthermore, with no peaceful channels of conflict resolution to remove self-interested elites, political succession tends to occur through *coups d'état* (p. 112). Indeed, such systems are often characterised with the growth of the security apparatus. As the ruling party's legitimacy wanes, and as the resources needed to maintain client-patron networks diminish, so the need for force to ensure stability and adherence to government rules increases.

The above explanation of the one-party system is important as many of its characteristics are often evident in the one party dominant system. However, the one-party system differs in three major aspects: firstly, it is largely undemocratic and uncompetitive<sup>20</sup>, thus the electorate is not able to vote for the political party of their choice since there is only one party. Secondly, such systems are characterised by centralised governments, which do not tolerate dissent or criticism and thus are illiberal. Agents of accountability- in the form of opposition parties, separate powers, a free media and civil society- are either deemed illegal, delegitimised or state-controlled, thus there are no counter-balances to the ruling party, which then leads to there being no checks on the growth of corruption. This means that the only limits on the exercise of power are "organisational inadequacies" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 599). A third difference, which is often a result of the first and second, is its eventual

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<sup>18</sup> Legitimacy refers to the citizen's belief that the ruling party has the 'right to rule'. Such legitimacy is derived through mechanisms such as elections, citizen's ability to influence policy in their interests and a perception of the positive benefits the social organisation brings them.

<sup>19</sup> This is a relationship between unequals, where the patron, individual of higher socio-economic status, uses his influence and resources to provide benefits and protection to a client, an individual of lower status, who in return gives general support to the patron or patron's government (Thomson 2004: 127).

<sup>20</sup> It is acknowledged that there are differing levels of competitiveness in one-party systems. For example, Tanzania's system under Nyerere was relatively competitive.

characterisation with a large security apparatus, which uses force to ensure compliance.

## 2.2 MULTIPARTY SYSTEM

On the other end of the spectrum are multiparty systems, characterised by competitive politics, where more than two parties are viable contenders for political office. The legislature comprises several minority parties and the system often results in coalitions. The strength of these systems is they create internal checks and balances - the ruling party or coalition seeks to fulfil its election promises as it will be judged at the following election, and such a system favours debate, conciliation and compromise. However, its criticisms relate mostly to the difficulties of coalition formation. The negotiations and horse-trading can become cumbersome, the coalition may be fractured and unstable, and its tendency towards moderation may mean that it is dominated by the political centre to the exclusion of ideological alternatives (Heywood 2002: 264). Despite the wider selection of parties to choose from, these systems are considered to be less stable (Brown 2000: 253). Nevertheless, the multiparty system occurs within a democracy and often ensures the maintenance of liberal democracy.

## 2.3 ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEM

One party dominance is also referred to as the one-party hegemonic system, dominant party system and the single-party dominated system. These terms refer to variances of one party dominance. Broadly, one party dominant systems refer to democratic regimes dominated by one party for prolonged periods. Five criteria can be used to identify party dominance: the political system; the threshold for dominance; the nature of the dominance; the inclusion of opposition features and time-span. Theorists of one party dominance acknowledge some or all of the above criteria, but there is much variance within each (Arian and Barnes 1974; Blondel 1968; Bogaards 2004;

Coleman 1960; Friedman 1999; Giliomee and Simkins 1999; Pempel 1990; Van de Walle and Butler 1999; and Ware 1996).

### 2.3.1 The political system

According to Friedman (1999: 99), one party dominance occurs in a democracy in which regular elections take place, opposition parties are largely free to organise and express themselves and civil liberties, for the most part, are respected. What distinguishes them from other democracies is the monopoly of power by one party. It is agreed that one party dominant systems occur within democracies, where democracy implies a set of institutions that enables citizens to choose their decision-makers in regularly scheduled elections. Thus, since this system permits more than one party to compete, and regular elections are held, it is democratic in the procedural sense, but whether civil and political liberties are fully protected is questionable. The issue needing further investigation is the *quality* of the democracy. This will be given attention in a subsequent section.

### 2.3.2 The threshold for dominance

The threshold given for identifying dominance varies amongst different authors. Pempel (1990: 3) and Ware (1996) assert that dominance can be sufficiently acquired with less than half of the seats in Parliament, thus dominance is obtained through attaining a plurality of the seats and not necessarily a majority. Blondel (1968) also recognises dominance when there is a plurality of support, as indicated in the vote, thus a party can be considered to be dominant with less than half of the votes. By contrast, Sartori (1976: 193) requires an absolute majority, where the make-up of the opposition largely loses its relevance. Bogaards (2004) further argues that most one party dominant system definitions were developed for parliamentary governments, however, as most of Africa leans towards presidentialism<sup>21</sup> there needs to be a means of recognising dominance in these governments too. Thus, in a presidential form of government the party must control both the Parliament and the Presidency through at

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<sup>21</sup> A presidential government, has most or all of the following features: direct election of the president, who appoints and steers the executive; the president and legislature are appointed for fixed terms, and neither can bring the other down; there is no overlap of membership between the executive and the legislature, and the president serves as head of state (Hague and Harrop 2004: 269).

least a plurality of the vote or seats. Although dominance in numbers, whether it be a majority or plurality, is a significant indicator of dominance, it is more the power and influence it translates into that is important. Thus, does the dominance in seats/votes enable the ruling party to dominate the political polity? Does it make policy decisions without needing to compromise or form coalitions? This leads to the third criteria – the nature of the dominance.

### 2.3.3 The nature of the dominance

According to Southall (2003: 37), the dominant party has dominance “by reason of its popular support and/ or its control of state machinery [and] is able to reproduce itself in power by virtue of its winning successive elections.” But, this dominance enjoyed by the ruling party, in the context of a one party dominant system, refers to more than just electoral dominance and overwhelming control of the state. Pempel (1990: 3-4) argues that dominance in number only counts if the party electorally dominates for an uninterrupted and prolonged period, and enjoys a dominant bargaining position in terms of government formation and setting public policy. Duverger (1954: 308) emphasises that a party is dominant when its “doctrines, ideas, methods and style coincide with those of the epoch [...] Domination is a question of influence rather than specific strength.” In addition, public opinion also underpins this dominance as “even the enemies of the dominant party and citizens who refuse to give it their vote acknowledge its superior status and influence;” they *believe* it to be dominant. This type of dominance goes deeper than mere numbers; at its core is a *symbolic* attachment to a particular party (Reddy 2006: 57). The party dominant system occurs within a democratic setting and thus enjoys the support of the majority, but this support continues despite non-delivery, mismanagement, corruption and other factors which would normally cost the political party its ruling seat. This symbolic attachment, which serves to maintain its dominance, is due to a particular historic event. In Mexico the PRI was the post-revolutionary party, both the ANC and the Indian National Congress (INC) are associated with post-authoritarian regimes, the Kuomintang (KMT) ruled in Taiwan after a counter-revolution and during continued struggle against the communist regime of Beijing, and Malaysia’s United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) ruled after colonial rule, foreign occupation and a war of insurgency. In particular, the ANC’s liberation credentials and its association

with the struggle against apartheid results in an affinity to the party that goes beyond a mere instrumentalist relationship between it and its constituency. Seepe (2007) refers to this as a “collective psyche”; where those who lived under apartheid associate the ANC party with a “sense of freedom” and the notion of human dignity. Such parties have a far larger share of popular legitimacy at their disposal than any of their political contenders.

#### 2.3.4 The inclusion of opposition features

Arian and Barnes (1974: 613) call the one party dominant system “a competitive system in which electoral results are held constant.” They argue that the system is dependent on the performance of the dominant party: “so long as the dominant party performs intelligently, the opposition can do little that is effective. Even bad decisions will not be disastrous unless the opposition is in a position to take advantage of them, and it seldom is” (p. 600). In other words, other parties *may* compete but they are unlikely to win. As opposed to a one-party system, the electorate have a choice beyond one party, yet they exercise that choice in favour of the dominant party. Nevertheless, the one party dominant system places on the ruling party a number of constraints that are absent in the one-party system. Since they still have to win elections and ensure the long-term maintenance of their dominance they must meet a measure of the expectations of their electorate or else they will lose their support. In addition, the opposition parties will attempt to keep the ruling party accountable as it is in their interest to highlight its shortcomings. Concomitantly, the ruling party is liberated from many of the constraints associated with the multi-party system. The significant margin with which they win elections gives them much room to move as does a further significant feature of the one party dominant system – its symbolic history. In addition, the presence of opposition parties gives the political system legitimacy and legitimises the rule of the dominant party.

It is argued that there are two primary types of one party dominant systems. The first variant will be referred to as the *hegemonic* party system; in this system opposition participates but in an almost completely uncompetitive environment. Opposition is restrained by manipulations of the legal mechanisms governing elections, by harassment, co-optation and even blatant fraud. A second variant is the *dominant*

party system, where civil and political society, are largely, able to participate and compete in the system.

### 2.3.5 Time-span

There are also divergent views regarding the duration of the dominance. Ware (1996) stipulates the dominant party should win ‘usually’. Pempel (1990: 4) argues for dominance to occur over a “substantial period”. And, Sartori (1976) argues that for a system to be called dominant there must be three consecutive elections with a clear majority in the Parliament.

**Table 1: Summary of criteria for identifying party dominance**

Criteria	Party dominance
Political system	Democracies
Threshold for dominance	Sufficient to dominate the political polity and public policy
Nature of dominance	Symbolic history
Opposition features	Opposition competes in elections, but are unlikely to win
Time span	Three or more consecutive elections

To summarise, in the discussions that follow, a one party dominant system occurs in both liberal and illiberal democracies; the dominant party’s dominance is sufficient for it to dominate the political polity and public policy; its dominance emanates from a symbolic history; opposition parties compete in elections, but are unlikely to win, whether the elections are competitive or semi-competitive; and the ruling party dominates over three or more consecutive elections dominating both the Parliament and the Presidency.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING PARTY DOMINANCE IN *DEMOCRATIC* POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Democracy has had its disappointments. Reasons for this include the appropriation of democratic rhetoric by authoritarian regimes so as to gain internal and external

legitimacy. The term ‘democracy’ is often used to cloak repressive authoritarian regimes and regimes, which often differ little from elitist-controlled communist systems. Sadly, it is generally democracy, with all the high expectations that follow such a term that is considered to have failed, as opposed to recognising the predominant features of authoritarian systems. Secondly, the term democracy has acquired so many meanings that it has become meaningless unless it is prefixed: semi-, liberal, illiberal. The popularity of the term has threatened its meaning as a political concept.

As a result of the almost boundless manifestations of democracy, the boundary between authoritarian and non-authoritarian regimes has become blurred and imperfect. To overcome these shortcomings of understanding and using the term *democracy* there is agreement with Huntington (quoted in Zakaria 1997: 24) that “democracy is one public virtue, not the only one, and the relation of democracy to other public virtues and vices can only be understood if democracy is clearly distinguished from the other characteristics of political systems.”

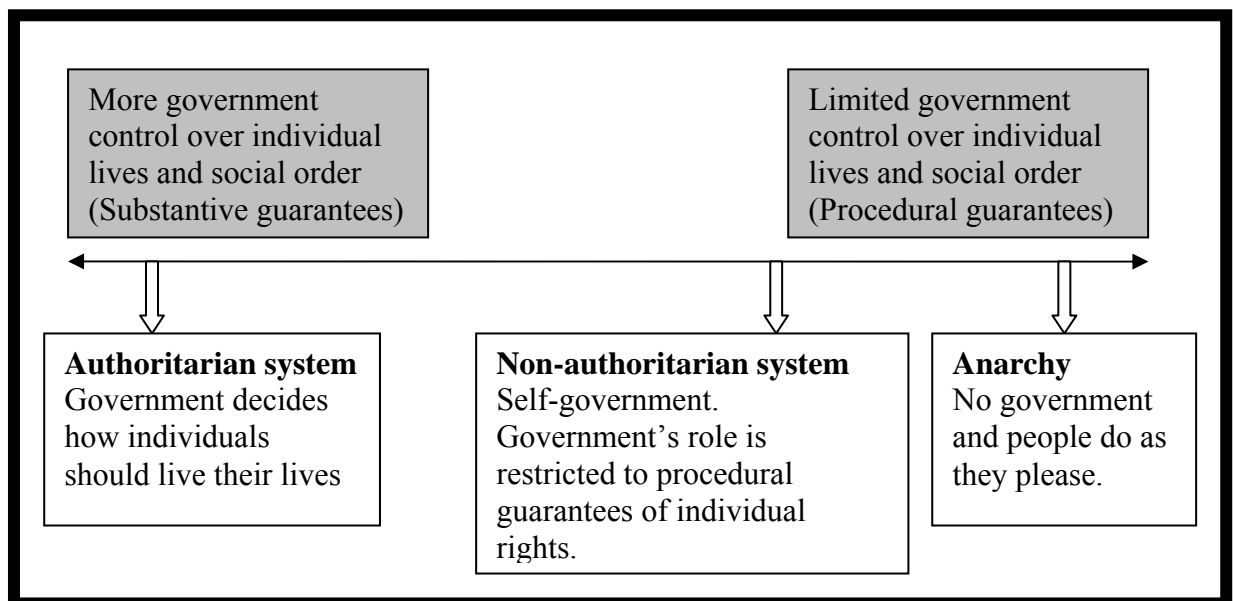
With indistinct boundaries between democratic and so-called undemocratic systems, Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1987: 7) advocate the importance of grades of distinction. Classifying countries as *semi-democratic* where the effective power of elected individuals is limited, where political party competition is restricted, or the fairness of elections is compromised so as to impact the electoral outcomes, or where political and civil liberties are uncertain so that some interests are unable to freely organise and express themselves. However, it is believed that the distinction needs to go further. The line between so-called democratic and undemocratic systems has become so blurred that it is necessary to go back to the basics so as to ‘unblur’ this line.

The foundational distinction of political systems lies between authoritarian and non-authoritarian systems and relates to the level of government control. *Figure 1* demonstrates the different types of political systems. An authoritarian system has almost complete control of its citizens, whereas a non-authoritarian system is where government’s power is limited and citizens exercise self-government. In addition, citizen’s limit the power of their government. Governments in the latter system provide procedural guarantees by ensuring that there are fair rules and that these are

enforced. Instead, in authoritarian systems the government decides how people ought to live their lives. Thus, power is given to the state as opposed to the people and the people become subjects of the state. Examples of such governments include the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union, where the government exercised absolute power over every aspect of life (Barbour *et al* 2006: 12-13).

A democracy, in theory, is supposedly non-authoritarian since it enables the people to choose, through elections, who their government will be. However, in agreement with scholars ranging from Fareed Zakaria, Alexis de Tocqueville, Samuel P. Huntington to Robert Dahl, democracy is understood to be one part of a political system, namely, the process of selecting government. It is therefore a means of accumulating power. But, to stop at elections is not sufficient to ensure the protection of civil and political liberties.

**Figure 1: A comparison of political systems** (adapted from Barbour and Wright 2003: 12)



### 3.1 TWO MAJOR TRENDS IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF DEMOCRACY

There are two major trends in the understanding of democracy; each has significant implications for one party dominance, an impact on opposition parties and other voices of accountability, and an influence on the traditional view of democracies.



### 3.1.1 Rule by the people and *dominant party* systems

The first trend is an understanding of democracy as **rule by the people**. Since it is impractical for each individual to continually and directly participate in every task of government (direct democracy), democracies are practised through the election of representatives. Representative democracy is a limited and indirect form of rule. However, it is only democratic insofar as the representation is a result of an effective link between society and government. A democracy of rule *by* the people implies that there are sufficient links with society for government to reflect and represent the interests of the citizens. In addition, the civil and political rights are sufficiently protected by a constitution and the rule of law to ensure the government does not encroach upon these rights. This type of democracy is a liberal democracy<sup>22</sup>. This political system combines democracy and constitutional liberalism. As previously defined, democracy, as an expression of the rule of the people, refers to the means of selecting governments. And, constitutional liberalism is not about the means of selecting government, but rather the goals of government. It emphasises individual liberty and the protection of an “individual’s autonomy and dignity against coercion, whatever the source” (Zakaria 1997: 26). This ‘liberal’ tradition, a term which refers to a “philosophy of liberalism, a doctrine which regards individual autonomy as the cardinal value” (Hague and Harrop 2007: 7), is a tradition found deep in Western history. To ensure the protection of the individual, and their civil and political liberties, there needs to be a restraining of governmental power. Thus, this is a non-authoritarian political system. A liberal democracy comprises free and fair elections plus the rule of law plus the separation of powers, and the protection of civil and political liberties. In this political system, agents of accountability, namely political and civil society, are recognised as important voices and channels through which society can make their voices heard. Since governmental power is limited and kept in

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<sup>22</sup> It is acknowledged that there is a current debate regarding whether liberal democracies are ceasing to be democratic. In so-called established liberal democracies, such as the United States, there is evidence of a gradual resurgence of decision-making by unelected experts, judges and regulators. Civil liberties in these countries are also being curtailed as evidenced in the U.S.’s Patriot Act. The Act was passed in response to the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks. It has been criticised from its inception for weakening protections of civil liberties. However, others (Dalton, Scarrow and Cain 2004) argue that as education expands so voters’ interests in political issues will increase, and so they will begin to insist on a political voice, determined not to be silenced by judges, experts and regulators.

check it is a non-authoritarian democracy. If the political system fulfils all the criteria for party dominance and it operates within a liberal democracy then the resulting type of one party dominance is the *dominant party system*.

### 3.1.2 Rule for the people and hegemonic party systems

A second understanding of democracy is encapsulated in the phrase **rule for the people**. This results when a democratically elected government believes it has absolute sovereignty and therefore power, and results in the centralisation of authority. The government rules on behalf of the people – it leads the people, and makes decisions for the people. People vote at elections but have no further input, since the government operates on the belief that ‘the people have spoken’. The ruling party begins to see itself as the political, economic, social and moral leader of the people, and anyone who would contend with it or oppose it would be de-legitimised as being against the state. Such governments are led by the principles of ‘democratic centralism’. These governments encroach on the rights and powers of other spheres of society, usurping power horizontally (from other branches of government) and vertically (from associations, civil society organisations and society in general). As a result there is limited or no space for agents of accountability. Since the government neither values nor protects the space of other spheres of society and instead becomes more and more extensive, an authoritarian democracy results. If all the criteria for one party dominance exist within such an authoritarian democracy the type of party dominance to manifest is *hegemonic party rule* as was evidenced in Mexico.

### 3.1.3 Classifying one party dominant systems

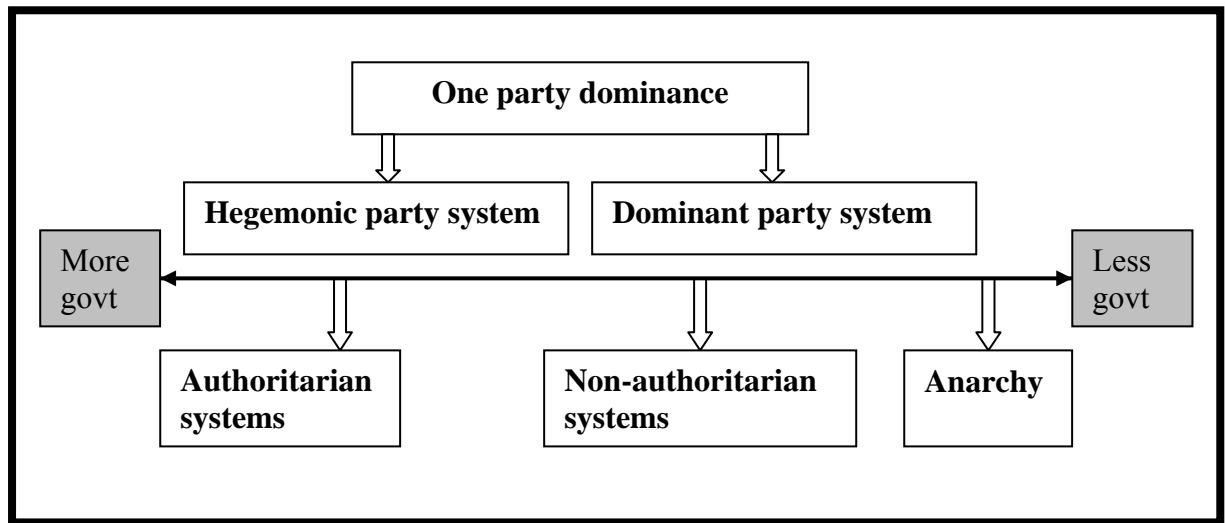
Thus, the ruling parties of one party dominant systems may exercise their power in an either authoritarian or non-authoritarian manner. Sartori (1976: 26) similarly identifies two types of party dominant systems: the pre-dominant party system and the hegemonic party system. In the first case there is a limited competitive political system, where one party outdistances its opponents; nevertheless there still exists a significant chance of there being an alternation in power. The second case refers to a non-competitive system, where alternation cannot occur. Peripheral parties do exist but mechanisms are in place that permanently excludes them from power. In such a

system open contestation and dissent are not allowed. It is characterised by fraudulent elections, internal repression, and a gagged press. Likewise, Nacif (2006: 92-93) refers to Mexico's one party dominant system as a single-hegemonic party system and recognises it to have been an authoritarian regime<sup>23</sup> since these hegemonic parties "sustain their monopoly of power through barriers of entry to new competitors." He nevertheless distinguishes the single-hegemonic party system from other authoritarian regimes in three aspects. First, this system is different to personal dictatorships due to the institutionalisation of succession of power. Second, single-party systems tend to have a genuine base of social support. Third, they are able to co-opt emerging political movements and co-exist with some form of opposition. The PRI maintained its legitimacy both domestically and internationally through semi-competitive elections, and its rule was underpinned by a base of social support. However, opposition parties faced serious official constraints, even harassment, and the ruling PRI heavily exploited the powers of office to maintain political support. Nacif thus distinguishes single-hegemonic party systems in authoritarian regimes, such as Mexico, from dominant party systems such as in South Africa. *Figure 2* illustrates how manifestations of one party dominance straddle over non-authoritarian and authoritarian political systems. The hegemonic party system is therefore an example of an authoritarian democratic political system and the dominant party system is an example of a non-authoritarian democratic political system. The differences between the two types of one party dominance are illustrated in *table 2*.

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<sup>23</sup> Nacif uses Barbara Geddes' typology of authoritarian regimes, where she distinguishes between three types of authoritarianism: personal dictatorships, military regimes and single party regimes.

**Figure 2: One party dominance in political systems**



**Table 2: Categorisation of one party dominant systems**

	<b>Hegemonic</b>	<b>Dominant</b>
<b>Political system</b>	Authoritarian democracy	Non-authoritarian democracy
<b>Political authority</b>	Centralised and monopoly of power. Rule <i>for</i> the people.	Fairly centralised government but limited in its scope of control. Rule <i>by</i> the people.
<b>Elections</b>	Regular but non-competitive	Regular and semi-competitive
<b>Political participation<sup>24</sup></b>	Patron-client networks, corporatism – elite-controlled.	Moderate participation, various channels of participation.
<b>Agents of accountability<sup>25</sup></b>	Limited and constrained. Gagged press. Media is largely state-controlled. Civil society organisations can only operate in partnership with government.	Space for operation is protected and recognised. Recognition that civil society organisations can play a multiplicity of roles.

### 3.2 WHAT DOES ONE PARTY DOMINANCE MEAN FOR A LIBERAL DEMOCRACY?

To start it must be acknowledged that one party dominance is not necessarily ‘a negative state of affairs’. It can act as a model of democratic stability as it is a more

<sup>24</sup> Political participation refers to activity by individuals and groups to influence those in government.

<sup>25</sup> Agents of accountability an independent judiciary, separate powers, and political and civil society.

favourable stabilising mechanism than fragmented parties and if the dominant party combines its rule with political competition and the protection of civil liberties it can serve as a good foundation for a durable liberal democracy.

The tension between democracy and liberal constitutionalism centers on power, where democracy is about power accumulation, liberal constitutionalism is about a restraining of this power. If this balance between power accumulation and power restraint is not maintained a democracy can easily move from being non-authoritarian to authoritarian and this is the concern with party dominance. As Zakaria (1997: 30) cautions, some governments, claiming to represent the will of their people on the basis of the vote, have tended to encroach on the space and rights of other elements in a society. Examples include the governments of Alexandr Lukashenko of Belarus and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

If a government believes it has absolute sovereignty (in other words absolute power) it can result in the centralising of authority. Since unchecked centralisation is the anti-thesis of a liberal democracy, the potential of a democracy to become authoritarian is especially concerning in a one party dominant system, where the dominant party does not have the real threat of the ballot box. There is thus the tendency of this party system towards the centralisation of power as is evidenced when analysing the methods used by dominant parties to consolidate their dominance. If we consider rule *by the people* and a non-authoritarian government as an ideal, then agents of accountability<sup>26</sup>, as counter-balances to the accumulation of power by the government, have an important and specific role to play in political systems dominated by one party. The study of Mexico and South Africa is essentially to determine what happens to liberal democracies in one party dominant systems.

#### **4. ONE PARTY DOMINANCE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Whereas Pempel's (1990) classic study of one party dominance in *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes* and Arian and Barnes' (1974) *The*

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<sup>26</sup> The role of agents of accountability will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

*Dominant Party System: A neglected model of Democratic Stability* focused on advanced industrial democracies, this research focuses on party dominance in industrialising countries. Similar to Giliomee and Simkins' (1999: 1-4) study of developing countries in *The Awkward Embrace*, historical, social and economic differences are recognised; creating a specific context within which one party dominant systems operate in industrialising countries. Giliomee and Simkins (1999: 1-4) also account for the "rougher game" of politics in the 'semi-industrialised' countries due to their founding history and socio-economic context.

There is a third category of countries, which this study does not cover – the de-industrialised and under-developed countries. It is important to understand and recognise this category for distinguishing purposes. It includes the world's poorest countries, which are primarily agricultural and rural, and thus have little or no evidence of industrialising or have returned to an agrarian economy. Many African countries fall within this category.

In practice, industrialisation refers to economic development, since economies highly dependent on agriculture do not have high Gross National Products (GNPs) (Mahler 1992: 52). In Seymour Martin Lipset's (1959) work *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*, in which he tested those conditions associated with the existence and stability of democratic society, a strong correlation was found between economic development and democracy. His indices for economic development included wealth, industrialisation, urbanisation and education. Thus, wealthy, industrialised, urbanised countries with high literacy rates are considered to be industrialised or developed. Countries, which are progressing in this direction, are considered to be industrialising or developing.

Thus, what are the specific contexts provided by both advanced industrialised and developing countries, and what is their impact on the one party dominant system and the quality of democracy? How then, do we understand one party dominance in developing countries? For the purposes of comparison, specific indicators are identified within the different themes.

#### 4.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pempel's advanced industrial democracies with one party dominance had a history of liberal democratic principles. As Zakaria (1997) points out most advanced industrial democracies have since 1945 embodied both democracy and constitutional liberalism. Prior to this, most of these countries, which are in Western Europe, were actually liberal autocracies; the franchise was restricted and it was only in the late 1940s that many Western countries embraced universal adult suffrage. However, constitutional liberalism was regarded as important as early as the late 1840s, with many of these countries adopting the rule of law, private property rights and a growing recognition of the need for a separation of powers and free speech. Thus, the development of liberal democracy first started with civil liberties, which then moved to political liberties. When one party dominance was initiated, civil liberties were already recognised, the media was free, opposition was viable and legitimate, and electoral contestation existed before the on-set of party dominance. Zakaria (1997: 22) identifies the political system of industrial countries being "marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion and property." This liberal context provided an already entrenched system of checks and balances on the dominant party. In addition, the history of liberalism meant that underlying the political system was a democratic political culture. Citizens valued their right to participate in the political arena and they valued and understood the importance of maintaining the stability of the democratic system of government.

In contrast, developing countries tend to not have such a history of liberalism. In fact, Zakaria's (1997: 28) work shows that "constitutional liberalism has led to democracy, but democracy does not seem to bring constitutional liberalism." Differing from the path of advanced industrial countries, dictatorships, military regimes and one party states in Latin America, Africa and parts of Asia have given way to democracies but with little background in constitutional liberalism. Examples include South Africa's apartheid<sup>27</sup> system instituted by the ruling hegemonic party, the National Party (NP), which suppressed the country's black majority; Ghana's quasi-military regime under the control of Lt. Jerry Rawlings; and Mexico's dictatorship under Diaz until the 1911

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<sup>27</sup> Apartheid was a system of legalised racial segregation enforced by the NP-led South African government from 1948 to 1994.



Mexican Revolution. Due to this illiberal history, political parties, civil society organisations and an independent media are either non-existent or in their infancy. The subsequent ruling party with its goal of maintaining political power is unlikely to encourage the growth of such oppositional elements in its society.

Common methods of consolidating dominance, evident in most one party dominant systems, such as attempts to delegitimise opposition parties, the use of patronage networks and the use of state funding for ruling party electoral contestation become concerning in industrialising countries where oppositional politics is still developing. Such devices are less concerning in industrialised countries where a system of checks and balances are already firmly entrenched and protected by the rule of law.

It is believed that the different types of democracies, in particular authoritarian and non-authoritarian democracies, needs further investigation, thus chapter three will address this in greater detail. A distinguishing feature of the historical context of developing countries is their authoritarian histories, thus it will be evaluated whether the indicator of an *authoritarian history (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial)* is present in both countries and to what extent. Chapter four will compare the contexts of the two countries.

## 4.2 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Studies have shown that wealthier countries are more likely to maintain liberal democratic rule as a positive relationship exists between the level of socio-economic development and democracy (Diamond *et al* 1987; Lipset 1959; Przeworski *et al* 2000). Democracies are frequent in developed countries but rare in poor ones; the reason is not that they are more likely to arise as a result of economic development, but rather they are more likely to survive in such conditions (Przeworski 2004: 12). Przeworski goes so far as to say that the survival of democracy depends on a few identifiable factors, the foremost factor being the level of economic development, as depicted by per capita income. According to Przeworski *et al* (1997: 295-297) once a country has a democratic regime, its level of economic development has a very strong effect on the probability that democracy will survive. Poor democracies, particularly those with annual per-capita income of less than \$1,000, are extremely fragile, and the



probability of survival in a particular year according to the authors is minimal. Diamond (1999a: 78) further reinforces this view, arguing that the better the performance of a democratic regime in producing and broadly distributing improvements in living standards, the more likely it is to endure. According to Lipset (1959: 75) a “society divided between a large impoverished mass and a small favored elite would result either in oligarchy (dictatorial rule of the small upper stratum) or in tyranny (popularly based dictatorship)”. In most developing countries, the citizens tend to vote and rate if democracy is a better alternative by how a government distributes basic public services. Socio-economic development is seen to change fundamentally the way individuals and groups relate to the political process. In addition, redistribution of any kind and the provision of social services are simply unviable in a democracy without an expanding economy creating new resources and jobs (Diamond 1994: 53). As Held (1993) and Putzel (1995) have claimed, democracy in any meaningful sense is incompatible with extreme economic inequality and, therefore, a condition of deepening democracy is alleviation of dependency and poverty among the population.

In Africa, most countries are poor, with per capita incomes well below the levels commonly posited as the minimum necessary to sustain democratic rule. According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 37), the African economic crisis will continue to undermine the legitimacy of any political regime, when incumbent governments receive blame for prevailing economic conditions. Indeed, many African voters still equate votes to their economic well-being. For that reason, democratic governments in poor countries rely for their legitimacy less on economic performance than they do on authoritarian counterparts and thus the coercive apparatus. Industrialising countries, on the other hand, tend to have growing economies and thus the need for government to rely on coercive means is lessened.

Nevertheless, industrialising countries are still characterised by pockets of abject poverty and extremities in terms of income distribution. For example, South Africa, even though it is the most developed country on the African continent, has vast inequalities with its Gini coefficient increasing from 0.68 in 1991 to 0.77 in 2001 (Schwabe 2004). At the time of the first general elections in both Malaysia and South Africa economic power was concentrated in the hands of a minority; whites in South

Africa, and the Chinese and British in Malaysia. In contrast, the biggest population groups, 80% black Africans and 50% Malays, lived in poverty, translating socio-economic inequality into an inter-ethnic phenomenon (Kassner 2006: 65).

Vast socio-economic inequalities make for a more volatile system and one which is more easily manipulated by elites. The first, the concern of volatility, is linked to the prevailing political culture and thus understandings of democracy. According to research conducted by Afrobarometer, the majority of South Africans perceive democracy in substantive terms (Kotze 2004: 27). Thus they value democracy as a means to another end, namely an instrument to alleviate socio-economic conditions and promote equity. If countries like Malaysia and South Africa, which are marred by poverty and inequality, are unable to meet the material needs of their citizens it may translate into the citizens perceiving the democratic regime to be inadequate and thus opting for a less democratic regime type. The second concern is that substantial developmental requirements provide the justification for a more centralised system of governance, motivated on the basis of a need for stability, unity and fair development. This centralised system is also more susceptible to moving towards authoritarianism, as happened in Malaysia, and to a system of patronage, as opposed to the governing party acquiring legitimacy through democratic means, such as elections and delivery on election promises.

Following on from the above discussions, indicators which serve to distinguish industrialising countries from industrialised countries include the *Human Development Index (HDI)*, *inequalities and employment*. The HDI includes the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country, but goes much further. The HDI is an index combining three dimensions of human development: living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), education (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level) and enjoying a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, GDP and per capita income) (UNDP 2009). A key use of the index is to rank countries as either underdeveloped, developing or developed. Countries are classified into one of three groupings of human development: High human development (with an HDI of 0.800 or above), medium human development (HDI of 0.500-0.799) and low human development (HDI of less than 0.500). In addition, significant inequalities between the rich and poor, different

ethnic group or different regions are expected to be prevalent in developing countries. The extent of these inequalities is what determines the future prospects for liberal democracy in the respective countries. In line with these inequalities is the level of employment. Whereas industrialised countries tend to have low levels of poverty and unemployment, these are definitely concerns faced by developing countries. Again, the severity of these factors will have an impact on the viability of liberal democracy in these countries.

#### 4.3 SOCIAL CONTEXT

The third issue resulting in a different context for party dominant systems in developing countries has already been alluded to - ethnicity. This factor plays a significant role in countries such as Ghana, Malaysia and South Africa and to a lesser extent in Mexico, Singapore and Taiwan. Malaysia and South Africa have societies that are polarised along ethnic lines, having ethnic fragmentation indices<sup>28</sup> of 0.694 and 0.873 respectively (Kassner 2006: 65). On the other hand, in Sweden, Japan and Italy, the societies are ethnically homogenous which leads to democratic competition concerning socio-economic issues instead of social identity. In industrialising countries, this factor feeds into race-based or identity-based politics. If the dominant party takes on a centrist platform, which is a general tactic of dominant parties, it encourages the smaller parties to pursue the support of specific groupings thereby entrenching a limited support base. Thus, the next indicator to be measured in Mexico and South Africa is *ethnicity*.

#### 4.4 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The above three contextual factors - an illiberal history, inequalities which feed into a centralised system based on patronage, and competition around issues of social identity - are concerning in a one party dominant system. Nevertheless, the fourth contextual issue relates to the international political economy within which the one party dominant system exists. The nature of our prevalent international political

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<sup>28</sup> This index takes into account the following three cleavages: racial, linguistic and religious. The index varies from 0 to 1, where 0 is for a completely homogenous society and where 1 occurs in a hypothetical society where each individual belongs to a different group.

economy provides a moderating effect on the actions of one party dominant systems. With globalisation and increasing global interdependence, countries are more subject to global influences and monitoring. It is expected that the dominant party will therefore be hindered from moving towards a blatant illiberal democracy or authoritarian one-party system. This is especially true for developing countries which need to grow economically and are thus dependent on investment and for the international community to view them positively. In order to compare the international contexts of Mexico and South Africa, the following indicator will be used: *influence of external forces*.

***In summary***, the context provided within advanced industrial countries – experience with liberalism, stronger economies feeding into greater equality amongst their people, relatively homogenous societies, and the moderating effects of the international political economy – provides a bulwark against the dominant party abusing its position of strength and accumulating power to the detriment of its populace. Besides the restraining influence of the current global economy, the context within industrialising countries – long histories with authoritarianism, vast socio-economic inequalities making for more unstable systems, susceptible to manipulation by elites - leads to a more volatile system vulnerable to largely unhindered power accumulation.

## **5. CRITICISM OF THE ONE PARTY DOMINANT APPROACH**

Using the one party dominant system as a theoretical approach is not without its critics. Suttner (2006: 277-289) attempts to show the concept as a flawed mode of analysis, which lacks explanatory capacity. Firstly, he correctly highlights that the party dominant system, where one party is so electorally strong that it is unlikely to lose in the foreseeable future, has not always been a cause for concern. He underlines this using Japan and Sweden's past dominant party systems, arguing that the democratic theorists generally did not raise much concern about their dominance. His examples are nevertheless from advanced industrial countries and thus have different contextual backgrounds to industrialising countries. However, it is agreed that the one party dominant system can have both positive (as with India's INC) and negative

implications<sup>29</sup> and it needs to be portrayed more fairly with regards to its potential benefits.

A second concern given is that this approach leads to an ‘electoral fixation’ that diverts attention from the necessity of recognising that the ruling party *is not the nation*. Although this may be so, many dominant and hegemonic parties certainly portray themselves as embodying the nation. Suttner further bemoans that other organisations, formed to meet particular social needs, are ignored. Thus, he stresses that pluralism, which acknowledges that other actors, besides the ruling party and even opposition parties, may represent the interests of citizens, is neglected by dominant party theorists. This is an important point and this research actually accentuates the role of these forces, which exist outside the parliamentary setting, often expressed through civil society. However, this thesis seeks to show that it is not the theorists but rather a consequence of the system itself that alternative voices are silenced or restrained. The existence of these alternative voices and their importance is not questioned.

A third issue raised by Suttner is the alleged failure of party dominant theorists to show a causal link between dominance and the supposed pathologies that flow from dominance. He argues that the approach cannot be called a *theory* as it has no explanatory powers and is rather a description and prediction of consequences flowing from dominance. Nyblade (2004: 1) agrees that the existing literature on one party dominant systems provides little systematic predictive or explanatory power. Through a comparative study of Mexico and South Africa as well as reference to other one party dominant systems from industrialising countries such as Taiwan and India, it is hoped that this research will overcome this shortcoming and show causal linkages specific to party dominant systems in industrialising countries.

## **6. LIFECYCLES OF ONE PARTY DOMINANT RULE**

Pempel’s (1990: 340-352) *Uncommon Democracies*, recognises a ‘cycle of dominance’ which includes a beginning, a process of maintaining dominance, and

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<sup>29</sup> The implications of the dominant party system will be dealt with later in this chapter.

then various crises that the dominant party attempts to overcome to remain in power. Similarly, three phases in the ‘lifespan’ of one party dominant rule are identified: initiation of one party dominant rule, consolidation and maintenance of such rule and then the decline of the dominant party. South Africa is currently moving into the second phase and Mexico has passed through all three phases. This cycle serves to answer the following questions: What are the causal factors that made the emergence of a one party dominant system possible? Why is it that a single party wins one election after another? And, a bigger question which will be explored in more detail in the forthcoming chapters: what are the implications of the workings of a one party dominant system?

## 6.1 INITIATION OF ONE PARTY DOMINANT RULE

Why does dominant party rule result after multiparty elections? A common feature of most one party dominant systems, including those of industrial countries, is a highly symbolic history and the ushering in of a new political order. It is recognised that many dominant parties “have been closely identified with the creation of the constitutional political order they came to dominate” (Arian and Barnes 1974: 595). In Mtimkulu’s (2006: 99) study of Sweden’s Social Democratic party, India’s National Congress Party (INC) and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) he also identified one commonality: “highly unusual circumstances prevailed in the respective countries prior to the parties accession to power.” Botswana achieved independence from colonial rule under the leadership of the BDP. In India, the INC, led at different stages by world-renowned ‘heroes’ such Mahatma Ghandi and Nehru, won almost three-quarters of the seats in Parliament in the national elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962, reaping the rewards of their role during the anti-colonial movement against the British (Hasan 2006: 41). Although there was no liberation struggle in Sweden, the country was in economic dire straits with unemployment at its peak. The Social Democratic Party then came in with the blueprint to end unemployment. Further examples include Malaysia where the UMNO was a principal actor in the country’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule. Israel’s Mapai, led by David Ben Gurion, fought for the creation of an independent state. In Italy, De Gasperi’s DC was one of the parties to overthrow Mussolini and end fascism. The dominant party then maintains this position of dominance by reminding the public

mind of this heroic or significant period. For example, Mexico's PRI electoral majority was largely sustained by an ideological appeal based on the Mexican Revolution.

A second common feature of one party dominant systems, already alluded to and closely linked to the first, is charismatic and revered leadership. The leaders of these parties are often strongly associated with the historic period which led to their rule. These are names include: Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Ghandi and David Ben Gurion. Thus the allegiance of the electorate lies not only with the party but with these 'heroes' too.

The above explains the genesis of the dominant or hegemonic party, but is insufficient in understanding why the ruling party's dominance persists. Arian and Barnes (1974: 599) note that "in many multiparty systems, parties are the result of historical and social forces and are only partially the conscious creation of political leaders....The dominant party system is one in which politics is king, in which dominance results from strategic political decisions made by the party elite." The above statement highlights the importance of the ruling party as an agent in establishing and consolidating the one party dominant system. The dominant or hegemonic party is thus instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of a one party dominant system.

## 6.2 CONSOLIDATING AND MAINTAINING DOMINANCE

For dominance to be consolidated the electorally dominant party has to have so entrenched itself that the chances of an alternation in power are remote. The dominant party has become ingrained both electorally, symbolically and it dominates the political discourse. Giliomee and Simkins (1999: 12) assert "it is in the consolidating phase that the difference between the dominant party and the competitive systems becomes increasingly distinct." The concern lies with the 'mechanisms of control' (Spieß 2002: 8) or those methods used to consolidate and then maintain dominance. These mechanisms include the following:

### 6.2.1 Pursuing a national project



Dominant parties come into power on the wave of a significant historic event, whether it be a revolution, state-creation or liberation, and tend to initially maintain this dominance by the continued referral to this event. Due to the passing of generations, to ensure their dominance, these parties must induce and maintain political loyalty using other symbolic mechanisms. The dominant party thus initiates a ‘project’ that determines the national public policy agenda and sets the foundation for an enduring support base. “Some kind of a programmatic appeal which, by telling the mass electorate that the governing party will transform their lives, guarantees a deep identification between the dominant party and a majority in the electorate” (Spieß 2002: 15). India’s ‘project’ was centered around a national consensus consisting of the ingredients of secularism, democratic socialism, mixed economy, non-alignment and nationalism. Kothari (1970: 144) notes: “Harping constantly and in 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.”

### **6.2.2 State centralisation and state-party collusion**

In general, the party’s claim to predominant power and pursuit of liberation, revolutionary or state-building goals goes hand-in-hand with the demand for increased state intervention. In addition, dominant parties are vulnerable to the changing of generations, the further they move from the historic event that brought them into power the greater the need for alternative mechanisms to induce loyalty. Building client-patron linkages is one such mechanism. To maintain such a system of patronage the ruling party needs unhindered access to state resources. An obvious implication of centralising of state power and the indiscriminate access it gives to state revenues is a blurring of the lines separating the party and state.

### **6.2.3 Corporatism, patronage and cooptation**

The ruling party’s control over the state resources and its predominant influence over public policies provides it with the leverage and means to use corporatism, patronage and cooptation. Corporatism refers to the relationship between the state, labour and



business associations where decisions on major issues result from discussion and coordination (Adam 1999: 261). There are two possible views of corporatism. The first is that it contrasts with pluralism, which implies competition between groups. In return for the influence that these peak associations enjoy they must ensure compliance from their members. It is thus seen as a top-down approach, where policy-making is done in private negotiations and electoral representation through Parliament becomes less important and where the autonomy of interest groups is deprived and the growth of opposition stifled (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: 27). The second view is that corporatism can provide a more effective form of decision-making rather than adversarialism (Adam 1999: 261). In addition, it is seen as a “method to pacify intense minorities by giving them another opportunity to influence politics when they have no chance in Parliament” (Lewin 1994: 59). Lijphart and Crepaz (1991: 245) studied corporatism in Western democracies, where they found that “corporatism can be thought of as a more broadly defined concept of consensus democracy.”

In Taiwan, the dominant party subsidised and controlled a number of interest associations. Through this corporatism the KMT contained class conflict, gained an important source of votes and provided a channel for disseminating state policies. The KMT however, gave neither business nor labour preferential favour, differing from the labour-based PRI and ANC (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: 28, 342). Corporatism was a key characteristic of the PRI hegemony and was based on three sectors: the National Workers’ Confederation, the National Peasant Confederation, and the National Confederation of Popular Organisations. These were groupings of labour unions, peasant groups and a variety of other interest groups, including business elites. Back-channel understandings and formal negotiations within corporatist arrangements fostered relations where in exchange for favorable economic treatment; business elites would give financial support and political quiescence. They therefore took into the ‘fold’ all the influential people.

#### **6.2.4 Institutional arrangements: Manipulation of elections and electoral procedures**

The chosen electoral system is of importance as it shapes the type of ruling alliance, the nature of the control of the ruling over its representatives, the degree of its hold

over society and the type of opposition that will emerge (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: 340). In South Africa, the closed party list proportional representation (PR) electoral system has certainly contributed to the ANC's ability to manage both its constituency and its members of Parliament – a point that will be elaborated on in chapter four. Mexico's PRI used all means, both fair and foul, to ensure dominance through the ballot box. The INC leaders were aware of the fact that so long as opposition remained fragmented and disorganised, they would benefit from the Westminster first-past-the-post electoral system. They included provisions that gave Indian federalism a unitary shape so as to be able to alter developments of the party system to their favour whenever necessary (Spieß 2002: 16).

Regular elections can also serve to legitimate a regime, even one where there is decreasing space for competition. Regular elections were a primary feature and source of legitimacy of Mexico's post-revolutionary regime. If elections occurred regularly and on schedule and there was at least one legally registered opposition party, elections maintained an illusion of political competition. This kept domestic and international criticism at bay. Likewise, Taiwan's elections were motivated by the leaders' intentions to show a distinction between their regime and that of their communist rivals on mainland China thereby presenting themselves as democratic to the international community. The KMT also wanted to gain the support of the local Taiwanese population and thus quickly put elections into process (Solinger 2001: 32). It must, nevertheless, be conceded that the PRI and the KMT had a real base of social support.

#### **6.2.5 Garnering broad-based support and delegitimation of the opposition**

A phenomenon associated with one party dominant systems is the tendency of the ruling party to adopt a more centrist approach so as to maintain its dominance and broad-based support. In Mexico, the ruling party was heterogeneous comprising of two major wings: the left-wing that emphasised income redistribution, land reform and social justice, illustrated in the rule of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940); and the right-wing that stressed industrialisation and state-led capitalist development,

as evidenced in the rule of President Miguel Alemán. Thus the PRI's economic policies would shift with the presidential terms<sup>30</sup> (Magaloni 2006: 9).

The attempt to capture broad-based support often coincides with the delegitimation of the opposition. The INC justified and the ANC justifies attempts of delegitimation by portraying themselves as the embodiment of an all-inclusive nationalism and the only political force capable of ushering in 'transformation'. A statement by the INC's former general secretary, Sadiq Ali, is illustrative: "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" (quoted in Spieß 2002: 1). Nehru similarly declared: "The Congress is the country and the country is Congress" (quoted in Spieß 2002: 21). These statements highlight the perception that the INC had to a legitimate claim to the commanding heights of India's polity during its dominant rule. This approach renders opposition parties incapable of launching a significant challenge to the ruling party. Instead opposition parties tend to champion minority interests so as to gain some base of support.

*In summary*, to consolidate and maintain dominance the ruling part ensures a broad spectrum of support, deters potential party defectors, and limits the expansion of opposition. Methods used to ensure such dominance include manoeuvring of institutional processes in favour of the dominant or hegemonic party; co-opting interest groups through corporatism and patronage; delegitimisation of opposition; provision of a 'national project' to rally support around; centralisation of authority and adopting a centrist approach to ensure broad-based support. The concern with these methods is that they result in an uncompetitive system, which then translates into an unaccountable system. In chapters five and six it will be assessed whether these methods are evident and, if so, to what extent in Mexico and South Africa, but of greater importance is to determine the impact of these methods on agents of accountability in both countries.

### 6.3 DECLINE OF THE DOMINANT PARTY

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<sup>30</sup> This feature illustrates the power of the presidency or executive in such systems, as a result of the centralisation of power.

In March 2000 Chen Shui-bian, the Democratic Progressive Party's presidential candidate won Taiwan's elections and in July 2000 PAN's candidate, Vincente Fox, won Mexico's presidential elections. India's November 1989 elections marked the end of the dominance of the Congress Party. In these previously one party dominant systems, the question needs to be asked: how did these victories come to pass? According to Bose (2009) there are two key factors which explain the demise of India's Congress Party: the first is that social groups had lost confidence in the party's ability to represent their interests. The second is the party's initial organisational prowess had begun to wither in key states. The decline of the hegemonic party system in Mexico proceeded at a slow pace; Whitehead (in Nacif 2006: 91) refers to it as a case of "transition by stealth." Its transition was the culmination of a complex process of institutional reform, internal pressures for reform, a changing international arena, and cataclysmic events, largely characterising the change as "a case of transition through liberalisation" (Nacif 2006: 91). Solinger (2001: 30) similarly argues that the opposition victories of one party dominant systems were not the "product of a finally freed-up, democratically expressed public will, but as the outcome of a lengthy process of unravelling of single-party domination." There are a number of factors in the "process of unravelling of single-party domination": a long history of elections; the role of opposition; internal factions; social modernisation; economic crisis; fraud and corruption; a vocal civil society; the international community and the momentum provided by the pro-democratic wave. These factors will be assessed in chapter five with a specific focus on Mexico.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS OF ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS**

Political analysts have argued for both positive and negative potential ramifications of the one party dominant system. Positively, party dominance can be seen to ensure political stability thereby creating the preconditions for longer-term entrenchment of democracy. Arian and Barnes (1974: 593) argue for the dominant party firstly, as a model of democratic stability asserting that the dominant party is a more favourable stabilising mechanism than fragmented parties. Pempel (1990) also points out that a dominant party, through the entrenching of democratic institutions, marginalising political extremes and fusing ethnic differences and creating a forum for compromise,

can facilitate stability. Secondly, Arian and Barnes argue that if a dominant party combines its rule with political competition and the protection of civil liberties it can serve as a good foundation for a durable liberal democracy. The INC of India stands as an example of the benefits of the dominant party system where some argue that “India’s democracy would not have survived without such dominance” (Reddy 2006: 56). The INC’s strategy was as a broad-based movement, which comprised numerous factions of diversely organised interests. These factions enabled the recruitment of new leadership and maintained internal debate thereby inhibiting the development of an elite-driven vanguardist Leninist organisation.

The first point is taken in both case studies. The PRI in Mexico served to end factional rivalries and political instability through the uniting of “revolutionary” forces from the country’s 1910-1920 social revolution (Middlebrook 2004: 1). According to Baer (1999: 92) “Mexico achieved stability when it traded a history of succession by assassination for institutionalized party rule.” However, the PRI’s methods of maintaining political stability apparently included incidents of force and violence, with some of the original revolutionaries being executed. South Africa’s largely peaceful democratic transition in 1994 from authoritarian hegemonic party dominance can partly be attributed to the unifying qualities of the ANC. A fragmentary party system would in all likelihood have resulted in the derailing of the democratising process. Nelson Mandela’s term of presidency supports Pempel’s argument, as his policy of reconciliation was perhaps one of the primary reasons for South Africa’s peaceful transition to democracy. Mandela served to unite South Africans and sought to win voluntary co-operation of all interest groups. The second argument of Arian and Barnes poses an important ‘if’. If there is a combination of dominant party rule with political competition and civil liberties then it may provide a positive foundation. Mexico, instead, showed a constraining of political space and a silencing and delegitimising of alternative voices. The impact of this on South Africa will be given greater attention in chapter six. A further concern is that although much can be gleaned from Arian and Barne’s observations of one party dominant systems it must be noted that they drew their conclusions from analysing industrialised countries, namely Italy and Israel.

There are concerning pathologies with the one party dominant system, which largely relate to the methods of consolidating and maintaining dominance. Firstly, the *blurring of state-party lines* resulting from state centralisation and the ruling party's access to state resources to maintain patron-client linkages. With the continuation of the same party in power a 'process of politicisation' occurs as state officials and institutions adopt the ideological and political priorities of the ruling party. Dominant or hegemonic parties that were liberation or revolutionary movements initially become identified with and then synonymous to the regime. An ultimate concern with this is that dissatisfaction with the ruling party's policies and actions may be translated into dissatisfaction with the democratic regime, making its future volatile.

Secondly, through capturing a broad base of support, the manipulation of electoral processes, access to state resources and the delegitimisation of opposition, dominant or hegemonic parties consolidate their dominance by *inhibiting the development of a strong opposition*. This system is also often characterised by weak and ineffective opposition, especially where the dominant or hegemonic party feels no obligation to take their criticism into account and uses tactics to discredit the opposition. As previously discussed, the PRI used a number of mechanisms to do this; namely, adopting majoritarian electoral institutions, hindering the opposition's opportunities to offer benefits to its members, ballot fraud and by building a large clientelistic network (Domínguez 1999: 2). Mexico's opposition parties were very poorly represented as a result of the electoral system. If the electoral arena and the outcomes of elections are controlled by the dominant or hegemonic party, opposition has little hope of influencing policy-making or offering benefits to their members. The prospects for opposition become limited and dull.

