

**The London School of Economics and Political
Science**

*The Dominant Party System: Clientelism, Pluralism and
Limited Contestability*

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Abstract

The thesis extends the conceptual boundaries of authoritarianism to include dominant party systems that meet the procedural definition of democracy but exhibit low degrees of government contestability due to the extensive application of clientelism.

The first part re-introduces Robert Dahl's notion of '*inclusive hegemony*' which encapsulates the stance of political pluralism on dominant party systems. The thesis develops two arguments in support of a Dahlian approach to dominant party systems. The normative argument discusses the associations between power, incentives, collective action and party organisation to indicate that, in the absence of physical coercion and intimidation, inclusive hegemony is a paradoxical outcome that can only be sustained by the application of a political strategy producing an effect on political behaviour similar to that of coercion. The discussion illustrates the practice of clientelism as the most pertinent explanatory variable. The second part develops a series of analytical arguments which update Dahl's approach in order to meet the criterion set up by the contemporary literature for distinguishing between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems, according to which the strategies and tactics associated with the establishment of a dominant party system determine the character of the regime. The set of argument addresses two questions: a) how clientelism can be causally associated with the rise and consolidation of an inclusive hegemony and b) whether clientelism is compatible with typical properties of democracy. The causal model presented indicates how clientelism affects political behaviour and overall competition. By incorporating agential and structural parameters it explains the consolidation of inclusive hegemonies. The same model provides the grounds for the formulation of two arguments on the democratic credentials of clientelism which allows the analysis to pass judgment on the character of inclusive hegemonies.

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Chapter 1

Dominant party systems: conceptualisation, causality and assumptions

1.1 Inclusive hegemony: problems of conceptualisation

Dominant party systems cut across the boundaries between typical democracy and authoritarianism. The growing literatures on dominant party systems and semi-authoritarianism seek to address two fundamental questions: to classify dominant party systems along the typical conceptions of democracy and authoritarianism and to identify explanatory variables that can be associated with the rise and consolidation of dominant party systems. These two questions are interrelated. The *nature* of one-party dominance can only be assessed in full after the *explanatory variables* associated with the rise of party dominance are identified. Likewise, making hypotheses about possible explanatory paths cannot refrain from passing judgment on the character of the regime they produce.

It is on this basis that the literature on dominant party systems has drawn a distinction between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems. Following a Schumpeterian-procedural approach to democracy, it has been effortlessly concluded that dominant parties are authoritarian when tools such as physical violence, fraud and intimidation, are employed to distort the genuine representation of voters' preferences, posing restrictions to public liberties that interfere in the way voters' preferences are formed and represented in politics. However, the literature has remained inconclusive about dominant parties *facing low degrees of political competition*, which do not, however, pose any of these direct hindrances to political participation. In this type of party system the exposure of the dominant party to contestation is limited yet political dominance is achieved and maintained through practices that do not directly block political participation. This form of party dominance can be associated with Robert Dahl's notion of '*inclusive hegemony*' – a party system facing low degrees of contestability (1971:8, 34), based on his conception of democracy as *polyarchy*, which includes two dimensions, participation and contestation (Dahl, 1971:1-9). Low contestability refers to a state of affairs in which, despite the presence of elections open to all

parties, a party stays in power over a long period of time facing no serious challenge by other political force with no foreseeable prospect of losing power.

The notion of inclusive hegemony substantially broadens the conceptual boundaries of dominant *authoritarian* party systems to include regimes that offer political forces an open structure of participation but in which no other political forces exist that is truly antagonistic to the government party (c.f. Sartori, 1987:196). A number of contributions in the literature on semi-authoritarianism inspired by the concept of inclusive hegemony built regime categories with reference to actual political systems with limited government contestability, to name a few, ‘electoral authoritarianism’, ‘hegemonic regimes’, ‘guided democracies’ and ‘managed democracies’ (Schedler 2006; Diamond, 2002; Colton and McFaul, 2003; McFaul, 2005, Wegren and Konitzer, 2007). The analytical strategy there was to build regime categories on the basis of observations from case-studies of characteristics thought to deviate from typical democracies. The authors refer to numerous practices employed by the regimes to thwart the development of a challenging opposition: a combination of authoritarian controls, the banning of candidates, the use of secret police and, finally, corruption and clientelism, all presented as empirical evidence illustrating case-specific developments.