A third apprehension, relates to the *accumulation of power*. Recognising the dangers of unchecked centralism and its potential to create illiberal democracies provides an important note of caution. If the dominant party accumulates sufficient power, where it can ignore the interests of its citizens without fearing the reprisal of the ballot box it may degenerate into an authoritarian and illiberal democracy. The reason for this is that 'substantive uncertainty' has been removed. Substantive uncertainty exists where politicians and political parties are not guaranteed of their positions and therefore act in the interest of their citizens. Due to a lack of 'fear of the ballot' the dominant party

may begin to display complacency and arrogance, and possibly corruption. A lack of substantive uncertainty is basically an uncompetitive system. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there are other constraints on the power of the dominant party that exist beyond the ballot box. Agents of accountability, namely civil society organisations and opposition parties, as well as internal factions may keep this power accumulation in check. However, in countries with weaker institutions of democracy and civil society, the dominant party can close different avenues of power by “using control of the state to keep its existing supporters content and its opponents disorganised” (Simkins 1999: 50). This is where a major threat of dominant parties to liberal democracies exists: the use of its dominance to apply state power to inhibit competition in the electoral region and to undermine rules regarding competition. Thus the salient progression to look out for in Mexico and South Africa is the closing of the political space for voice and accountability.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Criteria for classifying one party dominant systems from other party systems have been identified and include: occurring in democracies (political system); the ruling party’s political and electoral power needs to be sufficient to dominate the political polity and public policy (threshold for dominance); the dominant party has a significant, symbolic history (nature of the dominance); opposition parties compete in elections, but are unlikely to win (oppositional features) and the dominant party is in power for a prolonged period of three or more consecutive elections (time span).

Even though one party dominance is accepted to occur within democracies, the key question is: what is their influence on the *quality* of democracy in industrialising countries and why? The term ‘democracy’ itself has become meaningless unless it is prefixed. In a democratic political system a tenuous balance lies between power accumulation and power limitation. If an elected government uses its power to accumulate further power extending its governmental control into all areas of political, social and economic life, and if it constrains the operating space and voice of agents of accountability, the system can become authoritarian. This system remains a democracy by virtue of the process for selecting government, but becomes authoritarian in its operating. On the other hand, if a democratically elected



government protects and acknowledges the operating space of power limiting agents and agents of accountability, and the balance between power accumulation and power limitation is maintained then it is a non-authoritarian democracy. The concern with one party dominance and its generally recognised methods of consolidating dominance (state centralisation, state-party collusion, garnering broad-based support, delegitimising opposition and so forth) is that it tends to result in the centralising of governmental power and the closing of alternative avenues of competition. This authoritarian system is called a hegemonic party system and was evidenced in Mexico. On the other hand, if the dominant party's power is sufficiently limited by agents of accountability and they are given the political space to effectively and autonomously operate, as is currently the case in South Africa, the result is a dominant party system. One party dominance thus manifests either as a hegemonic party system in an authoritarian democracy or as a dominant party system in a non-authoritarian democracy.

What are the factors that will lead a one party dominant system to move either towards authoritarianism or non-authoritarianism? This chapter argues that these factors are determined by the methods used for consolidating dominance together with the specific context found in industrialising countries, which differ from the contexts of advanced industrialised countries, which managed to maintain democratic dominant party systems. The context provided within industrial countries – experience with liberalism, stronger economies feeding into greater equality amongst their people, relatively homogenous societies, and the moderating effects of the international political economy – provides a bulwark against the dominant party abusing its position of strength and accumulating power to the detriment of its populace. Whereas the contextual factors found in industrialising countries - an illiberal history, inequalities which feed into a centralised system based on patronage, and competition around issues of social identity, even if tempered by the international political economy - are concerning.

Chapter three will give more in-depth focus to the importance of a liberal democracy and agents of accountability towards maintaining a dominant party system which does not digress into a hegemonic party system.



## CHAPTER THREE

### LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The global democratic expansion, Samuel Huntington's *third wave*, began in the mid-1970s and spread from Southern Europe to Latin America, then to East Asia, Eastern Europe, finally reaching sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s. Between 1974 and the mid-1990s the number of democracies in the world more than doubled (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1995: 1). This number further increased from 117 in 1995 to 121 in 2002 (Diamond 2005: 13). This wave of democratisation coincided with a growing concern for human rights, which included the recognition that citizens should be able to choose their own government and have the freedom to express their political views. This growth of democracy can also be attributed to the demise of ideological rivals: the end of fascism after World War II and the apparent end of the appeal of communism after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The key questions remain: how successful have these democracies been and what is the *quality* of these democracies? Where many of these relatively new democracies are to be found in the developing world<sup>31</sup>, it becomes important to understand the impact of one party dominant systems on the democracies of industrialising countries. And, against what standard should these democracies be tested? It is advocated that an ideal political system should guard against an autocratic government and it should protect the political and civil liberties of its citizens. Thus, what is needed to ensure this ideal?

Morlino (2004: 10) proposes that the two objectives of an ideal democracy, as an ideal political system, should be: freedom and political equality. To ensure the protection of these political and civil liberties there need to be mechanisms in place to firstly, guarantee adequate opportunity for citizens to check and evaluate the

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<sup>31</sup> As discussed in chapter two, *developing* world, refers to a broader classification of countries also collectively known as the South. Within this classification there are many variations of development. Under-developed or least-developed countries, which are predominantly agricultural and have limited development prospects for the foreseeable future, are differentiated from developing or semi-industrialised countries, which are progressing in terms of their economic growth and social development.

performance of their officials, and secondly, for citizens to feedback into the political system. Therefore, a key indicator of a *good quality* democracy is whether the government is accountable and accepts the existence of both vertical and horizontal agents of accountability. An ideal democracy is one, which appreciates the importance of accountability; where accountability refers to both a reporting requirement (feedback) and a responsibility requirement (to be held to account). Accountability is especially important in a one party dominant system since these systems tend towards the accumulation of power around the centre.

In the first section of this chapter the historical origins of democracy are traced; out of which flows two predominant strands of democracy (rule *by* the people and rule *for* the people, as discussed in chapter two). These two strands of democracy have developed out of differing foundations, and values, in essence worldviews<sup>32</sup>, and both of these types of democracies have had distinctive outcomes, especially on the level of accountability of the government. If a good quality democracy is accepted to be one that protects and values civil and political liberties, thus an accountable government, then the ideal democracy which leads to this result needs to be identified, hence, the purpose of the historical section.

The second section of this chapter then turns to highlighting features required to ensure the establishment and sustenance of a good quality democracy, which is identified as a liberal democracy. The following indicators of a good quality democracy are identified: free and fair elections; separation of powers; the rule of law and independent courts; and civil and political society. Emphasis will be given to the role of agents of voice and accountability, in particular, civil and political society, in ensuring the protection of individual freedoms. What role do these agents play in the establishment and maintenance of an accountable government? In which type of

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<sup>32</sup> Schaeffer (1982: 83) recognises a worldview as that which “has its wellspring in the thoughts of people,” resulting in the presuppositions upon which an individual sees the world. These presuppositions provide for the basis of individuals’ values and their decisions, and thus these presuppositions “lay a grid for all they bring forth into the external world.” For example the worldviews of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke have significantly influenced their philosophies, which in turn have influenced those who have read their work and the actions of those who have attempted to implement these ‘philosophies’. These worldviews will naturally have implications, since ideas have consequences, and thus it is important to understand the roots of contemporary political systems.

democracy (rule *for* or rule *by* the people) do they thrive? And, ultimately what does this mean for democracies with one party dominant systems?

## 2. THE ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY

### 2.1 THE GREEK *DEMOKRATIA*

Democracy is generally presented as having its origins dating back to the city-states of Ancient Greece (500 to 300 B.C.). The term *democracy* originates from two Greek words – *demos* (people) and *kraetin* (to rule) and thus means ‘rule by the people’. Elster (1999: 253) argues that the Athenian democracy should be considered a success due to its system of checks and balances, which “prevented rash decisions by the citizens and abuse of power by military and political leaders.” To check their leaders the Greeks used, amongst other procedures, *eisangelia* (a suit brought by an individual citizen against another Athenian on the grounds of political misconduct) and *graphe paranomon*<sup>33</sup> (indictment for making an illegal proposal) (Elster 1999: 276). However, the Athenians definition of ‘the people’ excluded women, slaves and resident aliens. Their democracy was not founded upon values of equality or opportunity, besides 10 percent of the population they defined as citizens (Barbour and Wright 2003: 18). Thus, a fundamental flaw of their democracy, a democracy which was later embraced by the Roman statesmen, was their belief, or underlying worldview, that man was naturally unequal and only one or a privileged elite were competent to govern.

The Greeks attempted to build their society upon the *polis* – the city-state. Thus values had meaning only in reference to the *polis* (Schaeffer 1982). Plato (429-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Greek philosophers of that time, emphasised the priority of society over man. In his work, *The Republic*, Plato reasoned that a just society exists when every man is moved by concern for the common good. The state was thought to be a creature of nature and prior to the individual. Therefore, a higher value was placed on the ethereal ‘common good’ as opposed to giving each individual value. Of this view historian Richard Frothingham (1895) wrote: “At that time, social order rested on the assumed natural inequality of men. The individual was regarded as

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<sup>33</sup> In some cases of *graphe paranomon* the accused was charged with having proposed to give privileges to an unworthy person.

of value only as he formed a part of the political fabric, and was able to contribute to its uses, as though it were the end of his being to aggrandise the State... man was made for the State... the office of which was to fashion the thought and control the action of the many.” Thus, the foundations of present democratic government are to be found in Ancient Greece, albeit an imperfect form of democracy.

## 2.2 THE MIDDLE AGES, 600 TO 1500 A.D., AND THE MAGNA CARTA

A time of social, political and intellectual turmoil resulted with the demise of Roman order. During these so-called Middle Ages, the monarchs consolidated their power over their subjects. Ordinary individuals were subjects to an authoritarian government and an authoritarian Catholic Church<sup>34</sup>, to which they had extensive obligations but no rights (Barbour and Wright 2003: 18). Education was restricted so as to maintain control over the people. As a result there was little advancement in civil liberty, scientific discoveries or technology. In England, the Norman system of government, which began with William the Conqueror in 1066, removed the rights of the people. This led to the kings abusing the people, barons as well as commoners, until the English barons, under King John, drew up a contract addressing these abuses and demanding guarantees of certain rights. King John, who needed the barons to raise money, reluctantly signed the *Magna Carta* in 1215, limiting the power of the king vis-à-vis the nobility (González 1984: 309). This contract signified a change in the relationship between government and society, as it embodied the principle that both sovereign and the people, initially just the noblemen, were beneath the law and subject to it. According to Lord Denning (Master of the Rolls, 1965) the *Magna Carta* was the greatest constitutional document of all times – the foundation of the freedom of the individual against the arbitrary authority of the despot. Zakaria (2000: 184) recognises the *Magna Carta*, together with the Helsinki Final Act and the American Constitution as “expressions of constitutional liberalism.”

## 2.3 THE REFORMATION, PROTESTANTISM AND LOCKE, 1500-1700

Democracy gained further meaning and momentum during the Protestant Reformation between 1500 and 1700 (Barbour and Wright 2003: 19). The period was marked by a

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<sup>34</sup> During this period the authority of the church took priority over the teaching of the Bible (Schaeffer 1982).

religious revival, which had subsequent political and social effects. In a period where the Church and religion dominated almost every aspect of life, individuals had little autonomy or freedom beyond the structures of the Catholic Church. However, the Reformation paved the way for self-rule as individuals learnt they were directly responsible for their actions as opposed to a dependence on a priest as mediator between them and God. Bruce (2004: 7), in his study of linkages between Protestantism and democracy, found that with the removal of the clergy as intermediary the “Reformers laid the foundations for egalitarianism.” The biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers meant no distinguishing between Christians. And thus, “the government of the church by lay elders created the potential for democratic emphasis” (Schaeffer 1982: 124). The Reformation gave meaning to all particulars, especially with regard to the particular, which is most important to man, namely, “the individual himself or herself” (p. 124). Schaeffer reasons that if all people have value, then all are equal, and then each vocation, whether merchant, house-wife or king has dignity. Martin (1985: 27), in his study of contemporary Protestant Christianity in the developing world, also found that as people “have a God-given validation of their own lives and persons – then their life chances are genuinely enhanced.” During this period people were encouraged to learn and grow in understanding and were not merely at the mercy of a world they could not understand or manage<sup>35</sup>.

As individual growth and individual responsibility increased so economic and scientific development proliferated as did the growth of theories about the political world. Martin (1995: 30) asserts that “[m]orally, evangelicals may be conservative, but sociologically they are one of the forward sectors of radical social change.” Whereas “Medieval Christianity tended to mirror the feudal structure in expecting and allowing little of the common people; the Reformers demanded an active laity, mindful and diligent”, thus this lay participation would later become the “ethos of modern democracy” (Bruce 2004: 7). The Reformers insisted that everyone could discern the will God by reading His Word, thereby shifting the basis of religion from

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<sup>35</sup>Although, as a whole, many positive changes for society resulted from the Reformation, Schaeffer (1982: 123) acknowledges that this period was not necessarily a “golden age.” For example, Martin Luther, the forerunner of the Reformation, had an unbalanced position in regard to peasant wars and the Reformers showed little enthusiasm for reaching other parts of the world with the Christian message. Later manifestations of Christian societies also show the inconsistencies of adhering to some biblical principles and not others, for example, racial discrimination and the slave trade.

an authoritarian and hierarchical epistemology (where truth was only available to an elite few) to an ultimately democratic one<sup>36</sup>. The value of the individual and the priority of individual responsibility in Protestantism thus encouraged the emergence of democratic values.

As part of being autonomous individuals, the Protestants encouraged and aided in ensuring that people could read and write (Bruce 2004: 16). Of particular importance in the Protestant interest in literacy was its intensity – it was very important for people to learn to read and write, and its democratic reach – it was important for *all* people to read and write<sup>37</sup>. It nevertheless took time before the emerging egalitarianism was recognised as civil liberties and human rights.

On the other hand, just as people were taught they had value, they were also shown that man is fallible; thus all are guilty before God regardless of whether they are a king or a peasant (Schaeffer 1982). With the removal of the priest as intermediary it meant that each individual had to stand on his or her own before God, issuing in an “individualism primarily of responsibilities” (Bruce 2004: 7). Thus, people could understand both their value and their weakness, and consequently that no man or woman, regardless of his or her station could be considered infallible or above the law. Thus, the Reformation prompted the realisation that there was a need for checks and balances, especially for people in power.

Bruce (2004: 15) argues that Protestantism further contributed to modern democracy by pioneering not only individualism, but also a community spirit. Even though each person was responsible for his or her own fate, every church member still had an obligation to support each other in times of trouble and to care for the poor. They

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<sup>36</sup> Their view, however, did not endorse the relativistic view that what everyone believed was equally true.

<sup>37</sup> Martin’s (1995) study of contemporary Protestant Christianity in the developing world and the former Communist bloc, found that reading the Bible led to reading literature in general and sermonising led to argumentation. There is also a recognised connection between literacy and economic development, and thus Protestantism impacted economic modernisation. Economic modernisation was a result of increasing literacy as well as a division of labour and increased social mobility. In turn, economic modernisation and its accompanying prosperity were essential to the rise of democracy in the West (Bruce 2004). Hence, if Max Weber’s (1991) argument for a causal relationship between Protestant values and the spirit of capitalism is accepted, then it can be deduced that Protestantism played a role in encouraging economic modernisation and, in turn, democratisation.



combined the self-reliant autonomous individual with a supportive community through the construction of self-supporting voluntary associations. As a result, the feudal community of subservience was replaced by overlapping voluntary, autonomous associations and so the growth of a network of civil society organisations. It is also argued that the Protestant Reformation triggered economic development (Bruce 2004; Weber 1978). According to Weber (in Lipset 1959: 85) capitalist economic development, which was better facilitated in Protestant regions, led to the creation of a middle class. This middle class then became the catalyst of and necessary condition for democracy. Weber found an important link between religious radicalism, in particular Calvinism, and economic progress. He argued that the former led to the latter. Weber's thesis argued that the Protestant ethic of hard work and the rational organisation of one's life in service to God, led to the growth and development of western capitalism<sup>38</sup>.

The Reformation and Protestantism thus had, and continues<sup>39</sup> to have, three significant impacts on politics, especially in the West. The first is the value placed on the individual<sup>40</sup> and thus emphasising the importance of recognising and protecting the rights and freedoms of the individual. Max Weber in his classic *The Protestant Ethic* recognises the origins of modern freedom not in the Enlightenment, but in the Puritan Anglo-American tradition, whose roots are to be found in the Protestant sects (Baehr and Wells 2002: x). The second is an appreciation that if all people are fallible and capable of great cruelty, including people in power, then the need for checks and balances in political systems becomes paramount. Thirdly, since people are granted value as individuals, they too, have responsibilities as agents of change in their

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<sup>38</sup> Max Weber's thesis is not without its critics and his works led to much debate. See Foreword by R.H. Tawney to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2003).

<sup>39</sup> Spokesmen of various Protestant organisations including the Loyal Orange Institution argue that their forefathers were responsible for a number of social virtues and institutions that have promoted liberal democracy, namely: personal autonomy, freedom of choice, literacy, diligence, temperance, loyalty, democratic accountability, egalitarianism and civil society. Bruce (2004: 5-6) believes there is sufficient historical evidence to make such a claim worth contemplating, and has indeed sought to show "a strong and non-accidental relationship between the rise of Protestantism and the rise of democracy." He argues that when assessing those societies that avoided totalitarian and authoritarian regimes – Holland, Britain, Switzerland, USA, Sweden and Finland – it is found that they were predominantly Protestant. Similarities were found in Latin America, where those that experienced the spread of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism also saw the spread of democratisation. Although this was not true for every nation, there is enough of a pattern to deduce links.

<sup>40</sup> Wolf (1947: 98) argues that the "Judeo-Christian tradition prepared the way for modern democracy ...by its emphasis upon the intrinsic worth of human personality."

political environment. Individuals consequently formed civic associations, which would later become a mechanism of mediation between society and government. In essence, the foundations of an accountable government, where a limited government was combined with an active citizenry, were established.

John Locke (1632-1704), a philosopher of that period, and a key thinker in the development of early liberalism, declared that people had freedom and rights even before the existence of government. Chief amongst these inalienable rights were life, liberty and property. In his *Second Treatise*, originally published in 1690, Locke (1952) asserts that government must protect the property and the person of the individual, including the individual's freedom of thought, speech and religion. Out of this was born the idea of citizenship and rights<sup>41</sup>. Since all men are free, equal and independent no one can be subject to a political power, without their consent "which is done by agreeing with other men to joyn and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living amongst another [sic]" (Locke 1992: 238). Therefore, the establishment of a government was based on a *social contract* between the government and the governed, where citizens relinquished a few of those rights in return for protection of the rest of their rights. If the government did not protect the rights of its citizens then it was deemed to have broken the social contract and a new government could be formed. Hence, the key to authority being legitimate was citizens consenting to it (Barbour and Wright 2003: 19). Locke (1952: 73) also proposed that the power of government be limited and be subject to the rule of law: "whosoever has the legislative or supreme power of any commonwealth is bound to govern by established standing laws, promulgated and known to the people, and not by extemporary decrees; by indifferent and upright judges who are to decide controversies by those laws." In terms of limiting governmental powers, Locke (1952: 82) advocated a separation of powers since "it may be too great a temptation to human frailty, apt to grasp at power, for the same persons who have the power of making laws to have also in their hands the power to execute them, whereby they may exempt themselves from obedience to the laws they make, and suit the law... to their own private advantage". Locke thus emphasised the value of the individual,

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<sup>41</sup> Locke was, nevertheless, not a democrat by modern standards, since he believed that only property owners should vote. His ideas were nonetheless, important as they formed important building blocks for later understandings of a liberal democracy.



inalienable rights, government by consent, separation of powers, and the supremacy of the rule of law.

#### 2.4 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ROUSSEAU, 1789-1799

Democracy took on a different slant with the advent of the French Revolution, which was ushered in with the fall of the Bastille prison in Paris on July 14, 1789. The ideas circulating in France at the time, gave rise to the term *The Age of Enlightenment*. One of the originators of Enlightenment ideas and “perhaps the principal intellectual influence upon the French Revolution” (Heywood 2002: 75) was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

The effect of the ‘Social Contract’ between the governed and the governors is the creation of a new individual, which, according to Rousseau: “at once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a corporate and collective body, composed of many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from the act its unity, its common identity ... its life and its will” (Book 1, chapter 6). The result being the ‘General Will’- the most fundamental of all Rousseau’s political concepts. Rousseau goes on to argue “the body politic, therefore, is also a moral being, possessed of a will; and *this general will, which tends always to the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part...*” [my emphasis]. In a *Discourse on the Political Economy*, originally published in 1755, Rousseau (1993: 134) states that the “general will is always for the common good.” Again in the *Social Contract*, originally published in 1762, he asserts that the “general will is always upright and always tends to the public advantage” (1993: 203). However, as Cole (1993: xli) aptly questions: “is not the common will at least as fallible as the will of a single individual?” Is it not fallible individuals that vote, and often out of self-interest, how then does this translate into something, which is in the interest of the whole? Rousseau refuted such criticism stating: “does it follow...that the general will is exterminated or corrupted? Not at all: it is always constant, unalterable, and pure; but it is subordinated to other wills which encroach upon its sphere” (Book IV, chapter 1). Thus, when citizens entered into a social contract they would have to lay aside their own freedoms and individuality, which would become subordinate to the General Will. This is highlighted in Rousseau’s (Book 1, chapter 7) words: “in order then that

the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking...that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that *he will be forced to be free...*” [my emphasis]. According to Cole (1993: xlviii) Rousseau believed that as people accepted incorporation into the state, they agreed to the unlimited power of the state to regulate their common affairs in the general interest. Despite the consequences of his ideas, it is clear that Rousseau had not desired the ultimate regulation of a citizen’s personal life, except to insist on the supremacy of the general interest over the particular interest.

Nevertheless, Rousseau required total submission to the state and obedience to the *general will*<sup>42</sup>. Therefore, man was for the state and the state was to possess men and control every aspect of their economic and social life. The French revolutionaries considered a centralised, unitary state as the ultimate expression of a nation comprising citizens with equal rights. They favoured a government empowered to pursue the *general will*.

A particularly dark time during the French Revolution was the Reign of Terror; a policy approved by the revolutionary government, allowing it to use violence to suppress opposition. Approximately 40 000 people died under the Reign of Terror, many executed without a trial. The revolutionary leader, Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), was also executed in 1794. Schaeffer (1982: 150) asserts: “This destruction came not from outside the system; it was produced by the system.” Even though the initial intentions of the French Revolution were to replace the monarchy with a republic, the underlying ideology that put national good above individuals having independent value is certainly a plausible explanation for the brutality of the revolutionary state against its citizens<sup>43</sup>. The Revolution eventually laid the foundations for the creation of a dictatorship under Napoleon Bonaparte.

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<sup>42</sup> Since there is scope for the *general will* to be defined from above, for example by a dictator claiming to speak on behalf of the people, Rousseau is also sometimes seen as the architect of so-called totalitarian democracy (Talmon 1952).

<sup>43</sup> Schaeffer (1982) attributes the difference between the Reformation and the French Revolution to two different foundations or worldviews. The first being, the belief in absolutes where we can say that certain things are either right or wrong. The latter is based on a humanist worldview, which has no means to provide for what is right or what is wrong; everything exists in an impersonal universe that is neutral about cruelty and non-cruelty. In his *Economy and Society* Max Weber (1978: 26) similarly recognised that a “rational achievement of ends without relation to fundamental values is, to be sure,

It is argued that the French Revolution and the philosophies of Rousseau had, and continue to have two major impacts on politics. The first stems from an underlying belief in the inherent purity of the general will, which translates into there being no logical reason for the limitation of government, which represents the general will. Secondly, emphasising the *general will* over the value of the individual, led to, in the case of the Revolution, a disregard for the sanctity of life and individual liberties. De Tocqueville (1835: 61) also later recognised the *will of the nation* as “one of those expressions which have been most profusely abused by the wily and despotic of every age.” Consequently, it is argued that these ideas may have laid the foundations for authoritarian, illiberal democracies.

Although the above is acknowledged to be a somewhat limited discussion of the historical origins of democracy, it does serve to highlight the potential impact of different worldviews on the eventual outworkings of democracy. It is only logical that different foundations or different seeds will produce different results or different trees. Thus, the above hints at the importance of recognising underlying worldviews when evaluating the occurrence of liberal and illiberal democracies.

### **3. TWO STRANDS OF DEMOCRACY**

From the above discussion of the historical origins of democracy, two strands of democracy become apparent. It is postulated that these strands arise out of two major sources of progressive and radical political ideas: the Protestant Reformation, and the French Revolution. Where the one laid down the foundation for individual freedoms, increased self-government, egalitarianism, and a limited government, the other established the primacy of the state as the embodiment of the general will, with individual freedoms and rights as secondary to the state.

As mentioned in chapter two, the basic distinctions between political systems lies between authoritarian and non-authoritarian, and relates to the level of government

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essentially only a limiting case.” He observed that as “the religious roots died out slowly” in Germany, they gave way to “utilitarian worldliness” (Weber 1991: 176).

control. An authoritarian system is where the government exercises almost complete control of its citizens, whereas in a non-authoritarian system government's power is limited and citizens exercise self-government. Similarly, a predominant distinction between democracies is whether they are liberal or illiberal. Where the distinction between authoritarian and non-authoritarian relates to the extent of government control, the distinction between liberal and illiberal relates to the extent to which civil and political liberties are enjoyed and protected. Governments of authoritarian democracies tend to extend their control over their citizens, over the market and, in general, do not value nor protect the space of other spheres of society, beyond having regular elections. As Hague and Harrop (2007: 49) identify, an "illiberal democracy authorises power without limiting it." This combination of elections and authoritarianism is common in industrialising and underdeveloped countries where poverty is common, where ethnic, religious and economic divisions are accentuated, and where civil and political society are weak.

On the other side, where government's control is limited and it protects the civil and political liberties of its citizens a liberal democracy results. A liberal democracy thus recognises the authority of democratic governments and their right to rule while simultaneously limiting the scope of their authority. It thus means a 'limited government' and an accountable government. Such democracies are governments of laws instead of men, where elected rulers and citizens are subject to constitutions. In theory, if the government becomes overbearing citizens can access the courts to uphold their rights.

It is proposed that the origins of authoritarian democracies (rule *for* the people) are to be found in the French Revolution, and the works of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, where the rights of the individual were considered to be secondary to that of the 'general will'. Therefore, man was for the state and the state was to control every aspect of the economic, moral and social life of its people. Underlying this is an expectation that whoever is in power will act in the interest of society as a whole, and thus there is no need for extensive checks and balances. History has repeatedly shown the consequences of authoritarian democracies and other authoritarian regimes – where too much power and control is given into the hands of the rulers of the state, especially when they proclaim to represent the *general will*,

instead of ensuring various channels of voice and accountability – a repressive state results, against which individuals have no recourse. It is not argued that Rousseau formulated his ideas with the intention of creating a repressive state. But, rather that ideas have consequences and thus, the belief that the state will always act in the best interests of its citizens and that the general will is “pure” leads to power being accumulated in the government with few or no checks and balances.

On the other hand, the origins of non-authoritarian democracies are evident in the Protestant Reformation, and the writings of philosophers such as John Locke. The foundation of this system is the individual having an independent value to the state. The state exists for man; with justice, protection, and the common good, being the aim of government. The government has no claim to being the sole voice of its citizens and delineated areas of authority, thus institutions for voice and accountability have the political space to operate. Martin’s (1995) analysis of the political impact of Protestantism showed that it aided in the erosion of all-embracing systems. This is understood through de Tocqueville’s (1835) and Bruce’s (2004) arguments regarding the way voluntary religious organisations build up “social capital” through networks between the state and individual. Thus a layer of institutions are established which then become integrated into an emerging civil society. Similarly, the Protestant ethic encourages the establishment of free space and models of self-government. Underlying this is a worldview, which acknowledges man to be fallible and capable of acting to the detriment of society as whole, thereby encouraging the need for a system of checks and balances. By virtue of limiting governmental power a non-authoritarian democracy includes constitutional liberalism. Constitutional liberalism, emphasises individual liberty and the protection of an “individual’s autonomy and dignity against coercion, whatever the source” (Zakaria 1997: 28), thus a non-authoritarian, liberal democracy results.

### 3.1 AFRICA’S ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION OF DEMOCRACY

Africa, and its developing and under-developed countries, provides an interesting example of the application of democracy, in comparison to the application of democracy in industrialised countries. In most industrialised countries, liberal democracy is fairly deeply entrenched, especially those, which have a tradition of Protestantism, but Africa’s adaptation of democracy is different. In the hey-day of

Africa's independence from colonial rule, mass nationalist parties were created by elites who had appropriated the language of liberalism imported by colonialism, while demanding African self-determination, sovereignty and racial equality. These elites used the legal-rational bureaucracies, as left by the colonial governments, but they combined these institutions with patrimonialism or personal rule (Thomson 2004: 108). Thus, there was a façade of democracy as institutions of democracy, such as the legislature, where merely used by the elite in power to maintain their rule. By doing so, they combined Western liberalism and African nationalism (Southall 2003a: 4). Western liberal democratic thought was founded largely upon the rational individualism of Hobbes and Locke, whereas African nationalism, emphasising the solidarity of African nationals, had an affinity to the romanticism of Rousseau, who elevated the "general will" (Hodgkin in Southall 2003a: 4). The consequence was an 'African democracy' that was closer to the 'people's democracies' of the communist world than the liberal democracies of the West. The hollowness of this 'democracy' was illustrated in the numerous and shocking violations of human rights by regimes claiming popular legitimacy. The first wave of nationalist democracy manifested in the African governments' suppression of opposition, justified by calls to unite. It quickly made way for one-party states and then military rule in many countries.

From 1950 to 1965 it was elections that enjoyed pre-eminence, since the electoral procedure legitimated "the form, rate and direction of the decolonisation process" (Cohen 1983: 73). In his extensive review of election studies, Cohen (1983) noted the tendency of military regimes to stage façade elections (Zaire, Togo, Benin, Sudan). This illustrates the rulers' recognition of the legitimating function of elections. Nevertheless, it became apparent that elections were not the panacea to Africa's problems and did not mean the ushering in of liberal democracy. In fact, the adoption of nationalist democracy, which largely embodies the elements of authoritarian democracies, and electoral democracies without the protection of civil and political liberties, has led to the claim that 'democracy' has failed Africa. This is a misguided assertion since it is authoritarian democracy that has failed Africa, as non-authoritarian, liberal democracy was never actually implemented.

#### **4. IDENTIFYING A GOOD QUALITY DEMOCRACY**

Proposing that a good quality democracy can be identified implies that a poor quality democracy also exists. A poor quality democracy is one where citizens do not enjoy freedom and political equality due to an authoritarian state. Diamond, Linz and Lipset's (1987: 13) study of developing countries points to the "danger for democracy of excessive centralisation of state power" as "centralisation of power, by its very nature, tends to undermine democracy." Thus, following on from chapter two's distinction between a liberal and an illiberal democracy, the latter is considered to be a poor quality democracy. Instead, a good quality democracy is asserted to be a system that fulfils two primary objectives: political equality and the protection of civil liberties; a liberal democracy.

#### 4.1 ELEMENTS OF A GOOD QUALITY DEMOCRACY

Political theorists have put forward a number of pillars necessary in a good quality democracy. Schrire (2001: 136) recognises the following for the maintenance and establishment of the 'spirit of a democratic society' including:

- (1) The creation and protection of the political space for opposition parties to participate in, where they are free to compete for electoral support.
- (2) The recognition of the potential for both co-operative and adversarial relations between government and civil society.
- (3) The recognition and protection of civil liberties, which includes amongst others the freedom of the press.
- (4) A separation of powers to ensure further accountability and to guard against excessive power accumulation.
- (5) An agreeing amongst all parties to 'play by the rules of the game', thus to recognise the right to exist and to win elections.
- (6) Recognition of the rule of law, which no party or government is above.

Diamond *et al* (1987: 5) acknowledge similar pillars when they stipulate three essential requirements for a democratic political system: meaningful competition among individuals and organised groups, especially political parties; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies; and the recognition of civil and political liberties so as to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation. Shelton (2002: 2) agrees stating: "A true democracy requires a variety of competitive processes and channels for articulating, expressing, and advancing interests and values." According to Diamond (1994: 59) a democracy:



“requires not only broad and sustained citizen involvement (though not from all of the citizens all of the time), but also a pluralistic array of opportunities for distinct and opposing interests to have access to power, and to win at least partially and occasionally.” Thus a good quality democracy goes beyond multiparty elections and includes avenues for constant feedback into the political system – whether it be through the rule of law, opposition or the press.

Morlino (2004: 12) defines a good democracy to “be one that presents a stable institutional structure that realises the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms.” A good quality democratic government is an accountable government, where countervailing forces ensure that power is not abused. It is a non-authoritarian democracy that has sufficient mechanisms to ensure a liberal democracy endures.

For the purposes of this thesis the following mechanisms are recognised as essential to ensure and sustain a good quality democracy, since they serve to protect the liberty and equality of citizens: institutions of accountability: free and fair elections; rule of law and the independence of the courts; separated governmental powers; and agents of accountability: civil society, political society and society.

#### 4.1.1 Institutions of accountability: Elections

There is growing consensus that *elections* are insufficient to constitute a good quality democracy, although frequently held elections with universal suffrage are an “elemental requirement of it” (Middlebrook 2004: 4). Elections are important because they provide a focal point for collective political organisation and provide a necessary mechanism through which citizens can keep those in power accountable for their public actions. Nevertheless, *electoral democracies* may easily fail to ensure a minimum level of civil rights. Zakaria (1997: 22) noticed democratically elected governments routinely ignore “constitutional limits on their power” and deprived “their citizens of basic rights and freedoms”. A further emerging concern is leaders, who though having an electoral mandate, “readily assume an exalted executive role, regarding themselves entitled to rule as they please. They may set themselves up as the arbiters of what is good for the country, and show irritation at attempts to restrain their rule by the legislatures and courts” (Baker 2000: 204). This is tantamount to



what has previously been referred to as rule *for* the people. According to O'Donnell (1995: 55), these are *delegative democracies*, also referred to as *populist democracies*; regimes based on a majority system, with multiparty elections, a measure of freedom of the press and a court system somewhat able to block unconstitutional policies. However, citizens effectively delegate their voice to political officials through the vote, and subsequently have no opportunity between elections to feedback into the political system. As Zakaria cautions, such elected governments claiming to represent the will of their people, on the basis of the vote, have tended to encroach on the space and rights of other elements in a society.

Nevertheless, Diamond, Lipset and Linz (1987: 5) still highlight the importance of “meaningful and extensive competition” for governmental positions as well as a “highly inclusive” level of political participation in the selection of public representatives as essential conditions for a democratic political system. Free, fair, recurring, and multiparty elections, elements of a minimal understanding of democracy, are thus considered to be necessary but not sufficient for a good quality democracy.

#### 4.1.2 Institutions of accountability: Separation of powers

Elections are a “vertical” mechanism of accountability used by citizens to induce governments to act in a representative manner, while democratic institutions, such as the separate powers of government are “horizontal” mechanisms, keeping the government accountable to its citizens as well as to one another (Manin *et al* 1999: 19). The principle of the separation of powers, classically known as the *trias politica*, implies that the legislative, executive and judicial functions of the state should be assigned to separate branches of government. The separation is intended to ensure there is no overwhelming concentration of power in a single institution, however it is acknowledged that in reality separation is difficult to achieve (Taljaard and Venter 2006: 18). For example in parliamentary systems the executive and the legislature overlap. The separation of the powers should nevertheless be sufficient to enable checks and balances between the different branches of government.

The underlying principle of the separation of powers is to protect liberty (Wolfe 1995: 1120) and is thus a key element of a liberal democracy. Thomas Hobbes and John

Locke, early modern political philosophers, stressed that the role of government was to protect basic natural rights, the principle one being the right to self-preservation (Wolfe 1995: 1121 -1123). Whereas Hobbes believed that an absolute government could secure these rights, Locke believed that a system in which the functions of the government are separated would be necessary. Locke only advocated the importance of the legislature and the executive being separated, with the judiciary being subsumed under the executive. It was only with Montesquieu, a French political thinker that the judiciary emerged as one of the distinct powers. Currently, the separation of powers is a commonly accepted feature in both presidential and parliamentary governments of modern liberal democracies.

#### 4.1.3 Institutions of accountability: Rule of law and independence of the courts

The judiciary, in a liberal democracy, is required to ensure that everybody, including the executive and the legislature abide by the rule of law. As Malherbe (2006: 61) points out, an independent judiciary, able to apply the law “impartially and without fear, favour or prejudice is generally accepted as a cornerstone of democracy.” It is thus imperative that the rule of law, applicable equally to all members of society, be applied impartially and consistently. The rule of law is more than the enforcement of legal norms, it is the supremacy of law (Morlino 2004: 15). In addition, as a so-called “referee of society” the courts need to be able to act independently (Malherbe 2006: 70). This independence is determined by, firstly, the procedures used for appointments and the terms of service, and secondly, the ability of the courts to act without interference (p. 70).

In many developing countries the judiciary tends to suffer from corruption, intimidation, politicisation and a lack of resources and training, which leads to inefficiency. Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1995: 40) note how presidential systems in a number of developing countries, especially in Latin America, tend to have exalted the status and powers of the executive in relation to the legislature and judiciary. The judiciary is especially vulnerable to pressure where judges have been appointed by the president, for example in Kenya and The Gambia (Baker 1999: 281). In Kenya, for instance, magistrates who acted independently and criticised the police were transferred to rural courts (Baker 2000: 196). Instead, Diamond *et al* (1995: 41) highlight the importance of a “strong and independent judiciary” as a “bulwark of a

democratic Constitution”. The judiciary needs to be independent and strong enough to fulfill its role as the “ultimate guarantor of the rule of law” and thus ensure the accountability of the rulers to the ruled, a foundational premise of a liberal democracy.

#### 4.1.4 Agents of accountability: Civil society, political society and society

Diamond (1992: 57) identifies four arenas of social organisation in a democracy: society, civil society, political society and the state that appear as concentric circles with political and civil society mediating between the society and the state. In a non-authoritarian democracy these circles will be fairly evenly spaced meaning there is sufficient operating space for political and civil society. Each of these circles plays an important function towards ensuring an effective, stable and accountable non-authoritarian democracy. If one of the circles becomes overextended it will impact on the necessary balance. In an authoritarian democracy, the state would fill a large space, encroaching on that of civil and political society, and society itself. In Mexico’s corporatist system, the state intimidated and crowded out independent civil society. Thus, in this example the state would be very large, encircled by a thin layer of political society and then a substantial circle of state corporatist society, which is closely linked to the state.

Democratic accountability constraining the power of the state and thus protecting the liberty and equality of citizens emanates from the above three spheres of social organisation: political society, civil society and society. These three spheres of social organisation are consequently important mechanisms of accountability.

Agents of voice and accountability are recognised as channels through which society can participate in the political system. Theory and evidence points to the importance of “autonomous intermediate groups” (Diamond *et al* 1987: 11) that can ensure the basis for state limitation. A vibrant associational life also provides effective pressure for democratic vitality. This political competition and participation translates into an accountable political system, thereby enhancing the *quality* of a democracy. These agents of accountability are discussed in more detail in the following section.

*In summary*, the idealistic pursuit of the elusive ‘common will’ has manifested in authoritarian and repressive democracies, where individual liberties are disregarded. These authoritarian democracies are characterised by a centralised government, which purports to speak on behalf of the people. Furthermore, centralisation is a common feature of one party dominant systems. The dominant party, which consolidates its dominance, does not have the real threat of the ballot box and can boast the support of the overwhelming majority. These political systems may result in an electoral or delegative democracy, where there is little or no competition and subsequently little or no accountability. Instead, to ensure a non-authoritarian democracy, the underlying tenet must be the belief in the value of each individual and the protection thereof. Civil and political liberties need to be protected necessitating institutions, such as the elections, the rule of law and separated powers of government, as well as agents of accountability, such civil society, political society and society. A good quality democracy is therefore a non-authoritarian, liberal democracy governed by an accountable and responsive government. The critical test for agents and institutions of accountability in one party dominant systems is to ensure that the non-authoritarian liberal democratic ‘rules of the game’ endure.

## **5. VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **5.1 TEMPERING GOVERNMENT: AGENTS OF VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Accountability, or rather the lack thereof, has been identified as a key issue in the democracies of the developing world (Baker 2000; Diamond and Plattner 1996; Zakaria 1997). Liberal democracy’s apparent failure in the developing world has largely been due to its half-baked application, in particular in the area of accountability. Accountability goes further than elections, it requires constant feedback between the elected and electorate. This implies that the idea that once the vote has been cast that the ‘people have spoken’ and do not get to speak again until the next elections, provides for a government which becomes distanced from the voice of its citizens. “Elections may determine the rulers of the peoples’ choice, but it is accountability that brings the rules of their choice” (Baker 2000: 187). As Sklar (quoted in Baker 2000: 187) argues: accountability “implies the right of persons who

are affected by an action or decision to receive an explanation of what has been done and to render judgments on the conduct of those who were responsible for doing it.” Morlino (2004: 17) understands accountability as the “obligation of elected political leaders to answer for their political decisions when asked by citizen-electors or other constitutional bodies.” Accountability means citizens should be able to exercise power over the *process of decision-making* and not merely power to *select decision-makers*.

In this thesis indicators of voice and accountability are identified, each indicator represents one of the previously-mentioned arenas of social organisation, and each enables citizens to exercise power over the process of decision-making:

1. The role of opposition and parliament, in general, and the freedom they are given to oppose and to contribute to decision-making. (Political society)
2. The role of civil society and the extent to which its plurality of roles is recognised and is given space to fulfill its functions. (Civil society)
3. Public opinion and the extent to which it is reflected in public policies. (Society)

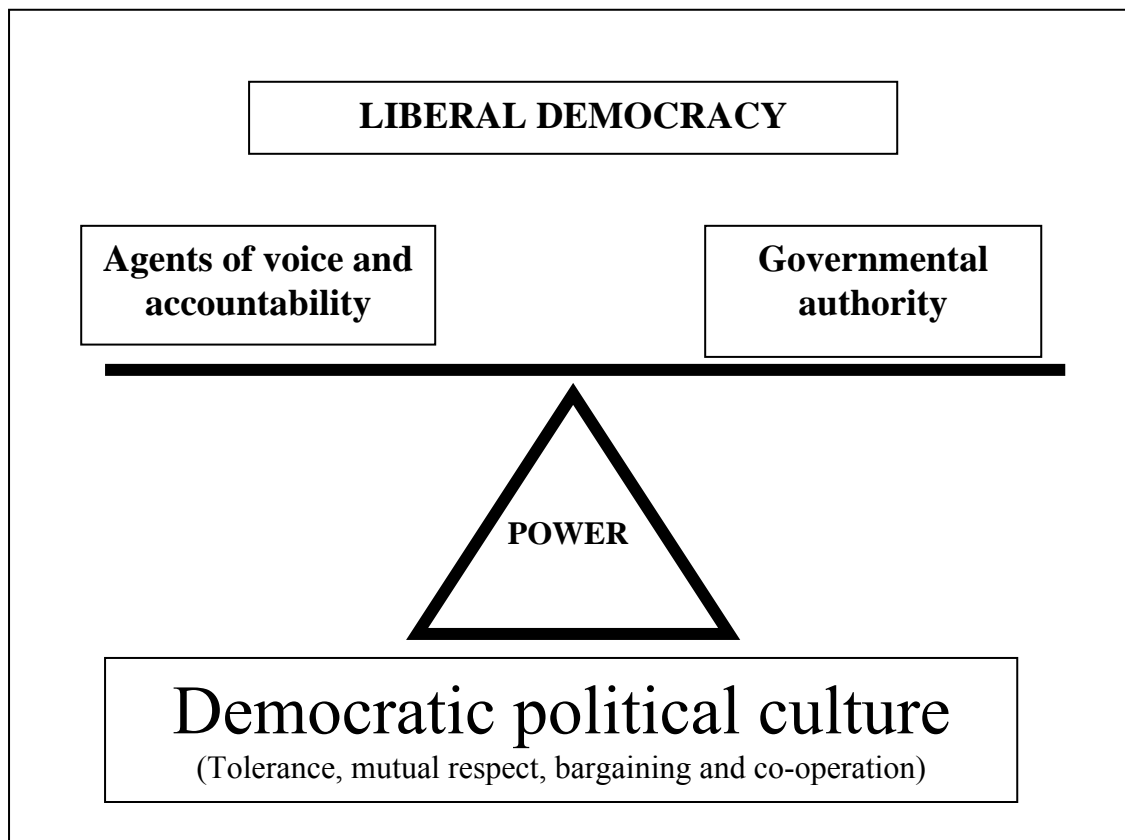
#### 5.1.1 The limitations of agents of voice and accountability

The arguments for keeping accountability to a minimum are similar to those for centralising a government, namely it will ensure quick decision-making, freeing decisions from having to go through protracted institutions of accountability. Further arguments for minimal accountability include that it is likely to encourage short-term decisions and make policy hostage to the sway of emotions. Instead, it is often politicians who, knowing their term in office is limited, that are driven by short-term decision-making. Baker (2000: 189) succinctly puts it: “The idea that rulers are more likely to ‘put the nation first’ and to weigh the long term advantages even at the expense of their own popularity credits them with an altruism that is surely rare.” Africa has a history of atrocities as leaders, such as Idi Amin, Mobuto Sesoko, and currently Robert Mugabe, have put self-interest before the nation they are supposed to serve, often guised under the lofty goals of unity and development.

However, recognising the need for agents of accountability by no means asserts that these agents are above the state or are not susceptible to similar weaknesses. Rather, it

is emphasised that all agents and agencies, whether they are states, civil society organisations or political parties, are guided and controlled by individuals who are capable of mismanagement, corruption and pursuing self-interest. There is agreement with Johnson (2002: 223) that for example, civil society, cannot be assumed to be “positive, homogenous, and coherent” and that the state is necessarily “authoritarian and bureaucratic.” There must, of necessity, be a balance – civil society, political society and society - too have responsibilities in a liberal democracy. Political participation needs to be tempered with an acknowledging and acceptance of political authority for there to be political stability. Chaos will result if civil and political society does not recognise the legitimacy of the government and if they do not abide by the rule of law. Citizens, civil society and political society must be responsible and considerate in exercising their liberties and they too need to be accountable to their members and society at large. Thus a balance between the power of governmental authority and the power of civil and political society is needed. Underlying this relationship there needs to be a political culture of tolerance, mutual respect, bargaining, and co-operation as illustrated in *figure 3*.

**Figure 3: Balance of power as attained through a liberal democracy**



What follows is a discussion of the three arenas of society from where voice and accountability can emanate, namely, political society, civil society and society. It is important to recognise that government, ideally, is also an agent of voice since it consists of elected representatives, representing and serving its citizens. However, if the government fails to engage in constant communication with its citizens it becomes an unreliable voice. It is also an agent of accountability in its role as law-enforcer, maintaining a law-abiding, accountable, and responsible society. A brief discussion on what is required of an accountable government is followed by the accountability prerequisites and roles of political society, civil society and society in liberal democracies.

## 5.2 ELEMENTS OF AN ACCOUNTABLE DEMOCRACY

### 5.2.1 An accountable government

The general trend of governments in developing nations is centralisation, rationalised on the basis of a lack of skilled manpower, concern over local politicians building their own power bases and the need for more effective service delivery. This, however, means citizens have little control or say over the issues that closely impact them. To counteract the pathologies of this trend is a need to establish an accountable government. Baker (2000: 191-193) identifies a number of qualities necessary for an accountable government. Firstly, transparency before the Parliament, media and public with regards to their policies, programmes, expenditure, reasoning and personal conduct. Second, there should be no direct contradictions between the pre- and post-election positions of the ruling party. Third, there should be constant consultation, maintaining links between the government and electorate *between* elections. Fourth, there needs to be devolution of power allowing sub-national levels of government to be autonomous of central government and not merely the administrative and implementing arms of the centre. In addition to Baker's identified qualities is the need for government to enable opposition parties to effectively participate in decision-making, recognising that they represent a certain section of the electorate; allowing them to *oppose* and giving them space to operate. Opposition also provides competition, and if there is competition the ruling party is more likely to



deliver on its promises so as to ensure that it continues to win office. A further important aspect, which is relevant to political parties in general, is the question of party funding. There needs to be transparency regarding the sources of party financing, especially in one party dominant systems. Greene (2007: 6) asserts that dominant party resources tend to come, largely, from diverting public funds. He (2007: 6) goes on to caution: “Unless access to these public resources is blocked by a professionalized public bureaucracy or their use for electoral purposes is prevented by an independent electoral management body with oversight and sanctioning authority, incumbents will skew competition in their favour by dramatically outspending competitors on campaigns and all aspects of party building.” Thus, if there are no institutional restraints, the extent of the ruling party’s resource advantages will rise and fall with the level of state ownership over the economy. And finally, an accountable government recognises the multitude of roles played by civil society, including the role of watchdog.

### 5.2.2 Political society

There is agreement with Stepan’s (1998: 4) list of core institutions of a democratic political society, namely: “political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, intraparty alliances, and legislatures.” These institutions within political society are “primarily oriented towards state power and administration” (Putzel 1995: 78). Political society is distinguishable from civil society, which does not seek to win political office. Instead, political society is often an outgrowth of civil society and fulfils the role of interest aggregation and representation by seeking the power of political office (Wakefield 2002: 11). Stepan (1998: 4) further writes: “By “political society” in a democratizing setting I mean that arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself for political contestation to gain control over public power and the state apparatus...those core institutions of a democratic political society... through which civil society can constitute itself politically to select and monitor democratic government.”

#### 5.2.2.1 The role of political parties



In democracies, political parties contend with each other using the electoral mechanism to gain power. However, the occurrence of parties is not a sufficient measure of democracy, but it is a necessary indication of democracy. It is acknowledged that political parties may become tools of tyranny and repression especially where the party system moves to a one-party state. Political parties therefore have specific responsibilities in a non-authoritarian, liberal democracy. First, they should recognise they are not above the law and thus undemocratic methods to enforce a change in government should never be considered an option. *Coups* tend to spawn themselves and such non-democratic methods have a way of setting an undemocratic cycle of regime change into motion. Secondly, they need to protect the integrity of the party and the trust of its electorate. Due to a perception of ineffectiveness and a lack of opportunities for political advancement for opposition parties in one party dominant systems, opposition party members tend to be susceptible to co-optation and patronage. This has been evident in South Africa during previous window periods for floor-crossing. In Mexico, during the heydays of the PRI's dominance all other political parties were known as satellite parties as they had been easily co-opted by the ruling party. Third, political parties need to be transparent regarding their sources of funding. It is recognised that parties need money to exist and to run election campaigns. However, such monies potentially have the “power to corrupt and subvert voter interest in favour of powerful interest groups who donate funds with conditions attached” (Who funds who? 2008). The need for transparency in the private funding of political parties is an issue that confronts all modern democracies. A lack of regulation may enable the wealthy to exert undue influence on a government's policy choices, which without transparency will go undetected. Finally, political parties in liberal democracies have specific responsibilities related to their role in Parliament – these are discussed later.

A political party commonly defined as a group of people organised for the intention of winning government is problematic in a one party dominant system, since the reality of an alternation in power is remote. Nevertheless they can fulfil the following liberal democracy-supporting functions<sup>44</sup>:

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<sup>44</sup> These roles are largely recognised by a number of scholars, namely: Ball & Peters (2005) and Randall & Svåsand (2002). Tordoff (1997: 119-141) recognises a rather different group of roles that

1. ***Aggregating and channeling interests:*** As political parties attempt to broaden their support base they can unite the public by bringing together various interests, crossing cultural, racial and geographical distances. In surveying the prospects for democratic consolidation in sub-Saharan Africa, Clapham (1993: 347) identified a key indicator as “the capacity to develop a party system which is both integrative between different communities and competitive between different parties.” This point is especially of significance to a racially and ethnically divided society like South Africa.
2. ***Representation of interests:*** Expressing the concerns of the public and mediating between them and government, thus providing linkages between the public and government. Political parties need to be “giving voice” to the people (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 5). The representation of the interests of citizens becomes especially important in a one party dominant system, where there is a tendency for the ruling party to become distant from society due to complacency.
3. ***Representation of minority rights:*** Following on from the previous function, an important role for political parties is to ensure that the broad spectrum of society is properly represented and this includes minority groupings. James Madison (1961: 357) wrote in *The Federalist*, originally published in 1787, “if a majority will be united by a common interest, then the rights of the minority will be insecure.” The dominant or hegemonic party may represent a specific ethnic or racial grouping, especially where there is majority rule. This can lead to the dissatisfaction or insecurity of minority groupings culminating in a disengaging from the polity, secessionist requests or even violence, especially if they feel their voice is not heard or represented.
4. ***Mobilisation of the public:*** Political parties can increase the participation of the public through integrating voters into the system and political education. Once again, mobilising citizens to vote, and to be politically active and alert is crucial in one party dominant systems, since these systems are often characterised by voter apathy. With citizens considering the outcome of the elections to be a given and with the growing perception of the impotence of opposition parties in a one party

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can be and are fulfilled in the African context, namely: the integrative function, the legitimising function, the policy function, mobilisation and reconciliation function, the patronage function, and the political communication function. However, many of these roles are in contradiction to the functions needed in a liberal democracy. For example, the function of patronage is in conflict with the expectation of opposition parties to keep the ruling party accountable, especially in terms of public spending and resource allocation.

dominant system citizens tend to become apathetic. This apathy serves to further entrench the dominance of the ruling party.

5. ***Creating linkages and networks with civil society organisations:*** Political parties need to work closely with civil society organisations with which they share common interests and concerns, to ensure greater impact. Important areas include voter education, fund raising and even basic literacy training. Mexico provides an example of political party-civil society cooperation. Links established between PAN, business groups and churches were pivotal in its eventual electoral success in Mexico.
6. ***Sources of governance: recruiting and training political leaders:*** Opposition parties should identify and train up future leaders. Of importance in this function is the habituating of potential political leaders with the norms and functioning of a liberal democracy.
7. ***Maintaining government accountability:*** Where the possibility of winning office is remote for opposition parties, maintaining government accountability becomes a primary function for opposition parties.
8. ***Ensuring a non-authoritarian system endures:*** Where one party dominance leads to the governing party seeing less and less need to respond to public opinion due to its confidence in re-election, an institutionalised and effective opposition becomes paramount towards ensuring the non-authoritarian democratic rules of the game endure. Of particular concern is the possibility of dissatisfied voters focusing their discontent on the democratic system and not on the incumbent party. Consequences include them opting out of the system by leaving the country or not voting. A more dire consequence though, is replacing the non-authoritarian system with an authoritarian one. It cannot be overemphasised how important a function opposition can play towards ensuring the future of a non-authoritarian democracy and in so doing they too ensure a future for themselves and the eventual possibility of winning office.

A one party dominant system is particularly prone to centralising power due to the leverage it has with its overwhelming support. Political parties, in this system, are required to check against this centralising tendency. Thus, it is argued that in a one party dominant system the primary function for opposition is its accountability-holding role since they can ensure healthy political debate, generate competition over

ideas and policies, and expose corruption. They subsequently serve and represent the public interest by requiring a responsive and accountable government.

#### 5.2.2.2 Parliament

To maintain accountability and to be accountable Baker (2000: 193) identifies a number of prerequisites for parliamentarians to fulfill. First, legislators should represent the party manifesto on which they won the elections. Too often, after elections, legislators will cross the floor leaving their own party to join the ruling party. Second, legislators should keep the elected and non-elected executive to account; scrutinising their conduct, policies, and expenditure. Third, legislators should keep close links with their constituents and electorate to ensure they represent their political interests. A concern here is where countries make use of proportional representation, since parliamentarians with no constituency have little incentive to keep contact with the electorate since their allegiance is more to the political party than it is to the electorate. And fourth, conflicts of interest and sources of income should be made transparent to decrease the likelihood of corruption. Some states have required of their executives to publish an inventory of their possessions at the start and end of their terms. Fifthly, adding to Baker's list, Parliament should have sufficient power and autonomy to keep executive members accountable. And, the ruling party should not be able to abuse its dominant voting position within Parliament.

#### 5.2.3 Civil society as an agent of voice and accountability

Civil society is an umbrella term and exactly which groupings of actors it covers, is debatable. Taking a broad understanding of the term, civil society comprises a multiplicity of actors, including, amongst others, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, churches, business, media, research institutions and think-tanks, women's groups, environmental groups and human rights organisations. Habib and Kotze (2002: 3) define civil society as "the organised expression of various interests and values operating in the triangular space between family, state and the market." Some, like Habib and Kotze, exclude business from the definition of civil society. This thesis includes it. Although the primary aim of a business is to make a

profit, and many will have no ‘political’ or social aspirations, there are businesses that do aggregate interests (for example, calling for a stable, crime-free environment conducive to investors) and can be organised towards influencing the state. According to Diamond (1994: 55) civil society “is the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting and autonomous from the state.” Civil society organisations (CSOs) therefore derive their legitimacy from their ability “to bring new issues on the public agenda, provide information, act independently from government and business interests and from their closeness to the people on the ground” (Naidoo & Finn Heinrich 2000: 7). Civil society celebrates plurality and diversity and this is considered to be a healthy state of affairs. It differs from society as it encompasses citizens acting collectively in a public arena expressing their interests, making demands on the state and keeping the state accountable. According to Diamond (1994: 57): “In a vibrant and healthy democracy, a strong state and a strong civil society co-exist in a dynamic but constructive and mutually respectful tension.” A concern to test is whether a party dominant system creates a passive citizenry in the form of inactive and impotent civil society organisations or whether it in fact stimulates a more active civil society.

Civil society also has responsibilities in an accountable democracy. The responsibilities of civil society include the following (Baker 2000: 197-198; Diamond 1994: 63-67): First, it is subject to the law and to public scrutiny. For example they must be kept accountable for the morality or immorality of their business conducted - the environmental consequences of their activities and the impact of an excessively intrusive media. Thus, the aims and methods of interest groups must be compatible with fair and responsible practice. Second, their power should not be used for bearing undisclosed influence onto government, especially where the benefit derived is not in the interest of the society as a whole. Too strong a civil society (or a conglomeration of rent-seeking forces in society) without restraints, can overwhelm democracy with its excessive demands. Uncompromising, maximalist groups with undemocratic goals can destabilise a democracy. If these forces aim to displace the state or other competitors then they disqualify themselves as agents of civil society. Third, the independent and state-controlled media must ensure that the information they provide has been well-researched and is truthful. Fourth, where civil society provides

developmental and community services, they should be accountable to the community they serve.

Diamond (1994: 58-59) recognises the following democracy-fulfilling functions of civil society:

**1. *Opposing authoritarianism:*** Independent associations and media provide the foundation for the limitation of state power. Civil society has played a significant role in authoritarian systems by containing abuses, and exposing corruption and human rights abuses. Pluralism and openness in the flow of information are essential in the achievement of proper accountability in governance. An independent media is particularly important for “[i]f the state controls the mass media, there is no way of exposing its abuses and corruption” (Diamond 1992: 8).

**2. *Promoting political participation:*** Civil society complements political society by encouraging political participation, and informing citizens of their political rights and duties. Thus, a rich associational life contributes towards a more democratic political culture. De Tocqueville (1835) observed the importance of this in America where he concluded that the voluntary participation of citizens in a variety of civic associations formed a bedrock of democratic culture and practice. Participation in civil society organisations further improves the political capacity of citizens as they acquire political, organisational and communicative skills.

**3. *Representing interests:*** Civil society provides channels, besides those of political parties, for the aggregation and articulation of interests. This higher level of aggregation is more likely to provide access to the process of policy-making. There needs to be political response to ensure that citizens do not doubt the efficacy and legitimacy of democracy. If they do not ‘win’ at least partially and occasionally they may opt of the system by not voting or through more extreme measures – violence, striking and disrupting the system. Inhibiting the establishment of trade unions and other such popular organisations actually serves to weaken the long-term sustainability prospects for democracy, the histories of Peru and the Dominican Republic provide examples, as it excludes an essential sector of the population’s avenue of making democracy work for them. A comparative study done in 1992 concluded that organised working classes had been a salient feature in pressing for

universal suffrage, political liberties, and democracy<sup>45</sup> (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992). Civil society provides an outlet for citizens, especially for the poor, and the opportunity to participate in making and influencing policy. This in turn helps to instill feelings of political efficacy and legitimacy. For example, in India, the independent press and civic associations have become important resources for democratic participation, tolerance, and accountability.

**4. Training and recruiting new political leaders:** Civil society contributes towards a democratic society through the recruitment and training of new political leaders. This is more a by-product of the functioning of civil society organisations over a long period of time.

**5. Providing information:** A fifth function of civil society is the distribution of information thereby empowering and educating citizens. An autonomous press is one avenue for the dissemination of a variety of perspectives and information. Others include human rights organisations, research institutes, and trade unions.

**6. Enhancing the legitimacy of the regime:** If civil society is able to fulfill the above-mentioned roles, in other words, by ensuring accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness and effectiveness it will culminate in citizens having respect for the state and acknowledging its legitimacy. Ultimately this enables the state to govern since there is voluntary acquiescence to its governing.

**7. Development of a democratic political culture:** Political culture can be defined as “a people’s predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of its country, and the role of the self on that system” (Diamond 1993: 7-8). A democratic culture consists of participation, moderation, accommodation, mutual respect, tolerance, and restraint. Such a culture is critical to the long-term entrenchment and sustainability of a liberal democracy. Diamond (1994: 68) warns that a democracy will not be stable and secure until the above behavioral orientations become internalised – “deeply embedded in a coherent syndrome of beliefs and values, and not only among elites, but at the mass level as well.” Civil society can contribute to the development of a democratic culture in the following ways: firstly, by what Rustow (in Diamond 1994: 69) calls ‘habituation’, which is the internalising of democratic norms and practices due to the repeated successful practice of democracy. Almond and Verba (1980), and de Tocqueville

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<sup>45</sup> On the importance of independent trade unions for the establishment of democracy, see also Sklar, (1987).



(1835) found that a stable democracy and significant formal political participation correlated strongly with high rates of participation and co-operation in voluntary associations. Their research also showed that membership in voluntary organisations correlated with the citizen's sense of political competence. By working in voluntary organisations citizens found they could impact the political process legally and peacefully. Secondly, Diamond (1994: 63) argues that the internal organisation of civil society can contribute to the instilling of a democratic culture. If interest groups are organised in a structured, stable manner they encourage the growth of co-operate and sustainable networks. If these groups aim to operate over a sustained period of time they will also tend to be more accountable and responsive to their constituency. The above contributes to a more stable democracy. Third, if the internal processes, decision-making and leadership selection, occur, as far as is possible, democratically, this will serve to socialise its participants into democratic forms of behavior. The authoritarian structures of governance within the mass organisations of Mexico's corporatist state discouraged independent political participation, inhibited citizen effectiveness and so upheld the social and cultural bases of authoritarianism. Fourth, pluralism within civil society encourages diverse groups to co-operate, compromise and to experience healthy competition. In addition, different associations need to learn to co-operate with one another on matters of mutual interest so that they can put effective pressure on the state. Finally, civil society best serves the development of a democratic political culture when it is dense, in other words where there are numerous layers of associations representing different interests. Citizens therefore participate in a number of associations, creating multiple memberships. This protects against all-encompassing 'parties of integration', which tend to isolate its individuals from alternative views and methods, thereby creating intolerance. Multiple memberships mean a citizen is not dependent on any one association. In essence, a critical, independent citizenry is better for a non-authoritarian, liberal democracy than a blind, submissive one.

However, civil society can only fulfill the above roles if they have significant financial, operational and legal autonomy from the state. "Where the state organises all significant interest groups, contributes to their finances, and awards corporatist monopolies on the representation of individual sectors, 'civil society' will lack the autonomy to take a critical stance or act independently of state control" (Diamond

1994: 62). During the hey-days of PRI dominance Mexico's state forcefully incorporated popular groups from above, providing a more stable base for an authoritarian regime. It therefore co-opted, pre-empted, constrained, and neutralised potential sources of challenge to its dominion. A non-authoritarian, liberal democracy was initially hampered in Mexico by the weakness of its civil society and the dependence of its civil society groups on the state for financial support and organisational existence.

Like Mexico's hegemonic party system, authoritarian governments tend to regard independent interest groups as a potential threat to their own power, thus "they seek either to repress such groups or incorporate them within their power structure" (Hague and Harrop 2007: 223). With significant economic growth, as happened in Mexico, new groups, including labour unions and groupings of intellectuals, tend to be unleashed. Industrialised countries already have a significant economic base to sustain and encourage such civic associations, whereas industrialising countries do not. Nevertheless, by virtue of them growing and developing there is an expectation of increasing economic development, and thus improving the prospects for the growth of interest groups. However, authoritarian regimes may initially resist or attempt to control this growth. In Mexico, favoured unions and peasant associations gained access to the state through the ruling party. In exchange for political support, these groups were provided with subsidies, government contracts and access to jobs. "In effect, Mexico became a giant patron-client network: a form of corporatism for a developing country" (Hague and Harrop 2007: 224). It resulted in groups at the same social level being divided against each other, thereby discouraging wider, interest-aggregation that might have formed a formidable counter-balance to the government. This network though became over-regulated and stifled business investment. At the same time an independent market sector expanded and the patronage available to the PRI diminished, enabling the growth of an autonomous sector of interest groups. Therefore, besides acknowledging the importance of independent interest groups in a liberal democracy, is identifying the necessity of sufficient autonomous operating space for them.

#### 5.2.4 Society

A liberal democracy thrives when limited governmental control is combined with a citizenry that value political participation and are effective in the exercise of their responsibilities as citizens (Diamond 1994: 49). Political participation refers to the activity of individuals intended to influence those who govern and their decisions. Milbrath and Goel's (1977: 11) analysis of the American population led to a classification of political participation in liberal democracies into: gladiators or politically active citizens (5-7%); spectators or those who rarely participate beyond voting (60%) and apathetics (30%). Thus, even in a liberal democracy citizens' participation is moderate. Nevertheless, as Almond and Verba (1963) found, the ideal political culture to uphold democratic politics is a *civic culture* – a culture which reconciles the political participation of citizens with the vital space for government to govern, thus political participation is not so extensive as to render the state ungovernable. Noteworthy is the trend in most liberal democracies for participation to be highest among the well-educated, middle-class, middle-aged, white men. This stratification of political involvement is concerning in developing countries where literacy rates are relatively low and a middle class is often not well-developed. It also points, once again, to the importance of economic growth from which a middle class can arise.

Besides the requirement for moderate participation in a liberal democracy citizens also need to recognise that they are interdependent and form part of a larger society. Thus when citizens break the law, destroy the environment, cause civil unrest, endanger public health, they should be challenged by society and brought to justice through the rule of law. Second, when seeking to change rules, policies, or elected rulers they should do it through democratic and peaceful means only. The concern with violent and non-democratic interactions with the state is that the state often responds in kind. Society is nevertheless most effective when it aggregates its interests in the form of political parties and civil society associations.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

A liberal democracy, which implies a limited, accountable government and the protection of civil and political liberties, is maintained through institutions of accountability (including free and fair elections; separated governmental powers and

the rule of law) as well as agents of voice and accountability (including political society, civil society and society) counterbalancing the power of the government. Civil society, political society and society, and the different powers of government, each have important roles and responsibilities in a liberal democracy. If a liberal democracy, which occurs in a non-authoritarian political system is a good quality democracy then its viability in a one party dominant system needs to be tested. Where chapter two has shown the tendency of one party dominant systems to centralise power around the centre and limit the scope of political and civil society, there is an heightened responsibility for these agencies and institutions to usher in (as was the case in Mexico) and ensure that the liberal democratic rules of the game endure. The concerns with one party dominant systems are compounded in developing countries where, due to poverty and vast inequalities, democracy is often associated with the provision of basic necessities and not political and civil liberties. Political and civil society also tend to be underdeveloped and either restrained or co-opted. The type of democracy that is often adopted is inclined to be an authoritarian one pursued in the name of the ‘common will’ to the exclusion of individual rights. In addition, industrialising countries are often associated with a limited middle class or one that is controlled by the state through client-patron relations and thus the needed foundation for an active society, civil society and political society is limited. Within this context what does the future hold for the quality of their democracies? We turn now to Mexico and South Africa.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMPARING MEXICO AND SOUTH AFRICA

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter two acknowledged historical, social and economic differences between developed and developing countries, creating differing contexts within which one party dominant systems operate. These contextual issues will be used as a basis for understanding the extent to which the two case studies are comparable. In addition, their historical, socio-economic and international conditions create very specific contexts within which their political systems function. As this chapter will show, Mexico and South Africa share historical and socio-economic similarities, but in other aspects, especially the international contexts in which one party dominance occurred, they are very different. Langston (2008) from CIDE University in Mexico believes that Mexico is dissimilar to South Africa. For example, during the formation years of one party dominance Mexico was very poor, whereas South Africa is not. She also highlighted South Africa's unique experience with apartheid. Yet, in spite of these differences, both of these countries have experienced one party dominant systems, how then do we account for the rise of these systems in Mexico and South Africa?

#### 2. SOUTH AFRICA

The death of apartheid stalwart and past president, PW Botha, on 31 October 2006 marked the end of an era for South Africa. As political satirist Pieter Dirk-Uys (2006: 2) explained: "I think this is a celebration. Not of the death of an irrelevant dinosaur from a bygone barbarian age, but of the fact that in spite of all he was responsible for, PW Botha died peacefully in his home. Not in jail. Not in exile. That says much about our present young democracy." Under the orders of the ANC government South Africa's new flag hung half-mast throughout the country in recognition of the death of the state president albeit a past leader of their archrival – the National Party (NP). This magnanimous act alludes to the potential of the soil in which democratisation is taking root.

In 1994, 1999 and 2004 South Africa held free and relatively peaceful national elections. The international watchdog for democracy and civil liberties, *Freedom House* (2006), gave South Africa a rating of 1 for political rights and 2 for civil rights in 2006<sup>46</sup> and defined it as ‘free’ meaning that it is deemed to protect a wide-range of civil and political liberties. However, in 2007 this rating declined to a 2 for political rights and 2 for civil rights, the Freedom House (2007b) explaining: “South Africa’s political rights rating declined from 1 to 2 due to the ruling ANC’s growing monopoly on policy making and its increasingly technocratic nature.” Despite the fact that South Africa has not experienced an alternation in power since the end of the apartheid era in 1994 and is not likely to do so in the near future, it still fulfils other democratic requirements: free and fair elections, universal adult suffrage, rule of law, a vibrant civil society, a vocal and engaging press, and the participation of multiple parties in elections. Being a one party dominant system does not necessarily render its political system undemocratic but it does have significant implications for the *quality* of its democracy. In South Africa the quest for a liberal democracy must be made within the context of a one party dominant system. We will now turn to the historical, socio-economic, international, and political contexts within which the one party dominant system exists.

## 2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 2.1.1 Authoritarian History

#### **Pre-colonial**

South Africa’s first inhabitants were the Khoisan; hunting and herding societies, who settled in the west and northwest of the yet-to-be created South Africa since around 1000 BC. American anthropologist Sahlins (1972: 29) contends that these hunter-gatherers probably lived in “pristine affluence.” Their mobility would mean adopting a lifestyle of limited wants, yet the ability to move continuously to areas of natural abundance would also mean a life of plenty. Thompson (2001: 9) recognises a darker side to their way of life, another consequence of their mobility. “People were left to die when they were too old to walk, and twins and other children were killed when they were too numerous to carry” (p. 9).

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<sup>46</sup> Freedom House uses a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating free and 7 not free.

Elsewhere to the west of the twenty-inch rainfall zone lived mixed farmers some pastoral farmers and others cultivators. Unlike the hunter-gatherers, these Bantu-speaking farmers lived in semi-permanent villages and had relatively strong political organisations. Between the fourth century A.D. and the late eighteenth century, these farmers began consolidating their position in better-watered regions (p. 15-16). As they grew in numbers and occupied the land suitable for agriculture they began “incorporating, killing, or expelling more and more of the indigenous hunter-gatherers” (p. 16). Within their communities, though, they were devoted to their families, a solidarity and obligation that went beyond the nuclear family. Their society was, nevertheless, hierarchical: men controlled women: elders controlled youths, patrons controlled clients and chiefs controlled commoners (p. 23). Anthropologist Kopytoff (quoted in Thompson 2001: 24) noted that in the sub-Saharan Africa societies “there were seldom any equals – one was either a senior or a junior, a superior or a subordinate...” The chief oversaw the affairs of his village. His power, was however, limited by necessity and custom; he had no army or police force, and he was dependent upon the co-operation of his advisers as well as the respect of his people. There are differing views of the office of the chief; some view it as rooted in the “idea of authority over persons, ruling through hereditary headmen and ward heads”, while others view it as headship of a defined territory which is divided into districts and wards (Davenport 1987: 70). For some Bantu-speaking societies, such as the Venda and the Pedi, the chief often acquired such a paramount position, that divinity was often ascribed to him (p. 71). A key problem of the chiefly government was its instability; chiefs were often assassinated for reasons of succession and some rulers executed potential rivals including their sons and brothers to secure their own positions (p. 74).

Although South Africa’s Bantu-speaking pre-colonial societies were hierarchical, the power of the chiefs and other leaders was limited, and they generally could not rule without consideration of their people. “All societies, even the Zulu in normal times, laid stress on the principle of government by discussion and consent” (p.72). Their treatment of the hunter-gatherers was another matter, and besides some examples of them being assimilated into the Bantu-society (Davenport 1987: 6), many were incorporated as slaves or killed, especially if they robbed the farmers of their livestock



(Thompson 2001: 28-29). However, the Khoisan's primary conflicts lay rather with the white settlers. Magubane (1978: 9) asserts that their struggle for survival against the white settlers "lasted for two centuries in the form of minor wars and scattered skirmishes. The majority of the San were gradually exterminated and those who managed to survive were pushed to the Kalahari desert."

## **Colonial<sup>47</sup>**

There are essentially two colonial periods in South Africa's history, the first began in 1652 with the arrival of the Dutch and the second began in 1814 with the British settlers (Magubane 1978: 17). Until the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886, South Africa's latest colonisers, the British, originally attached little importance to South Africa. Thereafter, in order to access the benefits of the mines, the imperial power attempted to establish stability and gain access to labour. "With each war fought against the Xhosa, the British proceeded to expel the excess inhabitants, divide the land among British colonists and transform the rest of the Africans in wage labourers" (Magubane 1978: 20). They, thus, broke the resistance of African polities through military force, and then subdued the Afrikaners in the Anglo-Boer wars of 1899-1902. Their goal was the unification of South Africa, which they achieved with the 1910 Act of Union. Thereafter, the state's political machinery served to protect the privileged interests of whites. Although this period represented a short-term defeat for the Afrikaners, the ultimate losers were the black Africans whose "interests were sacrificed in the pursuit of white unity" (Dubow 2000: 2). In reaction to the 1910 Act of Union, the ANC<sup>48</sup> was founded in 1912, with the aim of defending and advancing African civil and political rights "at a time when these were under unprecedented threat" (p. 1).

After 1910, black political and economic rights were under severe attack. Black African landownership was restricted and the majority of African farmers were forced to become wage labourers for white farmers and industrialists. Whites, though internally in conflict, dominated every sector of the economy, largely, with the use of

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<sup>47</sup> See Davenport (1987) for a more detailed overview and explanation of South Africa's colonial history.

<sup>48</sup> A more detailed description of the formation of the ANC is provided in Chapter 6.

cheap, black labour. As Thompson (2001: 155) highlights “The categories Race and Class coincided closely: with few exceptions, black people, however able, were subordinate to white people, however feeble.” With the enactment of the 1913 Natives Land Act African labour-tenants were expelled from white farms and 7% of the country’s land mass was allocated to two-thirds of its population (Dubow 2000: 5). In addition, the mining industry consolidated a reliance on migrant labour providing for the economic foundations of the system of apartheid. This system of migrant labour meant that by the 1920s 30-40% of able-bodied black African men were away from home at any given time (Butler 2004: 13). Butler (2004: 13) asserts, “[t]his period of South African history laid the economic, political and institutional foundations of segregation and apartheid.” Magubane (1978: 39) similarly notes, “British conquest and creation of the Union, whose Constitution decreed political servitude for the African, set up the circumstances and the structures that made it possible for Afrikaner racial nationalism.”

Between 1910 and 1948 the white population consolidated its control over the state, slowly removing Britain’s legal power to intervene in the country’s affairs (Thompson 2001: 154). South Africa is a typical example of a settler-colony; the settlers began to distance themselves from their ‘mother’ state, assuming an identity distinct from Britain. According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997: 81) South Africa was an example of a “settler oligarchy”, thus it had traditions of democracy, but there were racial restrictions on political participation. The rule of law was used to deny political rights to ethnic majorities, a system backed by hierarchically organised coercion. However, within their own microcosmic enclaves they established for the white society features of functioning democracies: elections, leadership selection, opposition parties, relatively independent courts and some media freedom. Furthermore, by 1948, besides the need for foreign capital and technology, the economy was nearly self-sufficient.

### **Post-colonial: Apartheid<sup>49</sup>**

Colonial rule laid the foundations for racial segregation in South Africa upon which the Afrikaner-dominated NP built a racially divided society. In 1948, the NP won the

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<sup>49</sup> It is acknowledged that there is a vast literature on South Africa’s period of apartheid. For example, see Davenport (1987), Lodge and Nasson (1991), and Ellis and Sechaba (1992).

South African elections under the slogan of ‘apartheid’ (apartness). Apartheid defined three racial groupings: white, coloured and black, and barred inter-racial marriage. In the wake of the 1920s Great Depression the slogan ‘apartheid’ appealed to the fears of whites as a result of increasing black urbanisation and job competition. After 1948, the NP secured its dominant position, by employing methods commonly used by hegemonic parties. It used institutional mechanisms: by abolishing the ‘Cape franchise’ and tampering with the South West African (now Namibia) constituency<sup>50</sup> contribution. Secondly, it created a new ‘moral’ climate through the systematic racism of the 1950s legislation, establishing distinct racial and ethnic groups. In addition, the NP sidelined voices of opposition, by advantaging Afrikaners and squeezing out United Party sympathisers. It also ensured continued support through deploying members of its secretive nationalist group, the Broederbond, into key positions in the government. (Butler 2004: 16-18) It created oligarchy rule in an authoritarian system. Where civil liberties were concerned, the apartheid system accepted the inequality of people before the law (Davenport 1987: 569).

### **Post-colonial: Transition to democracy**

A combination of processes led to South Africa’s transition to democracy, including both international and domestic pressures. Internationally, South Africa, due to sanctions and self-inflicted isolation, was forgoing technology transfers. It was also increasingly unable to maintain economic nationalism in an international economy dominated by neo-classical orthodoxy. International pressure also grew with increased media exposure of apartheid, especially the coverage of the force with which the government used to crush the youth revolt in Soweto in 1976. In addition, the United States, under the Carter Administration (1977-1981), changed its foreign policy towards South Africa adopting a more critical stance towards apartheid and acknowledging that its future lay with black nationalists (Thompson 2001: 219). According to ANC activist, Joe Slovo (interview with O’Malley 1993), there was also “an effective internationalisation of the South African question, for some period the United Nations had washed its hands of the South African situation and once again

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<sup>50</sup> The NP allowed South West Africa (SWA) to have six seats in parliament. Since those who had the franchise in SWA at the time were predominantly German and Afrikaans speaking, it further secured the NP’s position.

the Security Council and the General Assembly and so on took an initiative [sic].” The ANC too was feeling pressure to negotiate a change as it lost much of its financial and military support with the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union. Its ‘armed struggle’ had been largely ineffective against the apartheid security apparatus. With the collapse of communism, the NP also lost its ‘bogeyman’. The ANC’s material and ideological support had also shifted from the Soviet Union to Scandinavian countries, Sweden in particular (Ellis and Sechaba 1992: 122, 166). Domestically, the state was facing a structural crisis, unable to maintain influx control institutions. The state was also contending with a powerful mass protest movement and a federation of trade unions (Congress of South African Trade Unions) able to negatively influence the economy. Both sides, the NP and the ANC had reached a stalemate, which eventually led to them committing to negotiate through the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) (Butler 2004: 25). In 1994, shortly after negotiations had commenced, South Africa had its first elections with universal suffrage, culminating in the election of the ANC’s Nelson Mandela as president. The transition from white supremacy to multiracial democracy became known as the “‘miracle’ of South Africa’s ‘negotiated revolution’” (Dubow 2000: 102).

Due to South Africa’s largely illiberal history, political parties, civil society organisations and an independent media were fairly underdeveloped or biased. Nevertheless, it needs to be highlighted that institutions of democracy were not non-existent, there were civil society organisations like Black Sash<sup>51</sup>, there were political parties like the Democratic Party that opposed apartheid and elements of a democratic political culture did exist. These institutions have contributed towards South Africa’s non-authoritarian regime, which the ANC now governs. Nevertheless, the ANC’s overwhelming dominance stood in stark contrast to a fledgling system of checks and balances.

## 2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

### 2.2.1 Ethnicity

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<sup>51</sup> Black Sash was created in 1955 in protest against apartheid and its unjust laws. The organisation, led largely by white women, was described by Nelson Mandela as the “conscience of white South Africa” (Black Sash 2009).

South Africa is often referred to as having a ‘rainbow nation’, a term which reflects the country’s rich ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious diversity. Its population of 44 million is comprised of approximately 75.2% black, 13.6% white, 8.6% colored and 2.6% Indian (Lodge and Scheidegger 2006: 1). With eleven official languages, approximately one in five South Africans speak isiZulu as their primary household language, about 18% of the population speaks isiXhosa and just over 14% speak Afrikaans (Butler 2004: 29). Religious affiliations include about 80% of the population regarding themselves as Christian, 1.4% Muslim, 1.3% Hindu, 0.17% Judaists and 0.4% following traditional African systems of belief (p. 37).

Within the ambit of South Africa’s ‘rainbow nation’ academics have sought to understand the nature of South Africa’s electorate and the influence of race and ethnicity. Some conclude that the latter is decreasing and the independent voter is rising, while others argue that allegiance based on ethnicity is still of major importance. Schrire (2001: 137) argues for the latter, asserting that current party political alignment is a reflection of past racial/ethnic cleavages, with the ANC remaining a party of African nationalism. The base of the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA), is still predominantly white, but with its traditional English support being strengthened by Afrikaners and Afrikaans-speaking coloureds who moved from the now defunct New National Party (NNP). The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which initially attempted to broaden its ethnic base, is again a party largely supported by traditionalist Zulus.

South Africa carries the burden of legacy of the accentuation of racial, cultural and linguistic divides from the apartheid years with the result being evidence of cultural and political cleavages based on ethnicity (primarily race and language). This translates into the electorate, especially black Africans, viewing the major opposition parties as articulating the interests of specific racial and ethnic groups (Habib and Taylor 2001: 215). During an interview with O’Malley, Motlanthe (2004), then Secretary-General of the ANC and currently the interim president of South Africa, admitted that he thought the DA was a racist party, equating them with the Tories in England. During the interview, he referred to the DA and other opposition parties as “these *white* parties.” Davidson (2009), chief whip of the DA accedes that “politics in South Africa is defined by race.” Habib and Taylor (2001: 218) caution that “locating

parliamentary opposition in minority racial groups, as is currently occurring, will needlessly polarise society in racial terms and thereby undermine the consolidation of democracy.”

Further evidence of pronounced political cleavages can be seen in the political parties’ campaigns. In the 1994 and 1999 elections political parties using ‘us versus them’ campaigns did better than those parties that employed issue-based strategies<sup>52</sup>. During these elections the ANC was able to consolidate its nationwide support by continuing to put itself forward as the ‘true liberator’ of black Africans, much to the chagrin of the Pan African Congress (PAC)<sup>53</sup>, while the DP during the 1999 elections sent out the message that voting for the DP was a vote for the protection of minorities. Although these cleavages still persist, their lines are becoming more blurred as South Africans are becoming exposed to the ‘other’ in the workplace, schools, churches, universities, and social settings.

### 2.2.2 Economic development

#### **Human development index (HDI)**

Economically, South Africa is considered to be a middle-income, developing country with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of US \$11,110 in 2005 and a ranking of 56 out of 173 countries (UNDP 2006). This figure, however, does not give an accurate reflection of the quality of human life. More telling than the GDP is the human development index (HDI) which looks beyond GDP to a broader definition of well-being. The HDI measures three aspects of human development: the ability to lead a long and healthy life, being educated and enjoying a decent standard of living. The HDI for South Africa in 2005 was 0.674, giving the country a rank of 121 out of 177 countries with data (UNDP 2006). This ranking places South Africa relatively low within the HDI’s medium human development band. Explanations for this fairly poor ranking can be attributed to its high levels of unemployment, unequal access to

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<sup>52</sup> For example during the 1999 election the traditionally liberal DP “sought to win over NNP supporters with a tough campaign arguing for strong opposition to ANC dominance in the interests of liberal democracy” (Lemon 2000: 335). The DP replaced the NP as the official opposition after the 1999 elections, having captured much the NP’s support base.

<sup>53</sup> The PAC were key players in the liberation struggle for South Africa, for example it was the PAC’s anti-pass campaign that resulted in the Sharpeville massacre (Dubow 2000: 62). However, since 1994 their role has been significantly diminished as the ANC has monopolised the role of ‘liberators’ of South Africa.

public services (Butler 2004: 66-67), the catastrophic effect of HIV/AIDS on life expectancy, and the vast disparity between rich and poor, in general and black and white, in particular - a legacy of the apartheid era, and one which the current regime has not been able to redress. The literacy rate in 1990 is instructive in showing the racially-based inequalities: 50% black Africans, 62% coloureds, 69% Asians, 99% whites (South African Statistics 1994). According to the HDI life expectancy at birth has declined from 56.7 in 1995-2000 to 50.8 in 2005 (UNDP 2006). The UN Development Report (2000) states that there are approximately 3.5 million South Africans living with HIV, spreading at a rate of 1,500 new infections every day, though this may be a gross under-count.

### **Inequalities and unemployment**

South Africa's Gini coefficient measure of inequality rose from 0.69 in 1996 to 0.77 in 2001 (HSRC 2004: 2), where 0 refers to most equal and 1 refers to most unequal. Whereas the greatest disparities used to be defined along racial lines between rich white and poor black, currently, the sharpest difference is between rich black and poor black. The previous racial division has been eroded by the deracialisation of public policy and the removal of employment discrimination. The greater equality of access to education and the freedom for black South Africans to move into business has led to the growth of a black middle class. As a result, amongst the black population, the Gini coefficient rose from 0.62 in 1991 to 0.72 in 2001, an inequality that is comparable to the most unequal societies in the world (HSRC 2004: 2). South Africa's 2003 Human Development Report indicates that about 48.5 per cent of the South African population (21.9 million people) fall below the national poverty line of R354 per month (UNDP 2003: 6). Motlanthe (2004), then the Secretary-General of the ANC, acceded during an interview that the "biggest challenge in this country is the fight against poverty." Despite some of the positive changes, vast inequalities still exist between the racial groups, not just within the groups, with 56.3% of blacks compared to 6.9% whites falling below the national poverty line (p. 6).

These vast inequalities do not bode well as the research of Diamond, Lipset and Linz (1987: 11) highlights: "deep, cumulative social inequalities represent a poor foundation for democracy." According to research conducted by Afrobarometer, the majority of South Africans perceive democracy in substantive terms (Kotze 2004: 27).



Thus they value democracy as a means to another end, namely an instrument to alleviate socio-economic conditions and promote equity. Diamond (1994: 49) identified this when he stated: “elites from the liberation struggle and perhaps the bulk of the formerly disenfranchised population understand democracy first and foremost as guaranteeing social and economic rights.” This understanding of democracy stands in contrast to a liberal democracy, which encompasses the protection of political and civil liberties, within the parameters of the rule of law. A further concern is that substantial developmental requirements provide the justification for a more centralised system of governance. This centralised system is also more susceptible to moving towards authoritarianism, as happened in Malaysia, and to a system of patronage.

According to Stats South Africa (2008: xv) an unemployed person is someone (aged 15-64 years) who: (a) Was not employed in the reference week. (b) Actively looked for work or tried to start a business. (c) Was available to work. Using this definition Stats SA (2007: iv) calculated South Africa’s rate of unemployment to be 29.4% in 2001, 28% in 2003 and dropping to 25.5% in 2006 and 22.7% in 2007, with 4 391 000 unemployed persons in 2006 and 3 905 000 in 2007. This definition of the ‘unemployed’ does not however, give an accurate picture of South Africa’s labour challenges, as it does not include those who are not looking for employment or have given up looking for work. The statistics of these so-called ‘discouraged work-seekers’ shows a more bleak picture in terms of South Africa’s ‘real’ rate of unemployment. Stats SA (2007: ii) defines a ‘discouraged work-seeker’ as someone who wants to work, is available to work, but is not looking for work. While there was a decline in unemployment in 2007, there was a concomitant rise in the number of discouraged work-seekers. This figure rose from 3 217 000 in 2006 to 3 443 000 in 2007, suggesting that those who were looking for work gave up doing so (Stats SA 2007: iv). Thus, to gain a better understanding of South Africa’s labour challenge, these two figures should be added together. This means that in 2006, 7 608 000 South Africans were without employment, regardless of whether they were looking or not. The unemployment rate, using the official definition of ‘unemployed’, also has a racial bias, with 30.5% of those unemployed in 2006 being black African, 19.4% being coloured, 9.2% being Indian/ Asian and 4.5% white (Stats SA 2007: xviii).

It is also important to compare South Africa's informal and formal sectors. In 2001, formal employment (excluding agriculture) accounted for 62.8% of total employment, while informal employment (excluding agriculture) accounted for 17.6% (Stats SA 2007: x). In 2007, these figures were 68% and 15.7% respectively. Informal and unregulated employment fulfils an important role in South Africa. Those in this sector are either street vendors, car guards, car washers and so forth.

Unemployment is a formidable problem for South Africa, due to its impact in terms of poverty and inequality, and because it is often seen as the "government's greatest failure" (Butler 2004: 72). Explanations for this high level of unemployment include apartheid's legacy of maldistribution of access to assets and skills, and thus the current lack of skills in the labour market (p. 72). This lack of skills and training has persisted into the new dispensation. Motlanthe (2004) recognises that the "education and skills training regime has not kept pace, has still left many people, adults, outside of this growing economy, hence this heavy unemployment." Zille (2001) adds to this, arguing that the education system is suffering from a "very serious crisis of efficiency and that more than anything else is standing in the way of transforming this country from the legacy of the apartheid years." She explains, "literacy and numeracy rates are dropping...although far more resources are being pumped into it." The concern is "pouring money into inefficient systems does nothing to improve performance." A further explanation focuses on the consequences of largely inflexible labour market regulations, where the rigid regulations result in a strong disincentive to employment creation, in particular in small and medium-sized businesses.

Thus, South Africa's strong economic growth has occurred simultaneously with high levels of unemployment, a development that is labelled 'jobless growth'. These levels of unemployment and vast inequalities are and will continue to put strain on South Africa's democracy, especially when, as previously mentioned in chapter two, much of its population views democracy in substantive terms. Thus, the majority of South Africans view the failure or success of democracy through a socio-economic lens. A further concern is the opportunity this presents for government to justify a centralised government so as to meet these developmental requirements. In addition to these pressures, South Africa, like any emerging economy, is vulnerable to external conditions, over which it has very little control.

## 2.3 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

### 2.3.1 Influence of external actors

South Africa bears the marks of a history of influence by external forces. The state itself was initially created by the British Empire. Its people composition consists of a product of migratory drift: the Bantu people moving in from the North, labour that was brought in from India and China, and settler-colonies. During the apartheid era it was heavily influenced by the Cold War and its concomitant ideologies. And, currently South Africa is vulnerable to the dynamics of globalisation.

Subsequent to gaining power, the ANC has produced a strategy of multilateral international, continental and regional diplomacy. Under Mandela's leadership a doctrine of universality was adopted, which meant the suspension of judgement of the behaviour of other states, a policy which did not marry well with the country's supposed commitment to human rights and "high morality" (Butler 2004: 154). It thus has ties with states and entities, which are sometimes characterised as rogue states and authoritarian states, namely: China, Cuba, Libya, Syria, Iran, Zimbabwe and Palestine. Firstly, these relations do not create *positive* international pressure on South Africa to maintain a good human rights record or the protection of civil liberties. Since these countries place a priority on sovereignty, usually as a mask to hide their internal human rights atrocities, why would they then require and pressure South Africa's dominant party to act in the interests of its citizens? Secondly, if South Africa's dominant party can disregard international concerns regarding its alignment and associations with so-called rogue states, then could that not translate into a disregard for positive international pressure, such as the Freedom House rules, encouraging it to uphold domestic civil and political liberties? Nevertheless, South Africa continues to promote itself as a champion of human rights and democracy, especially to the outside world and it is not impervious to positive international pressure. For example, its policy reversal on anti-retrovirals<sup>54</sup> is explicable in terms of

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<sup>54</sup> The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which together with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the international community managed to pressure the government to concede on its HIV/AIDS policy. After much foot-dragging and obfuscation the government began to roll out much-needed anti-retroviral drugs in April 2002.

international pressure; “when AIDS threatened to discredit the New Partnership for Africa’s Development with its G8 partners” (Butler 2002).

Under the helm of Mbeki, South Africa’s foreign policy was largely influenced by its attempt to reverse the marginalisation of the African continent in the international economy through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU). The primary role of its current diplomatic representation is economic - to secure export markets, business opportunities and foreign direct investment. Alongside these priorities is the reality that Western Europe and the United States remain its key trading partners and sources of investment. This market-oriented economic approach often sits in conflict with its liberation movement theology<sup>55</sup>. In addition, the need for foreign investment limits the government’s economic policies and partially explains its choice to not submit to economic populism<sup>56</sup>. It is vulnerable to the exit of capital and skills and is sensitive to pressure applied by the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) zone (Butler 2002). Thus, although it may politically appear to be disregarding international pressure, it is certainly influenced by international economic norms, as embodied in international financial institutions. This bodes well for its continued economic development, an important requirement for the maintenance of liberal democratic rule<sup>57</sup>. However, it remains to be seen whether South Africa will continue along this path or adopt more state interventionist and socialist-based economic policies. Jacob Zuma’s election at the end of 2007 as the new ANC president (by default the next president of South Africa) is perceived, by

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<sup>55</sup> Chapter six highlights in more detail the historical traditions that have fed into the ANC. Two key partners of the liberation alliance are the South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU. They have contributed to the so-called ‘liberation movement theology’. The first is the influence of communism, the SACP in particular, and its socialist economic ideologies, which include the nationalisation of major businesses. In addition, a further key influence has been that of trade unions as represented by COSATU and their desire to see increased worker rights. These strands culminate in pressure for increased state intervention in the economy as opposed to a market-led economy. A coming together of those sharing these ideologies within the ANC resulted in the success of Jacob Zuma as president of the ANC. The expectation is that he will better represent the interests of the *left* than Thabo Mbeki.

<sup>56</sup> Economic populism refers to economic policies that reflect the instincts and desires of the people. Thus their desires provide the principle legitimate guide to economic action. The concern with this is that such actions may not be in the long-term interest of a country and its people.

<sup>57</sup> Studies have shown that wealthier countries are more likely to maintain liberal democratic rule as a positive relationship exists between the level of socio-economic development and democracy (Diamond *et al* 1987; Lipset 1959; Przeworski *et al* 2000).

COSATU and the SACP, as a ‘positive’ step towards altering the country’s economic policies.

The nature of the current international political economy provides a moderating effect on the actions of party dominant systems. With globalisation and increasing global interdependence, countries like South Africa, are more subject to global influences and monitoring. This is especially true for developing countries which need to grow economically and are thus dependent on investment and for the international community to view them positively. In addition, the government is currently sensitive to the international community’s perception of it given the upcoming soccer World Cup in 2010, and the investment and tourism potential of this event. In spite of this, South Africa’s 2009 elections represent a pivotal time for the country as it may see the ushering in of a populist government under the leadership of Jacob Zuma, where leftist leaders who were crucial to Zuma’s political victory at Polokwane may be placed in key positions in the government. Some opine that the powerful position of the treasury will likely be diminished and Trevor Manuel’s position as Minister of Finance will be hotly contended, especially since he has asserted that he will not implement freer-spending policies and changes to the Reserve Bank’s autonomy (Rossouw, Letsaolo, Mataboge and Dawes 2009: 2).

## 2.4 POLITICAL CONTEXT

### 2.4.1 Party system: Dominant party system

With its wide support base due to its history as the victorious liberation movement, the initial party dominance of the South African government system by the ANC was a given. The ANC’s dominance has been confirmed by its attainment of an overwhelming majority in the 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections. It attained 70% of the vote in 2004 (see *Table 3*), translating into 279 of the 400 national assembly seats. In addition, it gained control of all nine of the provinces in the 2004 provincial elections. Opposition parties compete in elections, but with little scope to win. The ANC’s association with the struggle against apartheid, results in a deep affinity to the party and attaches to it great symbolic value. Seepe (2007) refers to this as a “collective psyche;” where those who lived under apartheid associate the ANC party with a “sense of freedom” and the notion of human dignity. Academic commentators,

including Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer (2001), have applied the concept of ‘party dominance’ to South Africa. However, Southall (2005: 74-76) cautions that although there is evidence of a dominant party system the ANC’s dominance is limited by constitutional counterweights, its inability to impose itself on society and evidence of vigorous internal debate. As previously discussed in chapter one, Southall (2003b: 74-75) therefore argues for a “weak” version of the one party dominant system. He identifies in South Africa a “low intensity democracy”, implying that the formal requirements for democracy are met, yet “under conditions of decreasing competition and declining popular participation,” where dissent and critical thought are steadily being overwhelmed through the processes of centralisation. South Africa’s party system still combines democracy with elements of constitutional liberalism and is thus a *dominant party system*. Although there does appear to be evidence of an encroaching on the rights and powers of other spheres of society, and an usurping of power horizontally and vertically from other spheres of government, this was especially evident under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki. According to Gumede (2007): “Mbeki’s record on liberty, democratic participation, and encouraging inclusivity in a divided nation has been disappointingly limited.”

Mbeki’s centralising of power began during his deputy presidency and caused tension between him and Mandela to the point that Mandela issued a ‘general’ warning at the 1997 ANC Mafikeng Conference: “The leader must keep the forces together, but you cannot do that unless you allow dissent. People should be able to criticize the leader without fear or favor. Only in that case are you likely to keep your colleagues together.” Ten years hence have shown Mbeki’s choice of disregarding Mandela’s advice. His method of governance instead gave fuel to the skeptics’ concerns of the ANC’s dominance, pointing to the apprehension that a dominant party’s “sheer preponderance of political power” (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: 337) will enable it to govern unilaterally and without consideration of public opinion or minority interests.

#### **2.4.2 Governmental system: A unitary state**

According to Butler (2002) and Mattes (2002: 24) South Africa’s 1996 Constitution serves to continue the country’s traditionally centralised system of executive authority. The state is essentially unitary despite references to ‘concurrent powers’ and a language of ‘co-operative government’ and the existence of national, provincial,



and local levels of government. Structurally, the national level consists of three separate branches of government, namely, the legislative, the executive, and the judicial organs of State, and thus appears to provide for some separation of powers. The legislative authority is the Parliament, which has the power to make laws for the country in accordance with the Constitution. It comprises the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). The NA has no fewer than 350 and no more than 400 members elected through a system of proportional representation for a term of five years. The Assembly elects the President<sup>58</sup>, provides a national forum for public consideration of issues, passes legislation, and watches over executive action. According to Mattes (2002: 24), the Constitution itself does little to ensure the separation of powers between the legislature and executive; besides a formal vote of no confidence there are no mechanisms with which the legislature may check the actions of the executive.

The NCOP, the second house of Parliament, is composed of ten delegates from each of the nine provinces. The NCOP reflects the parties' shares of seats in the nine legislatures. Although the council reviews all bills affecting provincial government the National Assembly is not obliged to adopt any of the NCOP's proposed legislative amendments. And, with 95% of the provinces' revenues being allocated from national government, the provincial governments are largely powerless. In addition, the powers of the national government have been further extended at the provincial and local levels as a central committee has replaced provincial and local branches nominating candidates for provincial premierships and local mayoralties (Mattes 2002: 25).

The executive consists of the President, the Deputy President, and Ministers. The President appoints the Deputy President and Ministers and allocates their powers and functions, and may dismiss them. Since the ANC's ascendancy to power, South Africa has witnessed a process of centralising power around the Presidency. The central role of the president was set in motion during the term of Nelson Mandela and became increasingly manifest during Mbeki's ascendancy to president in 1999. The

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<sup>58</sup> According to the Constitution, the National Assembly is required to elect the president. Although there is a vote by National Assembly, the reality is that with the ANC's dominance, the president is a foregone conclusion and is, by tradition, decided by the ANC's National Executive Committee. ANC delegates in parliament are merely required to vote for the pre-selected ANC president.



*Presidential Review Commission*, set up under Mandela's tenure, insisted the Presidency should form the core of the system of governance. The report rationalised that the purpose of centralisation was to enable the heads of government to play a strong co-ordinating role towards the achievement of election promises (The Presidency 2000/2001). The re-structuring of the Presidency and the government essentially increased the control of the national government, and decreased the power of provincial and local governments. During Mbeki's presidency, Van Zyl Slabbert<sup>59</sup> (2001) exclaimed, "beyond Thabo Mbeki I'm not quite sure who does any thinking in the ANC. They may think privately but everything seems to hinge around him so they wait for him. They literally wait for him to come and say this way or that way." Later in the same interview, he goes on to say, "I don't think there is anybody that would take initiative without clearing it at the top. They are too scared to take decisions." Mbeki's dismissal as president in 2008 was largely in reaction to his overpowering control of the Presidency and his authoritarian style of leadership. It is expected that this experience will in turn impact the role and the power of the Presidency, possibly diminishing its centralised role and perhaps increasing the opportunity for alternative avenues of input. The role of the president is discussed in more detail in chapter six.

The Judicial branch is provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). Section 165 of the Constitution, states that the judicial authority of South Africa is vested in the courts, which are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is responsible for the administration of the courts and constitutional development. It performs these functions in conjunction with the judges, magistrates, National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) and Directors of Public Prosecutions (DPPs), who are amongst the so-called independent statutory bodies. Following the ANC's 50<sup>th</sup> *National Conference* senior ANC politicians have begun to be appointed to these so-called independent statutory bodies. The deployment of ANC loyalists to these bodies is in-line with its *Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy*, which requires the leadership to identify 'key centers' of power

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<sup>59</sup> Dr Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert is a former sociology Professor from the University of Stellenbosch, ex-leader of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) during apartheid and founder of the Institute for Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA).

for deployment. This strategy is more fully discussed in chapter six. The implications of the above on maintaining a system of checks and balances should be obvious.

In response to pressure to accommodate the interests of minority groups, the process of decentralisation was accepted by the ANC as the conclusion of constitutional negotiations (Niksic 2004: 358). Galvin and Habib (2003: 865) point out: “although the new South African government has adopted a range of policies that promote decentralisation, competing tendencies toward centralisation have become increasingly evident.” National leaders make eloquent statements in praise of decentralisation, but in reality they tend to perceive it as undermining their capacity to administer development and to control the processes and resources thereof.

Thus the South African system now has an ever more unitary state and power ever more concentrated in the executive branch. There are four possible explanations for this centralising tendency and the move towards a more unitary system (de Jager 2006: 67). Firstly, national leaders consider that centralisation enables better co-ordination. With the country’s massive socio-economic backlog as a result of the detrimental legacies of apartheid, the government motivates for the need for a streamlined and centralised system to ensure redistribution and development. Second, the ANC was possibly reluctant to see cultural-ethnic divisions enshrined in its Constitution, through the adoption of federal structures (Tordoff 1997: 120). Third, there is a growing worldwide tendency towards centralisation, a wave that South Africa appears determined to ride. The *Presidential Review Commission*, emphasised that the centralising of power was a growing trend among governments around the world. And lastly, past-president Mbeki and many within the ANC-government leadership have been trained within the radical Leninist school of thought, which gives pre-eminence to the role of the ‘vanguard party’ and evidence of a centralising system is thus a result of the pursuit of democratic centralism<sup>60</sup> - a stated goal of the ANC.

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<sup>60</sup> The term *democratic centralism* has its origins in communism and was a key feature of communist party organisation. This method of organisation was based on two principles: “lower levels must accept decisions made by higher levels (the centralism dimension) and each level is to be elected by the one immediately beneath, forming a pyramid of indirect election (the democratic dimension). But only one person was nominated for each election and this candidate was chosen from above. In reality, democratic centralism was centralism without democracy” (Hague and Harrop 2007: 251).

On the one hand, the evidence of centralisation appears to indicate the intention of the government to improve the co-ordination of its programmes, but it also raises the question of whether the Cabinet ministries, members of Parliament, and provincial and local governments are being sidelined. The concern is regardless of whether the intentions are benign; the centralisation paves the way for the possibility of an authoritarian government and a system of patronage, especially with the president's and the ANC National Executive Committee's authority to appoint almost all high level positions on all three levels of government. These are concerning factors for the sustainability of a liberal democracy, especially if a less than honorable person fills the extremely powerful position of president in the future.

#### **2.4.3 Electoral system: Proportional representation and floor-crossing**

Between 1994 and 2004, party politics in South Africa was marked by the entrenching of a dominant party together with the withering away and eventual demise of the previous hegemonic National Party. *Table 3* indicates the outcomes of the last three national elections. The most noteworthy changes over these elections have been the entrenching of ANC party dominance, the disbanding of the NNP<sup>61</sup>, the expansion of the DA's support base, and declining support of the IFP. ANC representation in the National Assembly has steadily grown over the last three years, even though its number of real votes has actually decreased, a potential concern for its decreasing legitimacy. The 2004 national election results serve to show the vast gap between the ANC with 279 seats, the DA with 50 seats and some of the other smaller parties with fairly insignificant representation. The NNP saw a continuous decline in support until eventual disbandment in 2004. It lost much support after it withdrew from the Government of National Unity in 1996 and after the resignation of FW de Klerk from party leadership. The DA, previously the Democratic Party (DP), has steadily risen to take the position of official opposition. The IFP initially joined the ANC in a coalition government at national and provincial levels with its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi holding the office of Minister of Home Affairs from 1994 to 2004. However, the party paid a high price for its co-optation, confusing its supporters and losing its non-Zulu support base.

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<sup>61</sup> Previously the National Party (NP), the hegemonic party during the apartheid era.

The concern with South Africa's election outcomes is that it seems there is maintenance of racial polarisation. If the dominant party takes on a centrist platform, the ANC is considered a centre-left party, it encourages the smaller parties to pursue the support of specific groupings thereby entrenching a limited support base. Seepe (2007) aptly describes this as "opposition parties fish[ing] in a pool of minorities." As mentioned, under South Africa's socio-economic context, identity-based politics appears to be thriving and not disappearing. South Africa needs to overcome race as a basis for distinction if it is to become a united country.

**Table 3: South African national general elections, parliamentary seat allocations 1994-2004**

	<b>1994 Votes</b>	<b>1994 Seats</b>	<b>1999 Votes</b>	<b>1999 Seats</b>	<b>2004 Votes</b>	<b>2004 Seats</b>
<b>ANC</b>	12 237 655	252	10 601 330	266	10 878 251	279
<b>DP/ DA</b>	338 426	7	1 527 337	38	1 931 201	50
<b>IFP</b>	2 058 294	43	1 371 477	34	1 088 664	28
<b>UDM</b>	-	-	546 790	14	355 717	9
<b>ID</b>	-	-	-	-	269 765	7
<b>NP/ NNP</b>	3 983 690	82	1 098 215	28	257 824	7
<b>ACDP</b>	88 104	2	228 975	6	250 272	7
<b>Total valid votes:</b>	19 533 498		15 977 142		15 612 671	

South Africa's electoral system of representative democracy, premised on proportional representation (PR) using the Droop Quota to appoint seats, has been widely assumed to have been positive for nation-building as smaller ethnic, regional and minority parties gained representation in Parliament. Due to the very low threshold set, it is a very inclusive system. This inclusivity stands in stark contrast to the exclusivity of the previous system of white minority rule and initially made the composition of the legislature one of the most representative in the world. The PR system has, however, come under much criticism since it is party-based rather than

constituent-based, resulting in the accountability of representatives to voters being very weak. This is a point, which will be given greater attention in chapter six.