Nevertheless, this form of regime categorisation is contingent on the authors’ own normative standards of how democracy should operate, often reflecting idealistic and debatable standards of what democracy should be. In addition, it is unclear how each of the practices mentioned as constitutive of the regime type has a causal relevance to the cases independently as well as which causal mechanism each of these practices unleashes does indeed lead to a particular political outcome. This reveals fundamental problems in conceptualising regime types on the basis of empirical observations alone, which usually involves a basket of explanatory factors consisting of tactics obviously authoritarian in nature as well as other manipulative practices common in democratic countries too.

In this light, the application of a Dahlian approach in the context of dominant party systems needs to justify why inter-party contestability is an inherent characteristic of democracy against minimalist and purely procedural definitions of democracy according to which inclusive hegemonies should be seen as democracies given that there are free elections open to participation allowing the preferences of voters to be

genuinely mirrored in electoral results (c.f. chapter one). From this minimalist perspective, in the absence of coercion or threat of coercion, the dominant party simply enjoys high levels of popularity in the polls and, consequently, its limited exposure to contestability should be seen as the outcome of free vote. In that view, while Dahl's pluralist approach to democracy is an important contribution to typological conceptualisation, the type of dominant party system defined by Dahl as an inclusive hegemony cannot be equated with an authoritarian regime. As an axiomatic definition of democracy Dahl's normative standard of *polyarchy* cannot elicit uncritical support and provides an inadequate defence of the position that inclusive hegemonies should be seen as non-democracies simply because they lack a high degree of inter-party competitiveness.

It follows from this objection that the position of inclusive hegemonies along the lines of democracy and authoritarianism remains contingent on alternative normative conceptions of democracy and that classification on the basis of particular normative interpretations of democracy is vulnerable to objections raised by different ideological viewpoints (Suttner 2006:277). As a result, regime types based on a Dahlian approach to democracy remain debatable against more minimalist and procedural understandings of democracy. Contestability is a controversial benchmark for assessing the democratic credentials of dominant party systems. Consequently, dominant party systems with low levels of contestability that meet the procedural benchmark of open participation unhindered by typical authoritarian practices continue to be a grey area lurking somewhere between the typical boundaries of democracy and authoritarianism. The above notes expose the limitations of adopting a normative conception of democracy that does not justify why *the main methods or strategies* by which a regime is primarily sustained are incompatible with agreed democratic standards (as the criterion in the literature on dominant party system requires).

This problem has both theoretical and real-world implications. It can still be argued that a party system where a single party stays in power without recourse to typical authoritarian restrictions and retains a high level of popularity over a large period of time is democratic as long as it still provides a free electoral process. Long-standing incumbency achieved after a series of electoral victories by a huge margin can be seen as a rare but genuine and legitimate outcome of democratic politics reflecting

high popularity scores. But as Huntington observed ‘the sustained failure of the major opposition political party to win office necessarily raises questions concerning the degree of competition permitted by the system’ (Huntington, 1991:7). Hence, lack of conceptual clarity regarding the boundaries between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems brings forth the need for a clear criterion on the basis of which to make a defensible distinction.

One plausible way to address this problem is to provide a convincing normative argument in support of Dahl’s thesis, which would offer a sophisticated line of reasoning as to *why contestability is an inherent characteristic of democracy* by inevitably relating to alternative viewpoints, either by means of a defence of the pluralist thesis against opposing views or through a synthesis towards a common denominator that could confirm that contestability should remain one of the criteria for distinguishing between democratic and authoritarian dominant party systems.

A complementary approach would be to update the Dahlian approach to dominance to meet the standards set up by the contemporary literature on dominant party systems for distinguishing between democratic and authoritarian party systems (*process qualifies outcome*: c.f. Bogaards, 2004: 178). The pressing question ‘to specify the standing of the regime types they built in relation to the traditional concepts of democracy and authoritarianism’ (Munck, 2006:28) requires evaluating the *processes* and *strategies* associated with the establishment of particular regime (in Schumpeter’s words, the *method*) against basic and uncontroversial elements of democracy. Although there is no doubt about the authoritarian nature of regimes that resort to methods of coercion, intimidation and electoral fraud and pose restrictions to political participation, the picture is still blurred when it comes to dominant party systems that rely on *softer tactics* for manipulating preferences and behaviour, for instance, the extensive application of clientelism.¹ Any attempt to clarify the status of these tactics is expected to perform two important tasks: a) establishing a causal path between the manipulative strategies such as clientelism and the establishment of an inclusive hegemony, and b) evaluating the incompatibility of the strategy against an uncontroversial standard of democracy.

¹ Broadly defined as ‘the use or distribution of state resources on a nonmeritocratic basis for political gain’ (Mainwaring: 1999:177) and in use here interchangeably with the term ‘patronage’.

In relating explanatory variables to political outcomes, establishing *causality* and *aggregate effect* is particularly problematic. The problem is daunting for empirical studies that often assume causality and take as given the aggregate effect of examined variables on political developments (such as clientelism, the use of secret police and other state resources, electoral-law restrictions, elite settlements etc.) without assistance by a theoretical model that could illustrate when, how and to what extent each of these variables can produce an aggregate political effect. This becomes more perplexing when references to clientelism are made in the context of dominant party systems given that the practice has been widely studied as a form of political mobilisation in competitive political systems and modern democracies too, and knowing that it is often seen as a phenomenon induced by high levels of competition.

An empirical inquiry into the association between clientelism and political outcome in general also confronts the difficulty of controlling all other interfering variables involved in producing case-specific political developments. A number of factors have been said to contribute to one-party dominance: a centrist/median-voter political position (Riker, 1976; Sartori, 1976; Cox 1997; Groseclose, 2001), electoral law arrangements (Greene 2007), socio-economic coalitions (Pempel, 1990) a catch-all strategy and various sources of incumbency advantage (Levitsky and Way: 2010). We are still missing a causal path by which to establish whether or when a given political tactic is theoretically close to being a *sufficient condition* for the establishment of one-party dominance regardless of the presence of other factors observed by case-studies.

A second challenge stemming from the standard which the literature on dominant party systems is to distinguish between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems according to which the processes and tactics causally associated with the establishment of a dominant party system shall determine the nature of the regime itself (*process qualifies outcome*). Once a causal path is identified, we are interested in discerning whether the hypothesised practice unleashing this causal path contravenes accepted standards of democratic process in order to pass judgment on the nature of the regime it generates. This is, however, particularly problematic when it comes to ‘softer’ forms of electoral mobilisation such as clientelism, which are associated with dominant party systems but are also found in competitive multi-

party systems. So far, this remains the main reason why the status of inclusive hegemonies remains unclear. It is debatable whether any of the softer party strategies assumed to be the possible explanatory variables of the phenomenon could be seen as incompatible with democratic politics.

Hence, a defence of the Dahlian thesis on hegemony requires the prior identification of strategy that can lead to this outcome in the absence of violence, intimidation and fraud, as well as the development of an argument about the democratic credentials of the strategy itself, which is what shall place the party system on the side of either authoritarian or democratic regimes. The two analytical challenges together lead to formulation of a higher benchmark with regard to the status of inclusive hegemony can be framed as follows:

A dominant party system is authoritarian if it meets two requirements: a) there is low government contestability in various arenas of political contestation and b) the means employed to achieve this state of affairs are essentially non-democratic

This standard raises the threshold an inclusive hegemony should pass to be classified as authoritarian. Defined by low degrees of government contestability, an inclusive hegemony apparently meets the first criterion. But given that all parties have been given an equal opportunity to stand for election and all voters freely cast a vote, more should be said about the nature of the strategies employed to limit the dominant party's exposure to contestation.

1.2 Clientelism: conceptual and analytical problems

Clientelism has been identified as a potential explanatory variable in a number of empirical and analytical works on dominant party systems (most notably, Greene, 2007, 2010a and 2010b; Levitsky and Way 2010). In light of the above-mentioned remarks, a contribution to the debate would be to clarify a set of assumptions and causal claims that have hitherto remained implicit in theoretical and empirical works: a) a claim that clientelism is an abuse of state power that is incompatible with democracy, and b) an assumed causal link between clientelism and political mobilisation.