Representativeness also came into question with the passing of the Constitution Amendment Act, 2003 (Act 2 of 2003) that enabled floor-crossing. This legislation allowed elected representatives of the local, provincial, and national legislatures to retain their seats despite a change in membership from the party that nominated them. Elected representatives could also retain their seats in the case of a merger or subdivision. In addition, one of the requirements for legal defection was that defection must represent not less than 10% of the total number of seats held by the party. The seats held by the defectors were considered to be that of the party to which they were defecting, meaning that proportional representation in terms of the initial allocation of seats (as determined by the number of votes) was distorted. Floor-crossing undermined the principle of representative democracy envisioned by the Constitution as representatives could cross to other parties without any imperative to consult, or be held accountable to citizens, or their opinions. Floor-crossing has merits in a constituency system in which representatives are elected as individuals but not in a national list PR system. Van Zyl Slabbert (2002) attributes the ANC's support of introducing the floor-crossing legislation to two reasons: firstly "to finally castrate the NP which they've now succeeded in doing because the NP will be dead in the next elections<sup>62</sup>" and secondly, "to get at the DA in the Western Cape." The floor-crossing legislation came under enormous criticism, leading it to being removed in 2008. This process began during the *ANC's 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference in 2007* when it was agreed that the floor-crossing legislation be tabled in Parliament for re-consideration.

South Africa's electoral system will be tackled in more depth in chapter six. Electoral mechanisms and amendments are often used by dominant parties to ensure and deepen their dominance. In South Africa, proportional representation and floor-crossing are certainly contributing factors to the enduring dominance of the ANC.

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<sup>62</sup> This is indeed what happened in the 2004 elections, where the NP disbanded and called its remaining members to support the ANC.

### 3. MEXICO<sup>63</sup>

Mexico shares with South Africa a history of authoritarian governments, colonial rule, and subsequent socio-economic troubles, including unemployment and vast socio-economic inequalities. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Mexico's hegemonic party, was formed in 1929 after a long civil war (1911-1920). The party evolved into an instrument of authoritarian control, with corporatist links to peasant and union organisations and the ability to manipulate the electoral process in its favour (Kaufman 1999: 176). The PRI's claim to represent the nationalist and egalitarian aspirations of the 1910 revolution provided an important base of legitimacy, which initially served to help entrench its dominance that would last until 2000.

In 1972, the *Freedom House* (2006) rated Mexico with a 5 for political rights and a 3 for civil rights<sup>64</sup>, concluding that it was partly free. A combined score of civil and political liberties, where a score of 5 or less is regarded as "free", 6 to 11 as "partly free" and 12 to 14 as "not free", Mexico received a score of 7 in 1975 and 8 in 1987<sup>65</sup> (Diamond and Linz 1989: 45). Mexico's political culture was characterised by its duality: democratic attitudes combined with authoritarian beliefs that were ingrained in many Mexicans (Baer 1999: 96). A study, conducted just prior to Vicente Fox's victory, on the preference for democracy in Latin America, found that only 50% of Mexicans preferred democracy, 20% authoritarian regimes and 26% either (Camp 2003: 14). Mexico has nevertheless achieved a peaceful transition in power after a long period of liberalisation. It is a case study laudable not only because of the peaceful alternation in power, but also the opening of its system to embrace civil and political liberties.

#### 3.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT: AUTHORITARIANISM

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<sup>63</sup> Special thanks to the following persons, who I had the privilege of meeting while in Mexico. Their comments and insight have been instrumental to the compilation of this section. Lic. Juan Carlos Luna Velázquez and Filipe Gonzalez from PAN; Prof. Joy Langston from CIDE University; and Prof. Eric Magar, Prof. Federico Estévez, Prof. Jeffrey Weldon, Prof. Alejandro Moreno and Prof. Alexandra Uribe Coughlan from ITAM University.

<sup>64</sup> 7 refers to unfree and 0 refers to most free.

<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately earlier freedom ratings are not available. Thus the years 1972, 1975 and 1987, which represent the years of declining PRI dominance are acknowledged to not be completely comparable to South Africa's ratings for 2006 and 2007, which represent the early days of ANC dominance.

*“I repeat: there is a bridge that reaches from tlatoani<sup>66</sup> to viceroy, viceroy to president.” –Octavio Paz (1972: 102)*

### 3.1.1 Authoritarian History

#### **Pre-colonial**

Mexico has a political heritage of authoritarianism. Between 200 B.C. and 900 A.D. several advanced indigenous societies emerged. These Teotihuacán and Mayan societies developed written languages, elaborate art, architecture, and public works. But of its pre-colonial civilisations, it was the Aztecs that presaged a pattern of strong authoritarian rule (Levy 1989: 462). By the 1300s the militaristic and bureaucratic Aztecs had established an empire which spanned much of Central Mexico (FRD 2006). From their capital, Tenochtilán, they conquered surrounding communities, establishing their rule from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific and from central Mexico to Guatemala. They entrenched a hierarchal governing system through which they collected tribute and commissioned labour (Hamilton 2005: 289). In celebration of their gods, the Aztecs would sacrifice thousands of those captured from the surrounding Indian villages. According to Uribe-Coughlan (2008) from ITAM University, the Aztecs were so unpopular with these communities that when the Spanish arrived, they militarily supported the Spanish against the Aztecs.

#### **Colonial**

Mexico was colonised by the Spanish from the early sixteenth century, when in 1519 Spanish forces under Hernán Cortés began the conquest of Mexico, overthrowing the Aztec empire and executing the last Aztec king, Cuauhtémoc (Cornelius 1996; FRD 2006). The Spaniards served to reinforce the hierarchical system of the Aztecs with the “addition of strong racial components” (Hamilton 2005: 289). Colonial rule was particularly harsh and exploitative due to the country’s abundant mineral resources<sup>67</sup>. The Spanish and the *criollos* appropriated the lands of the indigenous populations and forced them to work for them (p. 289-291). The strategy was to get the locals into a debt relationship with the Spanish, if they were unable to pay tribute to the Spaniards

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<sup>66</sup> The Aztec *tlatoani* introduced impersonal, priestly, cruel and institutional rule.

<sup>67</sup> Mexico became Spain’s most important American possession in the early nineteenth century, and accounted for over two-thirds of Spain’s colonial revenues.



they were required to repay their debt by working for the landowners. Furthermore, Mexico's economic relationship with Spain was founded on a philosophy of mercantilism – Mexico provided raw materials to Spain, which then produced finished goods to be sold back to its colonies at a profit (FRD 2006). During its colonial rule the Spanish crown expected its colony to produce enough food to sustain itself, resulting in agriculture developing, albeit unevenly, alongside the resource-exporting sectors.

A salient import from the Spanish rulers was the Catholic Church (Camp 2003: 25-26). Through an agreement between the Pope and the Spanish crown, Catholicism essentially obtained a monopoly in the Spanish New World. The relationship between the Spanish authorities and the Catholic Church established two key principles: the idea of an official religion, in other words one religion recognised and permitted by civil authorities; and the integration of the church and the state. The influence of the Catholic Church extended deeply into the political culture due to its influence over education, social organisations and its lack of religious competition. The legacies of the Catholic Church included the following: first, the church's privileges given to it by the state authorities set a precedent for favoured treatment of specific groups, which would later manifest in corporatism during hegemonic rule. Second, it established a general intolerance for any other religious and secular thought as was evidenced during the history of the Spanish Inquisition<sup>68</sup>. This heritage of intolerance<sup>69</sup> has prevailed throughout much of Mexico's post-independence political history.

Many attribute to the Spanish bureaucratic tradition an authoritarian legacy, “since the metropolis ruled the colonies through a centralized, bureaucratic state structure as part of a patrimonial monarchical state pursuing mercantilistic policies” (Diamond and Linz 1989: 2). Its strong, hierarchical institutions established the state as the pre-eminent institution. The private sector was weak, underdeveloped, and closed. In fact the monopolistic relationship between Spain and the colonies ensured that the latter would not be able to develop their full economic potential. Its top-heavy political

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<sup>68</sup> The Inquisition controlled publishing and assembled a book index that censored intellectual ideas from abroad.

<sup>69</sup> It needs noting though that in Mexico's more recent history and especially during its liberalisation, the Catholic Church took on a more positive, proactive posture on democratisation.

authority was characterised with much of the power in the hands of the executive institution (Camp 2003: 29). This executive-dominated rule would persist into the post-colonial rule of the PRI.

Colonial rule also polarised class divisions. These inequalities would become so embedded in the social and economic structures that it would remain as one of the primary challenges to future democratic development (Diamond and Linz 1989). During colonial rule, its population of more than six million was politically, and to a lesser extent economically, dominated by an elite of less than 20 000 *peninsulares*<sup>70</sup>. The society “epitomized the race and class stratification generated by Spanish imperialism and serious *criollo*<sup>71</sup> resentment of *peninsular* privilege” (Loveman 1993: 67). As a result of the intermarriages<sup>72</sup> between the Spanish and local communities the social ladder began to look as follows: the *peninsulares* who were at the top in politics, their children born in Mexico were *criollos* and could not hold any important positions in political administration. Still lower were the *mestizo*, those who resulted from the mixtures of European, Indian, and Negro. At the lowest rung of the ladder were the indigenous groups, who were suppressed and politically ignored. Social prejudice transmitted across to economic status as well, with those on the lowest racial scale being at the end of the economic scale as well (Camp 2003: 24).

### **Post-colonial**

The discontent of the *criollo*, together with the spread of late eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy and the egalitarian example of the American Revolution, moved them to seek increased autonomy and social status within the colonial system (FRD 2006). The Mexican war of independence ensued with Mexico gaining independence in 1821 from its Spanish colonisers<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> An European-born Spaniard.

<sup>71</sup> A person of full Spanish descent born in the Americas.

<sup>72</sup> With the initial absence of Spanish women, the Spanish conquerors acquired native mistresses or wives. Cohabitation with female royalty from the various indigenous cultures was considered to be an important means of joining the two sets of leaders.

<sup>73</sup> An interesting similarity with South Africa, is that in contrast to the decolonisation of most of Africa, independence from colonial rule in Mexico was not primarily achieved by native elites against colonial administrators, but by *criollos*, the culturally Spanish elite. The indigenous population did nevertheless play a role in the struggle for independence, where a popular revolution was led by the priest, Hidalgo.

Mexico experienced a brief interlude of limited democratic rule during the Reform (1855-1876). This period was characterised by the belief that democracy (a limited version) was compatible with stability and growth; a liberal constitution; liberties and elections. The Reform faded after Benito Juárez's death (1872) and a split over the 1876 presidential succession led to a military coup and the installing of Porfirio Díaz as supreme dictator (Levy 1989: 463). He used Mexico's 1857 Constitution to make himself constitutional dictator (Loveman 1993: 87) and sustained his rulership by using resources from a growing export economy and a skillful mix of repression and co-optation. His elitist system, which lasted from 1884 to 1910, was supported by foreign capital and the military, and provided few opportunities for its emerging middle class.

A subsequent defining feature of Mexico's history was the Civil War which erupted in 1910 against the ruling oligarchy instituted by President Díaz. The revolution, which lasted almost twenty years, was not initiated by common people, but instead by younger elements of the middle and upper class, and later drawing in peasants and workers. This younger generation had become disillusioned with over thirty years of increasingly heavy-handed leadership. They viewed their future political and economic opportunities as being blocked by the dictator and his closed clique. These bourgeois revolutionaries, led by Francisco I. Madero, did not seek to destroy the established order but to rather open it and create new opportunities for themselves (Cornelius 1996). Grievances amongst the workers and peasants also began to accumulate with leaders appealing to the disgruntled masses. One such leader was Emiliano Zapata, who led a group of peasants in the state of Morelos, intent on regaining the land they had lost to the rural aristocracy. Pancho Villa led a group of jobless workers, small landowners, and cattle hands, in the north, calling for steady employment. As the different revolutionary leaders contended for control of the government, the centralised government deteriorated into warlordism. Thus powerful regional gangs were led by *caudillos* (political-military strongmen), who tended to be more interested in increasing their personal wealth and social status than seeking a social revolution.

Between the 1920s and 1940s a series of strong central governments were led by former generals of the revolutionary armies. However, a centralised government

began to remove or undermine the most powerful of these regional *caudillos* by co-opting the local political bosses (Langston 2008). These local power brokers became appendages of the central government, ensuring the establishment of the central government policies and control in their communities. Peace was thus achieved through a power-sharing agreement among the regional strongmen, who acceded to a powerful Presidency in return for political inclusion and access to the economic pie (Baer 1999: 92). By this time, leaders such as Zapata and Villa, who had had genuine popular support, had been assassinated<sup>74</sup>. Instead control was seized by a largely *post*-revolutionary elite intent on demobilising the masses and ensuring the hegemony of the central government (Cornelius 1996). The ‘strongman’ of these post-revolutionary elites- President Calles – established a large, centralised party structure aimed at keeping the local political leaders from fighting amongst themselves<sup>75</sup>. He founded many institutions that would come to define the Mexican political system throughout the twentieth century: an authoritarian state controlled by a hegemonic party led by a powerful president, economic nationalism, land collectivisation, anticlericalism, and the resolution of social conflict through corporatist representation of group interests. This was the start of hegemonic party development – a dominant government with a strong figure leading the government, demanding loyalty in return for peace and inclusion in the system. Consequently, a relatively stable political system was established, built on two crucial factors: pacts among those elites not destroyed during the revolution and the organised integration of mass groups (Levy 1989: 464). Calles’ government formed the foundation of what would become the domination of government at all levels by the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI), founded in 1929.

Eighty years after Mexico’s 1910 revolution that claimed more than a million lives “provisions for suspension of constitutional *garantías* (guarantees) and concession of extraordinary powers to the president of Mexico were virtually the same as those of 1857” (Loveman 1993: 90). According to Cornelius (1996: 16) many historians “stress the continuities between prerevolutionary and postrevolutionary Mexico.” The

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<sup>74</sup> According to my informal interviews whilst in Mexico, it became apparent that the state, as led by President Calles had been behind the assassinations.

<sup>75</sup> The PRI was therefore born out of a *post*-revolutionary elite, as many of the original revolutionaries had been removed, co-opted or assassinated. These elite, however, maintained they had been directly involved in and responsible for the Mexican Revolution so as to unite the Mexican people, create a stable, centralised system and to garner support for its rulership.

processes of capital accumulation, state-building and political centralisation evident during the rule of Díaz, were merely interrupted between 1910 and 1920, but continued once a semblance of order had been reinstated. Mexico's history of authoritarianism spans back from the Aztecs, through Spanish rule, the dictatorship of Díaz and then for 71 years under the PRI's hegemonic party rule. This legacy of authoritarianism was only interspersed with brief interludes of limited democratic rule and the eventual liberalising of the system in the latter years of PRI rule. Mexico's long history of authoritarianism, entrenched a political culture of intolerance (Baer 1999: 91), where civil and political liberties went largely unrecognised and unprotected.

## 3.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

### 3.2.1 Ethnicity

In the 1920s Mexico had a population of approximately 7 million. From 1940, Mexico's population growth surged upwards as improvements in public health reduced the mortality rate. In 1940 the population was 20 million (Cornelius 1996: 107), growing to approximately 40 million in 1960 to about 50 million in 1970 and 67 million in 1980 (OECD 2008). Mexico, and Latin America in general, have a high degree of cultural and linguistic homogeneity. According to Diamond and Linz (1989) the common bonds of the Spanish language and Catholic faith afford a significant measure of cultural homogeneity that is conducive to democracy. Nevertheless, there was and continues to be significant social, political and economic divides between Mexico's three main cultural groupings: *criollos*, *mestivos* and its native Indian populations. These divides also translate into regional divides: with the North tending to be prosperous and consisting largely of people from Spanish descent, the Centre being a mixture of rich and poor and including a combination of Indian natives and those of Spanish decent; and the South being poor and comprising predominantly Indian natives (González-Lugo Méndez 2008). Mexico's severely reduced indigenous Indian population, comprising only 7.9% of the nation's population according to 1990 census figures, was a result of the culmination of attrition, intermarriage, and the cultural penetration of its regions (Cornelius 1996: 11). According to Cornelius (1996: 11) this "Indian minority has been persistently marginal to the national economy and political system."

### 3.2.2 Economic development

#### **Human Development Index (HDI)**

In the 1920s Mexico was a rural country with a literacy rate of 20 percent and the majority of the population employed in the agricultural sector. From the 1940s a strong emphasis was put on economic development and in particular the promotion of industry (Hamilton 2005: 298). The strategy for development was based upon the model of import substitution, which provided high levels of protection and tax relief for those manufacturing industries directed to the domestic market. Between 1940 and 1970, the Mexican economy grew rapidly, with economic growth averaging 6 percent annually, and industrial growth increasing at a rate of 8 percent (p. 299). In comparison to Latin America's other industrialising countries Mexico fared relatively well economically. In the 1960s and 1970s, it had become one of the most dynamic countries of Latin America and was recognised as a "semideveloped industrial economy [sic]" (Hamilton 2005: 299) and a "middle-income developing country" (Cameron and Wise 2004: 320). The GDP per capita in U.S. dollars in 1970 was 1 590, increasing to 4 338 in 1980 (OECD 2008). A question, which long puzzled political scientists, was why Mexico's fairly constant economic growth did not produce liberal democracy. A possible explanation is that the fruits of the growth were not well distributed. Even though a middle class grew, it did not initially push for greater liberalisation. An explanation for this can be the middle class's dependence on the state. However, a further reason could be that the economic growth merely served the interests of the reigning regime. If there is growth, the government has the necessary access to resources to maintain its client-patron networks. In addition, it could claim economic success and legitimacy. Nevertheless, over time economic growth began to promote pressures for broad liberalisation and democratisation, especially as businesses and associations with their economic strengthening, began to gain further independence from the state. As Levy (1989: 486) summarises economic "growth may well increase the chances for democracy eventually, but for a long time it may well shore up almost any regime."

Mexico serves as an interesting case, where economic growth initially served to bolster hegemonic rule, but subsequently led to the diminishing of hegemonic rule. When its economic fortunes turned and the party had to resort to economic

liberalisation, these market-oriented reforms weakened its control and removed its monopoly over the economy. Thus, economic liberalisation contributed to overall liberalising of Mexico's political system and the undermining of the hegemonic party's economic monopoly.

The earliest data available for Mexico's HDI is 1975, in the midst of hegemonic rule. At that stage it was 0.694, increasing to 0.814 in 2000, the year of the alternation in power (UNDP 2009). Mexico's 1975 HDI places it within the medium human development band. Mexico's life expectancy rate has also improved from 57.5 years in 1960, to 60.9 in 1970, 67.2 in 1980 and reaching 74.1 in 2000 (OECD 2008).

### **Inequalities and employment**

Mexico's massive growth and industrialisation between 1940 and the 1970s was accompanied by increasing inequality and by 1977 the lowest 20 percent of households controlled 2.9 percent of the income and the upper 20 percent controlled over 57 percent (Hamilton 2005: 299). In 1989 Mexico's Gini coefficient was 0.4694, deteriorating to 0.4761 in 1998 (Aguire Reveles and Sandoval Terán 2001: 130). In 1986 unemployment was approximately 15.4% (Hamilton 2005: 299). This rate decreased in 1990 with an improvement in the economy. However, the statistics do not properly show the extent of the unemployment problem. Mexico's labour force adds about 1 million job seekers each year. The PRI-government considered a person to be employed even if it was for just one hour a week. Many of these unemployed, underemployed, and first-time job seekers have taken to finding an income in the informal economy. They work as unlicensed street vendors, washing car windshields, sewing garments at home, and the like. This "underground" economy employs about 24 to 45 percent of Mexico's total work force (Cornelius 1996: 108). The rest sought employment in the United States, via illegal immigration. Thus, unemployment, underemployment, and subsequent patterns of migration were issues which the PRI faced during its rulership. These economic divisions have translated into vast chasms between the rich and the poor, inequalities that were present from during Spanish rule. During the PRI's 71 years of reign, social inequalities persisted and even worsened. The PRI did, however, enable mobility opportunities for the *mestizo* majority and channels through which the large power contenders could exert influence.



### 3.3 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

#### 3.3.1 Influence of external actors

Since independence, the politics of Mexico has been influenced by its close proximity to the U.S. Porfirio Díaz is reputed to have exclaimed: “Poor Mexico! So far from God and so close to the United States” (quoted in Cornelius 1996: 21). Mexico’s relationship with the United States is said to dominate national politics, with the U.S. being its largest trade partner and largest cultural influence. Following its war of independence Mexico was vulnerable to aggression from the north and lost more than half of its national territory to the United States during the Mexican American War of 1846-1848. This seizure of territory, as well as later military interventions, have left a tenuous relationship between the two countries, with Mexicans even today suspecting the U.S. of having intentions to seize further territory, especially its oil-rich areas (p. 21).

The PRI’s rule started during the time of the 1930s Great Depression. It was a period marked with the rise of fascism and communism, and many difficulties for democracy and Europe’s market economies. There was therefore little pressure on the PRI to democratise or liberalise during its earlier years of rule. By 1940, Mexico had become even more dependent on the U.S. for private capital to finance its industrialisation drive. On the other side, the U.S. experienced labour shortages during the World War II, leading to the *bracero* programme – an institutionalised programme of importing contract labour. After the end of the programme the flow of migrant workers continued and continues today. However, for much of the PRI’s hegemonic rule the U.S.’s priority for Mexico was not liberalisation, but stability (Levy 1989: 486). During the Cold War, the PRI maintained a position of neutrality and managed to contain internal communist influence by establishing a cooperative relationship with the Castro regime (Nacif 2006: 96). Again, the U.S.’s main concern during this period was that the PRI ensure a stable system.

The U.S.’s interest in the political stability and economic development of Mexico increased after World War II. Mexico became the U.S.’s third largest trading partner with the employment of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Americans being dependent on this trade. When Mexico experienced an economic crisis in 1982, some 250 000 jobs were lost in the U.S. Nevertheless, the country remained a preferred site

for investments by U.S.-based multinationals. Some cite Mexico's external economic dependence as an all-encompassing explanation for the country's problems. However, Cornelius (1996) only attributes these linkages with having a limited influence on the choices of policy and development priorities of Mexican policy-makers. Besides its close relations with the U.S., in 1986 Mexico acceded to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (now the World Trade Organisation (WTO)), and it joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (the club of the world's liberal democracies) in 1994. Its external relations have served to limit Mexico's range of choices; and international fluctuations are a significant source of uncertainty in the country's planning and policy-making. During the latter years of PRI rule there was certainly a growth in the presence and power of external actors in Mexican politics (Morris 1999: 632). International organisations, agencies of the U.S. government and others "began to pay far more attention to Mexican internal dynamics and to play a more important role in influencing Mexican politics than at any time in the past" (p. 632).

By 1990 Mexico began to pursue even greater economic integration with the U.S., culminating in the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in November 1993 (Cameron and Wise 2004: 301). As will be further explained in chapter five, NAFTA played a key role in Mexico's transition to democracy and to the diminishing power of the PRI. Firstly, "it reinforced longstanding trends that worked to undermine single-party rule, especially by raising the electorate's expectations to levels that could not be satisfied realistically by any government" (p. 306). Secondly, it weakened the PRI's rule by setting off a number of inter-related political and economic crises. In addition, the free trade negotiations of NAFTA presented an opportunity for popular movements emerging in Mexico to develop international networks (p. 308). The trade agreement itself though contained no "democratic conditionality" clause (Aguayo Quezada 2000: 35). However, "[i]n a nutshell, NAFTA helped to catalyze mass political demands for democracy, but it was just one of several forces that shaped this outcome" (Cameron and Wise 2004: 303).

As the economies of Mexico and the U.S. became more closely linked so the interest in Mexico's political process increased, especially by U.S. officials and the media. NAFTA generated approximately \$174 billion annually in two-way trade (Baer 1999:

90). In addition, the U.S.'s increased concern with the illicit drug trade, which mostly entered the U.S. via Mexico, led to U.S. officials criticising police and government officials for corruption, since they were considered to be important facilitators of the trade. Thus, the U.S.'s influence on Mexican politics began to become more than merely pressure for stability. In addition, Mexican opposition parties and non-governmental organisations began to access the U.S. mass media and its Congress to voice concerns regarding electoral fraud by the PRI-government. Because of this increased pressure and international exposure, the Mexican government agreed, for the first time, to allow foreign observers to monitor its 1994 national elections (Cornelius 1996).

From the above it is evident that inroads into the PRI's hegemony and pressures to liberalise and democratise came with changes in the international order. In its formative years there was little pressure on the PRI, except to maintain a neutral position with Cuba. The major pressure to democratise and liberalise only came with the end of the Cold War and Huntington's (1993) 'third wave of democratisation' which was moving through South America at the end of the 1980s. The U.S. too, began to exert pressure on the PRI government to liberalise. To counter the risk of international isolation, and faced at that time with a growing opposition due to prolonged economic recession, the PRI began to engage in negotiations with opposition parties to discuss further political reforms (Nacif 2006: 97). Thus, from the 1990s onwards the PRI began to feel an increase in pressure to liberalise and build its domestic and international credibility.

### 3.4 POLITICAL CONTEXT

#### 3.4.1 Party system: Hegemonic party

From its founding in 1929 until 2000, Mexico's long-standing ruling party - the PRI - won every presidential election and controlled a majority in both chambers of Congress until 1997. The party won every gubernatorial (state-level) election until PAN took Baja California in 1989. Through the years Mexico's political system has been given varied classifications. Some U.S. political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s referred to it as a "one-party democracy evolving toward "true"... democracy" (Cornelius 1996: 25). After the 1968 government massacre of student protestors,

analysts described its system as authoritarian. Others later began to classify it as a hybrid, part-free, part-authoritarian (Pye 1990) and others have characterised it as one of “flexible authoritarianism” (Hamilton 2005: 301). Nacif (2006: 92-93), however, refers to Mexico’s system as a single-hegemonic party system and recognises it to have been an authoritarian regime<sup>76</sup> since the PRI sustained its “monopoly of power through barriers of entry to new competitors.” Levy (1989: 469) also categorised Mexico’s system as a hegemonic party system since the PRI did not tolerate genuine challenges to its rule, it claimed almost all sub-federal posts, and electoral fraud was common.

It is argued that Mexico’s hegemonic party system was a type of authoritarian system as it shared features common to authoritarian regimes elsewhere: low popular mobilisation; elections that install a government more concerned with ensuring political stability and labour discipline than ensuring democratic freedoms or civil rights; civil and political liberties insufficient to guarantee the integrity of competition and participation; access to public office and benefits limited to those who support the system; lack of meaningful competition among organised groups for major government office; centralised decision-making by a few; and governmental manipulation of the mass media (Levy 1989: 469-477; Nacif 2006: 92-94). Nacif nevertheless distinguishes Mexico’s hegemonic party system from other authoritarian regimes in three aspects. First, this system was different to personal dictatorships due to the institutionalisation of succession of power. Second, it had a genuine base of social support. Third, it was able to co-opt emerging political movements and co-exist with some form of opposition. Thus, Mexico’s hegemonic party system was a type of authoritarian system, but was not amongst the highly repressive authoritarian regimes.

Since 1940, Mexico’s system has been characterised as a pragmatic and moderate authoritarian regime, unlike the neighbouring Latin American states, which during the 1960s and 1970s were prone to zealous repression (Cornelius 1996). The system was largely inclusionary, prone to co-optation, incorporation and control, instead of exclusionary, repressive and dictatorial. The PRI’s first strategy was to quickly co-opt

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<sup>76</sup> Nacif uses Barbara Geddes’ typology of authoritarian regimes, where she distinguishes between three types of authoritarianism: personal dictatorships, military regimes and single party regimes.

potential dissidents into the regime, failing this it would resort to more repressive methods.

The PRI attempted to control by including the widest range of economic, social and political interests through pacts and corporatist arrangements. The activities of many ‘mass’ organisations, civil society organisations and even opposition parties were actually sanctioned by the ruling party. The PRI’s power became overarching, if you wanted access to power, position or benefits you had to be a part of the system. The core function of the party system was to legitimise the regime by providing the appearance of competition and by granting a semblance of voice to social forces.

#### 3.4.2 Governmental system: *Presidencialismo*

In theory, the Mexican governmental structure appeared, and still does, similar to the United States - federal. The presidential constitution and institutional arrangement is based on a separation of powers: a presidential system, three branches of government (an executive, legislature and judiciary), and federalism at the local level. The bicameral Congress, the legislative body, consists of the upper house - the Senate and the lower house - the Chamber of Deputies. Mexico has thirty-one states (plus the Federal District) and over 2 000 *municipios* (municipalities). State structures mirror the national except that their legislatures are unicameral. Mexico’s *municipios* (smaller politico-administrative units) are governed by a council headed by a *presidente municipal* (municipal president or mayor), who is elected for a three year term – during PRI hegemony the *presidente municipal* was hand-picked by those higher up in the government. Despite this federalist structure being espoused in the 1917 Constitution, the supremacy of the hegemonic party served to reduce this separation to a mere formality. According to Weldon (1997: 226) party centralism overrode federalism. At all levels of government, most of those elected to public office were political appointees, largely dependent on those higher-up for their positions.

The concentration of power was especially evident in the Presidency<sup>77</sup>. The president had both constitutionally-mandated and unwritten ‘meta constitutional’ powers, ensuring his power over all of the country’s political institutions (Cornelius 1996). The president operated with few limits and was able to dominate the legislative and judicial branches. Much of his power flowed from his ability to appoint and remove state governors, mayors and members of Congress, through the authority accorded to him by the party. The president controlled the decision-making process in the Federal Congress and was at once chief executive and chief legislator. The states and municipalities were ultimately subject to his rulership from the centre. The president controlled access to the office of state governor and could remove local chief executives at will. The state governors became mere pawns of the president, who then delegated to them power over municipal presidents and state legislators (Nacif 2006: 93). The president also selected his own successor with little input from those within the ruling coalition<sup>78</sup>. Mexicans use the term *presidencialismo* to describe this overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of the president - the control of access to bureaucratic and elective offices, domination of policymaking processes and selection of successors (Kaufman 1999: 175). This overwhelming control often meant the abuse of these powers for personal and political ends (Cornelius 1996). *Presidencialismo* is considered by many to be the core of Mexico’s authoritarianism and the primary obstacle to genuine democratisation and liberalisation (Craig and Cornelius 1995: 289).

### 3.4.3 Electoral system: “Electoral machine”

The real function of Mexico’s elections under PRI rule was not to select parties, leaders or policies through open choice, but rather to offer stability, a semblance of democracy and regularised renewal of party rule with the aim of maintaining support and legitimacy for the incumbent regime. The PRI maintained its legitimacy both domestically and internationally through semi-competitive elections, and its rule was underpinned by a skilfully constructed base of social support.

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<sup>77</sup> Chapter five provides more detail regarding the power of the president and the source of his power, namely, the party.

<sup>78</sup> Tradition dictated that those who sought the presidency could not openly campaign for it, nor even admit to wanting the position.

From the adoption of the Constitution in 1917 and the first electoral code in 1918, the electoral laws of Mexico have been frequently reformed and “flexibly applied” by the PRI (Craig and Cornelius 1995: 284). Its electoral systems were revised and changed when and however needed to maintain the PRI’s dominant position. According to the 1917 Constitution, officials were to be elected into office through plurality vote in direct popular elections, with no re-election for executive positions (governors and presidents) and no immediate reelection for seats in the state and federal legislatures. The no-reelection principle<sup>79</sup>, *sexenio*, was applied to ensure the long-term dominance of one individual, as happened during the dictatorship of Díaz, did not occur again and to offer rival power contenders within the PRI an opportunity to advance. Ordinary elections are held every six years for president and members of the Senate and every three years for deputies. Gubernational (state-level) elections are distributed throughout a six-year presidential term (*sexenio*), so that no more than six governorships are contested each year. The 1917 Constitution provided for universal male suffrage. In 1947 women were given the right to vote and be elected in municipal elections.

Until 1964 Mexico had a purely majoritarian electoral system and members of the Congress were elected in single-member districts by plurality rule (Nacif 2006: 94). In the 1988 elections a more proportional system was introduced, which included 300 single-member seats and 200 proportional representation seats (Weldon 1997: 245). When the PRI only won 260 of the 500 seats, it changed the system again for the 1991 elections so as to ensure a PRI majority win. In 1994, a semi-proportional system was introduced again.

The 1918 post-revolutionary electoral code placed control of elections at the state and municipal levels. Municipal officials were required to register candidates, distribute voter credentials and ballots, and select poll-station observers. State-level boards were required to compile voter registration lists. However, once the PRI had established its hegemony over national politics these electoral tasks became highly centralised in agencies that were either part of the federal government apparatus or institutions in which the ruling party had majority representation. The Electoral Act of 1946

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<sup>79</sup> This principle of no re-election is still in force today.



stipulated that the preparation, conduct, and validation of elections were under federal control. (Cornelius 1996; Craig and Cornelius 1995; FRD 2006) Up until 1962, there was no regulation of party funding, no reporting requirements and restriction on government agencies contributing to political campaigns. The PRI's advantages were "absolute" (Greene 2007: 109). The use of electoral mechanisms and party funding as means to consolidate and maintain dominance will be explained further in chapter five.

The centralisation of decision-making was also evident in the PRI's control over elections. The PRI could essentially be described as an 'electoral machine': it managed to mobilise voters in support of the ruling party; it initiated reforms to either ensure a PRI victory or enable opposition participation to ensure continued domestic and international legitimacy; and when the above failed, to secure the maintenance of the regime, it resorted to electoral fraud. The PRI coordinated the candidate-selection process for most major elective posts and it could effectively guarantee that the PRI candidate would win either by fraud or by sheer majority (Weldon 1997: 244).

Government control over election convening organisations was a key feature of Mexican electoral politics. Its Federal Electoral Commission (CFE) was placed under the aegis of *Gobernación*, the Ministry of Interior. With the CFE being placed under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, there was no independent electoral commission to protect opposition interests. Parties had to register with the Ministry. (Langston 2002: 69, 80) It was only after significant pressure for electoral reform that the Federal Electoral Institute was created in 1990 and six years later it gained complete independence from government. Eventually though these electoral reforms became instrumental to the PRI's decline in power and a fairer playing field was ensured with the creation of an independent electoral monitoring organisation.

#### **4. SOUTH AFRICA AND MEXICO COMPARED**

There are some salient differences between Mexico and South Africa when placed side-by-side in the foundational years of their respective one party dominant systems: Mexico in the late 1920s and 1930s, and South Africa in the mid-1990s and early

2000s. Nevertheless, there are also significant similarities when comparing the two countries during the height of PRI dominance between the 1960s and 1980s.

*Historically* Mexico and South Africa share an authoritarian history with little experience of democracy in general and even less of liberal democracy. As Diamond *et al* (1987: 6) recognise; the durability of a democratic regime is to a certain extent influenced by the legacies of the past. Mexico and South Africa's pre-colonial societies were characterised by hierarchical rule and dominance; those with stronger political organisations subjugated and dominated the surrounding communities<sup>80</sup>. However, even though it is difficult to verify, the Aztec empire appeared somewhat crueler than that of the less centrally-organised Bantu-farming communities. The Bantu chiefs appear to have included discussion and consensus in their rulerships, whilst the Aztecs ruled by force and domination. It is important to recognise that both these countries have histories before colonial rule, although it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions from these pre-colonial histories.

Both then experienced colonial rule, although Mexico was under Spanish rule for significantly longer than South Africa was under British rule. It is widely agreed that the hierarchical system of the Aztecs presaged that of the Spanish hierarchy establishing the foundations for authoritarian rule. In both countries the settler colonies, quickly gained control of the majority of the land and established dependency relationships with the indigenous communities, where the locals often became the source of labour, which underpinned the economy. Colonial rule also developed class and racial divides within the societies of both countries, a system which favoured the colonial/ settler societies in relation to the indigenous communities. The settler-communities also began to establish identities apart from their imperial powers, whereas in South Africa, independence from British rule happened relatively peacefully, in Mexico it led to a war of independence. Under South Africa's settler oligarchy, democratic rule was experienced and the institutions of a democracy established, albeit for the white minority only, whereas the Spanish left a legacy of authoritarian rule, under which even the *criollo* suffered. Following its

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<sup>80</sup> One society dominating and subjugating another society appears to be a common feature in the history of humankind and is acknowledged to have been evident in pre-industrialised societies in the West as well as the histories of developing countries.

war of independence, Mexico then went through highly centralised rule under the dictatorship of Díaz, while South Africa too experienced centralised rule under the apartheid oligarchy.

The histories of Mexico and South Africa largely served to entrench centralised political rule and embed in the societies an authoritarian political culture. However, South Africa's population of European descent did experience and operate within democratic structures. This is important to highlight, as currently, under dominant party rule, civil and political society are fairly vibrant and vocal. Thus, instead of South Africa immediately digressing into illiberal rule when it became a one party dominant system, it has foundations of a liberal democracy. It therefore appears that there is a legacy of a democratic political culture from the colonial and post-colonial eras, even though its scope was limited. Thus, the apartheid system, which institutionalised racial segregation in South Africa, and gave special privileges, including access to a democratic political system, to whites and Afrikaans-speaking whites, in particular, was different to Mexico's dictatorship. Mexico had only experienced authoritarian rule during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods, despite a few, short and limited periods of democratic rule. The constraining conditions of the dictatorship affected the overwhelming majority of the population regardless of class or cultural grouping. Thus, in Mexico there was no heritage of democracy or a democratic political culture, even for the *criollos*. These historical differences thus may serve to explain why Mexico's one party dominant system resulted in authoritarian, hegemonic party rule and South Africa's system resulted in non-authoritarian, dominant party rule.

There are also pertinent differences in the evolving of the dominant and hegemonic systems within these historical contexts. The backgrounds of PRI and the ANC are more fully discussed in chapters five and six, but their differences are worth briefly noting here. Following the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the political rights and economic security of blacks came increasingly under attack. Thus the ANC was born in reaction to racial segregation and discrimination, a purpose which intensified under apartheid (Lodge and Nasson 1991: 383). On the other hand, the PRI was not born directly from the Mexican Revolution, even though it closely associated itself and its symbols with the revolution, to garner legitimacy for the party

(Langston 2008). The party was actually established by post-revolutionaries as a means to control and prevent local revolutionaries from fighting against each other (Uribe Coughlan 2008). The PRI nevertheless portrayed itself as a revolutionary party. To their credit, both ruling parties did manage to reduce conflict during very volatile periods. They brought together disparate voices and forces, and ensured peace as opposed to civil war for their respective countries. Their citizens were indebted to them for bringing a measure of stability to their countries. The implications of this *symbolic history* of the ANC and PRI, and the ‘indebtedness’ of their citizens are discussed in Chapters five and six.

*Socio-economically* Mexico and South Africa are probably more similar today than they were at the foundation of their one party dominant systems. In the 1920s, Mexico was largely an agrarian, underdeveloped society. Nevertheless, during the heydays of hegemonic rule, the 1960s onwards, Mexico experienced massive economic growth and industrialisation and was characterised as a medium human development power in 1975. South Africa on the other hand was significantly more developed in the 1990s, with relatively advanced infrastructure and banking systems. Its white population enjoyed standards of living, which were amongst the highest in the world. However, the majority of its population, the black citizens, lived in abject poverty, low standards of living, and poor education. Nevertheless, the overall literacy rate was considerably higher than Mexico’s in the 1920s, as was its level of development.

South Africa and Mexico are more comparable, when looking at Mexico from the 1960s onwards. In 1970, Mexico had a GDP per capita income of US\$ 1 590, increasing to US\$ 4 338 in 1980, and a HDI of 0.694 in 1975. Even though South Africa’s GDP per capita of US\$ 11 110 in 2005 is significantly higher than Mexico’s it does not give an accurate picture of the inequalities (a Gini coefficient of 0.77 in 2001, compared to Mexico’s 0.46 in 1989); high levels of unemployment (approximately 40%, compared to 15% in Mexico) and life expectancy (50.8 years in 2005 in South Africa, in comparison to 60.9 years in 1970 in Mexico). These factors are better illustrated in South Africa’s HDI of 0.674 in 2005, giving it a lower HDI score than Mexico in 1975. The two countries nevertheless share inequalities between the rich and poor; high levels of unemployment and underemployment; a largely unregulated informal economy and high poverty levels. They also have a growing

middle class and economy, and impressive infrastructures, which enable them to be classified as middle-income economies or developing countries.

A key concern for South Africa though is that socio-economic inequality is an inter-ethnic phenomenon. Its ethnic cleavages then feed into race-based or identity-based politics, whereas Mexico has a high degree of cultural and linguistic homogeneity. Although Mexico did have a hierarchically structured society, where there were significant political, social and economic differences between the three predominant cultural groupings, favouring the *criollo* majority, these differences were not institutionalised to the extent of South Africa.

The historical and socio-economic contexts place both countries within the category of developing or industrialising countries, although there are some key variances amongst the indicators. In spite of these differences, both countries developed into one party dominant systems. Greene (2007: 6) argues that the explanation for the development and maintenance of party dominance is due to the central economic role of the state. In Mexico, substantial portions of the economy were publicly controlled by a ruling party that politically dominated the bureaucracy, leaving agents in the private sector with fewer resources that could be used to support opposition parties (p. 7). South Africa, though, is somewhat different in terms of the public-private balance of economic power, where there is still substantial economic power in the private sector. Perhaps this is a further explanation as to why Mexico developed into a hegemonic party system and South Africa is a dominant party system. Where both countries are similar though is the monopoly of political power, a phenomenon which will be discussed in later chapters.

*The international context* during the foundational years of the PRI were noticeably different to the current international context into which the ANC's dominance has arisen, where globalisation has increased interdependence and brought countries much 'closer' to each other. During the PRI's foundational years, the 1920s and 1930s, there was no significant pressure to democratise or to even pretend to be a liberal democracy. The ANC's increasing dominance in South Africa, on the other hand, has occurred in a period where democracy is the international norm. The speed of the international media is another significant factor as human rights violations can

quickly be exposed to the international world. These are important constraining factors and a means of moderating regimes with potential authoritarian tendencies. Again, it may be a further explanation as to why South Africa has a dominant party system, not a hegemonic one.

On the other hand, Mexico has a massively influential neighbour, with whom it has significant economic ties. Initially, the U.S. was more concerned with the stability of its neighbour. Until the 1980s, the PRI was able to maintain a stable regime, albeit with authoritarian measures, and thus it incurred little pressure from its neighbour to democratise. However, with the diminishing of the PRI's ability to maintain internal control; with the economies of Mexico and the U.S. becoming increasingly intertwined, especially with the signing of NAFTA in 1993; and with a shift in international norms towards democracy, the PRI began to feel the weight of external forces to democratise and liberalise. South Africa, on the other hand, has no such 'big brother' and it is debatable whether its economic policies would have any far-reaching impact on the rest of world, significant enough to warrant these countries pressuring it to maintain its liberal policies. However, South Africa is still considered to be an important access point into Africa and a leader on the continent. Thus, the influence of external forces does play a restraining role in both countries. As the international arena changed and the international norms became market liberalisation, the protection of human rights, democracy and liberalisation, both countries felt the weight of the international community to uphold these norms.

*Politically* the key question to resolve is why did South Africa's one party dominant system result in a non-authoritarian, dominant system, and Mexico's result in an authoritarian, hegemonic system? The explanation is found in their differing historical, socio-economic and international contexts. Firstly, South Africa has had some experience with liberal democracy, where the white population operated under a democratic system (to the exclusion to the black, coloured and Indian population). There was therefore the opportunity for political and civil society to grow. When the ANC came to power there were already other established, although limited and requiring reform, institutions of democracy such as political parties, civil society organisations and a judiciary. Whereas Mexico had virtually no history or experience of liberal democracy; from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial, political systems

were dominated by hierarchical, authoritarian systems. Secondly, the PRI's dominance arose in an agrarian society with a 20 % literacy rate, thus it had none of the necessary economic requisites for liberal democracy to flourish in. On the other hand, South Africa's ANC came to power in a middle-income economy, albeit with vast inequalities. The country's economic strength and potential for development is a fairly good foundation for democracy to grow in. Thirdly, the PRI and the ANC came to power within differing international contexts. The 1920s and 1930s were characterised by the Great Depression and the rise of fascism and communism, very different from the 1990s, which, were characterised by the international norms of market-led economies, human rights and democracy. The PRI's external environment placed no pressure on it to be non-authoritarian, whereas when South Africa had its first universal elections the 'world was watching'. Thus, the differences in their respective contexts help to explain why the form and nature of their systems differed.

Despite their differing one party dominant systems, they do share political similarities. Mexico's 1917 and South Africa's 1996 Constitutions, both make provision for federal structures, yet the reality has been much closer to unitary systems. In both countries party centralism has overridden federalism<sup>81</sup>.

Perhaps one of the most pertinent similarities between Mexico and South Africa is the role of the President and the Presidency<sup>82</sup>. In both cases the president played, and in South Africa's case continues to fulfill, a central role, where immense power has been purposely centered around the Presidency<sup>83</sup>. They have in South Africa's case, and had in Mexico's case, enormous power to appoint and remove governmental officials, influence policy decisions, and require loyalty, which permeates through all levels of government. This central role of the president is despite the governmental system, in Mexico a presidential system, and in South Africa a parliamentary system with a

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<sup>81</sup> The writers of South Africa's and Mexico's constitutions did not take Madison's (1788) words into account:

A mere demarcation on parchment of the constitutional limits of the several departments is not a sufficient guard against those encroachments which lead to a tyrannical concentration of all the powers of government in the same hands. (Federalist, no. 48, 313)

<sup>82</sup> Chapters five and six will provide further details of the powers of the presidents in the respective countries.

<sup>83</sup> It will be interesting to see whether this power of the president will continue during the so-called Polokwane-era. No significant change is expected, as the president's power is a result of the overarching power of the ruling party and not the state.



president. Weldon (1997: 227) argues that the occurrence of *presidencialismo* in Mexico is not primarily the outcome of an authoritarian political culture in Mexico or the responsibility of the 1917 Constitution for establishing a highly presidentialist system. Instead he attributes it to four necessary conditions: (1) A constitutionally-based presidential system; (2) a unified government, where the ruling party controls the Presidency and the legislature; (3) a disciplined ruling party; and (4) a president acknowledged as leader of the ruling party. There is agreement with his latter three conditions, but it is argued that a presidential system is not a necessary condition for a centralised Presidency as is shown by South Africa's parliamentary system with a highly centralised Presidency. In agreement with Weldon (1997), proper *presidencialismo* requires that the same party control the Presidency and both houses of the legislature. If one of the chambers or houses is controlled by another party, then party discipline and party leadership by the president will diminish. Additionally, no president can demand compliance from a chamber or house controlled by a different party. Thus, what Mexico and South Africa share is a one party dominant system, which enables the growth of a strong presidency with wide-ranging powers. Due to the preponderance of power, afforded by having a ruling party, which is able to dominate the executive and the legislature, and thus very weak forms of checks and balances, essentially gives the president the space to expand and conglomerate his position of power with very little resistance.

As with South Africa, Mexico's presidential powers did not emerge immediately, but evolved with time<sup>84</sup>. However, Weldon (1997: 246) correctly predicted that "if an opposition wins an outright majority...then *presidencialismo* as we know it will be dead." In both countries vast electoral support was initially given due to the rich symbolic value attached to the parties. However, both had to consolidate this dominance to ensure the continuation of their ruling power. The PRI managed to pervade all society so that there was no political, economic or social future outside of the system. Its dominance was sustained on economic and political monopolies of power established by the ruling party. It will be interesting to see if South Africa is on the same path. Chapter six will assess whether the ANC has established or is establishing political and economic monopolies of power.

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<sup>84</sup> In Mexico, prior to 1940 there were a number of examples of open conflicts between the president and Congress – Mexico's legislature.

Mexico and South Africa's electoral systems differ in the type, scope and utilisation of them, although their consequences are similar. South Africa's PR, closed-list system means it is party-based as opposed to constituent-based, resulting in very weak accountability between representatives and voters. The outcome of Mexico's majoritarian electoral system was similar, where loyalty ran between the legislature and the party, as opposed to the electorate. The PRI however, frequently revised its electoral system from majoritarian to semi-proportional, whatever was needed to ensure it a majority win. The PRI was aptly described as an 'electoral machine' since it could effectively guarantee a win for the PRI-candidate. Unlike South Africa, the PRI, controlled the electoral commission, thus there was no independent, accountability-holding body. The PRI effectively used elections and the electoral machinery to bolster and guarantee its position. South Africa's ANC does not wield such power and the Independent Electoral Commission<sup>85</sup> monitors it, it nevertheless does use the electoral system to consolidate its dominance as seen by its opportunistic use of the floor-crossing legislation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The contexts in which South Africa and Mexico experienced party dominance formation are in many pertinent ways different, yet in both we see the rise of formidable dominance. The types of one party dominance, did however, differ, where Mexico had an authoritarian, hegemonic system, South Africa has a non-authoritarian, dominant system. Their respective historical, socio-economic and international contexts during their early years account for these differing systems. Nevertheless, their pre-dominantly illiberal and authoritarian histories and subsequent centralised political systems have not served to establish the checks and balances necessary for the development and maintenance of liberal democracy, unlike their industrialised country counterparts. Thus, in Mexico and South Africa, checks against centralising control are limited, enabling the growth of powerful political parties, which explains why the centralisation of the executive could occur with little resistance. Socio-economically both countries were, and are, plagued with massive inequalities, which

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<sup>85</sup> Davidson (2008) from the DA and others contest the actual independence of the IEC.

unfortunately make for a more volatile system and a system which is more easily manipulated by elites. Internationally, Mexico's 'big brother' the U.S. only really began to play a moderating effect on its authoritarian tendencies after the Cold War, whereas South Africa's dominant party is constrained by global interdependence and the prevailing norms of democracy and human rights.

Besides their initial dominance ensured from their liberation struggle and the revolution 'credentials', South Africa and Mexico both managed to consolidate dominance and, in both examples, increase the extent of their dominance. It is expected that to understand the extent of the external control of these dominant and hegemonic parties we need to understand their internal control. Much of this internal control has been alluded to, but needs deeper analysis. It is to this task that we now turn: a comparison of the internal methods of control of Mexico's PRI and South Africa's ANC. How have they managed to ensure internal party discipline and thus external control? And, what does this internal control mean for voice and accountability, namely political society, civil society and society?

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **IMPACT OF MEXICO'S HEGEMONIC SYSTEM ON VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The primary question of this thesis is to assess the impact of one party dominant systems on liberal democracies in industrialising countries. Although, at the formation of its hegemonic party system, Mexico was largely a non-industrialised, agrarian society, in the 1940s it underwent the processes of industrialisation, and thus was an industrialising country for much of the PRI's rule. At its inception it was also an illiberal democracy, which the PRI's authoritarian rule served to maintain for a prolonged period. The PRI's hegemony occurred in the context of regular elections, where opposition parties were allowed to form and compete for elected positions. Thus, it was democratic, but it was not liberal as the PRI ensured its electoral victory through illiberal means, including fraud, vote-buying and even intimidation. Despite having regular elections and a semblance of opposition, why and how did the hegemonic party maintain dominance for 71 years? And, what did this hegemonic party rule mean for accountable politics, and agents of voice and accountability?

The Mexican system's major political success – stability – became an obstacle to its liberal democratisation. Nevertheless, it did eventually succumb to liberalisation and democratisation – processes, which had begun long before PAN's eventual electoral victory in 2000. Why and how did Mexico, eventually, transform into a liberal democracy?

#### **2. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS DURING HEGEMONIC MEXICO**

##### **2.1 "TRAGIC BRILLIANCE"**

If a large gap develops between the interests of the state and society (civil and political) and the state becomes unresponsive to the society it purports to serve, it may lead to citizens challenging the authority of the state (Thomson 2004: 122) or opting out the political system. Yet in Mexico, society maintained its support of the PRI even

though it disapproved of the regime (Diaz-Cayeros *et al* 2003: 2). Explanations for this include the PRI's shrewd methods of controlling alternative voices. It used inclusionary methods, such as corporatism and client-patron networks, to co-opt dissenting voices and manage interest groups. In return for acquiescence from civil and political society, it responded to some of its concerns, and thus ensured an enduring and stable system. Diaz-Cayeros *et al* (2003: 2-3) refer to this phenomenon as the "tragic brilliance" of the system. *Tragic* in that citizens and civil society accepted corruption, low levels of government service, and inefficiency; and *brilliant* since the PRI not only induced society to accept these features, but to play their role in preserving the system. A brief overview of this durable party will be followed by a look at civil and political society in general. In the section to follow the methods employed by the PRI to ensure its control will be assessed as will their impact on voice and accountability.

## 2.2 POLITICAL SOCIETY

### 2.2.1 The ruling party

The National Revolutionary Party (PNR) was founded in 1929 by President Plutarco Elias Calles. In the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, the intention was to create a mechanism for elite conflict resolution amongst those contending for public office and to consolidate power. In 1946, it was re-named the Institutional Revolutionary Party or the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). Presidents were elected into office on the basis of one-term step-down of the president.

In 1938 President Lazaro Cárdenas turned the elite-oriented party into a mass-based political party by adopting populist economic and development policies (Greene 2007: 75). He instituted a statist political economy through the nationalisation of the oil industry, engaged in land redistribution, collectivised agriculture, banned priests from political activities, and instituted socialist public education. The state was used to mobilise labour and peasant unions, incorporating labour unions through a peak-level association called the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) and peasants into the National Campesino Confederation (CNC) (Greene 2007: 75). These sectors were subsidised and sanctioned by the state, with membership being compulsory for

workers. Cárdenas' strategy was to encourage broad political participation that could be used to garner support for government policies and mobilise participation in the elections. The PRI became a structured patronage institution which mobilised and channeled mass support. It was thus an elite-controlled, but mass-based party. During the Presidency of Cárdenas three primary sectors of the society: workers, peasants, and 'popular' (mostly public sector) groups were brought into the party. Cárdenas also merged into the party the local, state, and national level organisations of peasants and urban workers. Leaders of the different sectors of this corporatist alliance distributed incentives to their members in return for party support. This merging enabled the party to portray itself as an inclusionary party. Critics of Cárdenas highlight how this mass political organising resulted in organisations captive to the regime; they were so closely knit that they had no capacity for independent action (Cornelius 1996). According to Cornelius (1996: 57): "The official party and its affiliated mass organizations occupied so much political space that opposition parties and movements found it difficult to recruit supporters." For some (Mabry 1973), his Administration amounted to a socialist project. By the time Cárdenas relinquished power in 1940 the regime was adequately institutionalised to pave the way for a mostly stable and enduring rule of the PRI.