The main problem with the first association is that clientelism is ubiquitous in democratic systems (c.f. Clapham, 1982; Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Roniger

and Günes Ayata, 1994; Piattoni, 2001). A pragmatic view of clientelism understands it as a form of political involvement in the distribution of resources associated with rational behaviour in the context of competitive politics. The very notion of distributive politics suggests that government distributed resources are excludable and rivalrous, and that multiple actors and groups are in competition for access to political power. As chapter four explains, particularistic politics by definition generates inbuilt incentives for clientelism on the side of both politicians and economic actors. Like any form of particularistic politics, clientelist exchange serves clients to get access to resources and politicians to incentivise political support and form active groups of supporters. The re-marketisation of government-distributed resources is the result of these two parallel competitive processes. Hence, clientelism can be seen as another instance of particularistic politics that highlights the interplay between the government's capacity to distribute economic resources and the political incentives that emerge from the manner in which this distribution is performed via politics. The question remains where to draw the line between legitimate and illegitimate particularistic politics regardless of whether there are any reproachable intentions behind clientelist exchange. For inclusive hegemonies to be regarded as authoritarian, the requirement here is for a convincing argument to explain why clientelism – or at least the type of clientelism associated with limited contestability in an inclusive hegemony – is essentially a non-democratic instrument of political manipulation.

The second problem concerns the assumption of causality ascribed to observed patterns of clientelism in empirical studies and reveals the need to trace the causal mechanisms that remain thus far implicit behind claims on causal effect. References to clientelism as an abuse of state power that *by virtue of its scale* generates an authoritarian regime (Levitsky and Way, 2010; also in Greene, 2007; 2010a and 2010b) are still too generic to exclude democracies where clientelism has an intense and widespread presence in political competition. The problem was stressed by Bennet and George (1997) as an important analytical issue for research that seeks to make inferences either by statistical association alone or merely in historical narratives. For Bennett and George explanatory variables produce causal effects through processes and intervening variables that should be identified either inductively or deductively through 'process-tracing' (Bennett and George, 2005;

also Sayer, 1992: 104-105). In this method of theory development, empirical works should trace a causal process in analytical steps and couch it in an explicit theoretical form (George and Bennet, 2005:211). However, empirical studies need to address the issues of causal variation, equifinality and spuriousness (George, 1997).²

An alternative approach is to follow a deductive strategy that generates with logical argumentation a testable hypothesis in the form of a *causal mechanism* showing how the hypothesised cause generates the outcome in a number of steps (George and Bennet, and Sayer's introduction, 1992: 106-107). A hypothetico-deductive approach to analysis moves beyond making references to a set of empirical observations assumed to generate a causal effect, into building testable hypotheses/models associated with ideal-type regime types, which could serve as reference points for empirical testing by process-tracing and could enable 'structured iterations' between theory and cases (George and Bennett, 2005: 233, 234). Theory derived from a deductive approach can also be used for the building of more robust case-study explanations in the form of analytic narratives (Bates, 1998).

Establishing, however, a clear path of causality – here between clientelism and hegemony – still confronts two significant analytical problems. The first problem is to trace *causal effect* in micro-level interactions. The analysis of causality in the thesis is based on a *rational choice assumption of utility maximisation behaviour*, meaning that 'any rational actor in a given context will choose precisely the same (optimal) source of action' (Hay 2004:52). The extension of rational choice from economics to the area of political study relies upon the assumption that the same individuals act in both relationships (Buchanan, 1972:12). Rational choice allows the analysis to accommodate the impact of agential and structural factors on individual behaviour by determining the options and pay-offs individuals can choose from. It also explains cases where agency seeks to change the structural context with a view to constraining future behaviour. This makes rational choice a

² For instance, in dominant party systems, legal and institutional barriers act as *de jure* or *de facto* restrictions on the freedom of new parties to organise as well as 'outright bans of the entry of new parties' (Haggard and Kaufman, 267; also Greene, 2007; Magaloni, 2006).

powerful heuristic analytical strategy to explore collective behaviour by associating aggregates of rational calculations in response to given sets of structural incentives.

The thesis' treatment of clientelism at the micro-level moves beyond the limited view of clientelism associated with voting behaviour to examine the interface of the practice with other parameters of political action that could jointly produce a multiplying effect on political behaviour, and ultimately, on electoral mobilisation.

Positive theory establishes a causal path between clientelism and limited contestability in the form of two linkages: tracing the causal effects of clientelism on the micro-level on the basis of rational choice analysis and hypothesising the impact of these effects on the macro-level based on a structure and agency approach that incorporates aggregate sets of incentives impinging on rational choice to ascertain aggregate impact. In addition, the model is sensitive to the various other parameters that influence political competition, such as social divisions and cleavages, policy failures, policy-related grievances, ideological differences, party factions. This is particularly helpful in allowing empirical research to make robust claims to causality on the basis of observed patterns in their case-studies.