During the heyday of its rule, the 1940s and 1950s, the PRI became one of the most accomplished vote-getting machines, virtually ensuring a victory for its candidates in every election. Where support could not be bought, it repressed opposition and manipulated election results and thus became "one of the world's leading manufacturers of electoral fraud" (Schedler 2005: 9). The PRI further cleverly used electoral reforms less for the purposes of democratisation *per se* than for reviving legitimacy and combating opposition parties. It did not concentrate on the functions usually expected of democratic parties (Rodríguez 1998: 72) – its primary mission was neither to aggregate or articulate demands nor to truly compete for power. Instead, its functions included: mobilising support for the regime; suppressing dissent; gathering and manipulating information; distributing benefits and patronage; political socialisation and recruitment and providing the rationale for government action (Levy 1989: 473). The PRI's strategy was to be somewhat inclusionary and build a broad multi-class base. Its leaders skilfully varied their approaches in ways that often showed sensitivity to the public more than most authoritarian regimes. Thus,

Mexico's PRI mixed corporatism with pluralism, "repression with co-optation and continuity with flexibility" (Levy 1989: 485).

The PRI's core support emanated from older voters, the less educated, and low-income people. It also maintained throughout its rule, the support of most labour union members (Cornelius 1996). Levy (1989: 473) rather prophetically stated in the late 1980s: "Perhaps a party built to handle a basically rural and uneducated society is ill-equipped for modern Mexico."

### 2.2.2 Opposition

Similar to the PRI not fulfilling functions usually expected of democratic parties, under the height of PRI rule, opposition parties too, largely performed a stabilising, system-legitimising and system-maintenance function, even if unintentionally, as opposed to interest aggregation, articulation and representation, and keeping the government accountable. They were generally a 'loyal' opposition in the Congress; they provided an outlet for the protest vote and presented dissident political leaders with personal career vehicles. As an outlet for the protest vote, the logic worked as follows: if the public could voice their discontent through voting for opposition parties it would mean they would channel discontent through the electoral process rather than using public protests, which the ruling party would have to deal with.

For the PRI, the opposition's main function was to legitimise its rule, by giving them something to run against and as a means of claiming popular support. The PRI's strategy for dealing with opposition was to "carry a big stick, and offer small carrots" (quoted in Cornelius 1996: 69). In terms of carrots, the PRI periodically amended electoral laws to ensure there was some level of representation for opposition parties in the Congress, and they supplied them with public financing for their campaigns. If, however, they were unable to co-opt them then they would delegitimise, threaten, and intimidate them.

From the late 1970s, especially since 1985, a less pliable opposition emerged. On the back of discontent with the incumbent government, resulting from the economic crises and government austerity policies of the 1980s, a more formidable opposition



arose. In particular, the PAN began recruiting support across social classes, employed full-time staff and began conducting campaigns with the aim of winning over and not merely educating the citizenry. Opposition parties became bolder and began to use more confrontational techniques with the government. Greene (2007: 2) attributes much of Mexico's transition into a liberal democracy on the persistent party-building efforts by opposition candidates and activists. Although this was important, it will instead be shown that as the political and economic control of the state by the PRI eroded so the operating space for opposition opened.

#### 2.2.2.1 National Action Party (PAN)

The National Action Party (PAN) was formed in 1939 mostly in reaction to the leftward move of public policy under President Lázaro Cárdenas. In response to his socialist programme, opposition grew from numerous groups, but mostly amongst social conservatives and economic liberals (Greene 2007: 188). The conservatives were deeply concerned by the state-mandated socialist public education and attacks on the church. The economic liberals were critical of the populist development policy, considering it to be too redistributive. The social agenda and economic powers of the state, which were written into the Constitution, were a further concern to them. Thus, amongst the founders of PAN were civil society groupings including Catholic intellectuals promoting a Christian democratic ideology, and economic liberals. It initially functioned more as an institutionalised opposition than as a political opponent seeking political office. It advocated honest elections and championed federalism and the separation of powers. PAN's underlying philosophy was and continues to be the promotion of the importance of the individual and this in-turn manifesting in the recognition of civil society.

The PRI, however, quickly reacted to the potential power of an opposition comprising capital-holders, who could destabilise the economy, and gave assurances that the government would expropriate no other businesses. Cárdenas' successor, Manuel Avila Camacho (1940-1946) swiftly took steps to appease rightwing forces. "As the PRI conservatized and rolled back the most progressive elements of the Cárdenas Administration, economic liberals abandoned the PAN" (Greene 2007: 77). For them there was no reason to engage in the risky business of opposing the government,

especially when it was willing to “do business” (p. 77). Because of its loss of support from the economic liberals and due to its increasing propagation of Catholicism the party initially failed to attract significant electoral support. Instead, it became a niche-oriented challenger, unable to contend with the power of the PRI at the polls. Its early limited success was also attributable to a number of other reasons. Firstly, its supporters were exposed to episodes of physical repression by the PRI. In 1946 reports indicate that some 50 pro-PAN protestors were killed during a post-electoral protest in what is known as the *Plaza of the Martyrs* (Shirk 2005). Secondly, similar to other opposition parties, it was accused of offering no policy-alternatives to the PRI-government (Levy 1989: 476). And, finally, the party was often left paralysed due to in-fighting between the social conservatives and the remaining economic liberals, within the party itself. Thus, during the 40 years that followed its formation, the party would be unable to attract sufficient support to effectively compete in national elections.

Due to the economic slow-down in the 1970s the PRI, under President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), shifted its policy from centre-right to centre-left again so as to attract the more moderate left and stem broader opposition (Greene 2007: 74). The move succeeded in undermining the leftwing movement against the PRI, but it also sparked the political mobilisation of discontented economic liberals once more, even if somewhat limited. The PAN, and other opposition parties, began to successfully exploit the grievances of the provinces. In 1976, major oil deposits were discovered, leading President Portillo (1976-1982) to continue international spending and growing, and expand the role of the state in the economy, especially, PEMEX<sup>86</sup>, which grew dramatically to extract the new reserves. Nevertheless, the economy did not grow as the government expected and instead, debt and inflation rose. Consequently, business leaders abandoned their previous aversion to direct action and turned to the PAN. The increasing discontent of the business elites of the control of the central government again became a significant source of PAN strength in municipal and gubernational elections during the 1980s, particularly, in the northern border states. For example, in 1989, the PAN’s gubernational candidate, Ernesto Ruffo, received an overwhelming victory in the state of Baja California.

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<sup>86</sup> PEMEX was a state-owned oil enterprise.

A significant part of PAN's growing success was its persistence. It sought to change the system, by initially pushing for electoral changes, for example, an independent electoral commission. It also sought small victories for example, winning municipalities, then states, and then ensuring that they had successful governments there. But perhaps its greatest strength came as a result of the economic liberals' reaction to government policies. By 1982, business leaders were more willing to get actively involved in the PAN. These *neopanistas* brought with them a clear agenda for shifting Mexico's political economy away from state-led development toward free market capitalism (Greene 2007: 166). Having clear and differing policies from the PRI, the party began to make impressive electoral gains.

Although the PAN was clearly stronger than the other opposition parties it still had a number of weaknesses. From the 1970s it suffered from being divided between two factions: the moderate-progressive or economic liberals, and the militant-conservative or social conservative factions. The former advocated strategic alliances with the government on various issues, in particular, economic policies; whereas the conservatives wanted more direct opposition with the government. Over its history the PAN had few leaders of national stature able to define a clear national project or economic policies as an alternative to the ruling party, until the 1980s. By the 1980s PAN gained support in the state and local elections and in the 1990s became the biggest opposition party (Kaufman 1999: 177) with its core support base amongst the younger, better-educated, urban-based, middle-class voters (Cornelius 1996). PAN's persistence would eventually reap dividends as it became the first party to break the PRI's hegemonic rule.

#### 2.2.2.2 Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)

The PRI government's move to more free market policies in 1980s led to tensions within the party, between the economically liberal democrats and a more left-inclined statist faction. This populist faction, the *Corriente Democrática* (CD) or the "Democratic Current", representing the left-of-center, was led by Cuauhtémoc

Cárdenas<sup>87</sup>. These dissidents were eventually expelled from the PRI. Cárdenas then became the new party's presidential candidate and won 31% of the vote in the 1988 presidential elections (Langston 2002: 77). He was a strong presidential candidate and knew how the PRI system worked. Cárdenas eventually formed the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in 1989 – a coalition of various segments of the left. According to Greene (2007: 94) “the PRD should have been able to develop into a catchall party and win substantial support in the early 1990s.” Social conditions supported the rise of leftwing politics and the emergence of a freer press was beginning to limit the government's ability to suppress opposition forces (Lawson 2002). However, the PRD's support declined: in the 1991 midterm elections it won only 11% of the vote and a mere 16% of the 1994 presidential vote (Greene 2007: 94). Greene (2007: 94-95) asserts that the PRD's inability to attract significant support was due to four factors. First, despite the implementation of free market reforms and the contraction of the state, the Salinas Administration used resources from privatisation revenues to buy electoral support from leftwing constituencies through a massive poverty alleviation programme called the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL). Second, most of the PRD's top leadership held comparatively extreme policy preferences meaning the party was unable to make moderate appeals that would attract the average voter. Third, there was renewed repression of opposition raising the costs of participation. Fourth, the reduction in the PRI's advantages meant it used electoral fraud more liberally. The use of fraud dampened the prospect of the PRD's growth in support due to the lower probability of it winning.

In the 2000 elections PAN's candidate, Vicente Fox, won the election with 43% of the vote, followed by the PRI candidate, Francisco Labastida with 36%, and then Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, representing the PRD with 17%. Reasons for the PRD's inability to win these presidential elections, despite the tendency of left and centre-left candidates beginning to win power throughout Latin America, include the following: The popularity and strategic acumen of Fox. He crafted a broad centrist message that focused on change, moving beyond the party's traditional voters (Greene 2007: 301). On the other hand, Cárdenas was constrained by his party's resources and traditional

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<sup>87</sup> Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was the son of former president Lázaro Cárdenas.

leftwing appeals that did not resound with the average voter. In addition, his stint as Mexico City mayor in 1997 was largely unremarkable, thus he did not share the popularity of the PAN candidate. Furthermore, the PRD was largely unable to move beyond the niche-oriented policies it had, of necessity, carved for itself under the hegemonic rule of the PRI<sup>88</sup>.

### 2.3 CIVIL SOCIETY

The early and forceful incorporation from above of the popular groups by the PRI, ensured the stability of an illiberal regime by providing it with a broad base while at the same time co-opting, pre-empting, constraining and neutralising sources of potential challenge to its domination. Mexico's hierarchical, authoritarian structures of governance discouraged autonomous political participation, depressed citizen efficacy and thus buttressed the cultural and social foundations of authoritarianism (Levy 1989: 465-468). Those structures that normally aggregate and represent interests in modern Western democracies had very different purposes in the Mexican hegemonic system: limiting the extent of citizen's demands on the government, mobilising support for the ruling party, legitimating the regime in the eyes of the rest of the world and distributing jobs and rewards within client-patron networks.

Limited interest representation occurred through a corporatist system, where they could relate to the state through a single structure as endorsed by the state to represent that sector of the society. There were three sectors, namely, the labour sector, the peasant sector and the popular sector (a catchall sector). Each was dominated by a peak organisation: the labour sector was dominated by the Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM); the peasant sector by the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC); and the popular sector by the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP) (Cornelius 1996). However, there were a number of interest groups not formally represented in the PRI, namely, foreign and domestic entrepreneurs, the military and the Catholic Church. They often rather dealt directly with the governmental elite or had well-placed representatives within the executive

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<sup>88</sup> Under hegemonic and dominant party systems, opposition parties are forced to organise as niche-oriented parties due to the overwhelming resource advantages of the incumbent and their ability to take on a more centrist appeal.

branch. Much of the business-community was also organised into several government-sanctioned confederations.

Nevertheless, the proliferation of independent, popular movements began in 1968, in reaction to the student protest movement, which was violently repressed. Further reasons for the increase in popular movements included labour union dissatisfaction, rising PRI vote fraud, the nationalisation of the banks in 1982, the inadequate response of the government to the earthquake of 1985 in Mexico City, the debate over joining NAFTA and the negative impact of domestic, neoliberal economic policies on low and middle-class sectors of society. Many of these movements were localised in their scope and concern, although some did grow and begin to aggregate Mexicans across many different states. Amongst these were the dissident teachers' union movement which began in the late 1970s and the El Barzón movement, formed in 1993, representing agricultural producers. After the 1994-1995 peso devaluation, this latter movement became nationwide protesting soaring interest rates on consumer and small-business credit. For the 1994 elections, the Civic Alliance – a group of NGOs, independent labour unions and popular movements – mobilised 18 280 Mexican citizens and 450 foreign visitors throughout the country to monitor the elections. This increase in popular movement activity and its ability to disrupt political and economic life pressured the government to pay more attention to civil society outside the state-sanctioned organisations (Cornelius 1996). There was growing evidence of a citizenry moving from an authoritarian political culture, where citizens passively submitted to the dictates of authority and believed themselves incapable of influencing those in power to a more vigorous citizenry, willing to actively engage political leaders.

*In summary*, the PRI's hegemonic system, especially during the peak of its rule, served to distort the roles played by political society and civil society - functions needed in ensuring the development of liberal democracies<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> It is acknowledged that in the 1930s and 1940s democracy was understood more in terms of universal suffrage and regular elections, than necessarily including the importance of civil and political society. Nevertheless, if a liberal democracy, where civil and political liberties are protected, is considered to an ideal democracy, then it is still relevant to consider what happened to civil and political society under hegemonic rule.

The initial basis of the PRI's eventual hegemonic control and the concomitant impotence of civil society is to be found during the early Presidency of Cárdenas. Through the implementation of his socialist policies he placed the state, which was controlled by the ruling party, at the centre of economics and politics. He then drew in any potential competing social forces into close relationships of corporatism with the state, essentially locking labour, peasants and other popular groups into the state. Early incorporation from above of interest groups ensured the party with a broad base and a stable system while at the same time co-opting, pre-empting, constraining and neutralising sources of potential challenge to its domination. Civil society, which should ideally aggregate and represent interests in liberal democracies had very different purposes in Mexico's hegemonic system: limiting the extent of citizen's demands on the government; mobilising support for the ruling party; legitimating the regime in the eyes of the United States, and distributing jobs and rewards within the client-patron networks.

In addition, the PRI in its methods of political control, it cleverly used elections and electoral reforms less for the purposes of democratisation than for ensuring domestic and international legitimacy for itself and for combating opposition parties. Essentially the party used the mechanisms of a democracy to maintain and consolidate its dominance. Its overwhelming hegemony left opposition weak and ineffective, especially within the legislature. Opposition was largely dependent on the PRI for its existence – public finance and electoral laws, which would determine whether they could compete in elections or not. As a result, instead of opposition fulfilling the functions of interest aggregation, voter mobilisation and keeping the ruling party accountable, while seeking office, it performed a stabilising, system-legitimising and system-maintenance function, thereby illustrating the “tragic brilliance” of the system.

It was the PRI's ability to establish political and economic monopolies of power that enabled it to create a system, which was stable and enduring. So long as the PRI had virtually complete control over the economic and political arenas it could control civil and political society. Mexico's hierarchical, authoritarian structures of governance discouraged autonomous political participation, depressed citizen efficacy and thus buttressed the foundations of authoritarianism, which would endure for several decades.



### 3. EXPLAINING THE PRI'S CONTROL

In Mexico, apparent in South Africa too, opposition was weak and fragmented. Political society, evidenced in the legislature, became ineffectual and unable to keep the government accountable. And, civil society, in general, had little lustre or independent voice. The ineffectiveness of political society, especially opposition parties, can possibly be explained as weakness inherent to the political parties, a result of them being internally fragmented and organisationally weak. This is, however, an insufficient elucidation. Rather it is argued that opposition's weakness, its inability to garner significant support, and the feebleness of civil society are instead a consequence of the one party dominant system. As will be shown, in Mexico, hegemony was established and consolidated at the expense of alternative voices.

There are two key explanations as to why and how the one party dominant system constrains and inhibits voice and accountability. The first explanation, relating specifically to opposition parties, is what Greene (2007: 3) refers to as "incumbency advantages." The assumption that the electoral market is fair and no party has a systematic advantage is simply untrue in a one party dominant system. Greene argues that the dominant ruling party has two main advantages over opposition: access to resources and an ability to raise the costs of participation for the opposition. With its resource advantages the dominant or hegemonic party can outspend on campaigns, it can initiate massive public projects for 'buying' support, and it can establish immense patron-client networks. Costs that are incurred by those supporting the opposition include foregoing the material advantages of being part of the ruling party, such as stipends, kick-backs or access to the ruling party's networks of business contacts and favours. The second cost is associated with delegitimation and even physical intimidation of the opposition.

Although there is agreement with Greene's argument regarding "incumbency advantages" it is put forward that it was the shrewd and considered use of incumbency to produce internal structures of control that ensured external control, spanning over political and civil society. The second explanation thus relates to mechanisms of control that result in, as it did Mexico, there being 'no life outside the ruling party'.

Even if a party, like the PRI, controls both houses of Congress, but it is undisciplined it would be unable to ensure the consolidation of power. The PRI was, however, considered to be a “highly disciplined party” (Weldon 1997: 246), despite it being known for its factionalism. Regardless of this factionalism, this competition among elites did not translate into open public contestation as its internal methods of control ensured party discipline. What were its mechanisms of internal control and why were they so effective in ensuring an unquestioning loyalty, and how did this internal control extend to external control? And, on what was this control based? Diaz-Cayeros *et al*'s (2003: 1) “tragic brilliance” of the one-party dominant system, meant that mechanisms of control enabled the party to employ a “complex system of rewards and punishments” leading to citizens and society, in general, actively supporting the party, despite the fact that they did not approve of the system. In Pempel's (1990: 32) study of one party dominance he found that the long-term dominance of a single party involved “clever tactics of electoral mobilization, ideological positioning, and governance.” He concluded that “one-party dominance is an art far more than it is an inevitability.” It will be interesting to see whether the methods used by Mexico are similar to those used by the industrialised countries in Pempel's study.

As previously discussed dominant and hegemonic parties come to power on the wave of a significant historic event. Therefore, initial dominance is understandable through this significant event, which gives the ruling party access to “incumbency advantages,” but this position must be maintained through the skillful utilisation of this initial dominant position. The PRI, in relation to the 1910 revolution, stressed symbols and myths such as social justice, democracy, the need for national unity and the popular origins of the current regime. The government's purposeful identification with these symbols was reinforced by the mass media, public schools and those mass organisations associated with the official party (Cornelius 1996). It continually laid claim to the revolutionary mantle, even though the PRI was not directly born from the Revolution. However, the hegemonic party was vulnerable to the changing of generations; creating the need for alternative mechanisms to induce loyalty.

This thesis identifies in Mexico a number of mechanisms used to ensure party loyalty from those within the party, the government and society as a whole. These methods

essentially established two monopolies of power: political and economic, upon which the hegemonic party sustained its dominance.

### 3.1 ESTABLISHING A POLITICAL MONOPOLY

The rules of political behaviour are recognised to be both formal and informal. The formal rules being those set out in the laws and the Constitution. The informal rules evident in the realities of the process and how the system actually functions, being distinct from theory (Camp 2003: 103). “In authoritarian Mexico, unwritten rules completely dominated written rules” (Philip 2002: 132). For example, Mexico’s Constitution and institutional arrangement is based on a federal structure and a separation of powers, however, the hegemony of the ruling party served to reduce this separation and its federal features to a mere formality. The immense control of the PRI is only properly understood when studying its influence beyond its constitutionally-endorsed powers.

#### 3.1.1 Subordination of the military

In Latin America no group played a more pertinent role in politics than the military (Camp 2003: 133), with the exception of Mexico. In Mexico, the military did not operate as a separate political actor, but was part of the government apparatus and operated under civilian rule. From the 1930s, its civil-military relationship became progressively more characterised by the subordination of the military. Presidents Obregón, Calles and Cárdenas, all revolutionary generals, carefully timed and executed measures to subordinate the military. Cárdenas incorporated the military into the recently established government party, then the National Revolutionary Party (PNR). His intention was to balance the military against the agrarian and labour sectors, thereby reducing its political influence (Camp 2003: 133). In the 1940s, Cárdenas’ successor, General Camacho, changed this aspect of the early corporatist structure by removing the military as a separate party sector. He did not want the military to have the same standing as other notable interest groups. From then onwards the military’s relationship to the government was determined by its formal structural ties to the executive branch and through informal channels. Besides these structural changes, political leadership progressively diminished the military’s

political influence through a number of measures, including: reducing the military's allocation as a percentage of the federal budget; purges, forced retirements and transfers; opportunities for corruption within the service and for business employment outside it; and dependence on government for salaries and social security (Camp 2003: 133-134; Levy 1989: 472). Since the consolidation of civilian rule there were no coups or serious threats of coups. It meant that the military did not become a powerful interest group, but it did mean and ensure the stability of the regime.

### 3.1.2 *Presidencialismo*

The PRI-government became characterised with a concentration of power in the Presidency, resulting in a phenomenon referred to as *presidencialismo*. The power of the president and his Presidency extended beyond constitutionally endorsed powers to what Camp (2003: 172) labels "meta" constitutional powers. Mexico was a meta-presidentialism, meaning that the president was not bound by law or much else except for a limited six year term (Philip 2002: 132). The president controlled the decision-making process in the Federal Congress and was at once chief executive and chief legislator. In addition, the judiciary had neither the authority nor the independence to keep presidential power in check. Given the importance of presidentialism in Mexico, the president's personal style of ruling had a disproportionate impact on politics and society.

Philip (2002: 131) argues that Mexico was characterised by strong presidentialism (emphasising the importance of the president and the executive) and a weak party system. I contend otherwise, yes Mexico certainly had strong presidentialism, but this was a result of the hegemonic party system, and the access to power the party system afforded the president. As noted previously, Weldon (1997: 227) attributes the power of the president to a unified government, where the ruling party controls the Presidency and the legislature; a disciplined ruling party; and a president acknowledged as leader of the ruling party. In addition, the hegemonic party system is what made the formal laws for the separation of powers obsolete, and what rendered political and civil society weak and ineffective. Furthermore, Diaz-Cayeros *et al* (2003: 6) point out that the president was the leader of the political party, and members of the executive pursued their careers as party members. Therefore, the

“historic power of the president [was] intimately related to the PRI’s ability to maintain its hegemonic control of Mexican politics” (p. 6). Thus, when the power of the president is discussed it is done with the acknowledgement that his ‘room to manoeuvre’ was based on the ability of the party to ensure a majority of electoral support.

The primary voice in the decision-making process was the executive branch generally, but the Presidency specifically. It was understood that those who had access to the president were more successful in influencing decisions than those who had contact with members of Cabinet. The legislative branch had even less influence on the decision-making process. The Congress was reduced to revising and approving the president’s legislative programme (Langston 2002: 64). The explanation for this was that each legislator who was a member of the PRI was indebted to the political leadership, and indirectly to the president, for his or her position (Camp 2003: 104-105). If the legislator desired a future public career, he needed to follow presidential directives without questioning them. Further explanation will be given under the section *political leadership selection*.

The PRI controlled the legislative branch accounting for more than 90% of the district seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and all Senate seats until 1988 (Camp 2003: 175). Within the Congress, opposition could criticise the government and its policies, but their objections would rarely affect the final legislation (Cornelius 1996). The frustration of powerlessness was not limited to the opposition. Many deputies within the PRI itself complained that decisions were made in an authoritarian way by the leadership and they as individuals played a very minor role (Camp 2003: 175). The president had the authority to initiate legislation and was able to introduce bills directly without having to get members of the Congress to introduce the legislation. The legislative body was effectively reduced to revising and approving the president’s legislative programme. This was despite the fact that according to Article 17 of the Constitution the president, members of Congress and state legislators could introduce bills. Most bills passed by the Congress were presidential initiatives, and the majority of the bills submitted by the president would be passed by the Congress. The president also had the authority to veto legislation in its entirety or in part, although he could not veto constitutional amendments.

Article 74 of the Constitution requires the president to submit a budget for all government expenditures to the Chamber of Deputies each year. According to the formal, constitutional laws, the Chamber of Deputies was to have extraordinary powers over the budget, and exclusive rights to approve and amend the budget submitted by the president. The president thus received funding requests from all ministries and agencies, and then submitted these to the Chamber for authorisation of expenditures. In reality, between 1928 and 1999, the Chamber of Deputies always approved the budget sent by the president (Weldon 2002: 238). The president also had enormous discretionary power over where the money was actually spent, resulting in budgetary authorisations rarely reflecting actual expenditures. In 1993, a PRI deputy exclaimed: “It is evident that it is not up to [the legislature] to formulate the federal budget, nor generate alternative proposals” (quoted in Weldon 1997: 239). Thus, the legislature was impotent in the policy-making and budgetary process, in its role of keeping the executive accountable, and the majority of its members, being from the PRI party, were beholden to the president and the party, making their line of loyalty run to the party and not the electorate.

In addition, the judiciary had neither the authority nor the independence to keep presidential power in check. On national issues, the federal judiciary took its cue from the presiding president. Furthermore, any presidential decrees or legislation enacted at the request of the president were never found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. This lack of independence was largely due to the manner of selection of the Supreme Court justices. The 1917 Constitution stated that Supreme Court justices were to be elected by majority vote in a secret ballot by both Chambers of Congress. However, this election process was abandoned in 1928, and justices began to be named by the President and confirmed by the Senate (Weldon 1997: 242).

Mexico’s highly concentrated presidential authority was partially limited by prohibiting reelection at the end of a six-year term -*sexenio*. This provision has been a bedrock of political stability in Mexico since the 1920s. Nonetheless, whilst in power these presidents exercised enormous power as heads of state and the political party. In reality, the constitutional ban on consecutive re-election, did not serve to break the power of the president, instead it meant that the national leadership of the ruling party

became the co-ordinator of a massive system of office rotation, capable of satisfying ambition-driven and office-seeking politicians (Nacif 2006: 93). In addition, since the president had the power to remove or relocate those in official positions and to determine who his successor would be, loyalty was maintained during his incumbency.

The PRI's leadership selection process meant that the political future of office holders within government, whether it be the executive, the legislature or the judiciary, were dependent on the president and ultimately the party. Thus, the line of loyalty ran internally to the party and the executive, and not externally to the electorate. This mechanism of control served to strengthen the power of the president and the executive, and severely distorted the constitutionally-endorsed separation of powers.

### 3.1.3 Political leadership selection

The power of the president, the executive and party leadership, in general, was most evident in the recruitment of political leadership, with significant consequences. Sponsored selection occurred where political recruitment was dominated by incumbent officeholders (Camp 2003: 104). In the case of the PRI, until the mid-1990s the majority of decision-making positions were filled through sponsored selection, regardless of whether the appointment was appointive or elective.

National party leaders essentially controlled the nominating procedures and thus determined the futures of members of Congress, so the incentives of deputies, senators and others became aligned with the interests of the PRI (Weldon 1997: 242). In addition, the no-reelection rule, where presidents and state governors could only serve one term and members of Congress could not serve consecutive terms, tied representatives' futures to the executive and party leadership (Wallis 2003: 27). Thus, their next appointment and whether it was a promotion or not, depended on whether they were considered to be loyal and good party members.

The PRI coordinated the candidate-selection process for most major elective posts and it could effectively guarantee that the PRI candidate would win either by fraud or by sheer majority in the Electoral College. This power to assign seats provided a



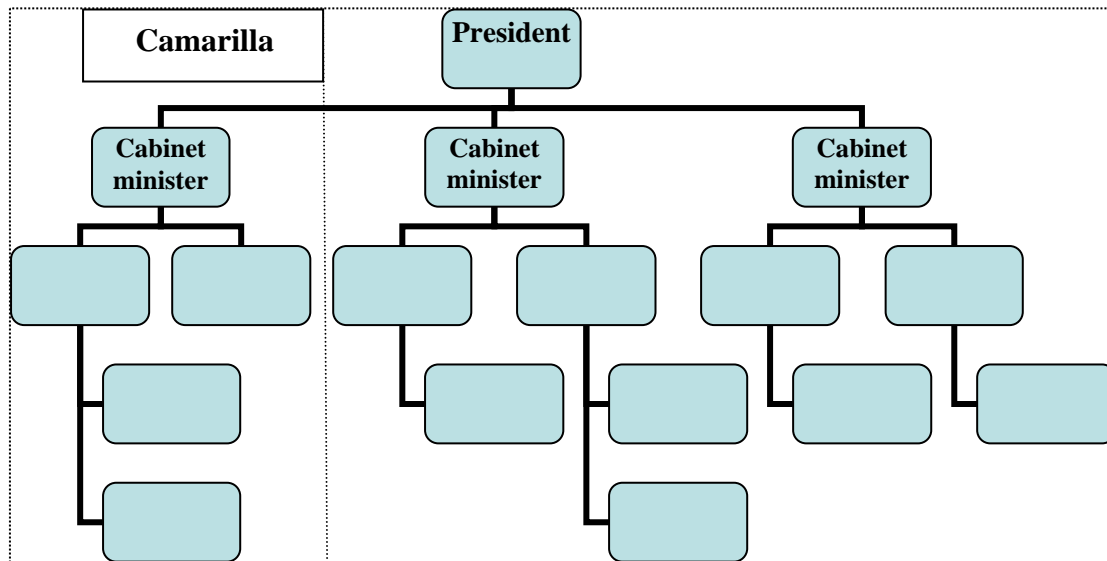
disincentive for electoral defections from the ruling party. The central committee (CEN) of the party could also easily dismiss ‘disloyal’ members. With the PRI winning every election by a significant margin, expulsion from the party was a major disincentive. Initially candidates were nominated by a decentralised primary election. However, the CEN would often intervene in the vote count or in the accreditation process. The rules were changed in 1937 and party conventions, which are easier to control, were introduced. The higher committees could veto nominations. By the 1990s the party used a closed-list system of nominations, with complete control over access to the ballot under the banner of PRI (Weldon 1997: 245).

### 3.1.3.1 *Camarillas*

The appointment of state governors and the successor president was made by the incumbent president. In turn, local and state governments were staffed by individuals who owed their careers and future mobility, to state and national leaders, respectively. Thus, if a government official decided to make politics his or her career they would develop contacts with other ambitious figures, generally a superior in their own agency or in a related organisation. That person would then initiate their rise within the national bureaucracy. The Mexican political class was essentially characterised by a network of client-patron relations, where the ‘patrons’ provided protection, political opportunities and other benefits in return for the ‘clients’ providing loyalty and services including voter mobilisation and political control. These client-patron networks tended to come together at the apex of the national authority – the Presidency. A vertical grouping of several different levels of patron-client relationships is known in Mexico as *camarillas* (Cornelius 1996). These *camarillas* were bound together by loyalty to the *camarilla* leader. This political clique determined, more than any other variable, who would ascend to the top of the political ladder and what posts they would fill. Change of each new presidential administration amounted to one major *camarilla* being substituted with another. As a *camarilla* leader moved, so did his key supporters. Shifting loyalties when one’s political mentor had reached a ceiling was a common feature of the system as was being associated with multiple *camarillas*.

**Figure 4: Client-patron structures within the Mexican political elite**

*Illustration adapted from Cornelius (1996: 41)*



Under PRI rule the formal structure and constitutional rules of Mexico's political system shed little light on the political structure or how political leadership selection occurred in reality. Instead the structure and process was largely determined by the centralisation of political authority and incumbent selection. The implication of this structure and these processes was that accountability and responsiveness of officials to their constituencies was severely weakened. Unquestioning loyalty was the means of access to political upward mobility, not accountability and responsiveness to one's electorate.

### 3.1.4 Corporatism

Mexico used a remarkable structure to channel most of the influential interest groups' demands, ensuring the government was able to monitor these demands and mediate among them. The PRI government sought to act as final arbiter and to make certain that no one group predominated (Camp 2003: 131). This idea of a corporatist structure was inherited from Spain, and was largely devised and put into place by President Cárdenas in the 1930s. However, there is evidence of it even prior to this under President Calles in the 1920s, when he forged an alliance with the Mexican Labour Confederation, making its leader, Luis Morones, his labour minister (Cook 1999: 246).

As defined in chapter two, corporatism refers to a formal relationship between selected groups, and the government or state. The type of corporatism evident in Mexico was probably more closely related with fascist theory, where the state would dominate partial interests. This links it with the first view of corporatism discussed in chapter two, which states that corporatism contrasts with pluralism, which implies competition between groups. In return for the influence that Mexico's peak associations enjoyed they had to ensure compliance from their members. It was a top-down approach, where policy-making was done in private negotiations and electoral representation through Parliament became less important. According to Levy (1989: 480) "[s]tate corporatism goes hand-in-hand with hierarchical, authoritarian rule inside mass institutions such as unions" as well as limited mass participation - only that which is restricted to official channels and patrimonial networks is acknowledged.

The core of the corporatist relationship was political reciprocity. In return for their loyalty to the government and turning out their members to vote for the PRI in electoral contests, they could expect the government to represent some of their interests, receive material subsidies, and gain access to political appointments for some of its members (Camp 2003: 158; Cook 1999: 246). Rodríguez (1998: 74) refers to corporatism as being "a form of social control." For corporatism to be effective though, dominance of the ruling party was necessary to ensure access to state resources so as to provide economic rewards and political posts to those favoured individuals and groups.

In Mexico, the corporatist structure was based on the previously mentioned three sectors: the National Workers' Confederation, the National Peasant Confederation, and the National Confederation of Popular Organisations. Two practises provided for the corporatist structure: the collective affiliation of union members to the party; and the quota system, where "each sector had a fixed share of the party slate of candidates to elective office" (Nacif 2006: 94). They therefore took into the 'fold' all the influential people. The leaders of these groupings were not independent of the government, but essentially part of the government, holding government-sponsored positions. For example, between 1979 and 1988, 21 to 25 percent of the PRI's

congressional candidates were labour leaders (Camp 2003: 146). Union leaders thus held positions in the party and tended to run as PRI candidates (Collier 1999: 221). The organisations the PRI controlled were therefore considered to be “quasi-governmental interest organisations” (Camp 2003: 131).

Strong political links to unions and peasant organisations were initially based on the political elite’s professed support for goals of social justice and racial equality. Later these corporatist organisations, in particular the official union movement, became mechanisms of social dominance. Official union leaders did have some bargaining leverage in terms of long-term wage and employment benefits, but they were also highly dependent on the ruling elites for their career advancement and access to material benefits (Kaufman 1999: 176). The government would promote new unions and leaders to keep established unions in line. It also subsidised favoured unions, establishing a dependency relationship, since most unions were unable to charge dues. In particular, the government used their corporatist relations with unions to prevent the mobilisation of large-scale opposition. According to Camp (1984: 4): “The government treats labour as a firm parent would a teenager. When it needs support in family crises and labour quickly provides it, it rewards the action. But when labour strays away from the family fold, it is scolded in a variety of ways. The government, not organised labour, controls the relationship.” Collier (1999: 222) similarly argues that the alliance deprived the labor movement of autonomous action but retained it as a support group, thus providing legitimacy for the regime. These corporatist arrangements therefore helped ensure industrial peace and political support – a largely acquiescent civil society.

The early incorporation of mass organisations promoted stability, even if it did remove meaningful interest aggregation and articulation. Due to its effective methods of co-optation, the regime was able to use fewer repressive means as evidenced in other authoritarian systems in Latin America. However, as pervasive and formidable as the corporatist controls were, they were still far from complete. The trade unions did at times bargain hard for benefits, and some leaders were critical of regime policies (Levy 1989: 466). There were also some business associations, including the Confederation of Industrial Chambers that worked with government because of mutual self-interest rather than coercion and co-optation. These associations were

economically strong and politically able to influence regulatory trade. Levy (1989: 467) juxtaposes business and labour relations with the state, highlighting that the balance between freedom and corporatist controls tended to depend on social class. He argues that intellectuals and other professionals were freer than workers to manage their own affairs and criticise government. All the same, the ruling party's centralised control over the state resources and its predominant influence over public policies and political leadership appointments provided it with the necessary leverage and means to maintain a very effective system of corporatism, patronage and co-optation.

### 3.1.5 Institutional arrangements and electoral amendments

In Mexico, the electoral machinery was effectively controlled by the government (Wallis 2003: 18). The PRI manipulated the electoral procedures, mechanisms and rules to favour its dominant position and to limit the threat of political opposition (Langston 2002: 64).

Firstly, the PRI put in place mechanisms to dissuade internal dissents from defecting and forming alternative parties. During the heydays of PRI rule, elections were won by the ruling party by a large margin and official participation rates were high. For example, during the 1976 presidential elections, the PRI's candidate ran virtually unopposed and won 94% of the valid votes cast, while the PRI won every seat in the federal Chamber of Deputies and controlled every state governorship (Domínguez 1999: 1). This was a deliberate strategy of the PRI. Emphasis was placed on mobilising voters, even when elections were not competitive, so as to deter elites from splitting. According to Magaloni (2006: 4) the PRI "developed complex networks of organizations and activities to mobilize voter turnout and distributed particularistic material rewards –everything from land titles to construction materials to public sector jobs – prior to elections." The high voter turnout was intended to signal the regime's strength and deter politicians defecting from the ruling party. The threat of electoral fraud also served to reduce incentives to split. Although electoral fraud, with the exception of the 1988 presidential elections, played more of a symbolic role, intending to convince elites of the ruling party's might (Magaloni 2006: 2). Besides mechanisms used to discourage internal dissent, the PRI's leaders, in 1940 and 1952, made institutional changes which increased the costs of registering new parties, thus

increasing the cost of leaving the party (exit) and increasing entry costs to the electoral market (Langston 2002: 65-66; Magaloni 2006: 7). In addition, support for alternative parties or candidates (besides those selected by the incumbent president) was stifled by a mixture of threats, accusations and payoffs (Langston 2002: 64).

Secondly, the PRI used electoral mechanisms and electoral reforms, as a means of legitimising the party, and to hinder genuine opposition competition, whilst guaranteeing at least some form of opposition to run against. These reforms should thus not be confused with genuine attempts to democratise the process. Regular elections served to legitimate the regime, even where there was decreasing space for competition. If they occurred regularly and on schedule, and there was at least one legally registered opposition party, elections maintained an illusion of political competition. In 1976, the PRI's presidential candidate ran unopposed, temporarily transforming the hegemonic system into a one-party system. This signalled a crisis of legitimacy for the party, which was largely based on its claim to having popular consent given through regular elections. In reaction to this crisis and to enhance the presence of opposition and channel the grievances of anti-regime movements through the electoral process, the PRI enacted important electoral reforms in 1977 (Greene 2007: 86). To maintain legitimacy the PRI even went as far as enacting a number of electoral reforms between 1946 and 1988. In some instances these reforms became necessary to ensure the participation of opposition parties. Of interest is that of the federal electoral reforms the most progressive changes occurred when opposition was at its weakest not when they had sufficient power to lobby for electoral liberalisation (Middlebrook 2004: 5). Examples include the 1946 Electoral Law, which reformed the electoral laws requiring that a new party needed to have 30 000 adherents, it needed to be registered for a year to participate in elections and a new party had to be registered by the Ministry of the Interior (*Gobernación*). The Federal Electoral Commission (CFE) was placed under the aegis of the *Gobernación* prior to these reforms, thus there was no independent electoral commission to protect opposition interests. Government control over election convening organisations was a key feature of Mexican electoral politics. In 1988, a mixed proportional system was introduced, with 300 single-member seats and 200 proportional representation seats. In these elections the PRI won only 260 of the 500 seats, leading it to change the electoral

system in 1991 so as to ensure it would win with a majority again (Nacif 2006: 96; Weldon 1997: 245). That year the PRI won 62% of the seats.

Thirdly, where elections or the outcome of electoral reforms did not produce the desired result, the PRI would commit electoral fraud with relative impunity. Amongst the methods used included: stuffing ballot boxes; intimidating potential opposition supporters by threatening to remove government benefits; changing poll stations at the last minute; disqualifying opposition poll watchers; manipulating voter registration lists and transporting PRI supporters to voting stations. If all the above did not ensure a PRI victory then there was sufficient control of the vote counting to ensure the manipulation of the vote tallies if needed. Votes were often added to the PRI column, which in some results meant there were more votes for the PRI candidate than there were registered voters. Electoral fraud culminated in the infamous ‘stolen’ presidential election of 1988 (Wallis 2003: 23).

And fourth, the attempt to capture broad-based support often coincides with the delegitimation of the opposition. Until the 1990s Mexican voters were exposed to a relatively homogenous media message “designed to generate support for the ruling party and discredit the political opposition” (Lawson 2002: 159). According to Cornelius (1996: 75) a significant obstacle to a realistic possibility of an alternation in power at the national level was “the PRI’s ability to cast doubt on any opposition party’s capacity to govern the country.” In the 1988, 1991, and 1994 national elections the PRI used fear-inducing strategies, emphasising that economic conditions would deteriorate and violence would erupt if any other party were to win.

The PRI controlled the elections, the electoral process, electoral convening organisations, discredited opposition parties and then fraudulently manipulated the outcomes if necessary to ensure their dominance. It nevertheless, ensured there was always a semblance of opposition, not to genuinely contend for power, but as a means to legitimise the system. If the opposition gained too much support though, it would use electoral reforms, electoral fraud, and even delegitimation, to limit its growth. The PRI itself was a vote-getting machine and its ability to maintain electoral support was a necessity for the maintenance of its hegemony. So long as the PRI had a majority of electoral support it controlled the executive, legislature and the judiciary;



it controlled access to state finances; it controlled the leverage for policy-making and electoral laws; and it controlled the means to allocate and dismiss political appointments.

### 3.2 ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC MONOPOLY

Until the 1980s the PRI pursued the import-substitution industrialisation (ISI) model of economic growth, relying on the domestic market as the outlet for nationally produced industrial goods. It was a highly protectionist and interventionist model based on state co-ordination. With ISI policies, regional and local economies were geared toward the center (Diaz-Cayeros *et al* 2003: 17). Due to policies such as multiple exchange rates, tariffs, permits, subsidised credit, regulations on foreign direct investment and the transfer of technology, producers had little hope of survival “unless they courted the central government” (p. 17). The government thus held an enormous amount of control over the economic levers of the state, with negative implications. Magaloni’s (2006: 37) findings from her study of Mexico indicate that: “the more fiscal resources, subsidies, and economic regulations are under the government’s control, the more leeway the autocrat will have to buy off electoral support and deter voter exit.”

The consequences of centrally-controlled state finances included: enabling the PRI to build a massive patronage system, this ensured the acquiescence of political officials, civil society, businesses, and society in general. Secondly, its practically unhindered access to state resources led to it spending unaccounted, massive funds on its own electoral campaigns. And, thirdly, its economic monopoly meant that the bulk of the state and municipal governments’ budgets were allocated to them by the PRI-controlled national government, thereby guaranteeing loyalty to the centre.

#### 3.2.1 Patronage

The PRI established a massive web of client-patron linkages based on its almost unhindered access to state resources. An example of this client-patron relationship between government and society, was evident in government-media relations. Although there appeared to be plurality due to the numerous media outlets, many of

which were private, dependence on the government was maintained through official control of newsprint, government advertising and the need for licences. State-media relations tended to be based on mutual self-interest, reflecting overlapping elite interests. The media received government advertising revenue and corrupt stipends for reporters, in return for favourable reporting, and the lack of disseminating the information a citizenry would need for responsible democracy with accountability<sup>90</sup>. Although the media was not directly censored, heavy economic penalties were used for those engaging in criticism or investigative reporting that embarrassed the president. In addition, government advertising was a primary source of revenue for most of the newspapers and magazines, so this revenue could be withheld from offending publications. In 1994, amongst the five principal newspapers in Mexico City, 40.8% of their coverage of the national election was devoted to PRI, 11.6% to the PAN and 17.8% to the PRD (Cornelius 1996: 57).

Television was practically monopolised by a private firm, *Televisa*, known for its close working relationship with the PRI-government regime (Cornelius 1996). *Televisa* monopoly's historical alliance with the PRI was a pillar of the PRI's rule from the 1950s through the mid-1990s, especially since television was the main source of political information for most Mexicans.

In addition, through patronage (a notion which incorporates government transfers, allocating public rents in the form of land reform, loans, public employment, elective offices, and government provided services), the PRI managed to appease a wide range of interest groups, and citizens, thereby maintaining a broad-base of support. In 1994 Magaloni (2006: 28) interviewed a 65-year old Mexican peasant who told her: "I have always voted for the PRI because only this party can win. Why should I support the opposition if it can't win? They told me that this time they would also give us checks [he was referring to cash transfers within the then recently instituted Farmers Direct Support Program (PROCAMPO) designed to support small-scale farmers]. I must thus vote for the PRI to get my check [sic]." This example aptly represented the

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<sup>90</sup> Where there was evidence of more critical reporting, there was also evidence of elite pluralism. Those newspapers, academic books and magazines tended to be more expensive and appealed to the educated minority. But after the repression of the leading independent newspaper in 1976, there followed increasing media freedom characterised by investigative reporting and public opinion polls and calls for widespread democratisation. (Levy 1989)

reason why most of Mexico's poor voted for the PRI. Vote-buying<sup>91</sup>, facilitated by a centralised government, was primarily directed at the poor, since the poor were the most dependent upon the party's spoils for their survival and thus making them the most loyal followers (Magaloni 2006: 29). The ruling party also gave liberal access to government spoils to the members of the so-called "revolutionary family", rewarding them with opportunities to do business "under the umbrella of the state and with profitable contracts" (p. 5).

The articulation of interests by labour unions, businesses and the like was also often done through client-patron linkages. These networks served to fragment popular demands into highly individualised or small-scale requests that could be dealt with on a case by case scenario. Thus officials were rarely confronted with broad, organised demands by independent organisations. This clientelistic structure enabled the distribution of public services and benefits in a highly selective and often arbitrary manner. At the same time it made it difficult for dissident leaders to organise people on the basis of shared grievances (Cornelius 1996).

Since patronage was a key device in consolidating and maintaining dominance, the PRI's support was later shaken by deteriorating economic conditions, urbanisation and changes in government policies – points made later under the discussion of the decline of the hegemonic party.

### 3.2.2 Party funding

The PRI's hegemonic position enabled it to have virtually unlimited access to government funds in order to finance its political campaigns. Until 1962, there was no regulation of private donations, no reporting requirement, no oversight of party financing, and no prohibition against government agencies contributing to political campaigns (Greene 2007: 109). With no laws requiring the reporting of campaign income and expenditures no one knew how money went from the state coffers to the PRI. The PRI's advantages were thus "absolute" (p. 109). The 1977 electoral reform, included language that appeared to encourage a level playing field by stating that "in

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<sup>91</sup> The INC similarly secured 'vote-banks' through clientelist linkages that pervaded the local and regional party structure (Spieß 2002: 17).

federal electoral processes, national political parties should have equitable access to the minimum needed to sustain activities directed at obtaining votes” (Constitution of the United States of Mexico, Article 41, paragraph 5). However, “equitable” and “minimum” were not defined in the law, but instead it was left to the Secretary of the Interior, a presidential appointee, to decide the amount and distribution of public funds (p. 109). Therefore, even these initial electoral changes proved to be of little hindrance to the PRI’s access to resources.

An obvious implication of centralising of state power and the indiscriminate access it gives to state revenues, is a blurring of the lines separating the party and state. Mexico’s PRI had an appetite for massive and illegal campaign expenditures. Some PRI governors openly used public resources to garner support for PRI candidates for state and local offices. Such was the power of incumbency that they could merely brush off criticism from opposition parties (Cornelius 1996). An example being a charge brought by the PRD against the PRI governor of the state of Tabasco, who had spent between \$40 and \$80 million on his 2004 campaign – approximately twenty times the legally allowed amount (Lawson 2002: 144). Thus, access to state resources enabled the PRI to bolster its own position by using state funds for its campaign financing.

### 3.2.3 Government funding structures

The PRI’s economic control also extended to ensuring loyalty within the different levels of government. Within the government the Secretariat of Treasury held considerable influence. Under Cárdenas the authority of the Treasury was enhanced, by permitting him to act as arbiter in the allocation of funds to other agencies and to federal governors (Camp 2003: 170). Thus, the president and the treasury secretary became the key figures in the distribution of economic resources, and in the determining of financial policies. The PRI effectively controlled a monopoly over the distribution of fiscal resources.

Revenues were collected by the executive branch and then reallocated back to the states. Prior to 1997 the federal government had control over 85% of those revenues (Camp 2003: 181), with state governments controlling less than 12% and *municipios*

share of public spending being barely 3%. By 1994 this had changed to 4% by the *municipios* and the state's share increasing to 16% (Cornelius 1996: 32). This centralisation of revenue collection meant that subnational and municipal governments were dependent on the central government for revenue transfers. There was virtually no regional or local tax collection, and thus no autonomy from the central government. In response to calls for greater autonomy and independent revenue-raising by municipal governments, the federal ministries, especially the Treasury Ministry, would argue that the *municipios* lacked the administrative capacity to effectively use additional resources.

In their study of a Mexican municipality predisposed to support the opposition rather than the PRI, Diaz-Cayeros *et al* (2003: 12) found that citizens voted for the PRI candidate for fear of losing their budgetary allocation. This was the direct result of a centralised fiscal system where municipalities received the bulk of their funds from higher level (PRI-controlled) governments. Depending on the outcome of the elections, the federal government would decide whether or not to punish the municipality by withdrawing budgetary funds. Since municipalities were heavily dependent on federal transfers, the PRI had the power to disrupt a local opposition government's ability to govern and provide basic services (Diaz-Cayeros *et al* 2003: 13). Thus, the use of fiscal resources to force electoral allegiance proved to be sufficient for hindering the opposition from winning. This fiscal arrangement rendered the constitutionally-based federal structures impotent. Again, since these tiers of government were dependent on the central government, their loyalty was horizontal and not vertical to the electorate.

***In summary***, Mexican politics, the regime, and the party system became practically synonymous with the ruling party. 'Official party' candidates monopolised almost every elected public office, government resources were freely used for party objectives and the PRI dominated the public policy agenda (Craig and Cornelius 1995: 249). The PRI used its access to the state to buttress its organisation and acquire mass support while limiting opportunities for other parties. Its consequences were an ineffective opposition, an impotent civil society and the destruction of the reality of a separation of powers. The PRI government was highly adept at dividing, buying off, co-opting, and if deemed necessary, repressing dissent. The system was subsequently

characterised by a low level of civil disobedience. A national opinion survey, conducted in 1994, showed that 55% of the respondents agreed with the statement that “people in Mexico are afraid to express what they think about politics and government,” while only 38% said they felt Mexicans were free to express their views (quoted in Cornelius 1996: 55). In other words, the consolidation of the PRI’s hegemonic rule, based on the creation of political and economic monopolies, was at the expense of voice and accountability. The two became mutually exclusive.

#### 4. DECLINE OF THE HEGEMONIC PARTY

In July 2000 PAN’s candidate, Vincente Fox, won Mexico’s presidential elections. How did this victory come to pass? The decline of Mexico’s hegemonic party system proceeded at a slow pace (Wallis 2003: 18). Whitehead (in Nacif 2006: 91) refers to it as a case of “transition by stealth.” It was the culmination of a complex process of institutional reform, internal pressures for reform, a changing international arena, and cataclysmic events, largely characterising the change as “a case of transition through liberalisation” (Nacif 2006: 91). Amongst the reasons cited as sources of weakness to the PRI’s hegemony include those outside its corporatist arrangements, namely a growing middle class and urban-informal sector. Ultimately though, since the PRI’s hegemony was built on its ability to maintain two monopolies – political and economic- its decline would be the result of an eroding of these two monopolies. And, therefore a decentralising of the system and an opening of space for alternative voices.

**Table 4: Key dates and events in the decline of the PRI’s hegemony**

Date	Event
1968	First crisis in the rule of the PRI. Student uprisings against the ‘authoritarian rule’. Between 300 and 1000 students killed. Student demonstration in Tlatelolco, Mexico City, during the Olympic Games is fired upon by Mexican security forces. Hundreds of protestors are killed or wounded. The extent of the violence shocks the country. First time PRI overtly uses methods of violent repression. PRI-government faced with a choice: to continue to use repression to ensure control or adapt and start reforming. PRI

	chooses to reform and open space for opposition. Opening of political space began at local level.
1982	Due to initial headiness from the oil boom, government overspends and takes the country into an economic crisis. Government nationalises banks.
1985	Earthquake in Mexico City, takes approximately 10 000 lives. Inadequacy of government's response leads to disillusionment.
1988	<p>First major split in the PRI with the establishment of the Democratic Current (CD).</p> <p>Partido Acción Nacional's (PAN) presidential candidate promotes the idea that PAN can really participate in the elections as a potential winner of political power. Charismatic leader who fiercely takes on the PRI-system.</p> <p>PRI eventually wins federal elections through fraudulent means. The "system crashed" just prior to the release of election results. Both Cardenas and (PAN) were strong contending candidates. PRI begins to realise it is possible for them to lose the elections.</p> <p>PAN realises internal changes within the system (for example, electoral reforms), had to happen before the power of PRI could be challenged.</p>
1989	PAN wins Baja California's gubernational elections. First time the PRI loses a gubernational election.
1994	<p>Salinas presidential period marked by economic crisis.</p> <p>Assassination of PRI's presidential candidate. His assassination followed a speech in which he promised to reform the political system.</p> <p>A guerrilla rebellion in Chiapas led by the Zapatista National Liberation Army is brutally suppressed by government troops. The</p>



	rebels oppose NAFTA and want greater recognition for Indian rights. The government recognises the Zapatista National Liberation Front (EZLN).
1997	<p>Electoral Commission becomes genuinely independent, thus the first year of independent elections since 1929.</p> <p>The PRI suffers heavy losses in elections and loses its overall majority in the lower house of Parliament for the first time since 1929. First time elections are held in Mexico City. PRI previously selected the governor. PRD wins the gubernational elections.</p> <p>PAN's candidate, Vincente Fox, begins campaign for the Presidency.</p>
2000	Peak of series of democratising and liberalising events as PAN's presidential candidate wins elections.

#### 4.1 ERODING OF THE POLITICAL MONOPOLY

##### 4.1.1 Institutional changes

Mexico, like Taiwan, held regular elections for half a century before the victory of the opposition leader. Its transition was one of stealth where the “gradual liberalization of electoral conditions resulted in a democratic transition” (Middlebrook 2004: 2). In both countries “it turned out that elections instituted to enhance the ruling party’s legitimacy eventually paved the way for its loss of power many decades later” (Solinger 2001: 32). The reforms which the PRI negotiated with opposition parties dispersed power away from the ruling party, eventually requiring it to share power with the opposition (Nacif 2006: 97).