More analytically, clientelism is seen to act as a particular solution for political parties to the collective action problem they confront concerning the building of party infrastructure and campaign organisation, which is vital for electoral mobilisation. It is also seen as a mode of interest accommodation that bypasses heterogeneous and often irreconcilable social demands by allowing political parties to address demands through bilateral exchanges. By imposing a mode of policy supply that accommodates individual demands, the clientelist party is able to permeate pressures from social groups that can hardly be contained over a long period through general policy-making alone. In similar way, it manages to offset centrifugal tendencies that threaten to break its support basis. It is argued that it is mainly through the two processes that clientelism helps the party skew voters' preference formation.

The thesis then tackles a second issue: tracing *aggregate causal effect* by moving from the micro-level to the macro-level. Of interest here is a type of clientelism that serves as a unique method of *party organisation* and as an effective and inclusive form of *interest accommodation* offering a distinctive way of tackling divisions and

grievances stemming from diverse, conflicting and often irreconcilable interests. Both of these functions must give the dominant party an unparalleled capacity in electoral mobilisation. Because clientelism is a practice common in most democratic countries and is associated with high degrees of political competitiveness, at issue here is to identify a type of clientelism that can act as successful substitute for coercion, constraining political behaviour to such an extent that it produces one-party hegemony in a multi-party system open to the participation of other political forces. This type should entail a configuration of structural and agential variables which allows a single party to contain centrifugal forces that tend to erode power monopolies and usually lead to defections and, ultimately, to electoral defeat. As a solution to this problem, the analysis here is based on the assumption that on aggregate level the sum of individual risk assessments affected by the set of clientelist incentives and disincentives approximates the number of actors who are engaged in the sector of the economy where clientelist exchange takes place. The structural parameter that determines the scale and intensity of clientelism is the size of the economy that remains subject to clientelist incentives.

1.3 Contents of the thesis: analytical steps to theory development

The thesis offers a normative defence of the pluralist position upon which the concept of inclusive hegemony is founded (chapter two and three). It then updates Robert Dahl's approach to meet the standard set by the literature on dominant party systems, according to which the strategies, processes and methods by which a dominant party is established and sustained determines whether it should be classified as democratic or authoritarian, by building positive theory linking a particular type of clientelism with the establishment and resilience of an inclusive hegemony (chapters four and five). This analysis feeds back into the normative question of evaluating the nature of hegemony (chapter six).

More analytically, chapter two develops a normative argument that explains why limited contestability, though derived from Dahl's pluralist viewpoint, runs counter to a basic, commonly shared and less controversial interpretation of democracy. The line of defence here gives additional support to the claim that inclusive hegemonies – dominant party systems exhibiting low degrees of contestability – are not democracies against the objections raised by other normative conceptualisations of

democracy according to which dominant parties simply reflect the true preferences of the majority expressed through an open and free electoral process.

Chapter three adds empirical support to the pluralist thesis by revisiting historical narratives of democratisation to discuss the associations in political competition between power, incentives, collective action and party organisation. It concludes that in the absence of physical coercion and intimidation acting as hindrances to political behaviour in typical authoritarian regimes, inclusive hegemonies can only avoid the centrifugal pressures from social divisions and internal confrontations by making use of forms of power other than coercion to produce an effect comparable to that generated by coercion in authoritarian regimes. As well as supporting the pluralist expectation of social diversity producing high degrees of political competition, chapter three serves as a bridge to the analytical argument developed in the following chapters. The historical narratives point to an explanatory path: given the fact that social diversity offers real opportunities for different and autonomous political forces to emerge and engage in competition with one another, limited contestability can only be seen as the result of a significant *power disparity* between the dominant party and all other political forces. In the absence of coercion this power asymmetry should be attributed to an unequal distribution of other resources besides coercion, economic and intellectual resources. This requires an understanding of how these sources of power impinge on political organisation and mobilisation. The analysis points to the practice of clientelism as the most pertinent explanatory variable.