In Mexico and Taiwan, electoral reforms were a key factor in the opening of space for voice outside the ruling party. In Mexico, the initial electoral reforms, between 1946 and 1977, were elite-driven and controlled from above. For a while, the governing party’s high level of institutionalisation and broad base of support protected it against

serious contention (Middlebrook 2004: 4). In subsequent years, the nature of the transition process distinctly changed. An electoral reform in 1977 established a mixed proportional representation and single-district simple majority system in the lower house of the Congress and in the state legislatures. For the first time smaller parties were able to win congressional seats (Langston 2002: 77). 100 of the 400 seats in the Chamber of Deputies were reserved for opposition parties. These seats, though, had to be divided proportionately amongst these parties thus limiting the share of any one of them (Solinger 2001: 34). Nonetheless, it was the beginning of a process of unravelling of the PRI's power.

Again, the PRI's electoral reforms in 1986, 1990 and 1993 sought to preserve the PRI's dominance against increasing opposition forces. The 1986 electoral reforms gave the PRI a majority on the CFE, resulting in them no longer needing votes of smaller parties on the commission to win electoral disputes. Thus the PRI was no longer willing to give benefits to the smaller parties for their support. These parties were, in turn, willing to 'punish' the PRI and support alternative coalitions. The 1986 reform introduced proportional representation into Mexican state legislatures, ensuring that opposition parties would have some political role in every state in Mexico. The additional representation provided a catalyst for the organisational development of the opposition, which meant there was a possibility of political life for defectors from the PRI. In turn, the incentive structures within the PRI were changed weakening its internal discipline (Philip 2002: 138).

A further challenge came to the PRI dominance in 1988 during the presidential elections, from a breakaway faction of the ruling party – the CD led by Cárdenas. To counter Cárdenas' support, the PRI resorted to widespread fraud. The questionable legitimacy of this election provided an important spur to initiatives calling for political reform. Despite electoral fraud, the PRI's share of the vote still dropped from 77% in 1982 to 51% in 1988 (Philip 2002: 139). Due to the ballot rigging its share probably fell by more. All the same, the PRI still managed to maintain its ruling position. In agreement with Philip (2002: 143), "it is less plausible to attribute the continuing success of the PRI to its local popularity [than] to its ability to maintain 'extra-constitutional' forms of control." Opposition forces were not yet strong enough to remove the governing elite's stronghold but "the balance of forces between the

regime and the opposition had begun to shift substantially” (Middlebrook 2004: 6). “The PRI no longer enjoyed an air of invincibility” (Philip 2002: 140).

Mexico’s Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) had initially fallen under the control of the Ministry of Interior with little independence. A series of reforms between 1990 and 1996 were enacted that gradually gave autonomy to federal electoral bodies and established minimal public reporting for campaign income and expenditure (Cornelius 1996; Middlebrook 2004: 6). It also set limits on individual and corporate contributions to electoral campaigns<sup>92</sup>. In the months prior to the 2000 general elections the IFE asserted its independence as it attempted to build public confidence in the electoral process and create the necessary conditions for competition by ensuring transparency in the balloting procedures and by restraining the misuse of government funds to further particular candidates and parties (p. 6). The regulation of electoral expenditures and the financing of political parties were transferred to the IFE in 1990. These reforms had positive implications for the competitiveness and equity of the parties’ electoral campaigns, ensuring a fairer playing field for the 1998-2000 period (Serrano 1998: 9).

In July 1997, the PRI failed to retain a majority of the seats in the federal lower house, meaning that the lower house was no longer able to function as a reliable ‘handmaiden’ for the president (Collier 1999: 242). Thus, an important step had been taken in the direction towards a real separation of powers.

As time passed the degree of openness and authenticity of the electoral contests grew, with the eventual alternation of power. It is apparent that opposition, of itself, in Mexico and Taiwan would never have been a serious threat had it not been for electoral reforms. Although it should also be acknowledged that in both cases reforms were prodded by opposition protests, even if the hegemonic party’s motivations for reform were guided by the desire to silence or co-opt opposition and appear democratic to the rest of the world.

#### 4.1.2 Growth of Opposition

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<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, despite no longer being able to access government funds, the PRI’s privileged access to finance from the private sector ensured it had significantly more than its competitors.

Post-revolutionary Mexican politics always included opposition parties. In the 1950s and 1960s, the heyday of the PRI's dominance, they functioned merely as satellites of the ruling party; as recipients of state finances in return for their political acquiescence. Purportedly it was only PAN that was neither incorporated, nor co-opted and did not collude with the PRI. However, even into the late 1980s PAN was little more than a "symbolic counterweight" than an actual contender (Solinger 2001: 33).

Middlebrook (2004: 9) asserts that "opposition parties were among the most important actors pushing for liberalized electoral laws and autonomous electoral institutions." However, it was really only after the 1977 electoral reforms that opposition parties began to enjoy increasing electoral strength, voice and importance. They then began to play important roles as vehicles for electoral protests against party dominance and as partners in major socio-political conflicts. From the late 1970s opposition parties' focus turned to electoral competition. Important consequences of this strategic focus was the provision of essential leverage in pushing forward the liberalising of electoral rules and processes, and the pushing for an opening of competitive party systems at the subnational level as well. From the 1980s onwards they had begun to turn into actual rivals challenging for power (Serrano 1998: 7). They began to emerge as channels for expressing public discontent with political and economic policies. Even so, at the root of opposition development lay the gradual changes to the electoral laws (p. 7).

During the 1990s, competitive politics at the state and municipal levels became increasingly common. This was partly due to opposition parties linking with civil society organisations whose demands often included electoral transparency (Middlebrook 2004: 10). As competitive elections became more prominent it became evident that there were viable alternatives to the PRI and citizens became accustomed to the possibility of an alternation in power.

#### **4.1.3 Factions within the hegemonic party**

A common tendency of the dominant or hegemonic party is to fall victim to its own success. Due to the strength of its position and its attractiveness to a broad-base of support, factions tend to develop within the party itself, which leads to an inward-looking perspective, decreasing concern with policy and often, a growth in corruption. For example, Nyblade (2004: 11) explains the loss of power of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party in 1993 as the result of splits in the party; coalition bargaining amongst the opposition parties, which resulted in an eight-party coalition government; and a decline in popular support. The splinter parties obtained sufficient popular support in the subsequent election to deny the dominant party a parliamentary majority. In addition, declining popular support, forced the dominant party to compromise with opposition parties. In Taiwan, the KMT was weakened by splits that occurred in 1993 and mid-1999. The first split was led by a group that was predominantly mainlanders and traditionalists who favoured eventual unification with the mainland. Its leader, Premier Hau Pei-tsun was forced out of the KMT and thus formed his own party, the New Party. During the 2000 presidential campaigns James Soong, a party member with a large following, defected. The three-way split between Soong, the KMT and the DPP was a critical factor in the victory of the DPP, who only took 39 per cent of the vote to Soong's 37 per cent and the KMT's 23 per cent (Solinger 2001: 39).

Within Mexico's hegemonic system, a key risk to its sustained dominance also came from internal threats. An example being the 'Democratic Current', the leftist-oriented, populist section of the PRI opposed to President Madrid's austerity policies. In 1989 various segments of the left then formed the PRD. Consequences of the split included: a shift in the rural vote away from the PRI, and a signal was sent that the PRI could be challenged (Solinger 2001: 37).

For Mexico and Taiwan defections proved to be the clincher that precipitated the end of party dominance. When competitive and fair elections eventually happened there were at least three significant parties competing. In both countries "more of the voters cast their ballots against the winner than for him. Had the ruling party still contained the faction that split off from it, it would have had the majority" (Solinger 2001: 39). Magaloni (2006: 14) came to a similar conclusion in her study of Mexico – attributing the growth of opposition to be connected to PRI splits. Although some would argue

that these factions were primary factors in the ending of the party dominance, it is rather argued that in Mexico they merely played a part in the eventual dismantling of the PRI's political hegemony. As the PRI's support base diminished so too did its control over economic and political rewards and so continued the unravelling of its hegemony.

#### 4.1.4 Civil society

Philip (2002: 133) highlights the inability of civil society and opposition parties to impact Mexican politics until a certain level of democratisation and liberalisation had taken place. Even so, the growth of a more dynamic civil society significantly contributed to the momentum of the opening of Mexico's political space. Middlebrook (2004: 11) argues that the increasing public visibility and political importance of these civil society organisations can be attributed to responses to complex changes that occurred in Mexican urban society and responses to catalytic events: the 1982 debt crisis, incompetent government responses to the devastating earthquakes that hit Mexico City in 1985, and fraudulent presidential elections. Thus, in the 1980s civil society began to make demands for electoral transparency, increased accountability and the rule of law. A significant role player was the Catholic Church; it was actively involved in the establishment of non-governmental organisations, raised public consciousness and helped shape potential social leaders. Another important role-player was the press. From 1986 to 1988, the CD made use of Mexico's press to get out its message and amplify its 'voice'. The CD's leaders travelled the country widely to gain support. This together with exposure in the press gained them popularity with the general population (Langston 2002: 77). The print media's activities during this period became an important source of support for future such initiatives.

In the 1990s, organisations independent of the government's clientelist networks began to arise. They started to introduce a new complexity and uncertainty into the system. Organisations and movements spontaneously arose from the urban poor, peasants, and even some middle-class groups such as teachers and private agricultural producers – groups that the PRI-government had unsuccessfully been able to incorporate. Many of these movements arose in response to the economic crises of the

1980s and 1990s. These independent organisations also gained popularity as people became more and more disenchanted with the state-sanctioned ‘mass’ organisations. The sectoral organisations had begun to be viewed as corrupt, self-serving puppets of the state bureaucracy, providing no representation of their interests. As a result they began to flounder in their ability to mobilise votes, as was evident during the 1988 presidential elections, and so the mass-base support of the PRI began to wane. Without this source of support, the basis of the PRI’s political monopoly was effectively eroded, forcing it into a more competitive and accountable system.

#### 4.1.5 International community and the prodemocratic wave

Further inroads into PRI’s political hegemony came with changes in the international order. A major pressure to democratise came with the end of the Cold War and what Huntington (1993) refers to as the “third wave of democratisation” which was moving through South America at the end of the 1980s. To counter the risk of international isolation and faced at that time with a growing opposition due to prolonged economic recession, the PRI began to engage in negotiations with opposition parties to discuss further political reforms (Nacif 2006: 96). It still managed to maintain its dominance but by now it was in the momentum of political liberalisation.

In the 1990s the PRI, again, began to feel pressure to increase and build its domestic and international credibility. As a result, the Federal Electoral Institute was strengthened and given greater autonomy, and foreign election observers were able to observe the elections as were independent Mexican citizen observers (Cornelius 1996). Significant pressure came from the US to liberalise, but this was more a result of Mexico’s economic integration with the United States. Although there is no conclusive evidence of overt pressure from the US government, there is certainly evidence of criticism of Mexican authoritarianism in the US Congress and the press (Philip 2002: 137).

#### 4.2 EROSION OF THE ECONOMIC MONOPOLY

Since the dominant or hegemonic party maintains its dominance through access to state resources, if these resources dissipate so too will their leverage for client-patron



linkages, patronage and access to funds for party campaigns. During the initial 40 years of PRI rule the economy grew steadily. As a result of mismanagement of public finances and the inability to introduce reforms, economic crises became recurrent after 1976. These economic crises had two major implications. The first was a serious constricting of the government's ability to co-opt its members and its corporatist sectors, since its access to state resources had been weakened. Secondly, in reaction to the crises, the PRI-government resorted to implementing market-orientated economic reforms, again diminishing its control over the economic levers of power.

#### 4.2.1 Economic crises and policy changes

The first major economic crisis occurred in 1976. This was followed six years later by a further crisis, leading the government to default on its international debt, and years of economic stagnation ensued. The Mexican debt crisis of 1986 was a result of short-term loans which the government took on with high interest rates. When oil prices dropped the loans could not be repaid leading to a devaluing of the peso, cutting of social services and a lowering of public sector wages. The economic pain was felt by all (Diaz-Cayeros *et al* 2003: 18; Langston 2002: 74). As Mexicans became increasingly alienated and disillusioned they became more willing to vote for opposition parties. To add to this the government handled the 1985 Mexico City earthquake very poorly, generating further discontent. The PRI-government responded by ballot rigging, which in turn created domestic and international scandal. The PRI also implemented a series of pro-market reforms and opened its economy to foreign trade in response to the economic stagnation of the 1980s. To avoid a further downward economic spiral, the Mexican government sought the support of the US government. This support was at the price of a commitment to gradual democratisation. In keeping with its strategy of capitalist development, it became imperative that Mexico ensure a favorable investment climate. It therefore used incentives to court foreign capital, by liberalising regulations for investment and opening up sectors of the economy to foreign investment. Nacif (2006: 95) recognises this to be the beginning of Mexico's transition to liberal democracy.

In 1994, Mexico suffered a further massive financial crisis, known as the Tequila Crisis, resulting in one of the harshest recessions in modern Mexican history.

Magaloni (2006: 14) argues that the PRI's electoral support (the basis of its political monopoly) collapsed after this crisis, since its access to state resources and therefore its economic monopoly had been destroyed.

A primary agent of political transformation was undoubtedly the government's loss of economic policy autonomy after 1982, due to its willingness to take political risks in pursuit of an economic project (Philip 2002: 135). These economic policy changes were accompanied by significant political consequences. Firstly, economic liberalisation led to a major split within the PRI as its left-of-centre supporters established the CD in 1987. This split resulted in a 15% drop in PRI voter support (Nacif 2006: 95). Secondly, as Magaloni (2006: 37) surmised, if strict economic control by the state meant access to the means for vote-buying, then by the same token market-oriented reforms and trade liberalisation would weaken hegemonic-party control as these policies imply removing the ruling party's monopoly over economic sanctions and selective pay-offs in the form of subsidies, tariffs and the like. Thirdly, neo-liberalism was accompanied by changing forms of interaction between elite economic actors and the state. These changes led to transformations in state-society relations, prompting social actors to develop new forms of representation and political participation (Shalden 2000: 73-74). In particular, the PRI's shift in economic policy from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialisation altered the balance of power among social forces in the country (Cook 1999: 247). These policies meant that the central government increasingly lost control over the local economies and businesses. These economic actors, businesses in particular, began to support alternative parties, for example PAN, in opposition to the PRI. Since trade liberalisation made it easier for localities and businesses to pursue international options, their economies and sources of business became less dependent on the national government (Diaz-Cayeros *et al* 2003: 36) making them more willing to support opposition parties and to take a more critical stand against the government.

The new economic context undermined the hegemonic regime both from within and without (Collier 1999: 223). From within, the new economic context led to tensions within the party and defections from the party (CD). Trade liberalisation also made it easier, for example for municipalities, to pursue international options, especially economic integration with the US, which made their economies less dependent on the

national government. From without, the financial crises meant that PRI's rewards dried up, making it more difficult for the PRI to hold on to core constituents, resulting in the regime resorting to more extravagant fraud to preserve its position (Wallis 2003: 29). As its material base for class compromise was removed, so political opposition arose, undermining the hegemonic party and producing more open political contestation. So from without, it spurred the growth of opposition to the left and the right.

#### 4.2.2 **The rule of technocrats**

Technocrats tended to dominate the PRI after 1982. Their priorities were inclined less towards political maximisation than the achievement of economic development through market-oriented methods, including membership of NAFTA. Economic development thus became paramount in the liberalisation and democratisation of Mexico. For example, the US would not allow Mexico into the NAFTA without a guarantee that it would democratise (Philip 2002: 133). President de la Madrid (1982-88), an orthodox economist, decided to abandon national capitalism and adopt market-oriented reforms, and consequently effectively ended Mexico's national economic autonomy (Philip 2002: 135). Their economic policies became tied up with the world of conditionalities and the threat of capital flight. Once protectionist policies had been abandoned they could not be easily reinstated. "In the end, economic change could not be kept separate from demands for political change" (Philip 2002: 136).

#### 4.2.3 **Social modernisation**

Social modernisation occurs alongside a process of industrialisation. When the PRI came to power, Mexico was a rural country with a literacy rate of only 20% and the majority of the population being employed in the agricultural sector. However, by the 1970s the literacy rate had increased to more than 80% and Mexico had become a predominantly urban society. Since 1950 a massive shift of the population from rural to urban areas occurred, accounting for the long-term decline in the party's ability as a vote-getting machine. By 1990, less than 29% of the population lived in isolated, rural communities, as opposed to 57% in 1950 and those employed in the agriculture sector

declined from 58.3 to 26.8% (Cornelius 1996: 63). Authoritarian control mechanisms are less effective in urban areas, since their education and income levels are higher and the middle class larger. The opposition was also more organised and visible in the urban areas, and thus better equipped to expose election fraud.

The political consequence of these growing levels of social modernisation was the expansion of the oppositions' electoral base. The PAN, as a group of intellectuals and professionals, saw a growth of support in the populated municipalities and districts with the highest levels of social modernisation (Nacif 2006: 95). While the PRI's political control mechanisms began to lose their effectiveness over an increasingly complex, urbanised society (Craig and Cornelius 1995: 290).

*In summary*, the PRI gradually lost support to its rivals on both the left and the right due to a culmination of actors and events. Its electoral base declined as a result of urbanisation, an inability to handle economic and social crises, electoral reforms, neo-liberal economic reforms, the mounting strength of opposition and civil society, external pressures with the pro-democratic wave and an increasing generational distance from the impetus of the post-revolutionary regime. By 2000, the Mexican party system was far more developed and the electorate had stable alternative party options in the PRD and PAN. The hegemonic system was no longer entrenched as the PRI's political and economic monopolies had been eroded. In July 2000, Vicente Fox won the presidential election heralding a historic turning point in Mexico's party system.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Chapter two highlighted concerning pathologies with the one party dominant system, which largely relate to the methods of consolidating and maintaining dominance. Each of these pathologies was evident in Mexico's hegemonic system. Firstly, there was a *blurring of state-party lines* resulting from state centralisation and the PRI's virtually unlimited access to state resources to maintain patron-client linkages and for its electoral campaigns. In industrialising countries, like Mexico, with weaker institutions of democracy and civil society, the hegemonic party can close different avenues of power by "using control of the state to keep its existing supporters content

and its opponents disorganised” (Simkins 1999: 50), with little external resistance. Thus, the PRI effectively used the state and its mechanisms, including the electoral mechanisms, the legislature, the judiciary and the different tiers of government to ensure its hegemony. In addition, its process of leadership selection, where an official’s position and opportunity for promotion was largely dependent on the ruling party, meant that constitutional processes for leadership selection were superseded. Consequently, the state became distanced from its citizens, as the line of loyalty ran from the different institutions and levels of the state to the executive, the president and ultimately the party, as opposed to the electorate.

Secondly, through capturing a broad base of support, incorporation and co-optation of civil society through corporatist arrangements, the manipulation of electoral processes, access to state resources and the delegitimisation of opposition, the PRI consolidated its hegemony by *inhibiting the development of a strong opposition and an independent civil society*. As previously discussed, the PRI used a number of mechanisms to do this; namely, controlling electoral institutions, hindering the opposition’s opportunities to offer benefits to its members, ballot fraud and by building a large clientelistic network. Mexico’s opposition parties were very poorly represented as a result of the electoral system. The electoral arena and the outcomes of elections were effectively controlled by the hegemonic party, resulting in opposition having little hope of influencing policy-making or offering benefits to their members. In addition, civil society was so closely connected to the ruling party, with its elite being co-opted by the party, that it lost touch with its members and their interests. Therefore independent voice in the form of civil and political society was successfully silenced in the hegemonic party system.

A third apprehension, relates to the *accumulation of power*. If the dominant or hegemonic party accumulates sufficient power, it can ignore the interests of its citizens without fearing the reprisal of the ballot box. The reason for this is that ‘substantive uncertainty’ has been removed. Substantive uncertainty exists where politicians and political parties are not guaranteed of their positions and therefore act in the interest of their citizens. The PRI maintained and consolidated its hegemony through the establishing of political and economic monopolies. It was a highly centralised system with ‘no life outside the party’. If one party dominant systems

become so centralised that voice and accountability is silenced and the government has no or few counterbalances to its accumulation of power, it becomes an authoritarian system regardless of the presence of elections and opposition parties.

The PRI's prolonged rulership was not a problem in and of itself, but since it is an example of an industrialising country, which did not have a liberal history or a sufficiently developed civil and political society, there were few checks and balances to its accumulation of power. This centralised power resulted in a state, which took little heed to its citizens and rather acted in the interest of maintaining the control of the hegemonic party. Through the PRI's mechanisms of internal and external control, society was incorporated into and dependent on the system. The hegemonic party existed to the exclusion of voice and accountability, excepting for state-sanctioned and state-controlled avenues of articulation.

The PRI's hegemony was eventually undermined when its hold over the political and economic levers of power was diminished through electoral changes, a growing opposition, a maturing civil society, internal factions, US pressure to liberalise and economic policy changes towards market-led development. The Mexican example shows that economic and political monopolies exist to the exclusion of voice and accountability. Thus, it becomes pertinent to see whether South Africa's ANC is also establishing internal and external mechanisms of control, which will result in it having economic and political monopolies of power. A key question is: does South Africa have sufficient effective and autonomous agents of voice and accountability preventing it from developing into a system where there is 'no life outside the ANC' and to guard against the possibility of it becoming an authoritarian system?

## CHAPTER SIX

### IMPLICATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM ON VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

*“During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.”* –Nelson Mandela, 1964 Rivonia Trial

*“Power repeating untruths until they have the force of truth”* –Edward Said (1994)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

With its history as the victorious liberation movement, the initial party dominance of the South African government system by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 was a given. The expectation of this dominance enduring into the foreseeable future deems necessary further analysis of the system. The following questions regarding South Africa's one party dominance need answering: With reference to the learnings from Mexico what are the implications of the one party dominant system on South Africa's *quality* of democracy? How does this political system influence agents of voice and accountability? How has the ANC ensured its continued, dominant control? And, what are the implications thereof?

The history of the ANC and the different traditions and ideologies that have intertwined over the years have resulted in a broad-based, eclectic party. The current methods of dominance and the ANC's justification of increasing control of state and society is only comprehensible when unravelling these different strands and understanding the influence of these underlying worldviews, which culminate in its national project – the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). As a result, the ANC has very specific and often limiting views, of opposition and civil society and the roles they should fulfil within South Africa.



## 2. STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

As previously highlighted, Pempel (1990) maintains that a dominant party can act as a model of democratic stability, and *if* the dominant party combines its rule with political competition and the protection of civil liberties it can serve as a good foundation for a durable, liberal democracy. South Africa's largely peaceful democratic transition in 1994 from authoritarian hegemonic party dominance under the then National Party can partly be attributed to the unifying qualities of the ANC. A fragmentary party system would have possibly resulted in the derailing of the democratising process. What followed, from 1994 to 1999, was an era of reconciliation and consensus-building in South Africa under the Presidency of Nelson Mandela. Mandela served to unite South Africans and sought to win voluntary co-operation of all interest groups. According to Feinstein (2007: 78) "Mandela's ability to ensure that the interests of the nation preceded those of the party is what... elevated him to the pantheon of greatness."

The second part of the argument poses an important 'if'. *If* there is a combination of one party dominant rule with political competition and civil liberties *then* it may provide a positive foundation for a non-authoritarian, liberal democracy. If the balance between power accumulation and power restraint is not maintained a democracy can easily move from being non-authoritarian to authoritarian or when an already authoritarian regime, through elections, maintains one party dominance, it can lead to the entrenchment of authoritarian rule. In Mexico, the consolidation of the PRI's hegemony led to a constraining of the space of political and civil society. It was rather when the grip of the PRI was prised open and civil and political society began taking back their operating space that we see a move towards liberal democracy. Where Mexico evolved into a liberal democracy South Africa was declared and established as one – the question is whether this will be protected or not.

### 2.1 POLITICAL SOCIETY

#### 2.1.1 The ruling party: The African National Congress

In January 1912 a group of prominent African men and women created the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The key purpose of this organisation, which was to later become the African National Congress, was to “defend and advance African civil and political rights at a time when these were under unprecedented threat” (Dubow 2000: 1). It was “conceived as a group to represent the political interests of black Africans” with other racial groups only being formally admitted in 1969 (Ellis and Sechaba 1992: 15-16). Its creation was largely in reaction to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, an act that signalled the emergence of a unitary white supremacist state. The inauguration of the Union united Britons and Boers under the helm of the British Crown (Magubane 1978: 32). Thus, the SANNC was essentially a “coalition born of opposition to white oppression” (Venter 2007: 8). As Magubane (1978: 33) points out “the manifest inequity of the settlement of 1910, which gave the Boers political power so soon after their defeat and at the same time denied Africans any say, created a situation whose logic and drama is still being played out today.”

The SANNC was certainly not the first, nor the last organisation formed to represent the interests of non-white South Africans. Others included the Natal Indian Congress, formed in 1894 and the ‘coloured’ African People’s Organisation, founded in 1902. What distinguished the SANNC was that it was the first political organisation to be created on a national rather than a regional basis. The organisation, in line with its nationalist objectives, aimed at overcoming inter-African ethnic divisions and to see citizenship and franchise extended to all on a non-racial basis (Dubow 2000: 3).

In order to properly appreciate the contemporary ANC as a broad-church, and its ability to garner a wide spectrum of support, which maintains its dominance; it is essential to understand the ANC’s history and the three main traditions that have fed into it since its inception. The first tradition originates from its founders. Its formative leadership consisted primarily of aspirant members of the African middle class, including lawyers, doctors, journalists, ministers and landowners – those who stood to lose most from the post-Union political dispensation (Lodge 1983: 1). Its members were largely drawn from the *kholwa*, a Zulu word meaning Christian converts, who promoted Victorian values of moral progress, material advancement and personal respectability (Dubow 2000: 4, Ellis and Sechaba 1992: 16). The ANC’s founding

leaders tended to be the fruit of the early Christian missionaries, who provided missionary schools such as Lovedale in the Ciskei and Adams College in Natal (Thompson 2000: 156). As the government did not provide education for black Africans, those who did manage to receive an education did it at these missionary schools. It was here that they received a “relatively liberal Western tradition” (p. 156). The early ANC’s call for inclusion in the South African body politic was as citizens of a common, non-racial society, informed by Christian and liberal conceptions of justice and humanity (p. 4.). The organisation’s leadership was committed to a method of opposition which emphasised responsible citizenship and spurned popular protest and demonstrations. Instead, they were deeply committed to constitutionalism. They established themselves as a broad-based centrist organisation, which maintained strong links with the old chiefly aristocracy while remaining opposed to tribalism and ethnic particularism. Thus, the first tradition can be described as one of liberal-democracy based on Christian values.

In the 1920s the ANC became increasingly influenced by a further two traditions, namely those partial to the ideals of pan-Africanism - an ‘Africa for Africans’, and the communist tradition. In 1921, the Communist Party of South Africa was created, and a relationship between them and the ANC formed in 1928. The Communist Party was, initially, the first political organisation in South Africa to recruit members from all racial groupings (Thompson 2001: 177) as the party adhered to the principle that “working class unity transcended racial divisions” (Lodge 1983: 7). It was not a large body, but it was highly organised, its centralised structure drawn from the Leninist model (Lodge 1983: 7). This influence of Communist and Africanist groups within the ANC would have considerable long-term significance for the organisation. The communists and Africanists situated themselves at polar ends of the ANC, the former emphasising non-racialism and class solidarity, and the latter stressing African self-sufficiency and the pre-eminence of the racial struggle (Dubow 2000: 15). The Africanists were suspicious of communism believing it merely served to hide another version of white paternalism: “Africans are a conquered race – they do not suffer class oppression – they are oppressed as a group, as a nation” (quoted in Lodge 1983: 22). At key periods the two traditions would unite to produce a type of indigenous radicalism embodied in the idea of African socialism.

The 1940s saw the rise in pre-eminence of pan-Africanist consciousness, an influence which became evident in the ANC's 1943 seminal document *African Claims*. It differed significantly with previous ANC official discourse, as polite requests turned into demands and a future which promoted a more interventionist state. The ANC Youth League was formed in 1943 with its key mover being Anton Lembede. Lembede's philosophies from those of his elders in a move towards revolutionary militancy and "racial exclusivism: Africa, the League declared, was 'a black man's country'" (Gevisser 2007: 37). The manifesto of the League stated that its purpose was to insert 'the spirit of African nationalism' into the national liberation movement (Lodge 1983: 20). In 1949 the ANC adopted the ANC Youth League's<sup>93</sup> *Programme of Action*, a document which served as a manifesto for campaigns of mass action in the 1950s. The objective of the ANC, under the Programme, was defined as the achievement of 'national freedom', which meant "freedom from white domination and the attainment of political independence" (quoted in Dubow 2000: 33). It committed the ANC to a campaign of boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience. Although it was transiting into a radical mass nationalist movement, the Congress was nevertheless neither organisationally nor ideologically unified.

In the 1950s the ANC became recognised as the dominant force of opposition to the apartheid state as a result of its rapid membership growth. Its 1955 initiative, the *Congress of the People*, a coalition representing a wide spectrum of society and inclusive of the ANC, the Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Organisation, and the Congress of Democrats, led to the adoption of the *Freedom Charter* (Thompson 2000: 208). This was a key document which upheld a number of liberal-democratic freedoms (Dubow 2000: 51). However, two of its provisions proved to be problematic: the first, the statement that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white' resulted in resentment from the Africanists who wanted prior rights to the country for black Africans. The second statement called for the transfer of the country's mineral wealth, banks and monopoly industries into common ownership. The concern with the question of economic nationalism was whether it merely amounted to a pseudo-communist manifesto. According to Ellis and Sechaba (1992: 27) "anti-communists have always claimed that the Freedom Charter was drafted by

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<sup>93</sup> The ANC Youth League was formed in 1943-4. Its first president, Anton Lembede, was a theorist of 'Africanism', advocating black self-reliance and racial pride.

members of the Communist Party.” However, Ellis and Sechaba (1992: 28) claim that the Charter was the product of most of the strands in ANC, including the communists. The *Charter* would later spur further discontent as the Africanists highlighted that the nationalist tenets set out in the *Programme of Action* had been undermined by the multi-racialism of the *Freedom Charter*. Their view was that the principal conflict in South Africa should be defined racially as being between black Africans and whites – the conquered and the conquerors. These tensions came to a head in 1959 when a group of Africanists broke with the ANC and formed the Pan-African Congress (PAC). The PAC “stood for government by the Africans for the Africans – ‘everybody who owes his loyalty to Africa being regarded as African’” (Lodge 1983: 85). Whites were excluded, as they benefitted from the apartheid structures, even if they considered themselves to be part of the cause of African liberty (Lodge 1983: 85).

The South African Communist Party (SACP), a reconfigured Communist Party of South Africa, was a key influence in the development and ideology of the ANC. During the 1960s it began to play “a dominant role within [*Umkhonto we Sizwe*<sup>94</sup>] MK and, through MK, the ANC itself” (Dubow 2000: 77). The now-banned ANC’s structures as a mass organisation made it difficult to move into underground activity, it thus became more reliant on the SACP. “The key effect of this influence was undoubtedly the move from non-violence into armed struggle” (Gevisser 2007: 149). Much of the ANC’s essential material and military resources from Moscow were a result of the SACP’s links. Communist members within the ANC were able to arrange for volunteers to travel to Eastern Europe, China and Africa for training and to acquire equipment (Ellis and Sechaba 1992: 34). As Ellis and Sechaba (1992: 35) recognise, “the decision to build a guerrilla organisation and to declare war on the government greatly increased the Party’s weight in its alliance with the ANC.” The SACP also provided the ANC with organisational discipline, revolutionary theory and ideological conviction. Together with the Party’s contribution of intellectual and organisational competencies came the entrenchment of authoritarian ‘democratic-centralist’ practises and attitudes. Membership of the SACP was for “only a select few

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<sup>94</sup> *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, translated as the Spear of the Nation, was the militant wing of the ANC, which embarked on a long and ultimately fruitless campaign against a state with a vastly greater military and intelligence superiority (Butler 2004: 109).

– a ‘vanguard’ hand-picked by the Party leadership,” recruited through a highly secretive process (Gevisser 2007: 147). Its democratic centralism allowed for tight control of members from the centre. It was an organisation where “[s]ecrecy was more than a necessity – it was a cherished virtue and a mark of true revolutionary” (p. 147). Although the SACP had been instrumental in the ANC’s adoption of a non-racial rather than purely Africanist outlook, it was nevertheless one of the last communist parties in the world to reject Stalinism (Feinstein 2007: 54). In addition, it had acknowledged from 1927 already, that a ‘black republic’ was the first step to socialism; leading to the ANC/SACP alliance being based on a “two-stage theory of revolution: democracy first, socialism second” (Southall 2008: 105). According to ANC MP Ben Turok (interview 2009), Joe Slovo of the ANC, believed that the nationalist revolution would lead into the socialist revolution. Turok, however, argues otherwise asserting that the working class has not taken the lead in the revolution nor has it established a platform for a socialist transition. He believes that the contestation today between the CP and Congress of South African Trade Unions<sup>95</sup> (COSATU), is whether or not the NDR can be used as a platform for further transition. Dubow (2000: 106) argues that if the ANC had come to power before the end of the Soviet empire it is probable that the influence of the Communist Party and the COSATU would have “predominated over the nationalist and social democratic-inclined party that eventually took office.”

Besides the above three differing traditions influencing the composition, direction and policies of the ANC, a further significant watershed event would spurn a further three influences on the make-up of the organisation - the 1964 Rivonia Trial. The ANC would practically cease to exist in South Africa, as its key leaders were either languishing in jail on Robben Island or had gone into exile. London became the centre of its external mission with forward bases established in African ‘front-line’ states. During this period, Oliver Tambo’s leadership style which combined pragmatism, collective leadership and deep Christian beliefs provided an important source of strength, enabling the ANC to function as a broad coalition and to lay claim to the moral high ground. As a result of the Trial, three spheres of ANC activity began to

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<sup>95</sup> COSATU is a partner in the Tripartite Alliance together with the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). It was formed in 1985, the result of the drawing together of trade unions, sympathetic to the Congress movement.



feed into the composition and character of the organisation: those incarcerated on Robben Island; those in exile; and the internal domestic and labour struggle, led by organisations aligned with the ANC, namely the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Cosatu (Butler 2004: 109). There were vast cultural and organisational differences characterising these various components of the ANC (Feinstein 2007: 20-21). The Robben Islanders were hierarchically organised, disciplined, but nevertheless fairly democratic within the obvious limitations. It was known as the ‘University’ since emphasis was placed on political and theoretical learning; as a result they tended to be open to debate. Internally, the UDF and its affiliates mobilised a broad base of support against the apartheid regime, focussing on massive community mobilisation in black areas while also including targeted initiatives in white suburbs. The UDF, founded in 1983, was an effort to coordinate internal opposition to apartheid, by a thousand delegates from all races, representing 575 organisations, including trade unions, sporting bodies, community groups and women’s organisations (Thompson 2001: 228). Its genesis was in reaction to the government’s proposals in 1982 and 1983 to reform the influx control system and to introduce a new Constitution. The Constitution would appear to represent a more racially diverse electorate, with the exception of black Africans. The reality, however, was that whites would be given a built-in majority over indians and coloureds (Lodge and Nasson 1991: 35, 47). The movement had a culture of openness, discussion and tolerance of alternative viewpoints. It was non-racial and inclusive, even if it was somewhat chaotic in its operations. The UDF endorsed the *Freedom Charter* and recognised the need for “unity in struggle through which all democrats, regardless of race, religion or colour shall take part together” (South African Institute of Race Relations 1983: 57-61). The movement’s affiliation with the ANC implied an acknowledging of the ANC’s claim to leadership<sup>96</sup> (Lodge and Nasson 1991: 35). On the other hand, the exiles comprised different groupings, ranging from those in the camps in the frontline states to those in European capitals. They were constantly being targeted by security forces. As a result they tended to be hierarchically organised, “with information tightly guarded and decision making centralised... The vanguardist, democratic centralist aspects of the

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<sup>96</sup> The UDF disbanded in 1991. The official statement of the UDF, read by Albertina Sisulu stated: “We urge our affiliates to devote their energies to the building of the ANC, our ideological senior and mentor, into a mighty force for justice, democracy and peace” (quoted in Lodge and Nasson 1991: 203).



organisation in exile betrayed Leninist roots, while an additional Stalinist dimension saw the party as paramount and loyalty as the crucial currency” (Feinstein 2007: 21).

The combination of the efforts by the ANC’s internal and external wings had, by the 1980s, established it as the most credible inheritor of political power in any future dispensation. Its attainment of leadership of South Africa in 1994 confirmed for many the belief that its victory had been historically ordained. As Dubow (2000: xiv) states: “The ANC itself has been keen to encourage this view, not least because it helps to legitimise its claim to be the natural custodian of liberation and freedom.” Dubow (2000: 107-109) puts forward three underlying structural tendencies, which contributed to the pre-eminence of the ANC, enabling it to consolidate its position in the run-up to the 1994 elections. The first was the ANC’s moderation and inclusivity, as it had been a movement with broad-church politics ensuring that it was predisposed to take the middle ground. Secondly, is its longevity and survival; being the longest standing African resistance movement, the ANC succeeded in accumulating enormous reserves of symbolic capital. And third, was the ANC’s broad front. Its supporters spanned a wider range of social groups and ideological positions than any other competing party or organisation. In its alliance with the SACP, Cosatu, the Coalition, which the ANC led, included traditions of non-racialism, African nationalism and socialism. A further decisive factor in their later ascendancy to power was the unimpeachable moral authority attached to the Robben Islanders and other exiled members of the ‘struggle’.

The history of the ANC clearly shows three key ideological influences feeding into the makings and the complexity of the ANC: the first is that of the Christian liberal-democrats as was evidenced in its founder members and later leaders such as Albert Luthuli<sup>97</sup> and Oliver Tambo. The second strand is that of the Africanists and their promotion of a black-African biased, African nationalism. And, the third influence was of the communists and their non-racialism and socialist economic ideals. Added to this ideological complexity the ANC’s organisational structure also had three distinct elements: an external mission based in Europe and Africa; an internal movement grouped around the UDF and Cosatu; and the Robben Island prison

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<sup>97</sup> The 1950s leader, Albert Luthuli, is famously quoted as saying: “The road to freedom is via the Cross” (The Presidency 2007).

Diaspora. These factors shed light on the current internal factions within the ANC; they explain its broad support base, which maintains its dominance; and they provide insight into the ANC's current centralist policies and actions, and apparent unwillingness to receive criticism. It also serves to explain why the ANC sometimes acts democratically and considerately, and at other times as an authoritarian with a blatant disregard for public opinion. Turok (2009) admits that we currently live “in a period of massive contradictions – contradictions between the aspirations of the ANC and the way we run the country...between our socialist views and our practise in government.” In present-day politics there have been increasing complaints of the dominance of an Africanist and a pro-capitalist bias within the leadership, and the stifling of internal debate. As Butler (2004: 110) points out the “liberation movement's democratic tendencies coexists with democratic centralist and hierarchical conceptions of legitimate authority.” This unhappiness culminated in the change of leadership at the Polokwane Conference (2007) - it will later be argued that in reality, the faces may be different, but the underlying worldviews have not changed and thus an expectation for the ANC to be more open to criticism and debate, and less hierarchical decision-making is an unfounded optimism, especially since the loudest voice within the ANC is currently not the liberal-democrat strand.

### 2.1.2 Opposition

Between 1994 and 2004, party politics in South Africa was marked by the entrenching of a dominant party system. The 2004 national election results serve to show the vast gap between the ANC with 279 seats, the ‘official opposition’, the DA with 50 seats and some of the other smaller parties with fairly insignificant representation. The overwhelming electoral dominance of the ANC appears to make the role of opposition obsolete, especially if it is accepted that a “parliamentary opposition is only ‘worth its salt’ if it is perceived as a potential alternate in government” (Habib and Taylor 2001: 209). Giliomee *et al* (2001: 163) argue that since the ANC is guaranteed over 60% of the vote, there are none of the shifting interest-based coalitions along the lines of European democracies. As a consequence the “opposition tends to be peripheral to the system” (p. 163). However, a key occurrence in one party dominant systems is the formation of factions from within the ruling party. This is what occurred in Mexico with the PRD being a splinter group from the PRI. The PRD did not win the

subsequent elections, but they certainly made a dent in the support base of the PRI, which would later lead to the end of its hegemony and making real the possibility of an alternative ruling party. In South Africa, the formation of the Congress of the People<sup>98</sup> (COPE) will significantly affect the playing field opening up alternatives for previously loyal ANC supporters. It is a development, which other opposition parties would be wise to utilise in their interest.

Asas discussed in chapter three, opposition also has a number of other important roles to play in a liberal-democracy, besides seeking to govern, namely, to ensure that a citizenry's discontent does not translate into a delegitimation of the democratic order, since opposition provides institutional outlets for criticism; and the facilitation of public interest functions, such as debate over ideas, providing policy alternatives and monitoring government performance (Habib and Taylor 2001: 209).

#### 2.1.2.1 The Democratic Alliance

The DA's origins can be traced to the defection of twelve MPs from the United Party during the apartheid-era (Lodge and Scheidegger 2006: 11). These MPs promoted common role black African enfranchisement and established the Progressive Party. From 1977 the renamed Progressive Federal Party (PFP) became more influential among white South Africans. In 1987 the PFP reconstituted itself as the Democratic Party (DP). It served as the official opposition to the NP promoting a non-racial democracy, a limited state, the supremacy of the Constitution, and a market economy (Butler 2004: 110). Its genealogy is thus traceable through a liberal tradition of parliamentary opposition to apartheid (Lodge and Scheidegger 2006: 11-12). During the post-apartheid period the DP became the official opposition to the current ruling party. As the NP and then the reformulated NNP lost support and eventually disbanded in April 2005, many of its white and coloured supporters transferred their loyalty to the reconstituted Democratic Alliance (DA). Since its establishment as the

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<sup>98</sup> COPE was established in December 2009, largely in reaction to the ANC's Polokwane Conference in 2007 and the subsequent dismissal of Thabo Mbeki as president. COPE prioritises the defense of constitutional democracy asserting that there are threats to constitutional order emerging from the ANC (COPE 2009).

DA, the party has attempted to entrench itself as an ideological alternative to the ANC (Venter 2006: 10).

According to Helen Zille (interviewed by O'Malley 2001), current leader of the DA, her vision has always been to establish a viable opposition in South Africa, stressing that she had “decided that what would be the worst thing for democracy was one party having ten years time the most important thing to have done for this country will have been to build a multiparty democracy and a strong and viable opposition. The transitions to democracies in an overwhelming stranglehold on all the levers of power in society ... that in Africa have usually been characterised by the consolidation of power of a single all-powerful party, the connections that you have to that party determining your chance in life, the withering away of the opposition with all the resultant morbidity that we've seen. I don't want this country to go the same way.”

Despite these aspirations, the DA has yet to shake off the perceptions of being a ‘white’ party, and appears to have reached its ceiling in terms of the electorate - being unable to attract significant numbers of black voters. In addition, as Schrire (2001: 143) points out, South Africa is not a normal democracy: its history has led to its government undertaking a ‘historical mission’ and electoral loyalties, for the foreseeable future, will continue to be based upon ethnic and racial cleavages with the ANC continuing to ride on its liberation credentials as a movement to transform the South African society. Ian Davidson (interview 2009), Chief Whip of DA, concurred that “politics in this country is defined by race.” He, however, believed that the advent of the Congress of the People (COPE)<sup>99</sup> in 2008 was a positive development for the DA as “it has opened up choice...[one] can still exercise choice without sacrificing identity and once you have exercised choice – choice in and of itself is a liberating exercise - then you can say to yourself ‘hey if I have voted for COPE, then what is the difference between COPE and the DA?’” Davidson believes, as do many others, that 2009 will be a watershed election and he is confident that irrespective of how well or badly COPE performs, the DA will win the Western Cape, either with or without a

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<sup>99</sup> COPE was established in December 2009, largely in reaction to the ANC’s Polokwane Conference in 2007 and the subsequent dismissal of Thabo Mbeki as president. COPE prioritises the defence of constitutional democracy asserting that there are threats to constitutional order emerging from the ANC (COPE 2009).

coalition. He goes so far as to say that he would not be surprised that by 2014 there is a single party merger between COPE, the ID and the DA.

South Africa's opposition parties and their ability to fulfill democracy-supporting functions are constrained by a number of factors: institutionally, the nature of the governmental and electoral systems serve to entrench the dominant party and fragment opposition parties; dispositionally, the ANC's anti-transformation rhetoric acts towards the de-legitimising of the opposition; and socio-culturally, the apartheid legacy continues to divide political support along racial cleavages. In terms of opposition's accumulative voting block, where the ANC holds 293 of the 400 seats in the National Assembly, it has little power to keep the government accountable within the parliamentary-arena. It is nevertheless robust and vocal in terms of highlighting corruption, voicing the concerns of its electorate and the opposition parties do provide alternatives for voters. And, if Davidson is correct, then perhaps in the 2014 elections, the DA and other opposition parties will begin to make in-roads into the ANC's largely black support base, with the black voter having learnt to "exercise choice without sacrificing their identities."

## 2.2 CIVIL SOCIETY

The 1980s in South Africa witnessed a countrywide growth of civic organisations. These groupings campaigned on issues concerning education, housing, rents and consumer concerns. In 1983 many such civic organisations came together and formed the United Democratic Front (UDF). At the height of its existence the UDF had an affiliated membership of more than two million, with a heterogeneous social and political composition. The UDF, professing an open and democratic style of mass politics differed from the ANC, which had become highly secretive and hierarchical during the years of exile (Dubow 2000: 86-87). The UDF found inspiration and legitimacy in the Congress traditions of the 1950s such as the *Freedom Charter*. It was largely created to promote calls for a new constitutional dispensation and new legislation to regulate the freedoms of African city-dwellers. The UDF was an essential partner of the ANC in keeping the internal struggle alive, while much of the ANC's leadership was in exile or in prison. In 1991 the UDF decided to go into voluntary liquidation.

This history of civil society in a conflictual relationship with government stands in stark contrast to the ANC's current view of the role of civil society. According to Habib (2003: 228) during apartheid, this contending-cooperative divide took a racial form with the white civil societies largely taking on a collegiate role and the black civil societies adopting a conflictual stance. However, a proper analysis of South Africa's history (Thompson 2000: 204-205) shows there were significant exceptions; largely white-based organisations such as Black Sash, the Christian Institute, the South African Council of Churches<sup>100</sup>, English-medium universities such as the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, and unions like the National Union of South African Students took on a conflictual role with the state. Presently the conflicting and collegiate relations extend across the range of civil society. Civil society celebrates plurality and diversity; the set of institutions within civil society "will reflect diverse and even contradictory political and social agendas" (Habib 2003: 228). It is only natural that some relationships between the state and civil society will be characterised by collaboration and cooperation, and others will be characterised by contestation and conflict. This is a healthy state of affairs and should be encouraged. In rhetoric, the plurality of civil society is acknowledged by government officials, yet there exists an expectation for a "single homogenous set of relations between the state and civil society" (Habib 2003: 239). The ANC (2007a: 7) recognises that democracy has "opened up critical space for organisations of civil society to flourish;" however, they voice concern regarding so-called "tendencies towards mechanical oppositionism in relation to government." One function, fulfilled by some civil society organisations, with which, Mbeki clearly found fault with, is the 'watch-dog' or counter-hegemonic role of civil society:

... the democratic movement must resist the liberal concept of 'less government', which, while being presented as a philosophical approach towards the state in general, is in fact, aimed specifically at the weakening of the democratic state. The purpose of this offensive is precisely to deny the people the possibility to use the collective strength and means concentrated in the democratic state to bring about the transformation of society (Mbeki quoted in Johnson 2002: 228).

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<sup>100</sup> Following the 1948 elections leaders of all white South African churches with the exception of the Dutch Reformed churches issued statements criticising apartheid (Thompson 2000: 204).

Nelson Mandela, had earlier assumed an equally dim view of organisations of civil society seeking to adopt the role of critical overseer of the ANC government and who served as channels for grass-root grievances. At the National Civil Society Conference in April 2001 Mandela stated:

We cannot approach the subject of civil society from the point of view that government represents an inherent negative force in society; and that civil society is needed to curb government. Such an approach runs the risk of projecting civil society as adjunct to the organised political opposition ... We cannot in the long term afford a situation where the majority of the population perceives civil society as something oppositional to their needs, wishes and interests because it is seen to instinctively oppose the government they voted into office.

At the same conference Mandela (2001) asserts that the challenge:

...is how various organs of civil society can co-operate to advance overall national goals of transformation ... and trust that these efforts at cooperative partnerships will bear fruit for our society... In that manner we can ensure that the energies of civil society are harnessed for the progress and unity rather than for division and dissipation of efforts.

However, not all within the ANC, view civil society in this manner. During an SAFM After 8 debate (19 April 2009), Gwede Mantashe, Secretary General of the ANC conceded that “civil society must keep government accountable.” Turok (interview 2009) too acknowledges that government suffers from deficiencies such as bureaucracy and high-handedness and thus “checks and balances are vital in any democracy” and he believes South Africa suffers from a deficit in terms of having a weak civil society. Turok, however, later nuanced his statement, asserting “on the one hand you have got the notion of checks and balances, which is very good. You must constrain a ruling power, because otherwise it goes mad. On the other hand, if the ruling power does not rule, then nothing happens.” He went further to exclaim that “the balances of power, the liberal forces, the values of democracy and the checks and balances, have actually, to a degree, stalled the revolution.”



From the aforementioned statements it is evident that civil society, for some, should be in the process of being relegated to partner and implementer, shrouded in terms such as ‘public-private-partnership’, co-operation and consolidation. This is a primary concern for civil society today; maintaining its autonomy from government and its space to fulfil its plurality of roles whether they are collegiate or conflictual with the government in power.

A further concern is that in some instances the boundaries between the state and civil society have become indistinct during the transition to democracy as civil society activists have moved into government, while trade unions and civic associations have formed formal alliances with the ANC (Johnson 2002: 229). The ANC continues to benefit from the support of its historical allies with Cosatu, whose leadership belongs to the ANC and many of whom hold positions on the national executive. The Tripartite Alliance, comprising the ANC, Cosatu and the SACP has served the ANC well during election times. In addition, the ANC enjoys associations with the South African National Civic Organisation<sup>101</sup> (Sanco) and the South African Student Congress (SASC) as well as a wide range of other voluntary associations. Many civic associations therefore do not keep a ‘healthy distance’ from the present government.

According to van Zyl Slabbert (2006: 143) civil society refers to the “space between the state and the individual where voluntary organisations can be created to pursue collective goals that do not have to be controlled or regulated by the state, provided they do not offend the Constitution.” With the end of apartheid, there is a concern that many black associations within civil society will not only cease their resistance to the state but will form an intimately functional relationship to the state. For example, a number of leaders from civic associations have called for state funding, a prominent example being Moses Mayekiso (past president of Sanco). Oscar Dhlomo (1993), past president of the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy warned that this raised the “danger of some of our civic organisations being co-opted by the government or becoming praise-singers for the government. This attitude would threaten a democratic culture and the ability of such groups to maintain a healthy skepticism.” According to Diamond (1994: 68): “[t]he future integrity and democratic potential of

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<sup>101</sup> The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) was launched in March 1992, bringing together township-based civic organisations in a national civic structure.

civil society in South Africa will critically depend on it remaining financially (as well as politically) independent of the state.” In 2001, during an interview, an Eastern Cape civic leader from Sanco voiced his concern that the unquestioning support the association gave to the ANC threatened its existence. He stated: “We find in Sanco that the more we stick within the alliance, the more we became dictatorial to our people” (quoted in Zuern 2004: 17).

Despite concerns of civil society being either co-opted or marginalised by the government, to date South Africa has a fairly vibrant and largely, independent civil society, if we include trade unions, businesses and the press. South Africa has an independent and often very outspoken media. The *Mail & Guardian* weekly newspaper is an example of investigative journalism, which is not afraid to probe into and expose corruption. The newspaper is regularly at loggerheads with the government, which has gone as far as attempting to gag it and often labels it and other such independent media sources as being counter-revolutionary. James Myburg (interview 2009), editor of PoliticsWeb, a web-based a politics news site, agreed that in practise there is media freedom in South Africa. Davidson (interview 2009), from the DA, also concedes that there is “fair coverage,” in particular, of political parties. In preparation for the 2009 elections, there has been robust debate and ample opportunity afforded to the various political parties on the news station SAFM.

Another example is the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)<sup>102</sup>, which together with Cosatu managed to pressure the government to concede on its HIV/AIDS policy. After much foot-dragging and obfuscation the government began to roll out much-needed anti-retroviral drugs for the prevention of mother-to-child-transmission of HIV in April 2004<sup>103</sup>. The TAC pressurised the government from without, holding it to the ideals and values found within the Constitution (Matisonn 2004: 1211), while Cosatu, the ANC’s alliance partner, pressurised from within. In this example the South African government capitulated to public opinion and pressure from civil society organisations. Citing the above example Matisonn (2004: 12) argues against a party dominant system creating a passive citizenry instead “the dominance of the

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<sup>102</sup> The TAC was founded in 1998 with its primary aim being: to campaign for greater access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all South Africans.

<sup>103</sup> Tembeka Majali of the TAC did however question the motives of the government’s timing as April 2004 was the month of the national elections.

ruling party may have prompted citizens to explore new or alternative channels for tackling public issues.” Davidson (interview 2009) similarly maintains that a dominant party system “does have a hugely negative effect on accountability from a political perspective, simply because of that lack of contestation and arrogance that goes with it. Ironically, what very often happens, is that civil society, because they perceive there is a lack of real accountability at a political level, they begin to mobilise... If the politicians are doing their job well and there is accountability ... civil society becomes less proactive. It is when there is that void that civil society comes to the fore.”

### 2.3 THE ANC’S SELF-CONCEPTION AND VIEW OF OPPOSITION

For a democracy to be liberal “the political culture must value and foster political participation, discussion, and awareness on the part of the citizenry” (Diamond 1987: 9) and be combined with *tolerance* for differing political beliefs. There must be a willingness to acknowledge the right for other parties, civil society organisations and their differing beliefs and ideologies to exist and be expressed, and there needs to be horizontal accountability evident in the separation of powers and the willingness of office-holders to be accountable for their actions to other agencies.

#### 2.3.1 ANC view of itself

According to Schrire (2001: 139) the ANC is suspicious of opposition, given its self-image as a party that represents the ‘nation’ by virtue of its liberation credentials (Schrire 2001: 139). The reason for this is it does not perceive itself to be a mere political party, but rather the “embodiment of the national will” (p. 139). The ANC-led government considers itself to be the legitimate voice representing the views of the people. At the 51<sup>st</sup> National Congress of the ANC in 2002 President Mbeki stated: “From its foundation, the African National Congress has served as the *parliament of our people* and an agent of unity of the African people.” Not only does the ANC view itself as the legitimate *representative* of the people but it considers itself to be the *leader* of the South African society as is evident in the ANC’s Secretary General, Gwede Mantashe’s (2008) portrayal of the ANC as “a powerful force able to *lead* society in building a national democratic society” [my emphasis]. According to

Myburgh (interview 2009) from the beginning of its rulership the ANC's ideology was based on a historic mission to transform society, it considered itself to be the "bearer of assumed goals, which were sacrosanct, and which only the ANC could pursue." He argues that Mbeki encapsulated that ideology, and his removal and the subsequent split in the ANC has shaken this ideology. Myburgh does caution, that "if the ANC re-establishes its authority after elections, it may revert back to being much more aggressive."

The ANC's self-conception is better understood within the context of its national project, the National Democratic Revolution – the NDR is discussed in detail in later sections. Suffice to say, it is an overarching project, which seeks to transform the state and society as a whole, with the ANC at the helm, leading the transformation. According to the ANC (2007a: 4) a "national democratic society is a conscious construct, dependent on conscious action by *politically advanced sections* of society" [my emphasis]. In its 2007 *Strategy and Tactics* paper the ANC (2007a: 8) puts forward a rhetorical question: "Does the liberation movement have the cadreship able not only to withstand the pull of negative values but also to *lead society* along the road towards a caring nation that a national democratic society should be!" [my emphasis] At a 2008 *lekgotla*, the ANC NEC "confirmed the long-established principle that the ANC is the strategic political centre that *directs* and *guides* its employees in various centres" [my emphasis]. Thus in its aim of achieving a national democratic society, towards the fulfilment of its NDR, it considers itself to be the "politically advanced sector" capable of leading society by the deployment of its cadres in various centres of power.

The ANC assigns to itself leadership not only of its supporters and the state, but to society as a whole. Its 52<sup>nd</sup> *National Conference* reaffirmed the "ongoing need for the ANC to give leadership to society and the state" (ANC 2007b: 9). The form of its leadership also extends beyond political leadership to include social leadership as it considers itself to be a *moral leader* of society as well. The ANC (2007b: 32) believes that it has "through its 95-year history always embodied and aspired to the highest morality and values of South African society." It further believes that "the South African national integrity system encompasses the legislative, executive, judicial, business and civil society sectors and must be underpinned by our revolutionary

morality and historic values” (p. 32). In light of unresolved and on-going scandals, namely the ‘Arms Deal’ – an international arms deal fraught with evidence of bribery and corruption; Chancellor House – a funding-front for the ANC; the Travelgate scandal – the abuse of public funds by members of Parliament, including ANC MPs; and the president of the ANC, Jacob Zuma’s pending corruption trial, the irony is not lost when the ANC (2007b: 32) in its latest conference boldly proclaims it “must provide leadership to society as a whole in the fight against corruption” and in its larger self-conception as political, social and moral leader of the state and society.

The concern with the moral high ground the ANC assigns to itself, and the expectation that the rest of society should follow its ‘morality’, is that it does not give space for critical debate regarding the NDR, instead those who do not support it are portrayed as opposers of a better society, counter-revolutionaries, and being anti-South Africa, instead of them having the legitimate right to disagree with the ANC’s defined morality. The ANC ultimately calls for unity in the pursuit of the NDR, which in reality is a call to unity around the ANC’s ideology.

### 2.3.2 ANC view of opposition

The ANC’s *National General Council Report* from their meeting of 11-15 July 2000, in reaction to the 1999 election results, states “the elections demonstrated a reduction in support for the *forces opposed to transformation*” [my emphasis]. Again at the 51<sup>st</sup> *National Conference* of the ANC Mbeki (2002) asserted: “The Democratic Party/ Democratic Alliance has continued to position itself as the most determined opponent of our movement and our perspective of the fundamental transformation of our country. In the period since our last National Conference, the DP/DA has indeed done everything it could to *oppose our transformation effort*” [my emphasis]. According to Kgalema Motlanthe (interviewed by O’Malley 2004), Deputy President of the ANC, the DP is a racist party with an agenda for the maintenance of white privilege since “they are now home to the conservatives who left the NNP.” In addition, Motlanthe stated “they have said to themselves that anything that is bad for SA is good for them, it’s good for them. Anything that is bad for SA as a country is good for the political fortunes of their party.” In other words, unlike the normal expectation of any opposition party - to see the incumbent party fail so they can rise to the position of

leadership - the DA is accused of wanting to see South Africa as a country fail. Ultimately if you are critical towards the ANC-led government or its policies then you will probably be branded as disloyal to South Africa and the future of South Africa, not the ANC. This implies that the ANC perceives itself to be more than the ruling party but as the embodiment of South Africa, and thus dissent or criticism is not tolerated. Myburgh (interview 2009) asserts that the ANC, during its early years of government and under the height of Mbeki's rule, saw opposition and critical media as obstacles in the pursuit of its "sacrosanct" goal of transforming the society.

James Selfe (interview 2009), MP of the DA and Chairperson of the DA's Federal Executive Council, asserts that there are some within the ANC that recognise, for example, the right of the DA to exist and there are those that do not. Again, highlighting the different factions within the ANC. Selfe calls it a "split organisation" and a "paranoid organisation" where some are very committed to the Constitution and multi-party democracy and others believe that the DA is counter-revolutionary. According to Selfe, Mbeki's Presidency was "no golden age for opposition." When asked whether the ANC sees the right of the DA to exist, Davidson (interview 2009) replied that he believed that they did now. He explained that in the beginning it was difficult for the ANC to understand and accept the concept of a "loyal opposition", stating: "when I first came to Parliament it was incredibly difficult for many people in the ANC to actually recognise that you had a legitimate function to perform and that your function actually contributed towards the development of democracy." Nevertheless, both Selfe and Davidson recognise that there is space to be critical of the ruling party. Selfe, who was also a MP under NP rule, asserted that there is certainly more scope now than when the NP governed. Davidson qualified this saying: "I do not think anybody has ever felt threatened, well let's say this, I am talking as a white person, if you talk to our black colleagues it is a different picture. They will tell you there is huge intimidation and pressure on them on a continuous basis to 'leave that white party' as they call us."

The ANC's skepticism of opposition goes beyond political opposition to civil society as well. In its 52<sup>nd</sup> Conference *Resolutions* under the section *Communications and the Battle of Ideas* it stated that the ANC was "faced with a major ideological offensive, largely driven by the opposition and fractions in the mainstream media, whose key



objective is the promotion of market fundamentalism, control of the media and the images it creates of a new democratic dispensation in order to retain old apartheid economic and social relations” (ANC 2007b: 44). They claim that “some fractions of the media continue to adopt an anti-transformation, anti-ANC stance” (p. 44). Instead the ruling party asserts that the media should contribute towards the National Democratic Revolution and the transformation of South Africa. In particular they note that the SABC remains an important player in the NDR. In the *ANC Today* ANC President Jacob Zuma (2008) pointed to a “general trend within most mainstream media institutions to adopt positions, cloaked as sober and impartial observation, that are antagonistic to the democratic movement and its agenda for fundamental social, political and economic transformation.” He likens the critical voice of the media to functioning as “an opposition party.” He explains that this critical media is controlled by “particular class interests and is predominantly whites.” Zuma goes on to say: “it stands to reason that media institutions will tend to reflect the preoccupations, values and world view of this small group of society.” By insisting that supposedly predominantly white institutions, such as businesses and the media are merely products of apartheid and motivated by racism, the ANC is able to undermine such institutions that provide a check on its power. Instead, the 52<sup>nd</sup> *National Conference* has called the ANC to “develop its own media platforms.” The concern again is the elevation of the NDR and the goals of the ANC as being above reproach or debate.

*In summary*, since, the ANC has charged itself with the historical challenge of ‘transforming’ the South African society by means of the NDR; it largely views and portrays the strategies and tactics of opposition, whether it be a political party or civil society, as being anti-transformation and thus illegitimate. It also depicts criticism of itself, its members, its policies and its morality as being anti-South Africa and not anti-ANC, thus it conceives the ANC to be the very embodiment of South Africa. The NDR and the ANC, for the most part, have thus been placed outside the boundaries of acceptable political debate. As Giliomee *et al* (2001: 170) point out, in doing so, they have managed to suppress or discredit criticism over the extension of party control, justifying its increasing centralisation over all institutions of the state as part of the NDR’s transformation of the state. Nevertheless, this closing of alternative voices is not a sentiment shared across board in the ANC, as became obvious from the interviews. The different historical strands within the ANC are still evident and there



are the liberal-democrats who understand the need for a “loyal opposition” and for alternative voices as expressed through civil society.

### **3. EXPLAINING THE ANC’S CONTROL**

In the previous chapter it was argued that the consolidation of Mexico’s hegemonic system was at the expense of voice and accountability. The PRI was able to exert extensive control over virtually all levers of power through internal structuring and mechanisms of internal and external control. To what extent does South Africa’s ANC use these strategies of internal and external control, and what are the implications thereof? Is the establishment of political and economic monopolies of power evident in South Africa as it was in Mexico? To ascertain whether these monopolies exist in South Africa, similar categories as used in chapter five will be applied.

#### **3.1 ESTABLISHING A POLITICAL MONOPOLY**

Using methods of internal and external control, Mexico’s PRI created a political monopoly, to the point where there was virtually ‘no life outside the party’. Although the ANC’s methods differ, there are still similarities and there is evidence of ensuring internal control to the extent that alternative voices are effectively side-lined or silenced. A key means of establishing a political monopoly in South Africa, and out of which other methods emanate, is undoubtedly the quest of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

##### **3.1.1 Pursuing a national project**

Dominant parties come to power on the wave of a significant historic event, and tend to initially maintain their dominance by continual referral to this event. The ANC’s claim to the liberation struggle is evident in their *Strategy and Tactics* document (2007a: 3) where it states: “it is both an honour and a challenge for the ANC to claim the legacy of the liberation struggle, to occupy the high ground of its moral suasion and wield its compass.” Due to the passing of generations, and the need to ensure their dominance, these dominant parties must induce and maintain political loyalty

using other symbolic mechanisms, such as a national project. The ANC's project is certainly the *National Democratic Revolution* (NDR).

The NDR originated within the SACP and the 1969 Morogoro Conference, where this 'revolution' was its foremost objective as the first stage towards the attainment of socialism (Dubow 2000: 77-78, Turok 2009). According to the ANC (1998) the strategic objective of the NDR is: "The creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society." Turok (interview 2009) claims the NDR is "multi-class" and its aspirations are for a democratic society in terms of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution. However, the ANC's *Strategy and Tactics* (2007a: 4) document emphasises that the "main content of the NDR is the *liberation of Africans in particular and blacks in general* from political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female" [my emphasis]. In 1996 Joel Netshitenzhe stated the NDR is a "process of struggle that seeks the *transfer of power* to the people. When we talk of power we mean political, social and economic control" [my emphasis]. According to Mbeki (2002) the change will "come about as a result of consistent effort on our [the ANC] part, which will entail a complex ideological, political and organisational struggle."

Accordingly, the NDR will be realised through: Firstly, "[t]he application of the principles of *democratic centralisation*" (ANC 2000) [my emphasis], by "strengthening the hold of the democratic government on state power, and transforming the state machinery to serve the cause of social change" (ANC 1999a). Although the ANC has been careful not to give the word 'transformation' a precise definition two understandings of the word have emerged, according to Giliomee *et al* (2001: 167-169). First, in public statements by the ANC leadership, transformation has been referred to in racial terms, thus all institutions within society, be they public or private need to reflect the exact racial composition of society as a whole. Transformation therefore refers to a policy of demographic representivity. It justifies the use of race classification and racial discrimination, within the aspirations of Africanism. The NDR is about the liberation of "Africans in particular" and "blacks in general." This emerging historiography clearly implies that a coloured, indian or

white can never be an African. For example, the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003 (The Republic of South Africa 2004: 2) defines a ‘black’ as a coloured, indian and african. Implying it is possible to be black without being an African. Second, is the aim of extending party control as is expressed in the ANC (1998) document *The State, Property Relations and Social Transformation*. It states: “transformation of the state entails, first and foremost, *extending the power of the National Liberation Movement over all levers of power*: the army, the police, the bureaucracy, intelligence structures, the judiciary, parastatals and agencies such as regulatory bodies, the public broadcaster, the central bank and so on” (ANC 1998) [my emphasis]. The ANC looks to political power to transform the South African society. Strong state intervention is seen in the form of Black Economic Empowerment strategies, affirmative action initiatives and a general pressure from the state apparatus on businesses and society at large to transform. Since the ANC considers the current *status quo* as illegitimate and the heritage of eighty years of white rule, it justifies the necessity of greater state intervention to redress these past injustices. This strategy of transformation by increased state intervention and control by a core elite is explainable by the ANC’s historical role as a liberation movement, which required secrecy and decisions to be made by a small core group of people, and the influence of communism which tends to spawn a highly centralised system of government.

Secondly, the NDR is to be achieved through its *Cadre Development and Deployment Strategy* (ANC 1999b) in the attainment of ideological hegemony. The term *cadre* denotes party members trained and disciplined in the ideology of the party who are “expected to exhibit a high level of political commitment and doctrinal discipline” (Heywood 2002: 249). A feature of the cadre party is a reliance on a political elite to offer ideological leadership to the masses. The strategy of cadre deployment was formally adopted by the ANC at its 50<sup>th</sup> *National Conference* in 1997. It is essentially undemocratic as it commits the party to controlling all levers of power. It is also unconstitutional as it circumvents the Constitution. It essentially allows the ANC to appoint its members and those loyal to the party to key positions within the state machinery. Advocate Paul Hoffman (interview 2009), Director of the Institute for

Accountability in Southern Africa, states that cadre deployment in the public service is illegal and “has been declared illegal by the courts.” The advocate went on to say that “28% of the people who are employed in local government are there as a consequence of cadre deployment and not because they are deployed into a job that fits into and is described in the structures of the municipalities for which they work... that is just corruption on a grand scale.” In his remarks to a 2008 *Lekgotla*, President Mbeki (ANC 2008) said: "Everybody in this room is ANC and all deployed in government by us are ANC. The mandate is not government's mandate but that of the ANC. We have a common responsibility to ensure that the ANC continues to enjoy the support and respect that it has enjoyed in the past. None of us should undermine the confidence enjoyed by the ANC as a united movement." The loyalty and accountability of those institutions therefore runs first and foremost to the ruling party removing power from these constitutional institutions and ultimately giving it to the ANC NEC. In the *Cadre Development and Deployment Strategy* (ANC 1999b), under the heading ‘Winning hegemony,’ it asserts the “responsibility of [their] cadres (e.g. those located within the state)...[is] to use whatever power they have to ensure that transformation policies are accepted and implemented.” The policy document also calls for the “deployment of cadres for effective intervention on all fronts, including the governmental, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, with proper co-ordination amongst all these levels, to ensure that we act as one movement, united around a common policy and bound by a common programme of action.” Parliamentary implies the political society and extra-parliamentary implies civil society, thus the ANC intends for all spheres of political and civil society to be influenced and penetrated by its ideology and its cadres. Myburgh (interview 2009) refers to the process of cadre deployment as a “patronage-based” system. Poor service delivery and a lack of accountability can certainly be linked to this system. If your position is dependent on your loyalty to the ANC and not to your abilities or your performance then the accountability lines will run to the party and not to the citizens. It is nevertheless, recognised that under Motlanthe’s guardianship there has been a recognition of the need to bring skilled labour back. Hoffman and Myburgh point to the appointment of Justice Cameron to the Constitutional Court as evidence of the acknowledgment that skilled people are needed regardless of affinity or colour.

Third, the ethos of the NDR informs the ANC's wide-ranging aim to *penetrate not only all the centres of power of the state, but the economy, civil society and society* as well. The NDR means a *socialisation* of society towards the establishment of *ideological hegemony*. In the ANC's *National General Council Meeting of 2005* it reasserted the importance of its "ideological struggle and cadre development," where the relevant commission recommends the necessity of paying "close attention to issues pertaining to the *socialisation* of new generations in institutions such as the family, schools and higher education institutions" [my emphasis]. Thus, this ideological hegemony is to include the political socialisation of all South African citizens in the worldview of the ANC. Regarding civil society, the ANC highlights the importance of "social cohesion" supported by "joint efforts among all sectors of society to strengthen community organisation and mobilisation around issues pertaining to sport, women's rights, youth interests, the battle against crime and so on" (p. 5). The ANC essentially aims to achieve the ideological hegemony of its NDR across all spheres of government and society (ANC 2007a: 12): "the presence of ANC members and supporters in state institutions"; "activism in the mass terrain of which structures of civil society are part"; "involvement of cadres in the intellectual and ideological terrain to help shape the value systems of society" though promoting "progressive traditions within the intellectual community, including institutions such as universities and the media"; and "playing a vanguard role also means the presence of members and supporters of the ANC in business."

Finally, the ANC places itself at the head of this NDR, going as far as calling it its "vanguard role" (ANC 2007a: 12; Turok 2009) and positioning itself as the "ultimate strategic 'centre of power'" (p. 13).

**Figure 5: ANC’s national project: The National Democratic Revolution**



Since criticism of the NDR is considered to be anti-transformation, the ANC is essentially silencing dissent. In doing so it is encroaching on the autonomy of society in general, and the separation of powers within the state, in particular. The strategy is basically undemocratic, committing the party to controlling all levers of power, circumventing the Constitution and its endorsement of a separation of powers. Leader of the official opposition, Helen Zille (2007), conveys the point as such: “To the ANC, the ruling party is the state, and each citizen must play her role in the “national democratic revolution,” whether she votes ANC or not.” ANC documents portray the NDR as beyond reproach, that if you are in any way critical of it you are against the transformation of South Africa. The ANC appears to refuse the possibility that the programme of action may be flawed and need proper interrogation.

Turok (interview 2009) acknowledges this dichotomy between the goals of the NDR, to control all levers of power so as to transform society, and the Constitution's goal of the separation of powers. "We are in a contradiction here, this country is run by a liberation movement, with a very strong agenda for transformation, at the same time we live in a liberal democracy, which includes the separation of powers...the ANC is very anxious to exercise political power, which it cannot, because of the forces that are at work and the dynamics of relative autonomy." Turok believes that revolution has not yet happened in South Africa and for it to happen the ANC has to "exercise power." He subsequently deems the values of a liberal democracy and its checks and balances to have "stalled that revolution."

Some contend that there is a "New ANC" (Kotzé 2008) with the 2007 *Polokwane National Conference* and South Africa is entering into a new dispensation. Cosatu and SACP leaders view Mbeki's defeat and Zuma's victory as president of the ANC, as a return to the way things were before Mbeki: "In particular this conference should open the way to the re-emergence of the Tripartite Alliance as a central player in the political process" (Cosatu's New Year Message 2008: 1). According to Ceruti (2008: 108) Zuma's victory was partly explicable in terms of the connection that had "been established between Zuma and the poor" and the expectation of their interests being better represented by him<sup>104</sup>. Kotzé (2008) maintains that in some aspects a "New ANC" has emerged; an ANC which propagates a return to Mandela's politics of "nation-building, reconciliation and public debate" in contrast to Mbeki's agenda of "transformation, Black Economic Empowerment and a narrow emphasis on Africanness." Accordingly the "New ANC" purports to want a return to public debate and is attempting to portray itself as open to a more robust and assertive civil society. Others, like Zille (2007) argue otherwise, stating that "the core ambitions remain the same: to achieve control over every part of our society, right down to the very "soul" of the nation." Analysis of the policy documents emerging from the ANC's *52nd National Conference* in 2007 indicate a continued fervency for the aims of the NDR and the establishment of its ideological hegemony is very much evident in the

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<sup>104</sup> The composition of the ANC's NWC though appears to show a return to the old style NDR based on a coalition of class forces (Ceruti 2008).



*Strategy and Tactics* (2007a) document<sup>105</sup>. In fact it goes even further as the *Resolutions* (ANC 2007b: 7) document puts forward the establishment and institutionalisation of a “Political School” as one of the core organisational priorities for the next five years. The School will focus on the development of *cadres*. Furthermore, the ANC propagates general political education “for all constitutionally elected structures at all levels” and the need to “ensure that all senior deployed cadres in various centres of power go through political classes to understand the vision, programme and ethos of the movement” (p. 7). The Conference again “affirmed that the ANC remains the key strategic centre of power, which must exercise leadership over the state and society in pursuit of the objectives of the NDR” (ANC 2007b:p. 8). The Conference tasked the NEC with the implementation of the *1997 Resolution on Deployment* supposedly with a “view to strengthening collective decision-making and consultation on deployment of cadres to senior positions of authority” (p. 9). This is despite its call to once again strengthen “its culture of robust debate” (p. 11-12). Thus, as Ceruti (2008: 112) sums it, the result of the *Polokwane Conference* is merely “old strategies persist[ing] in new conditions.”

### 3.1.2 Democratic centralism and “*Presidencialismo*”

In general, the dominant party’s claim to predominant power and pursuit of liberation, revolutionary or state-building goals goes hand-in-hand with the demand for increased state intervention. Although the ANC agreed to a weak form of federalism as a political compromise in the pre-1994 negotiations they were, in fact, “opposed to any form of federalism” (Feinstein 2007: 47). This is confirmed in an interview conducted by O’Malley in 1989 with an undisclosed member of the ANC, who stated: “We reject the concept of power sharing because it divides and we are fighting for a non-racial, democratic SA, a united one.” The ANC has gradually established a unitary state based on *democratic centralism*, a core element of the NDR, and which translates into “the leadership of the ruling party control[ing] the party, Cabinet,

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<sup>105</sup> In fact it goes even further as the *Resolutions* (ANC 2007b: 7) document puts forward the establishment and institutionalisation of a “Political School” as one of the core organisational priorities for the next five years. The School will focus on the development of *cadres*. Furthermore, the ANC propagates general political education “for all constitutionally elected structures at all levels” and the need to “ensure that all senior deployed cadres in various centres of power go through political classes to understand the vision, programme and ethos of the movement” (p. 7).

Parliament and all other levels of government” (Van Zyl Slabbert 2006: 163). The Soviet Union’s government made this practice famous and its prominence in the ANC’s policies highlights the continued influence of its communist tradition. Democratic centralism<sup>106</sup> emanates from the centre out, thus the role of the executive and ultimately the president become paramount.

In Mexico, the concentration of power in the Presidency was referred to as *presidencialismo*, where the power of the president and his Presidency extended beyond constitutionally endorsed powers to “meta” constitutional powers. This phenomenon has also become evident in South Africa and was set in motion during the term of Nelson Mandela and became increasingly manifest during Mbeki’s ascendancy to president in 1999. The *Presidential Review Commission*, set up under Mandela’s tenure, insisted the Presidency should form the core of the system of governance, emphasising that the centralising of power was a growing trend among governments around the world. The report rationalised that the purpose of centralisation was to enable the heads of government to play a strong co-ordinating role towards the achievement of election promises (The Presidency 2000/2001). The re-structuring of the Presidency and the government essentially increased control of the national government, and decreased power of provincial and local governments.

Changes resulting from the reorganisation of the Presidency included the alteration of the relationship between the different levels of government as the centre was strengthened so the provinces and local governments were weakened. Although, whether the provincial governments could ever have seriously been considered autonomous is questionable with 95% of their funding emanating from the national government. Nevertheless, the powers of the national government have been further extended at the provincial and local levels as a central committee has replaced provincial and local branches nominating candidates for provincial premierships and local mayoralities. As part of their *cadre deployment* process the *Polokwane Conference* (ANC 2007b) decided that the ANC NEC should develop criteria for

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<sup>106</sup> State centralisation, as previously discussed, results in the usurpation of power from other spheres of society, including usurping power horizontally from other branches of government and within the party itself.

cadres to be deployed to senior positions in government, such as the President, Premiers and Mayors.

In June 1997 Cabinet approved the establishment of an important new unit in the President's office. The Co-ordination and Implementation Unit (CIU) was designed to "equip government with the strategic planning and management capacity it required" (Davis 1999: 6). This unit then evolved into the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Service (PCAS). When asked during an interview, with the *Financial Mail*, what the CIU was Mbeki answered:

It's an economic, a socio-economic co-ordinating unit. There has been a difficulty in the separation of departments, with each doing its own thing. When people think about foreign affairs, they normally think of the department of foreign affairs. But trade and industry is in foreign affairs, finance is in foreign affairs, defence is in foreign affairs, safety and security are in foreign affairs - a whole number of departments. You could have a situation where each one is pulling in different directions. So you need a co-ordinating unit, particularly with regard to economic questions. It is a unit of co-ordination. (Bruce & Laurence 1997)

The PCAS, consisting of five units, vets new policy and drafts legislation for tabling at Cabinet meetings. The units are accountable to no legislative body and it is mandatory for the ministries to refer all new policy documents and draft legislation to the Presidency for examination by the PCAS. The five units, namely, economic sector, intergovernmental co-ordination, social sector, criminal justice system, and international relations, are headed by chief directors. The chief directors are at least as powerful as the Cabinet ministers, but with a salient difference, whereas the latter are accountable to Parliament, the chief directors are not. They are accountable to the president alone. Mbeki's Presidency became characterised by its active involvement in and increasing domination of practically every area of policy-making, as well as the emergence of a small group of advisers that replaced the position of collective debate within the ANC (Feinstein 2007: 86). Post-Polokwane, it is hoped by those disillusioned by Mbeki's leadership style and as enshrined in the Polokwane resolutions, that the ANC will adopt a more collective style of leadership, rather than

vesting too much power in a single individual. However, even if there is a stronger focus on collective leadership, it is likely that decision-making will remain elite-controlled.

On the one hand the restructuring under Mbeki seemed to indicate the intention of the government to improve the co-ordination of its programmes, but it also raises the question of whether the Cabinet ministries, provincial and local governments are being sidelined (Chothia & Jacobs 2002: 149). The restructuring has raised much apprehension with the central question being: “how much of the restructuring is about improved co-ordination, and how much about power?” (Chothia & Jacobs 2002: 150)

As Turok (2009) acknowledged there is a disjuncture between the ANC’s strategy of the control of all levers of power and the Constitution’s separation of powers. He asserts that “the ANC has captured political power, there is no doubt about it.” From the above discussions it is evident that the ANC has managed to capture the executive and the legislature, where its decisions and policies are determined by Luthuli House. The one institution still considered to be independent is the judiciary. Davidson (2009) believes “as a broad statement [the] courts are independent” he cautions that statement by emphasising that the “ANC has as one of its core strategies ...the NDR and that entails the Chapter 9 institutions, plus the courts, the Independent Electoral Commission, which are supposed to be independent. The ANC has always said they do not need to change the Constitution; they can merely deploy their cadres.” However, a positive development was the appointment of Justice Cameron to the Constitutional Court, as of January 2009. He is widely regarded as “one of the most eminent jurists in the country” (Davidson 2009) and an independent voice. According to Hoffman (2009) his appointment “shows that Motlanthe is prepared to appoint the best person for the job and to do so on a basis that does uphold the independence of the judiciary.”

The extent of the independence of the judiciary and the Constitutional Court, will be tested in September 2009, when four new judges will be appointed. The 2007 Polokwane Conference again called for the transformation of the judiciary. In December 2005 a clutch of bills, “which would have had the effect of cadre control of the judiciary” (Hoffman 2009) were introduced. One of the bills called for the

authority of the administration and budget of the courts to given to the minister of Justice (Leon 2008: 429). A further bill vested responsibility for the training of judges with the government and not the judiciary (p. 429). The original bills were “opposed by every living Chief Justice, even George Bizos<sup>107</sup>” (Hoffman 2009). Hoffman maintains that it is the intention of the ANC to bring out another set of similar bills; however, they are currently in the process of “softening up” the nation, using a ‘mallet’ called “J.P. Hlope” who has brought the judiciary into disgrace. It seems that it suits the government to have Hlope misbehave and discredit the judiciary as it will be “argued because of his misbehaviour, that when these ‘let’s control the judiciary’ bills are produced in Parliament, it will be said ‘hey, look at Hlope, we better do something about it ... we must take control here’, and it will be difficult to argue against that.” Selfe (2009) too recognises that the “independence of the judiciary is under attack.” Hoffman (2009) refers to South Africa’s judiciary as “its last hope.” Former leader of the DA, Tony Leon (2008: 435) states: “on balance, it appears that the judiciary remains well aware of its powers – and of the dangers of executive overreach. But there is hardly room for complacency. A skilled, robustly independent judiciary is a challenge to – and an uneasy fit for – a majority party whose ‘national democratic revolution’ wishes to control all levers of power.”

According to the Constitution (1996) the so-called Chapter 9 institutions, supporting constitutional democracy, “are independent, and subject only to the Constitution and the law, and they must be impartial and must exercise their powers and perform their functions without fear, favour or prejudice.” Section 181.4 of the Constitution (1996) goes on to declare: “No person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of these institutions.” As previously highlighted, these institutions have also been targeted as levers of power to be controlled by the ANC, despite the Constitutions provision for their independence and impartiality. A pertinent case in point is the decision to disband the National Prosecuting Authority’s (NPA) Directorate of Special Services, otherwise known as the Scorpions. Its disbanding, which occurred after it had begun investigating National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi<sup>108</sup> and Jacob Zuma in separate cases, brought the independence of this institution into serious question. According to Hoffman (interview 2009) the “reason why the Scorpions is

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<sup>107</sup> George Bizos is a human rights lawyer, who defended Nelson Mandela during the Treason Trial.

<sup>108</sup> Selebi is currently suspended from his position, pending investigations into charges of corruption.

being closed down is straight political expediency; it has nothing to do with any rational, legal, reasonable or accountable decision-making process whatsoever. The significance of doing away with the Scorpions is that the institutional independence of the national prosecuting authority is completely undermined by the demise of this unit.” The advocate goes on to explain that the Constitution’s terms say that national legislation must ensure that the NPA works without fear, without favour and without prejudice, and it is questionable whether the Scorpions were able to do so. Hoffman argues that the Scorpions are being closed down because “it does not suit crooked ANC politicians to have the Scorpions breathing down their necks.” It is contended that the disbanding of this important institution is a result of the ANC’s strategy of controlling all levers of power and thus, the centralisation of power. The work done by the Scorpions will now be carried out by the police, by a unit called the Directorate of Priority Crime Investigation (DIPSI). In its organisational structure DIPSI is answerable, in the final analysis, to the Minister of Safety and Security, who is a politician and who, in South Africa’s dominant party system, is bound by the disciplines and rules of Luthuli House. Taking away the Scorpions not only damages the Scorpions, but it damages the structural integrity of the NPA, undermines its independence and leaves South Africa in a situation “where that fabled control of all levers of power in society is one step closer for the dominant party” (Hoffman 2009).

A general adjunct of centralisation is the evolving of a politics of personalised supremacy, where “dominant leaders impose policies, inhibit debate and suppress real or imagined challenges to their leadership” (Southall 2003: 58). The AIDS debacle is evidence of this trend in South Africa. With Mbeki’s publicised doubts of the HIV/AIDS link, the government went into paralysis regarding implementation of a policy towards curbing the tide of HIV/AIDS in the country as governmental officials either agreed with the President or would not be seen to oppose the President. It was left to civil society organisations, which employed the Constitutional Court, to declare the government’s inaction as unconstitutional. The presidential elections in Zimbabwe are another case in point. Despite, international and local condemnation of the Mugabe-rule and evidence of intimidation of the opposition and manipulation of the voting process, the South African government has maintained a policy of ‘quiet diplomacy’ and generally produces speeches of obfuscation regarding the current

political crisis of its neighbour. The ANC clearly takes on the mantra of ‘the leadership knows best’ and the rest should merely follow.

Contra to the optimism after the *2007 Polokwane Conference* it is argued that as long as the NDR remains the guiding principle objective of the ANC together with its strategy of cadre deployment and control of all levers of power so too will the processes of centralisation and elite control. The process of centralisation is still marching forward, as evidenced in the recent disbanding of the Scorpions, and the eminent ‘transformation’ of the judiciary. These activities have occurred despite it being the so-called “New” ANC, and in spite of the removal of Mbeki from within the ANC.

### **3.1.3 Leadership selection**

#### **3.1.3.1 Selection of party leadership**

ANC leadership selection is done through a list process. In theory, each of the ANC branches nominates candidates to the regional party structure. Regional conferences, consisting of representatives from each branch, would finalise the regional list of candidates to the Provincial Legislature and national Parliament. These lists will then be sent to a Provincial List Conference, comprising representatives of all the branches in the province as well as the ANC’s constituent organisations. Finally the list would be submitted to a National List Conference. Up to this point the process, though cumbersome, is democratic. After the National List Conference the national leadership will deliberate on the final list for submission to the Electoral Commission for the National Executive Committee (NEC). According to Feinstein (2007: 81), a former ANC MP, this is where the process loses its democratic character and becomes hostage to the battles of the ANC leadership. The ANC’s final candidate list for the 2009 elections is a case in point. Party officials and former ministers, considered to have been close to Mbeki and who had been “nominated by the branches and featured on the consolidated list from provinces published at the end of January” were summarily removed from the final list (Tabane 2009: 7). Examples include



Netshitenzhe who was number 41 on that list, Matsepe-Casaburri 75 and Mufamadi 141 - all absent on the final list (p.7).

### 3.1.3.2 Selection of government leadership

The selection of government leadership is governed by the ANC's principles of *cadre deployment* and emphasises the central role of the ruling party in the appointment process. According to the *Resolutions* of the ANC's 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference (2007b) at the local government level the Regional Executive Committee (REC) should make recommendations of not more than three names of *cadres* for the position of mayorship, and the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) will make a final decision based on the names submitted by the REC. Provincially, the PEC should make recommendations of not more than three *cadres* for the position of Premiership, and the National Executive Committee (NEC) will make a final decision based on this pool of names. At national government level the ANC president should be the candidate of the movement for the President of the Republic. Furthermore, the "prerogative of the President, premiers and mayors to appoint and release members of Cabinet, executive councils and mayoral committees should be exercised after consultation with the organisation" (ANC 2007b: 9). The NWC appoints all Speakers of Parliament, Heads of Committees, and ANC whips, rendering the ANC caucus in Parliament without autonomy and impotent (Giliomee *et al* 2001: 173). In addition, the party leadership maintains strict discipline by controlling party, public services, parastatal and statutory body appointments in line with its *Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy*. During the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference the ANC (2007b: 10) affirmed the "need for all ANC cadres to uphold moral integrity and revolutionary discipline."

According to South Africa's Constitution, the legislature is required to hold the executive accountable. However, since the executive consists primarily of the most senior members of the ruling party, it leads to the untenable reality of junior politicians attempting to keep their superiors to account. Such a situation is only workable if you have no fear of losing your seat as an MP. But within South Africa's

system of closed party list and proportional representation, and the ANC's method of leadership selection, a dissenting voice can be removed from the party lists at the next election, if not before. Rigorous parliamentary oversight by MPs of the ruling party in effect means they are criticising senior party leaders, who may reject their party membership and thus position in Parliament. "Disloyal" MPs are summarily replaced with loyal MPs (Mattes 2002: 24). Thus a primary consequence of this method of leadership selection has been the closing of internal debate within Parliament, bearing in mind that of the 400 seats 293 are held by ANC MPs, therefore severely compromising Parliament's constitutional obligation to hold the executive accountable.

Further examples of the unfortunate ramifications of this method of political leadership selection include the reduction of South Africa's Public Accounts Committee (Scopa) to a Parliamentary watchdog in name only; a result of its attempt to keep the executive to account with regards to the 'arms deal'. The committee raised a number of concerns regarding the arms deal including the "spiraling cost of the deal, significant departures from accepted procurement practices, and the limited enforceability of the industrial offsets" (Feinstein 2007: 171). In addition, their investigations exposed irregularities in the government's dealings with international arms traders including evidence of corruption, which implicated members of the executive. In reaction to their rigorous investigations the executive and Mbeki, in particular, brought immense pressure onto the Committee. In 2001<sup>109</sup>, during a public broadcast, Mbeki alluded to Scopa's work: "Our country and all our people have been subjected to a sustained campaign that has sought to discredit our government and the country itself by making unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations of corruption... We know that various entities have been hired to sustain this campaign ... I would like to assure you that the campaign will not succeed." The *Sunday Independent* (2001), in response, editorialised: "Any suggestion that criticism of the executive is subversive, is a subversion of democracy. We would argue that Mbeki's decision to... publicly accuse the Auditor General and Scopa of wrong-doing subverts

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<sup>109</sup> According to Feinstein (2007: 239), 2001 was the year in which the organisation had begun to lose its moral high ground as a liberation movement. "It was the watershed from which the organisation's humility, accountability and integrity began to be replaced by arrogance, aloofness and a gradual diminution of its values."

the separation of powers between the legislature and the executive and undermines the instruments of accountability in so fragile a democracy.” Later that month, during a meeting with the ANC Study Group, Chief Whip, Tony Yengeni, announced: “The ANC, from the President downwards, will now exercise political control over Scopa” (quoted in Feinstein 2007: 194). In a subsequent press conference Yengeni went on to say that there was “no committee in respect of the ANC which is above party political discipline” (quoted in Feinstein 2007: 194). As Feinstein lamented, from that day the role of Scopa as a non-partisan arbiter on matters of financial management was over. Feinstein was effectively compelled to resign as ANC MP and member of Scopa since he had violated the ANC’s unwritten code of not publically airing criticism of the party and its leadership. Feinstein (2007: 4) bemoaned that politics in South Africa had become “characterised by an autocratic leadership giving precedence to the interests of the political party and personal power over those of the country as a whole.”

Further examples include the redeployment of member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Defense, Thandi Modise, after she vigilantly fought to have the concerns of civil society groups incorporated into the National Conventional Arms Control Bill. Following the 2004 elections Modise was ‘redeployed’ by the ANC as Speaker to the Northern Province legislature. Many saw this move as a punitive act by the ANC resulting from Modise’s stand-off with the executive (February 2006: 131). In May 2000 Pallo Jordan, then a Minister in Mbeki’s government, proposed a motion in Parliament to condemn Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe’s actions and question whether free and fair elections were possible in that country. Mbeki reacted in fury and Jordan was required to publicly recant. According to Feinstein (2007: 121) “[t]his behaviour, in which acceptance of the leader’s thinking is linked to a lack of meaningful debate within the organisation, was totally out of character for the ANC, but was the beginning of an insidious change ...what some in the party described at the time as its Zanu-isation.” Similarly, in September 2007, National Director of Public Prosecutions Vusi Pikoli was suspended on the basis of an “irretrievable breakdown in the working relationship between the Minister of Justice and Pikoli” (Mail & Guardian 2007). The decision followed assertions that the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and Pikoli had just issued a warrant of arrest for National Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi, and the question

arises whether there are links between the two incidents. The situation draws into question the extent to which the NPA can act independently and without fear or favour. The dismissal of Deputy Minister of Health, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, is another case in point. She was known for being outspoken regarding the HIV/AIDs debacle and called for the roll-out of anti-retrovirals, contra to the Health Ministers statements. Reasons given for her dismissal include her embarking on a trip without the approval of the President and in Mbeki's words: an "inability to work as part of a collective" (Mbeki 2007).

Although such incidents are often attributed, and sometimes with validity, to the leadership style of Mbeki, it is contended that they are also inherent within the ANC itself. Dubow (2000: 60) recognises that throughout much of the ANC's history "[l]oyalty to the organisation and respect for institutional continuity was much prized by the ANC." The ruling party at its 52<sup>nd</sup> *National Conference* affirmed the "unity and coherence of the ANC" as an "absolute requirement for the ANC to successfully pursue its revolutionary task in the battle of ideas in the advancement of the NDR" (ANC 2007b: 45). Its strategies of democratic centralism and cadre deployment, towards the attainment of the NDR, are not Mbeki's policies, but are embedded within the ideologies - Africanism and communism - of the ANC.

This method of leadership appointment means preeminence is given to the ANC's authority over constitutional arrangements for government selection. The consequences are similar to the case of Mexico, firstly, the line of accountability and loyalty runs to the party and not to the public or constitutional institutions. Secondly, in order to protect their current positions and future appointments, members of the ruling party will be unlikely to contend with the party-line thus rendering horizontal accountability and the logic behind the separation of powers— accountability, representivity and transparency - obsolete. As the ANC applies the method of *cadre deployment* in its leadership selection and the doctrine of *democratic centralism* by encouraging party leadership to "exercise maximum discipline among its members, and ensure that, after ideas have been exchanged and decisions taken, all its structures and members pursue the same goal" (ANC 1997) so internal opposition and critical debate have been censored. Anyone who would contend with the party-line is re-deployed, suspended or relieved of their positions.

### 3.1.4 Institutional arrangements: Elections and electoral procedures

It is expected that individual citizens will get better representation when they are properly organised and political parties are necessary organisations exactly for that reason. However, South Africa's electoral system is diminishing the representative role of political parties, especially of the dominant party. As Lodge and Scheidegger (2006: 8) assert, South Africa's electoral system "has a profound influence on the internal functioning of parties and on the behavior of their parliamentary caucuses."

#### 3.1.4.1 Closed party list electoral system and floor-crossing

South Africa's system of representative democracy premised on proportional representation (PR) using the Droop Quota to appoint seats, has been assumed to have been positive for nation-building as smaller ethnic, regional and minority parties gained representation in parliament<sup>110</sup>. Due to its very low threshold of support requirement it is a very inclusive system. This inclusiveness stands in stark contrast to the exclusivity of the previous system of white minority rule and has made the composition of the legislature one of the most representative in the world. However, in practice "South Africa's party-led proportional representation system lends itself to centralisation and control" (Feinstein 2007: 150).

The electoral system has important implications for accountability – due to the system not being constituent-based the accountability of representatives to voters is weak. The system "has created no direct link between legislators and voters" (Mattes 2002: 24). The closed party list means voters have no choice over candidates and simply

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<sup>110</sup> In 2001 Van Zyl Slabbert, member of Parliament in opposition to the Nationalist government from 1974 to 1986, was asked to chair a task team which was required to investigate alternative electoral systems for South Africa. Throughout the process van Zyl Slabbert (2006) doubted the genuine interest of the ANC to investigate alternative systems; his own appointment took over a year to officially be made. The majority on the task team proposed a multi-member constituency system, nevertheless, it became clear to the chair "after discussions with Kader Asmal and Essop Pahad and a call from an ANC Electoral Committee official, that the government preferred the status quo" (2006: 107). During this time the Constitutional Court authorised floor-crossing. They had initially argued that combining floor-crossing with a closed proportional list system was "inappropriate and immoral" (quoted in van Zyl Slabbert 2006: 107). This position changed when the ANC began to look favourably upon floor-crossing. According to a source in Cabinet Slabbert's Task Team's report was not read or studied by anybody he could recall and the electoral system, a proportional list system was maintained.

vote for a party. This has two significant consequences; firstly, party officials have enormous control over political recruitment and the system allows “the party leadership to place loyalists in key positions” (Giliomee *et al* 2001: 161). Strict party discipline is reinforced by this system as it enables easy ‘redeployment’ of disloyal members. Secondly, since members of Parliament (MPs) are dependent on their political party for their position and not on the electorate they are less likely to represent public opinions which are contra the party line. The working draft of *South Africa’s Country Self Assessment Report*<sup>111</sup> (Evans 2006) claims the party list electoral system is “stifling dissent and ensuring accountability to parties, rather than citizens.” Submissions to the Report (Evans 2006) noted that Parliament was “seen not as protecting the interests of the people but acting to protect the ruling party.” The ANC’s MPs are subordinate to the NEC sub-committee<sup>112</sup> and are bound by a code of conduct, which prohibits them from any “attempt to make use of parliamentary structures to undermine organisational decisions and policies” (Lodge and Scheidegger 2001: 21). Thus the ruling party’s parliamentary caucus maintains a predominantly deferential demeanor towards the executive. At the ANC’s national conference in 1999 a decision was made against giving parliamentary caucuses special constitutional status.

Representativeness has also come into question with the passing of the Constitution Amendment Act, 2003 (Act 2 of 2003) enabling floor-crossing. The ANC’s initial opposition to crossing the floor shifted when the then-NNP exited the Democratic Alliance coalition<sup>113</sup> to enter talks with the ANC. The timing of the change in legislation, according to Mattes (2002: 22), exhibited “naked political opportunism.” This legislation allows elected representatives of the local, provincial, and national legislatures to retain their seats despite a change in membership from the party that nominated them. Elected representatives may also retain their seats in the case of a merger or subdivision. In addition, one of the requirements for legal defection is that defection must represent not less than 10% of the total number of seats held by the

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<sup>111</sup> The country report is compiled for the African Peer Review Mechanism and is designed to help countries in Africa improve their governance. It is part of a system introduced by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.

<sup>112</sup> Only members of the ANC’s NEC can draft discussion documents that will then be put forward as draft resolutions to a policy conference before being put forward at national conferences.

<sup>113</sup> The Democratic Alliance was initially created as a coalition between the New National Party (previously the National Party), the Federal Alliance and the Democratic Party.



party. The seats held by the defectors are considered to be that of the party to which they are defecting, meaning that proportional representation in terms of the initial allocation of seats (as determined by the number of votes) is distorted. According to Faull (2005) from Idasa, in the context of the 2004 national elections, where approximately fifteen and a half million valid votes were cast, and with each of the 400 seats accounting for 0.25% of the vote, “it is reasonable to assert that for each seat swapped in the National Assembly, the voter intention and representation of 39 032 citizens who went to the polls in 2004 is nullified.” Floor-crossing undermines the principle of representative democracy envisioned by the Constitution as representatives can cross to other parties without any imperative to consult, or be held accountable to citizens, or their opinions. Floor-crossing has merits in a constituency system in which representatives are elected as individuals but not in a national list PR system<sup>114</sup>. In addition, the 10% threshold protects larger parties, as a much larger number of representatives need to abscond before defection can occur. Thus the floor-crossing legislation has become a further mechanism in the strengthening of the ANC’s dominance; it has, unsurprisingly, yet to lose a national or provincial seat in any legislature floor-crossing<sup>115</sup>. This legislation has favored the ruling party and been inclined to fragment the opposition. *Table 5*, which indicates the National Assembly seats after the September 2005 floor-crossing, is illustrative. The ANC lost no seats but gained 14 new members and hence, an additional 14 seats.

This legislation seriously compromises South Africa’s democracy and has implications not only for accountability and representativeness but participation as well. It results in voter apathy as one’s vote is so easily carried over to another party, bringing into question: one’s vote may count, but for whom? Supporters of smaller parties may be less willing to make the effort to vote since experience has shown that the primary beneficiary of floor-crossing at all levels has been the ruling party at the expense of opposition parties. In addition, this legislation does not reflect the interests of South Africans as shown in an opinion poll conducted by the Washington Post/Kaiser Foundation released in 2004<sup>116</sup>. The poll shows that 63% of South

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<sup>114</sup> It is noted that floor-crossing has also been abused in constituency-based systems in post-colonial Africa.

<sup>115</sup> The ANC has agreed to review the floor-crossing legislation considering its current undemocratic ramifications.

<sup>116</sup> The opinion poll was conducted between September 29 and November 7, 2003.



Africans, across race and class divides, disapproved of the system and of these, 42% strongly disapproved. The impact of this legislation on democracy within the context of a PR system cannot be overstated, since voter apathy has a “substantive effect on electoral outcomes” (Faull 2005). In South Africa’s system, voters impact the results whether they vote or not. The pie stays the same size though the size of the pieces of the pie – the proportional ‘power’ of every vote cast – is increased. Compound this with largely opposition supporters opting out of the system and the entrenching of the one party dominant system becomes formidable.

**Table 5: National Assembly seats after September 2005 Floor-crossing**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Seats gained</b>	<b>Seats lost</b>	<b>New total</b>
<b>African National Congress (ANC)</b>	14	0	293
<b>Democratic Alliance (DA)</b>	2	5	47
<b>Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP)</b>	0	5	23
<b>United Democratic Movement (UDM)</b>	0	3	6
<b>Independent Democrats (ID)</b>	0	2	5
<b>New National Party (NNP)</b>	0	7	0 (Disbanded)
<b>African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)</b>	0	3	4

Even though there has been much debate regarding South Africa’s closed party list proportional representation system, the ANC (2007b: 29) reaffirmed during its 2007 *National Conference* that this electoral system “remains relevant” and it was necessary to “facilitate representivity across the various sectors of our communities through a credible, generally accepted and understood electoral system.” A positive resolution was that “[f]loor-crossing should be abolished,” however, in the same resolution the ANC (2007b: 29) stated that “public representatives of other political parties should be encouraged to join the ANC regardless of whether or not they retain their seats.”

### 3.1.5 Corporatism and cooptation

The ruling party's control over state resources and its predominant influence over public policies provide it with the leverage and means to use corporatism, patronage and cooptation as strategies to consolidate dominance. Although corporatism was extensively used by Mexico's PRI to ensure loyalty to the party, it has over the years received considerable criticism since it became recognised as a process by which the state used officially-recognised organisations as a tool for restricting public participation in the political process and limiting the power of civil society. Corporatism is evident in South Africa in the form of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac). In this forum government comes together with organised business, organised labour and organised community groupings on a national level to discuss and attempt to attain consensus on issues of social and economic policy. Although South Africa's corporatism is certainly not as pervasive as it was in Mexico, nor is its form similar. Corporatism in Mexico was closer to a fascist form, evident in authoritarian regimes, whereas South Africa's form is closer to neo-corporatism as found in liberal democracies such as Germany.

According to Feinstein (2007: 248): "The party has always tried to co-opt opposition to it." In line with this strategy Azapo was offered a Cabinet seat and attempts were made to keep the IFP in Cabinet. A prime example of cooptation is the merging of the NNP, the previous apartheid government, into the ANC. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2004 the NNP's leader Martthinus van Schalkwyk announced that he would be joining the ANC and called his members to join him. One of the Party's members went on to say to other members that they would have to decide whether to "help build South Africa or criticise from the sidelines" (quoted in Msomi and Ndlangisa 2004: 1).

*In summary*, Giliomee *et al* (2001: 173) caution that the ANC's policies of democratic centralism and cadre deployment, in their pursuit of the NDR, have created what Hannah Arendt terms a dual authority, where *de jure* authority resides in the Constitution, Parliament and Cabinet, but *de facto* authority resides in the dominant party. Therefore real decision-making occurs not in the constitutional public forums but behind closed doors of party forums. Compound this with party, electoral and government systems that serve to entrench party dominance, a party centralised

leadership selection process, a history which continues to divide party support along racial and ethnic cleavages, and a dominant party that de-legitimises and silences opposition, and it becomes clear that the operating space for any form of opposition or dissent in South Africa's dominant party system is becoming more and more constrained.

### 3.2 ESTABLISHING AN ECONOMIC MONOPOLY

As a small, growing economy South Africa had little choice but to engage in the global economy. Its economic policy for the first ten years was a constant struggle between the necessity of attaining material and social justice on the one hand, and gaining the approval of the global economy on the other (Feinstein 2007: 66). The government's adoption of the Growth, Equality, and Redistribution (GEAR) policy was premised on the mainstream assumption of the early 1990s that economic growth could not be achieved by import substitution within a closed economy and expansive state spending, but rather by policies which encouraged foreign direct investment, low inflation, and free international trade. This shift from the Redistribution and Development Plan (RDP) was largely influenced by the stagflation and boom/bust experience of many Latin American countries in the 1980s, otherwise known as macroeconomic populism. GEAR did manage to stabilise public finances, increase government revenues, keep inflation levels low and lead to increased growth levels. However, it did not lead to improvements in the fight against unemployment. Feinstein (2007: 69-70) cites two reasons for the poor employment record: the failure of labour-intensive public works schemes and labour market rigidities. Essential to the success of GEAR's employment-creation targets was a relatively flexible labour market environment. "The job protection and conditions of service provisions were simply too onerous for a small, relatively uncompetitive, developing economy" (Feinstein 2007: 69). It discouraged companies from employing unskilled workers – those who needed the work most. The adoption of rigid market regulation can either be explained through Mbeki not taking on the labour unions, to ensure political harmony or through his style of keeping balance: an unpopular orthodox economic policy combined with social democratic labour legislation, popular with the political allies.

### 3.2.1 Centralisation of the state

Despite its apparent adoption of more free market economic policies, the ANC's skepticism of the role of the free market, is equally evident in its policy documents. The ANC believes that the economic changes they seek "will not emerge spontaneously from the 'invisible hand' of the market," but rather that the "state must play a central and strategic role, by directly investing in underdeveloped areas and directing private sector investment" (ANC 2007b: 17). The 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference again affirmed the need for a *developmental state* that is "located at the centre of a mixed economy...a state which leads and guides that economy and intervenes in the interest of the people as a whole" (p. 17). To attain this developmental state the Conference called for a "strengthened role for the central organs of state" and the "integration, harmonization and alignment of planning and implementation across all three spheres of government, and with the development finance institutions and state-owned enterprises" (p. 18). In addition, since the NDR aspires, in theory, to improve the quality of life in South Africa, it justifies the call for an interventionist state, which "will guide national economic development and mobilize domestic and foreign capital and other social partners" (ANC 2007a: 5). The document goes further in its call for the "intense role of the state in economic life" (p. 6) within the tradition of "social democracy." Thus, again, the monopolisation of the economy is to be understood within the ambit of the NDR, which charged the ANC to use state power to deracialise the economy. The ANC, since it attained power, has been committed to a 'democratisation' process that goes beyond the state to include control of the economy as well.

### 3.2.2 Political party funding

The ANC, like any other political party, needs funding to compete in elections, maintain its headquarters, national organisation and pay for the salaries of its staff. In general, South Africa's political parties have two sources of funding: public funding through the state, and private funding. The spending of public funds is carefully regulated and monitored, while the private funding is almost completely unregulated.