Chapter four explains why clientelism in party competition goes beyond vote-buying portrayed in the typical conception of the phenomenon as ‘the direct exchange of a citizen’s vote in return for direct payments or continuing access to employment, goods, and services (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007:2). Rather, the chapter describes an alternative causal path between incentives, party organisation, interest accommodation and electoral mobilisation. First, it emphasises the role of campaign resources for persuasion and for activating social divisions into electoral support, which has been particularly highlighted by empirical works in the study of nascent political systems. Campaign resources play a key role in enabling political parties to project strong and convincing political messages to appeal to the electorate. Thus the link between party campaign and electoral results is narrowed

down to a link between *party organisation* in the form of recruitment and coordination of campaign resources and the *conditions in which voters form their preferences*. In this context, clientelism is seen to have an effect on electoral mobilisation not primarily through direct vote-buying, the typical conception of clientelism, but *by affecting the recruitment of campaign resources* without which a political party is unable to activate policy issues and cleavages into electoral support and become an effective contestant taking advantage of the open structure of participation.

With clientelism seen as both a mode of interest accommodation and an incentive structure for political mobilisation, chapter five develops a model associating clientelism with the establishment and resilience of an inclusive hegemony. To assess how clientelism could serve the purpose of maintaining a power monopoly as effectively as coercion in typical authoritarian regimes, the chapter looks for the aggregate effect of clientelism on political organisation and preference formation. For this purpose it incorporates the causal model of the previous chapter into a typology of clientelism that includes structural parameters to explain differentiation of impact on political competitiveness on the basis of different configurations of clientelist incentives and structural conditions. The notion of the ‘political sector of the economy’ is introduced, describing the range of state intervention in economic activity subject to high degrees of politicisation. Its size is associated with a low degree of political competitiveness manifested in the organisational weakness of the opposition forces, lack of autonomy of civil society and the containment of party factions by the dominant party.

A discussion ensues in chapter six about the compatibility of clientelism with democracy in order to pass judgment on the character of inclusive hegemonies. This is a challenging task since the practice of clientelism is observed in typical democracies too. Convincing arguments should be stripped of debatable normative ideas and guidelines of how ideal democratic politics should operate. This is a requirement for the analysis to be consistent with the criterion set up by the literature according to which a regime is authoritarian only when it emerges and becomes consolidated by non-democratic means (*process qualifies outcome*). To defend the view that inclusive hegemonies are authoritarian party systems, the argument to be made is that clientelism has certain in-built properties that run

counter to *core principles* of democracy or, alternatively, that it performs functions under certain conditions that act in the same way the exercise of violence and physical intimidation restricts free political behaviour in typical authoritarian regimes. Two arguments are presented. The first explains why clientelism is an essentially non-democratic practice regardless of whether its exercise generates limited contestation. The second argument identifies the analogy between the use of state coercion in typical authoritarian regimes and the particular type of clientelism associated with inclusive hegemony in the way they both limit ‘voice’ and ‘exit’ from a sphere of domination, thereby depriving citizens of their freedom to choose their desired path of political behaviour. This sequence of arguments supports the thesis’ main argument that:

Inclusive hegemonies produced by extensive application of clientelism are authoritarian regimes, because both the outcome – limited contestability – and the causal process – clientelism – are antithetical to basic democratic properties.

Chapter 2

Understanding one-party dominance: A deontological defence of the pluralist framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a critical overview of the literatures on dominant party systems and semi-authoritarianism with a focus on the normative concept of ‘inclusive hegemony’ put forward by Dahl. The purpose is to illustrate the problems inherent in distinguishing between democracy and authoritarianism either by placing emphasis on the existence of formal political liberties or, alternatively, by adopting Robert Dahl’s approach to democracy according to which party systems with an open structure of participation but low degrees of exposure to contestation are non-democracies.

The chapter argues that regime classifications based on Dahl’s normative principles are vulnerable to objections raised by a procedural approach to democracy that does not share the normative principles underlying the pluralist view of democracy as ‘*polyarchy*’. While a number of empirical studies relate to Dahl’s approach and comfortably name regimes as ‘semi-authoritarian’ regimes, ‘electoral authoritarian’ regimes and ‘flawed’, ‘managed’ or ‘guided’ democracies (Diamond, 2002; Colton and McFaul, 2003; McFaul, 2005; Schedler 2006; Wegren and Konitzer, 2007), their benchmark of what constitutes democracy and authoritarianism could be criticised for reflecting subjective, deontological and highly debatable normative conceptions or at best for referring to a scale of political pathologies also found in modern democracies. Alternative conceptions of democracy could consider inclusive hegemony as the result of successful party strategies, effective party organisation, better mobilisation strategies, popular ideological programmes and a populist rhetoric whose democratic credentials, however, are not disputed. In that view, to claim that inclusive hegemonies are a subcategory of authoritarianism cannot be taken at face value and requires a defence of the pluralist thesis on contestability as an essential dimension of a genuine democracy.