The main concern with the public funding is the application of the *Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act 103* (1997), which stipulates that funds should be allocated on the basis of the “principle of proportionality” and the “principle of equity.” The Act empowers the President with recommendations from the Parliament to determine the means of allocating funds. Parliament, essentially controlled by the ANC, has given extensively more weight to the principle of proportionality than that of equality. The result is that the lion’s share goes to the ANC, for example in 2006/7 the ANC obtained R49.3 million of the R74.1 million available (Southall 2008: 107). Opposition argues that they have been disadvantaged by this method of applying strict proportionality to the detriment of the principle of equality, and thus severely limiting the need for a strong opposition.

The primary concern with private funding is its lack of monitoring and transparency. Secret donations can negatively affect political rights and participatory democracy as the average citizen’s voice becomes eclipsed by the undue influence wielded by wealthy donors. The ANC, despite its commitment to regulate private funding since 1997, when the *Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Bill* was enacted, has made no progress in developing the necessary legislation. As a signatory of *Article 10 of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption* of 2003, South Africa is obliged to adopt measures to “incorporate the principle of transparency into funding of political parties,” yet South Africa’s unregulated, unmonitored private funding is leading to increasing examples of corruption and a blurring of the state-party line.

According to Sarakinsky (2007: 113) the ANC’s budget was R300 million for the year 1999. Southall (2008: 107-111) recognises four main funding sources of the ANC. The first is state funding as provided by the *Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act* of 1997. The second is corporate funding. An example of which is ‘The Network Lounge,’ where corporations, parastatals and government departments pay R5 million to associate with the ANC elite. Similarly, in 2006 the ANC established the *Progressive Business Forum* to raise party funds. The members of the Forum, leading businesses in South Africa, including parastatals, pay a significant fee to the ANC in exchange for access to key government ministers. Both examples constitute corruption as ‘public office has been used for private gain’.

Although it is acknowledged that the corporate sector is a potent engine for growth and employment, their closeness to political parties and politicians may extend beyond those parties which historically represented the interests of the business community. To be too closely linked to business interests results in the expectation that the party and its politicians will have to deliver for their special interest backers.

A third source of funding has been the ANC's move into business. According to Southall (2008: 109) Batho Batho Trust was founded in 1992 by Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Tokyo Sexwale with the mandate to benefit 'the broader South African community' but unofficially it has financed the ANC. In addition, the *Mail & Guardian* uncovered an elaborate network of companies known as the Chancellor House Group, created to utilise BEE deals to raise money for the ANC.

And, fourth, certainly the most dubious source of funding is the misappropriation of state resources. There has been a blurring of state-party lines as the ANC has used state resources for campaigning as evidenced in the Oilgate scandal. State oil company, PetroSA, made an advance payment of R15 million to Imvume Management for an oil condensate sourced from the Swiss company, Glencore. R11 million of this amount was diverted to the ANC ahead of the 2004 elections. Meanwhile PetroSA paid the R15 million directly to Glencore for fear of it closing its Mossel Bay fuel point down. PetroSA has, to date, attempted, without success, to recover its money from Imvume. This amounts again to public funds being used for private gain. The ANC's response has been to attempt to gag newspapers from investigating and reporting on its relationship with Imvume.

Unregulated party funding has a corrosive impact on a democracy as it breeds and encourages corrupt behaviour. Robinson and Brümmer (2006: 1) caution that unless party funding is regulated it will "become the biggest test to the country's sanctified separation of power as enshrined in the Constitution: if state power is abused to direct resources to support political parties, the basis of fair political contestation is undermined."

***In summary***, the ANC justifies its increasing control over the economy in terms of its achievement of the NDR. The idea of the developmental state places the government

at the helm of the economy and economic institutions; these institutions therefore become hostage to its policies and prescriptions. To further bolster its dominance the ANC has adopted methods of party funding, which are blurring the lines between the state and party, undermining fair political contestation and testing the relevance of the constitutionally endorsed separation of powers.

### 3.3 IDEOLOGICAL HEGEMONY

In contrast to Mexico, besides establishing political and economic monopolies the ANC is also seeking to entrench ideological hegemony throughout all state organs and society. A strategy it refers to as “the battle of ideas” (ANC 2007b). A battle necessarily implies a winner and a loser. In their battle they seek to “vigorously communicate the ANC’s outlook and values (developmental state, collective rights, values of caring and community solidarity, *ubuntu*, non sexism etc) versus the current mainstream ... ideological outlook (neo-liberalism, a weak and passive state, and overemphasis on individual rights, market fundamentalism, etc)” (ANC 2007b: 45). This battle of ideas is thus based on specific worldviews (Africanism and communism) which the ANC advocates as being superior to other worldviews, in the case above - a liberal-democratic worldview, which promotes individual rights and liberalities, and a limited state. Its ideological battle is thus not only external, but internal as well, when considering that within the ANC there are liberal-democrats.

There has been a significant rise in the dominance of the less inclusive Africanism. Thabo Mbeki’s parliamentary speech in 1996 *I am an African*, appeared to promote and highlight a future for all born in South Africa, regardless of colour or race:

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San ...I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me. In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East...

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongqause...



I come of those who were transported from India and China...

Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that - I am an African.

However, for Feinstein (2007: 63) the speech highlighted Mbeki's practise of obfuscating a deeper and often less palatable intention. It became apparent to him that it merely presaged the beginning of the ANC's shift from non-racialism to a more complex and less inclusive Africanism. During his Presidency Mbeki began to speak more about a divided nation of wealthy whites and impoverished Africans. His '*I am an African*' speech had metamorphosed into an increasingly exclusivist, pan-African vision contra to the ANC's non-racial, nationalist and values-driven ethos (Feinstein 2007: 63). Van Zyl Slabbert (2006: 3) also argues that Mbeki's initial inclusive definition of Africanness has been "ideologically mangled and historically appropriated beyond recognition."

The influence of communism is evident in the ANC's mantra the 'leadership knows best'; its policies of democratic centralism and cadre deployment; and its self-appointment as moral leader of the South African society. Furthermore, "the ANC's Leninist/Stalinist residue, evoked in many of the party's strategic documents over the years and in the attitudes and behaviours of some of its leaders, especially in the Presidency, leads the movement to regard the state as the plaything of the ANC" (Feinstein 2007: 262). The impact of a communist ideology is especially concerning when a deeper analysis is made of the public opinions of South Africans versus the policies implemented. Leadership has clearly replaced representation, as the ANC's view supersedes that of the citizens of South Africa. In the ANC document *Accelerating the Pace of Change* (1999a: 5) it states that the ANC "remains the most important moral voice on almost any question facing the country." The above is interesting in light of the obvious chasm between public opinion and policies. In 2003 86% of the population considered themselves to be adherents of a religion, 96% of these identifying with a Christian denomination (Rule and Mncwango 2006). In the Human Sciences Research Council's 2003 *South African Social Attitudes Survey* (SASAS) the attitudes of South Africans towards three moral issues were surveyed, namely: attitudes towards same-sex relations, abortion, and the death penalty. The

survey found that more than three-quarters (78%) of adult South Africans believed that same sex relations are “always wrong,” of which 81% of black Africans were against such relations. Yet in November 2006 the *Civil Union Bill*, which protects the rights of same-sex marriages, was enacted despite massive public outcry. The ANC made it compulsory for its Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, and MPs to attend the parliamentary sitting and vote in favor of same-sex marriages regardless of their religious or traditional beliefs.<sup>117</sup> ANC spokesperson in Parliament Moloto Mothapo said: "There are no exceptions. We are united 100 percent behind the Bill" (quoted in Quintal 2006: 2). Mothapo went on to assert that ANC MPs were in Parliament by virtue of the party and not because they were elected individually by their constituencies; highlighting the concern previously noted that the party list system has dire implications for representation of the electorate. Regarding abortion, the survey (Rule and Mncwango 2006) found that 56% of South Africans oppose birth defect-related abortion, 64% of which are black Africans. On 1 February 1996 the government passed the *Termination of Pregnancy Act* and in May 2004 the Constitutional Court upheld the right of girls younger than 18 years to undergo abortions without the permission of their parents. 75% of the South African adult population is in support of the death penalty; the escalating crime rate in South Africa has certainly fuelled such sentiments. Yet in 1995, the death penalty was abolished and formally declared unconstitutional. It is nevertheless recognised that the death penalty was made unconstitutional by the interim Constitution of 1994, and the parliamentary act was an implementation of the Constitution. Although it appears that the South African government is not adhering to nor representing public opinion, when it comes to issues of morality, a concern for representative democracy<sup>118</sup>, there is also the recognition that these acts have been passed in line with the Constitution. This raises the issue, whether our Constitution is too progressive and out of touch with the values of the South African society. This is despite it having been a product of extensive negotiation, and supposedly embedding the values of society as interpreted by CODESA.

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<sup>117</sup> An irony is evident - ANC MPs were not allowed to vote according to their conscience for the Civil Union Bill yet the justification given for the right to floor-cross is to move according to conscience.

<sup>118</sup> This is not always the case as there are examples of the government buckling to public pressure especially when it is mounted through organised civil society organisations.

*In summary*, this centralisation and racialisation of power has begun to silence internal and external dissent and debate. Increasingly evident in the culture of the party is a disregard for independent institutions and voices in society, instead its culture has been dominated by *double-speak*, *group-think* and a *deaf-to-criticism* style of leadership. Pursuing a liberal democracy, Africanism and democratic centralism at the same time is to “indulge in serious programmatic contradictions” (Van Zyl Slabbert 2006: 164). Eventually something has to give and it is usually liberal democracy.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to understand the implications of South Africa’s dominant party system on the *quality* of its democracy, especially since the country is hailed as a liberal democracy. In particular, it was necessary to identify the ANC’s methods of consolidating dominance, since its endurance as the dominant party appears to be a long-term reality. If, the participation of agents of voice and accountability, are considered to be important indicators of a good quality democracy, then how has the ANC’s methods of control influenced them?

Similar to Mexico’s PRI, it is becoming increasingly evident that the ANC is establishing economic and political monopolies of power, which serve to entrench its dominance. However, grasping the implications of the establishment of an economic and political monopoly in South Africa can only be accurately understood within the ambit of the ANC’s policy of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and its self-appointment as political and moral leader of this transformation of the state and society. But the analysis needed to go further, since the NDR and its offshoots are only properly comprehensible with the identification of the different historical traditions and ideologies that have fed into the ANC; the influence of these underlying worldviews ultimately culminate in the NDR. Currently, there is a notable pre-eminence of two historical traditions, namely Africanism and communism. The ANC’s present policies and activities, and methods of control are better understood in light of these influences, rather than over-emphasising individuals such as Thabo Mbeki. Contra to the optimism for expected change after the 2007 *Polokwane* conference it is argued that as long as the achievement of the NDR through the

strategies of cadre deployment and control of all levers of power remains the objective of the ANC so too will the processes of centralisation and elite control.

The ideologies of Africanism and communism feed into the current methods of consolidating party dominance as they influence the national project, the governmental structure, the electoral processes, the tendency to centralise around the Presidency, the centralising of the economy and the methods of leadership selection. These ideologies, and the ANC's deliberate intention to establish an ideological hegemony as well, have culminated in a dominant party, which is positioning itself, its members and its policies outside the reasonable realm of debate and criticism. In the interests of its citizens and the future success of its country the ruling party of a one party dominant system needs to recognise that it is not the sole channel for the voice of its citizens and to acknowledge the space for agents of voice and accountability.

Despite the evidence of centralisation and a closing down of debate both horizontally – within the party and the government - and vertically – within civil society, and the strong calls for unity as voiced within the ANC's policy papers, there are cracks in its dominance and there are positive obstacles in the path of moving towards hegemony.

Firstly, there is a disjuncture between rhetoric and actuality. The ANC's pronounced intentions are not always realised. For example the ANC has managed to combine free market economics (GEAR) with social democratic labour relations. This is despite its leftist talk and its supposed commitment to more socialist economics. The organisation is thus not free from external and internal (in this case local businesses) influences. A further example is the ANC's conceding to maintain the mayoral committee system in the Western Cape, after the DA and a coalition of smaller parties<sup>119</sup> won the municipal elections in 2006. The provincial-ruling ANC attempted to reconfigure the city governance system from a committee system to an executive committee system, which would effectively take power out of the hands of the DA. There are three possible reasons for the ANC's turnaround. The first is the impact of

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<sup>119</sup> The multiparty coalition consisted of the DA, ACDP, FF+, UDM, United Independent Front, Africa Muslim Party and the Universal Party.

local pressure. When Robert Macdonald (2006), spokesperson for the mayor Helen Zille, was asked whether the ANC's turnaround was influenced by the coalition he responded: "materially –the parties mobilised a march for democracy on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October where approximately 2000 people attended. The parties within the coalition worked together to put pressure on the ANC." In addition, the incident was widely covered by the local media. Second, is international pressure as it was covered by many of the bigger international newspapers such as the *Washington Press* and media such as the BBC and CNN, serving to discredit the country. Due to the upcoming World Soccer Cup in 2010, the ANC was probably under immense pressure to halt the bad publicity. Third, is pressure from differing factions within the ANC, thus there were those, who did not favour such moves, especially since they exhibited political opportunism more than a concern for democratic principles, thus tarnishing the reputation of the ANC. According to Macdonald (2006) it was "general reflection of fractions within the ANC." Thus, the ANC's attempt at centralising power at the local level and its desire to displace opposition was halted by political society, civil society and more moderate elements within the ANC itself.

The second issue relates to Southall's idea of 'weak dominant partyism', where he questions whether the ANC is really capable of imposing itself on society. As previously mentioned, Mexico's hegemonic party system developed in an agrarian society, where the majority of its citizens were illiterate and rural. It thus lacked an informed and sophisticated citizenry; instead they were susceptible to populism and elite control. The context within which the dominant party system was established in South Africa is somewhat different. It is an industrialising country, with large, urbanised areas, a relatively high literacy rate, a diverse society, and thus a far more complex and complicated society, that is probably not as malleable as Mexico's rural society was.

Thus, this chapter has served to highlight dangers and tendencies that have been realised in part in South Africa, but will hopefully not reach complete realisation due to the complexity of the South African society, the ANC itself, and the changing nature of the ANC's membership, in particular, the growth of an urbanised, black middle class.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study sought to understand the nature of the influence of one party dominant systems on the future and viability of liberal democracy in developing countries. The key research question led to the theoretical unpacking of two fundamental concepts: the one party dominant system and liberal democracy, and prompted the need to comprehend the context provided within developing countries as opposed to developed or industrialised countries. Since party dominance is accepted to occur within democratic regimes, it is important to understand what its implications are for the *quality* of democracy in general and the future of liberal democracy in particular. This led to an investigation into the relationship between the nature of the party system - the one party dominant system - and the type of democracy that would result in developing countries. Having clarified these concepts the nature of the influence of one party dominance was analysed and evaluated using Mexico and South Africa as examples of developing countries.

#### 2. WHY A 'LIBERAL' DEMOCRACY?

The first contribution of the thesis was to reconsider the understanding of democracies as non-authoritarian political systems. The thesis challenged previously held conceptions of democracy as being exclusively non-authoritarian. It thus contended with the misguided notion that *democracy per se* has failed in certain regions.

In Africa, for example, the adoption of nationalist democracy, which has not protected civil and political liberties, and thus largely embodies the elements of authoritarian democracies, has led to the claim that 'democracy' has failed in Africa. This is an erroneous assertion since it is authoritarian democracy that has failed, since non-authoritarian, liberal democracy was never actually implemented. Thus in the theoretical section the term 'democracy' was discussed, acknowledging that unless it is prefixed the concept is too nebulous.

Democracy implies a set of institutions enabling citizens to choose their decision-makers in regularly scheduled elections, thus it is generally contended that a democracy is a non-authoritarian system. Yet, despite there being regular elections there have been a number of democracies, where the government has centralised power and sought to control its citizens, thus leaning closer to authoritarianism than non-authoritarianism. It was therefore maintained that the term democracy is but one public virtue in a political system and centres around the means and methods of selecting a government. If a democracy is understood in this way it makes it clearer as to why the term needs to be prefixed, since the prefix enables one to understand the *type* of democracy. How the ruling party exercises the power given to it through its election as ‘governor’ determines the *type* of democracy to result. If the government extends its power to all spheres of the state and society it is considered to be an authoritarian form of democracy. However, if the power of the government is limited and there are many other centres of power then a non-authoritarian democracy will result. The importance of distinguishing between the types of democracy is highlighted when looking at two major trends in the understanding of democracy.

The first trend is **rule by the people**. A democracy of rule *by* the people implies there are sufficient links with society for government to reflect and represent the interests of its citizens. In addition, civil and political rights are adequately protected by a constitution and the rule of law to ensure the government does not encroach upon these rights. This type of democracy is a liberal democracy. In this political system, agents of accountability, namely political and civil society are recognised as important voices and channels through which society can make their voices heard. In addition, there is a separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary; there is rule of law; and constitutionally-endorsed political institutions like the electoral commission and the prosecuting authority are able to act without fear, favour or prejudice. Since governmental power is limited and kept in check it is a non-authoritarian democracy.

Philosophical origins of this form of rule are to be found in the writings of John Locke (1632-1704), who declared people had freedom and rights even before the existence of government. Out of this understanding of government the ideas of citizenship and rights were born. The foundation of this system is the individual having an



independent value to the state. The state exists for man; with justice, protection, and the common good, being the aim of government. This type of democracy is a *non-authoritarian democracy* since the scope and mandate of government's control is limited. It is also a *liberal democracy* because it combines democracy and constitutional liberalism; where constitutional liberalism, emphasises individual liberty and the protection of an "individual's autonomy and dignity against coercion, whatever the source" (Zakaria 1997: 2). To protect individual liberty there are mechanisms to restrain governmental power and to ensure the government is in touch with the needs of its citizens there are linking mechanisms. Citizens are therefore able to exercise power over the *process of decision-making* and not merely power to *select decision-makers*.

A second understanding of democracy is encapsulated in the phrase **rule for the people**. It is a democracy by virtue of the means of selecting government; there are regular elections. However, the government rules on behalf of the people – it leads the people, and makes decisions for the people. The democratically elected government believes it has absolute sovereignty and therefore power, and centralises its authority around the executive government.

The philosophical foundations of this system are evident in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). He envisioned a state that ordered every aspect of human activity. He elevated the "general will" as opposed to the individual. Therefore man was for the state and the state was to control every aspect of the economic, moral and social life of its people.

Thus, although the system is democratic in the sense of regular elections, the voice and influence of the people is largely limited to that single event. People vote at elections but have no further input, since the government operates on the belief that 'the people have spoken' and it subsequently becomes the sole mouthpiece of the people. The ruling party begins to see itself as the political, social and moral leader of the people, and anyone who would contend with it or oppose it would be delegitimised as being against the state and the 'general will'. These governments encroach on the rights and powers of other spheres of society, usurping power horizontally (from other branches of government and within its own ranks) and

vertically (from associations, civil society organisations and society in general). They justify this centralisation declaring it as necessary for unity and the common good. As a result, there is limited or no space for agents of voice and accountability. Since the government no longer values nor protects the space of other spheres of society an *illiberal democracy* results and as it becomes more and more extensive in its control of other institutions such as the executive, legislature and judiciary so an *authoritarian democracy* develops.

It was subsequently argued that rule *by* the people - a liberal, non-authoritarian democracy - embodies a good quality democracy and a goal worth striving for. A liberal democracy is therefore understood to be a combination of free and fair elections with the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of civil and political liberties.

### **3. CLASSIFYING ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS**

The second contribution of the thesis was to the field of party systems, in particular one party dominant systems. Criteria for categorising one party dominant systems were identified and two types of one party dominant systems were distinguished. Five criteria were identified in the quest to classify the one party dominant system, as a type of party system, namely: A one party dominant system occurs in both authoritarian and non-authoritarian democracies, since the ruling parties of these systems may exercise their power in either an authoritarian or non-authoritarian manner (the political system); the dominant party's dominance is sufficient for it to dominate the political polity and public policy (the threshold for dominance); its dominance emanates from a symbolic history and a deep-seated attachment to a particular party (the nature of the dominance); opposition parties compete in elections but are unlikely to win, whether the elections are competitive or semi-competitive (the inclusion of opposition features); and the ruling party dominates over three or more consecutive elections dominating both the Parliament and the Presidency (the time-span).

It was further argued that there are two categories of one party dominant systems. If all the criteria for party dominance are fulfilled, but the ruling party operates within a

liberal, non-authoritarian democracy then the result is a *dominant party system*. If, however, all the criteria for one party dominance exists within an illiberal, authoritarian democracy then a *hegemonic party system* results as was evidenced in Mexico.

While remembering the tenuous line between authoritarian and non-authoritarian political systems, cognisance should be given to the tendency of ruling parties of one party dominant systems to centralise and expand government control during the second lifecycle phase, that is their predisposition towards consolidating dominance. To maintain dominance the ruling party attempts to ensure a broad spectrum of support, deter potential party defectors and limit the expansion of opposition. The following methods to ensure continued dominance, were identified: manoeuvring of institutional processes in favour of the dominant party; co-opting interest groups and other political party members through corporatism and patronage; delegitimisation of opposition; provision of a ‘national project’ to rally support around; centralising of authority and the leadership selection process; and adopting a centrist approach to ensure broad-based support.

Since unchecked centralisation is the anti-thesis of a non-authoritarian democracy, the observed tendency of dominant parties to use their predominant position to further consolidate their control is a concern. The apprehension is that, as power is centralised the operating space of agents of voice and accountability (including political and civil society) is constrained. This could lead to an already authoritarian democracy being further entrenched or for a non-authoritarian democracy changing into an authoritarian democracy. One party dominant systems therefore place both a unique burden and a responsibility on agents of voice and accountability. This is especially so when one party dominance leads to the governing party seeing less and less need to respond to public opinion due to its confidence in re-election. Ensuring that non-authoritarian democracy remains the *only game in town* in a one party dominant system requires *responsive and accountable government* and *effective agents of voice and accountability*. The critical test for agents of accountability (political and civil society) and institutions of accountability (separation of powers and the rule of law) in one party dominant systems is to ensure that the non-authoritarian liberal democratic ‘rules of the game’ endure.

#### **4. ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS IN INDUSTRIALISING COUNTRIES: EVALUATION OF MEXICO AND SOUTH AFRICA**

The final contribution of this thesis was to the field of comparative politics through the investigation of one party dominant systems in industrialising countries, using Mexico and South Africa as case studies. Critics such as Suttner (2006) have contended that the criticism leveled against one party dominant systems is unfounded and that this party system can have positive implications. The one party dominant system, it is agreed, can create a stable foundation for the development of democracy. However, the examples that Arian & Barnes (1974), Pempel (1990) and Suttner (2006) cite are predominantly industrialised countries. Instead, it was argued that the context created by developing countries is vastly different from that of these developed countries. The context of advanced industrial countries – experience with liberalism, stronger economies feeding into greater equality amongst their people, relatively homogenous societies, and the moderating effects of the international political economy – provides a bulwark against the dominant party abusing its position of strength and accumulating power to the detriment of its populace. Besides the restraining influence of the current global economy, the context within industrialising countries – long histories with authoritarianism, vast socio-economic inequalities making for more unstable systems, susceptibility to manipulation by elites, economic inequalities which feed into a centralised system based on patronage, and competition around issues of social identity - leads to a more volatile system vulnerable to largely unhindered power accumulation. These contextual factors rendered crucial the further study of one party dominance in developing countries. Thus, Mexico and South Africa were chosen as case studies for further analysis.

Despite differences in the type of one party dominant system, whether they be hegemonic (Mexico) or dominant (South Africa) the ruling dominant/ hegemonic party uses similar methods of consolidating dominance – they essentially centralise power through the establishment of (1) economic, and (2) political monopolies. Even Pempel (1990: 32) recognised that establishing one party dominance was more an art than an inevitability. These monopolies are established using internal and external methods of control, which in turn effectively close down or limit the operating space

of civil and political society and they inhibit the ability for other institutions of democracy to act without fear, favour or prejudice. This is especially true in industrialising countries, which do not have histories of liberal-constitutionalism, and have vast socio-economic inequalities making them especially susceptible to the manipulation of ruling elites.

In Mexico, the PRI established a monopoly of political power through the following mechanisms of internal and external control:

- Subordination of the military;
- Extending the powers of the president and the executive;
- Centralising the political system;
- Institutional arrangements and electoral amendments, which favoured the PRI;
- Corporatism, which linked the futures of civil society groupings to the PRI;
- Patronage networks; and
- A party controlled process of political leadership selection.

After its original victory, based on its history as a revolutionary party, the PRI set out to quickly consolidate its dominance. The PRI controlled the elections, the electoral process, electoral convening organisations, discredited opposition parties and then fraudulently manipulated the outcomes if necessary to ensure its dominance. These methods of control induced a virtually unquestioning loyalty to the party leadership, which extended beyond those within the government to society as well. While initially ruling on the basis of legitimate support, the PRI later ruled because of it having eliminated or emancipated virtually every other form of competition. Mexico under PRI rule had all the semblances of a non-authoritarian government with democratic-supporting institutions like opposition, the judiciary, civil society. Except that, the PRI controlled, either directly or indirectly, these institutions. Illustrating that a regime may have all the ‘right’ institutions, but unless there is competition, they are just institutions.

The “tragic brilliance” of the PRI’s hegemonic rule led to the distortion of roles fulfilled by civil and political society, normally associated with liberal-democracies. Elections, opposition, the legislature, the judiciary and civil society groupings effectively stabilised, legitimised and maintained the system. Thus, those institutions,

which would normally counterbalance the centralising tendencies of a government actually served to maintain the system. The PRI's economic monopoly, based on its centralised control of fiscal resources, subsidies, economic regulations, and policies gave it significant leeway to buy off electoral support, siphon funds for its own election campaigns and deter voter exit. Centrally-controlled state finances enabled the PRI to build a massive patronage system, ensuring the acquiescence of political officials, civil society, businesses, and society in general.

Due to the virtue of *incumbency* the ruling party pervaded all aspects of the government, state and society. Through the establishment of political and economic monopolies it guaranteed that there was 'no life outside the party'. So long as the PRI had a majority of electoral support it controlled the executive, legislature and the judiciary; it controlled access to state finances to maintain the acquiescence of civil society; it controlled the leverage for policy-making and electoral laws; and it controlled the means to allocate and dismiss political appointments. Civil and political society, in the interests of their own survival and future, became loyal components and sustainers of the hegemonic system. The PRI's immense control was inevitably detrimental to voice and accountability – the overwhelming power of the ruling party meant there was very little *real* operating space for these social forces.

The PRI's prolonged rulership was not a problem in and of itself, but since it is an example of an industrialising country, which did not have a liberal history or a sufficiently developed civil and political society, there were few checks and balances to its accumulation of power. In addition, at the inception of hegemonic rule Mexico was a predominantly agrarian and illiterate society making it vulnerable to the dictates and manipulations of a ruling elite. Centralised power resulted in a state, which took little heed to its citizens and rather acted in the interest of maintaining the control of the hegemonic party. Mexican politics, the regime, and the party system became practically synonymous with the ruling party, thus the blurring of state-party lines. Through the PRI's mechanisms of internal and external control, society was incorporated into and dependent on the system. The consequences were an ineffective opposition, an impotent civil society and the destruction of the reality of a separation of powers. The consolidation of the PRI's hegemonic rule, based on the creation of political and economic monopolies, was at the expense of voice and accountability,

excepting for state-sanctioned and state-controlled avenues of articulation. The two became mutually exclusive.

Mexico did eventually undergo a process of liberalisation and is currently classified by Freedom House as a 'free' country. A hegemonic system therefore does not necessarily translate into a one party state, and can transition into a multi-party democracy. But, as in Mexico's case, it will probably be a long process combining a number of factors, which over a long period of time eventually culminate in the unraveling of the economic and political monopolies of power. The basis of the PRI's power - its massive electoral base - eventually declined as a result of urbanisation, the rise of a more sophisticated and educated voter, the PRI's inability to handle economic and social crises, electoral reforms, neo-liberal economic reforms, the mounting strength of opposition and civil society, a split from the party, external pressures with the pro-democratic wave and an increasing generational distance from the impetus of the post-revolutionary regime.

Worth highlighting, is the government's loss of economic control due to its willingness to liberalise its market. This releasing of economic power became a primary agent of political transformation. Firstly, economic liberalisation led to a major split within the PRI as its left-of-centre supporters established the CD. This split was important in dividing the PRI's support base and opening up the space for opposition parties to become political contenders. Secondly, market-oriented reforms and trade liberalisation weakened hegemonic-party control as these policies implied removing the ruling party's monopoly over economic sanctions and selective pay-offs in the form of subsidies, tariffs and the like. Thirdly, neo-liberalism was accompanied by changing forms of interaction between elite economic actors and the state. These changes led to transformations in state-society relations, prompting social actors to develop new forms of representation and political participation. In particular, the PRI's shift in economic policy from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialisation altered the balance of power among social forces in the country. These policies meant that the central government increasingly lost control over the local economies and businesses. These economic actors, businesses in particular, began to support alternative parties, for example PAN, in opposition to the PRI. Since trade liberalisation made it easier for localities and businesses to pursue international



options, their economies and sources of business became less dependent on the national government making them more willing to support opposition parties and to take a more critical stand against the government.

As the PRI's control of the economy and economic policies shrunk so space was opened for the beginning of political liberalisation and the dismantling of the political monopoly. The PRI's hegemony was eventually undermined when its hold over the political and economic levers of power was diminished, and alternative actors were given space to operate and contend for power.

Similar to Mexico's PRI, it is becoming increasingly evident that South Africa's ANC is also establishing economic and political monopolies of power, which serve to entrench its dominance. The ANC's mechanisms of internal control towards establishing these monopolies have not been very different from those of Mexico and include:

- Party centralised leadership selection process;
- Deployment of *cadres* or those beholden to the political party in elective and appointed positions, in essence a patronage-based system;
- Centralising and increasing the power of the Presidency;
- Centralising the political system;
- Institutional and electoral arrangements that serve to maintain the ANC's electoral dominance;
- Centralising of economic policies;
- Use of political office for the gain of the political party; and
- Corporatism and patronage.

All these mechanisms pivot around and are justified on the basis of the ANC's national project the National Democratic Revolution. Grasping the implications of the establishment of an economic and political monopoly in South Africa can only be accurately understood within the ambit of the NDR and the ANC's self-appointment as political, economic, social, and moral leader of the transformation of the state and society. Such a self-conception places South Africa's political system closer to rule *of* the people as opposed to rule *by* the people. As Diamond (1994: 50) recognised "intellectual openness promotes tolerance, by 'accepting the idea that no one has a

monopoly on absolute truth and that there can be no single, correct answer to public policy issues’.”

The analysis needed to go further, since the NDR and its offshoots are only properly comprehensible with the identification of the different historical traditions and ideologies that have fed into the ANC; the influence of these underlying worldviews ultimately culminate in the NDR. Currently, there is a notable pre-eminence of two historical traditions, namely Africanism and communism, often to the exclusion of a third tradition - liberal-democracy. The ANC’s present policies and activities, and methods of control are better understood in light of these influences, rather than over-emphasising individuals such as past president, Thabo Mbeki. The underlying ideologies of Africanism and communism feed into the present methods of consolidating party dominance as they influence the national project, the governmental structure, the electoral processes, the tendency to centralise around the Presidency, the centralising of the economy and the party controlled methods of leadership selection. The influence of communism is evident in the ANC’s mantra that the ‘leadership knows best’; its conception of itself as the vanguard of change; its policies of democratic centralism and cadre deployment; and its self-appointment as moral leader of the South African society. The influence of Africanism is evident in its racially-based policies and prescriptions, and its racial division of society between *us* and *them*. It justifies the use of race classification and racial discrimination, within the aspirations of Africanism. The NDR is about the liberation of “Africans in particular” and “blacks in general.”

The ANC ultimately calls for unity in the pursuit of the NDR, which in reality is a call to unity around the ANC’s ideology. This highlights a difference between South Africa and Mexico; where the former is attempting to establish an additional monopoly - an ideological monopoly. The concern with this moral high ground the ANC assigns to itself, and the expectation that the rest of society should follow its ‘morality’ and ideology, is that it does not give space for critical debate regarding the NDR and the ANC’s ideology. It views and portrays criticism and dissent, whether emanating internally from within the party or externally from political or civil society, as being anti-transformation and thus illegitimate. It depicts criticism of itself, its members and its policies as being anti-South Africa and not anti-ANC, thus it

conceives the ANC to be the very embodiment of South Africa. This effectively places the NDR and the ANC outside the boundaries of acceptable political debate. In doing so, they have attempted to suppress and discredit criticism over the extension of party control, justifying its increasing centralisation over all institutions of the state and the economy.

The history of the ANC and the different traditions and ideologies that have intertwined over the years have resulted in a broad-based, eclectic party. A result of some of these ideologies is that the ANC has very specific and often limiting views, of opposition and civil society and the roles they should fulfil within South Africa. Although it is acknowledged that this is not across board as, there are liberal-democrats within the party. In addition, since 1994 there have been learnings within the ANC, that perhaps they are not the sole bearers of South Africa's democracy and recognition of the need for a 'loyal opposition' has grown. Mbeki's tight-fisted leadership was also a shock to many within the organisation as was the realisation that the organisation is fallible, as embodied in Mbeki. The experience possibility left the ANC a bit more humble.

South Africa's opposition parties and their ability to fulfill democracy-supporting functions are nevertheless constrained by a number of factors. Institutionally, the nature of the governmental and electoral systems serve to entrench the dominant party and fragment opposition parties. Dispositionally, the ANC's anti-transformation rhetoric acts towards the de-legitimising of the opposition. And, socio-culturally, the apartheid legacy continues to divide political support along racial cleavages. In terms of opposition's accumulative voting block, where the ANC holds 293 of the 400 seats in national government, it has little power to keep the government accountable within the parliamentary-arena. It is nevertheless vigorous and verbal in terms of highlighting corruption, voicing the concerns of its electorate and the opposition parties do provide alternatives for voters. The 2009 will also be a pivotal election for the DA as it is widely expected that they will win the Western Cape provincial elections, thereby dismantling the ANC's control of all nine provinces. Opposition parties and civil society groupings are limited, but they are certainly not suppressed. Representatives from both institutions acknowledged that there is freedom of expression, and there is still space to be critical of the ruling party.

Despite the ANC's attempts to delineate roles for civil society it has remained fairly vocal and robust. In spite of concerns and evidence of civil society being either co-opted or marginalised, to date South Africa has a fairly vibrant and independent civil society, if we include trade unions, businesses and the press. The ANC has possibly underestimated the complexity of the South African society and its desire for independent voice and accountability. In addition, a fairly weak and weakened opposition has possibly been an instigator for the growth of civil society, especially in the form the media. When other channels, such as political parties, close or become weaker civil society groupings become stronger and more vocal. They get organised.

If we return to the original two strands of democracy – rule *by* the people and rule *for* the people, it is worrying to note how the ANC is attempting to position itself as the sole moral, social, political and economic voice of South Africa and its citizens. In its call for unity – around its ideology – the ANC is effectively shutting down counter-balancing forces and moving towards an authoritarian political system. It is also interesting to note the three areas where independent voice is still vocal – the economy, the media and the judiciary – are the areas of power that are currently being targeted by the ANC. A major concern for South Africa's liberal democracy is whether, based on the failures of Mbeki's rule and his association with liberal economics, and the growing global economic crisis, that the ANC under a Zuma-leadership, will motivate for further state control of the economy and nationalisation of key industries. In doing so, it will mean greater access to sources of patronage for the ANC, an important basis of leverage and power during hard economic times. In addition, it will mean the closing of alternative independent sources of power.

It is nothing short of arrogance to consider one's political party to have the monopoly of voice in a society. Since all institutions are fallible, none should be above the realm of dissent and debate. The ANC, for the sake of the future of South Africa and for its own continued legitimacy, needs to keep open and acknowledge the operating space of alternative agents of voice and accountability. In 1994, John Carlin, a journalist of *The Independent* wrote a "devil's advocate" piece stating that "South Africa was going to go the way of Mexico" (2007: 13). Thirteen years later he wrote again wondering how far off the mark he had really been.

Contra to the optimism of an expected reversion to Mandela's style of politics after the 2007 *Polokwane* Conference it is argued that as long as the achievement of the NDR through the strategies of cadre deployment and control of all levers of power remains the objective of the ANC so too will the processes of centralisation and elite control, in fact these processes will become even stronger. A better understanding of the 'new' ANC, is rather recognising that another of its three strands is coming to the fore, namely, the communist strand, superseding the Africanist strand as embodied in Mbeki. This strand ultimately finds its expression in the NDR and its strategies of state centralisation, control of all levers of power and cadre deployment. The influence of communism was especially strong in the ANC in the 1950s and the 1960s, a period during which the NDR was initially promulgated. With the 2007 Polokwane Conference and its ultimate goal of placing Jacob Zuma as President of South Africa during the April 2009 elections, this communist strand is intending to play frontrunner of the ANC once again.

Despite these concerning tendencies, South Africa is still considered by the Freedom House to be 'free' and it still has an active and vibrant civil and political society. Voice and accountability have certainly not been silenced in South Africa. There are three possible reasons for this. The first is the soil in which the dominant party system took root. South Africa is an industrialising country, with large, urbanised areas, a relatively high literacy rate, a diverse society, and thus a far more complex and sophisticated society, that is probably not as malleable as Mexico's rural society was. The second relates to the first; the South African society, which is diverse and complex, and largely literate. It tends to guard its independence, probably as a result of never wanting to return to an apartheid-like system. Within this society there is a fairly well-established civil society and an active political society. These institutions of democracy were largely non-existent in Mexico in the 1920s. With opposition parties being fairly impotent, civil society seems to be growing and strengthening so as to fill this void, a positive development. And, third is the changing nature of the ANC's membership as a growing urbanised, black middle class is making new demands on the party. This has also led to increasing factions and alternative voices within the party, that are often not willing to merely acquiescence and toe- the -party-line. This third reason is possibly a contributing factor in the 2008 split in the ANC

and the formation of COPE – a party, which is portrayed as representing the black middle class interests. As Myburgh (interview 2009) explains, COPE are “inheritors of the Mbeki tradition” but without the Africanist agenda.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Within one party dominant systems there is a particular pressure on liberal democracy-supporting institutions such as civil and political society. As the ruling party increases the scope of its control so the power of these societies is usurped. These societies, for short-term benefit, may obtain position, patronage, favour and access to state resources, but it will eventually be at the cost of their voice and autonomy. Instead, they can and should fulfill liberal democracy-supporting functions, which include:

***Representation of interests:*** The representation of the interests of citizens becomes especially important in a one party dominant system, where there is a tendency for the ruling party to become distant from the society it is supposed to serve due to complacency.

***Mobilisation of the public:*** Mobilising citizens to vote, and to be politically active and alert is crucial in one party dominant systems, since these systems are often characterised by voter apathy and citizens unwilling to participate in the political system. With citizens considering the outcome of the elections to be a given and with the growing perception of the impotence of opposition parties in a one party dominant system citizens tend to become apathetic. This apathy serves to further entrench the dominance of the ruling party.

***Creating linkages and networks between civil society and political society:*** Where they share common interests and concerns, political parties and civil society need to work closer together, to ensure greater impact.

***Coalitions:*** Opposition parties need to consider coalition governments. The ruling party, especially as it begins to portray itself as the moral, social, economic, and political voice of society, requires a formidable counter-voice for it to take cognisance. Competition is what will eventually stimulate accountability again.

***Being responsible as opposition:*** Civil society and political society should recognise they are not above the law, regardless of how frustrating their circumstances may be.

The use of undemocratic or violent methods to enforce a change in government should never be considered an option. Such non-democratic methods have a way of setting an undemocratic cycle of change into motion. Instead, opposition and dissent needs to be exercised with restraint and using only those mechanisms provided for within the parameters of constitutional liberalism.

***Protecting the party's integrity and the trust of its electorate:*** Due to a perception of ineffectiveness and a lack of opportunities for political advancement for opposition parties in one party dominant systems, party members tend to be susceptible to co-optation and patronage. Mexico provides an important learning. During the heyday of the PRI's dominance all other political parties were known as satellite parties as they had been easily co-opted by the ruling party. This was with the exception of PAN, which maintained its integrity and autonomy, throughout the PRI's rule. PAN eventually won office in Mexico. In the interests of their electorate and the policies and values they stand for opposition parties need to keep integrity during dominant party rule.

***Maintaining government accountability:*** Where the possibility of winning office is remote for opposition parties, maintaining government accountability becomes a primary function for opposition parties since they can ensure healthy political debate, generate competition over ideas and policies, and expose corruption. They thereby serve the public interest and require a responsive and accountable government. Similarly, civil society needs to protect its plurality of roles – it need not contend with government or fulfill a watch-dog role, but there should be some associations which do and should be able to perform a checks and balances role.

It cannot be overemphasised how important a function political and civil society can play towards ensuring the future of a non-authoritarian democracy and in so doing they too ensure a future for themselves and, for opposition parties, the eventual possibility of winning office.

## **6. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS IN INDUSTRIALISING COUNTRIES**

Although one party dominant systems may initially have a uniting, stabilising effect, in industrialising countries if they continue unabated they tend to lead towards either the entrenchment of authoritarianism or the establishment of authoritarianism, since



hegemony and dominance is achieved at the expense of competition. And, if there is no competition, there is no accountability. Uncompetitive democracies result in unresponsive governments. If ruling parties, like the PRI and the ANC, know that they are going to win the elections by a wide margin they can adopt strategies such as patronage and cadre deployment. These systems result in the lines of accountability running from the state institutions, who are filled with party loyalists, to the party itself as opposed to the accountability running from the electorate to the government. Eventually it leads to a situation of the ‘tail wagging the dog’ or to there being ‘no life outside the party’. Reiterating, there are two key consequences of one party dominance. The first is the removal of cycles of input and feedback between the citizenry and the state. The second is the blurring of the state and party lines. Decisions and decrees emanate out of the ruling party, which state institutions staffed with party loyalists will fulfil. Thus, it distorts accountability, and becomes a system, which acts in the interests of the party and not the citizens.

Pursuing a liberal democracy, while centralising and monopolising power at the same time, is to indulge in serious programmatic contradictions. Eventually something has to give and it is usually liberal democracy. Voice and accountability inevitably become inhibited in one party dominant systems due to the mechanisms of internal and external control used by the dominant or hegemonic party. These mechanisms of control result in, as they did in Mexico, there being ‘no life outside the ruling party’. Only when the economic, political and ideological monopolies are dismantled through either economic liberalisation, opposition maintaining its integrity, civil society keeping its independence and societies and democratic institutions refusing to be drawn into relationships of patronage, can the space for voice and accountability be prised open again. As highlighted previously for a democracy to be liberal “the political culture must value and foster political participation, discussion, and awareness on the part of the citizenry” (Diamond 1987: 9) and be combined with *tolerance* for differing political beliefs. There must be a willingness to acknowledge the right for other parties, civil society organisations and their differing beliefs and ideologies to exist and be expressed. In the interests of its citizens and the future success of its country, the ruling party of a one party dominant system needs to recognise that it is not the sole channel for the voice of its citizens and to acknowledge the space for agents of voice and accountability.

A final point is that due to the fact that one party dominant systems exist in democracies, where there is an electoral process and there are alternative parties, as opposed to a one party system, where there is just one party, splits from the party can and do occur. A democracy, regardless of whether it is authoritarian or non-authoritarian, provides scope for factions to exist outside of the ruling party. In addition, the processes of centralisation and control eventually manufacture their own demise. Mexico and South Africa both experienced parties splitting from the ruling parties. These factions may not create political parties that will rule, but they do create competition, which stimulates accountability and the need to be responsive to society. Thus, factions a general feature of one party dominant systems, help to again stimulate the political system.

Dominant parties may maintain that they need the dominance in order to rule with unity and deliver on election promises, but the methods used to consolidate this dominance (political, economic and ideological monopolies) tend to move them further and further from their citizens. The process of centralisation is at the expense of multiple channels of feedback, leading to an unresponsive and unaccountable system. A system, which functions for the party and not the citizens it purports to represent.

### **Postscript**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2009 South Africa held its fourth national and provincial elections. It is important to note the outcome of this election and postulate on what these results might imply for South Africa's one party dominant system. The ANC once again won with an overwhelming majority, winning 65,9% of the vote, thus gaining 264 seats in Parliament (15 seats less than the 2004 elections), the DA won 16,7%, achieving 67 seats (17 seats more than in 2004) and the new contender, COPE attained 7,4%, receiving 30 seats. The ANC's vast majority again ensures it with sufficient power to continue with its programme of cadre deployment, to adopt further strategies of patronage and provides it with enough room to consolidate its dominance. This will probably perpetuate the lines of accountability running from the state institutions to Luthuli House and not to the citizens. The key institution to watch will be the judiciary and whether or not its independence will be threatened. The

concern is not with the ANC *per se*, but rather the lack of competition, which is important for accountability.

There are nevertheless important signals of a growing and strengthening opposition, vital to a liberal democracy. COPE, may not have performed as it might have hoped, but for a party merely a few months old it did well. If it maintains this momentum and targets the electorate beyond the middle and upper classes it could surely become a contender for the ANC's support base. The DA has certainly increased its support base, but it appears that it did not draw this support from the ANC's base, but rather from the smaller opposition parties. The DA more importantly won the Western Cape provincial elections with a majority. From the interviews it was clear that this was a definite strategy of the DA; to win at the municipal level, as they did in Cape Town, govern well, and thereby increase their support base. Key elections to watch will thus be the upcoming municipal elections. If the DA and other opposition parties can win these elections and then show themselves to be capable governors, where delivery counts the most, we could see a bottom-up erosion of the ANC's dominance.

## APPENDIX ONE: South Africa Timeline

c. 1000 BC	Khoikhoi and San, hunting and herding communities living in present west and northwest South Africa
c. 300 AD	Bantu-speaking farmers migrate into southern and eastern South Africa
1652	Dutch East India Company establishes Cape Town settlement
1806	Britain assumes control over Cape Colony
1816-28	<i>Mfecane</i> a period of political disruption and population migration as the centralised Zulu kingdom conquers neighbours
1834	Slave emancipation
1835-40	Great Trek of Afrikaners into the interior
1867	Diamonds discovered
1886	Gold discovered on the Witwatersrand
1910	Union of South Africa established
1912	South African Native National Congress (later ANC) formed
1948	National Party elected on 'apartheid' slogan
1960	Sharpeville crisis – police kill 67 demonstrators
1961	South Africa declares formal independence from Britain and withdraws from the British Commonwealth
1964	Nelson Mandela and other opposition leaders imprisoned for life
1976-77	Revolt in Soweto leads to national unrest
1985	President Botha's 'Rubicon' speech Foundation of union federation COSATU
1989	F.W. de Klerk becomes president
1990	Release of Mandela and opposition parties unbanned
1991	Repeal of apartheid legislation Negotiations begin at CODESA
1992	White referendum: a two-thirds majority for reform
1994	ANC wins first non-racial elections and Mandela becomes president South Africa joins Southern African Development Community (SADC) SA joins United Nations

- 1996 Adoption of new Constitution
- 1999 ANC wins second national elections and Thabo Mbeki becomes president
- 2000- HIV/AIDS epidemic
- 2004 ANC wins third national elections with a 2/3rds majority and entrenches its position as a dominant party. Mbeki is president for a second term
- 2007 Polokwane Conference
- 2008 Recalling of Thabo Mbeki and Kgalema Motlanthe becomes the interim president
- 2008 Formation of COPE

## APPENDIX TWO: Mexico Timeline

- 1810- Mexico's independence from Spain
- 1821
- 1846- Mexican American War
- 1848 U.S. seized half of Mexico's national territory: Texas, California, Nevada, Utah; most of New Mexico and Arizona; and part of Colorado and Wyoming
- 1860s Part of French Empire.
- 1910 - Mexican Revolution.
- 1920 No political parties.  
Population of 8 million before the Mexican Revolution. 1 million people less at the end of the revolution as a result of immigration and death.
- 1917 Constitution enacted
- 1920 President Obregón (1920-24) in power
- 1924 President Calles (1924-28) in power
- 1929 The National Revolutionary Party (PNR) is formed. In 1946 it is re-named the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI. Presidents elected into office on the basis of one-term step-down of the president.  
Mexico was a rural country with a literacy rate of 20% and the majority of the population employed in the agricultural sector.
- 1934 President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40) begins programme of oil nationalisation, land reform and industrial expansion. Mexico's political institutions reshaped as the Presidency becomes the primary institution of the political system.  
Military's power is decreased and it becomes one of several institutional pillars of the regime. Elaborate network of government-sponsored peasant and labour organisations provides mass base for ruling party.
- 1939 PAN is formed, grew out of disaffected Catholics and business people.
- 1940 Avila Camacho (1940-46) becomes president
- 1946 President Miguel Alemán (1946-52) stresses government's commitment to industrialization and state-led capitalist development. Alemán was also the first post-revolutionary leader to begin appointing university-trained, non-military personnel. Presidents no longer members of the military. Seen as a positive model for Latin America as they were able to subjugate the military to civilian rule.

- 1940- Economic modernization
- 1970s
- 1968 Student uprisings against the 'authoritarian rule'. Between 300 and 1000 students killed.
- 1970s- Decline in economic growth
- 1980s
- 1970s Level of literacy increased to more than 80%, with Mexico becoming a predominantly urban society.  
Devaluation of the peso
- 1976 Huge offshore oil reserves discovered
- 1980- Democratic rhetoric becomes the norm
- 90s
- 1982 President José López Portillo nationalizes Mexico's banks
- 1980s Debt crisis as oil prices drop
- 1985 Earthquake in Mexico City. 10 000 people die.
- 1986 Significant internal split within PRI. Leftist political movement led by Cardenas splits from PRI.
- 1988 Salinas (1988-1994) becomes president. Elections widely considered to be fraudulent.
- 1989 Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) is formed out of various segments of the left.
- 1994 Start of presidential debates.  
August - Presidential elections won by PRI candidate Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon (1994-2000), after the previous candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, was murdered. Zedillo implements wide-spread democratic reforms. By the end of his term Mexico is considered to have been liberalised.  
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is signed between USA, Canada and Mexico (1992), takes effect in 1994  
Zapatista rebellion in the South. The government recognises the Zapatista National Liberation Front (EZLN).  
The stock market plunges in December, the peso loses a third of its value.
- 1995 The government and the EZLN reach an agreement on greater autonomy for the indigenous Mayans of Chiapas.



- 1997 The PRI suffers heavy losses in elections and loses its overall majority in the lower house of Parliament for the first time since 1929.
- 1999 Introduction of primaries due to pressure of democratic opening.  
Open primary system for nominating the PRI's presidential candidate occurred for the first time in November 1999.
- 2000 July - Vicente Fox of PAN wins presidential elections, the first opposition candidate ever to do so. Parliamentary elections see the PAN emerge as the strongest party, beating the PRI by just over 1%. PRI's past president says: "This is a victory for democracy".
- 2002 June - Millions of secret security files are released, shedding light on the torture and killing by security forces of hundreds of political activists in the 1960s and 1970s.

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## SUMMARY

### **VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ONE PARTY DOMINANT SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF MEXICO AND SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Doctor Philosophy (Political Science)**

This thesis examines the impact of one party dominant systems on liberal democracy in developing countries. It is insufficient to argue that one party dominant systems – systems where one party dominates over a prolonged period - need not be further scrutinised because they occur within democracies. Instead it is contended that the term ‘democracy’ is but one public virtue in a political system and thus needs to be prefixed for it to have meaning beyond a method of government selection. The importance of this is highlighted when looking at two major trends in the understanding of democracy. The first is democracy as rule *by* the people -a non-authoritarian democracy- where governmental control is limited, and agents of voice and accountability are protected. Voice and accountability refers to citizens being able to exercise power over the *process of decision-making* and not merely power to *select decision-makers*. The second type of democracy is rule *for* the people -an authoritarian democracy- where governmental control extends over all spheres of society, and the operating space for agents of voice and accountability is constrained. Since unchecked centralisation is the anti-thesis of a non-authoritarian democracy, the observed tendency of dominant parties to use their predominant position to further consolidate their control is a concern. The apprehension is, as power is centralised so the operating space of agents of voice and accountability (including political and civil society) is constrained.

Despite differences in the type of one party dominant system, whether they be hegemonic (Mexico) or dominant (South Africa) the ruling dominant/ hegemonic party uses similar methods of consolidating dominance – they essentially centralise power through the establishment of (1) economic, (2) political, and sometimes (3) ideological monopolies. These monopolies are established using internal and external methods of control (centralising of political power; party controlled process of political leadership selection; institutional arrangements and electoral amendments, which favour the ruling party; patronage and corporatism), which in turn effectively close down or limit the operating space of civil and political society, especially in developing countries which do not have histories of liberal-constitutionalism, and have vast socio-economic inequalities making them especially susceptible to the manipulation of ruling elites.

Although one party dominant systems may initially have a uniting, stabilising effect, if continued they tend to lead towards either the entrenchment of authoritarianism or the establishment of authoritarianism, since dominance is achieved at the expense of competition, and independent and alternative voices. Uncompetitive democracies result in unresponsive governments. Pursuing a liberal democracy, while simultaneously monopolising power is to indulge in serious programmatic contradictions. Eventually something has to give and it is usually liberal democracy. Voice and accountability inevitably become inhibited in one party dominant systems due to the mechanisms of internal and external control used by the dominant or hegemonic party. These mechanisms of control culminate in, as they did in Mexico, there being ‘no life outside the ruling party’. Only when the economic, political and ideological monopolies are dismantled through either economic liberalisation, opposition maintaining its integrity, civil society keeping its independence and societies refusing to be drawn into relationships of patronage, can the space for voice and accountability be prised open again. In the interests of its citizens and the future success of its country, the ruling party of a one party dominant system needs to recognise that it is not the sole channel for the voice of its citizens and to acknowledge the space for agents of voice and accountability. Ensuring that non-authoritarian democracy remains the *only game in town* in a one party dominant system requires *responsive* and *accountable government* and *effective agents of voice and accountability*.

KEY TERMS:

Agents of accountability, authoritarian democracy, civil society, dominant party system, hegemonic party system, illiberal democracy, liberal democracy, Mexico, non-authoritarian democracy, one party dominant system, political society, ruling party, developing countries, South Africa, voice and accountability.