In response, the chapter develops an argument in defence of the pluralist view by reconstructing a basic etymological interpretation of democracy that serves as the

lowest common denominator of existing normative conceptions of democracy. If at the very basic core of the notion of democracy lies the command that democracy enables the *demos*, the body of citizens, to exert an important degree of influence on the exercise of state power (*kratos*) by virtue of their political liberties, Dahl's concept of polyarchy should be read as a thesis on how this ideal standard of democracy can be approximated in the real context of inter-group antagonisms through party formation and other non-violent forms of political activity, which inevitably generate arenas of political contestation.

2.2 Two bodies of literature

The literatures on dominant-party systems and semi-authoritarianism have yet to engage fully in a systematic dialogue on the common challenges they face concerning the robust conceptualisation of distinctive regime types. Among the most critical questions is to specify the standing of the regime types they built in relation to the traditional concepts of democracy and authoritarianism (Munck, 2006:28). The literature usually points to flaws in the formal electoral process, namely elections tainted with fraud, the banning of parties and the intimidation of political activists and voters.

'Authoritarian manipulation may come under many guises, all serving the purpose of containing the troubling uncertainty of electoral outcomes. Rules may devise discriminatory electoral rules, exclude opposition parties and candidates from entering the electoral arena, infringe upon their political rights and civil liberties, restrict their access to mass media and campaign finance, impose formal or informal suffrage restrictions on their supporters, coerce or corrupt them into deserting the opposition camp, or simply redistribute votes and seats through electoral fraud' (Schedler, 2006:3).

The state of the literature, however, remains inconclusive with regard to more subtle mechanisms of voters' manipulation, even though it does make references to softer tactics and tools such as clientelism, the use of state funding and resources in political campaign and in pork-barrel politics. This demarcation problem arises from the absence of a prior agreement on what the basic standard of democracy is. The problem, as Suttner put it, is that any attempt to propound a particular concept

of democracy needs to address ‘the question of meanings of democracy in the plural’ (Suttner, 2006:286).

The concept of a dominant party-system has a broader coverage of cases in which a political party has won several election victories often by a huge margin and over a long period of time. Electoral defeat seems a very unlikely event in the foreseeable future (Pempel, 1990; Giliomee and Simkins, 1999). Inspired by Maurice Duverger’s reference to a dominant party as one whose ‘influence exceeds all others for a generation or more’, and a party whose ‘doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, so to speak, coincide with those of the epoch’ and whose influence is such that ‘even enemies of the dominant party, even citizens who refuse to give it their vote, acknowledge its superior status and its influence’ (Duverger, 1954:308-9), the literature on dominant party systems has studied the characteristics of such systems and the causal processes associated with the emergence and consolidation of dominant parties. One-party dominance was observed across a much wider range of cases including post-war Japan and Italy, Sweden between 1932 and 1976, West Germany until 1966, Botswana, Israel until 1977, India under the Congress Party, Taiwan under the rule of the Kuomintang (KMT), post-apartheid South Africa, and a number of African states:

‘In these countries, despite free electoral competition, relatively open information systems, respect for civil liberties, and the right of free political association, a single party has managed to govern alone or as the primary and ongoing partner in coalitions, without interruption, for substantial periods of time, often for three to five decades, and to dominate the formation of as many as ten, twelve, or more successive governments.’
(Pempel, T.J., 1990: 1-2)

The literature sought to define observable and measurable traits to distinguish between dominant party systems and typical democracies, which included indicators such as legislative dominance, duration in office, minority party size and the number of legislative parties (Boucek and Bogaards, 2010: 219-229). The variables mostly in use are the size of parliamentary majorities and the length of incumbency (Bogaards and Boucek, 2010:6). Exact quantitative standards for parliamentary majority vary: some definitions require a plurality of votes and/or seats, while others raise the benchmark to an absolute majority (Bogaards 2004).

The seminal work of Pempel extended the notion of party dominance to four sets of observations: a) the number of legislative seats and offices held with at least a plurality needed for a party to qualify as dominant; b) a strong bargaining position vis-à-vis other parties – in cases where a party does not enjoy a parliamentary majority alone, it must be highly unlikely for any government to be formed without its inclusion; c) a substantial amount of time in power; and d) a strong impact of its government policies and projects that give a particular shape to the national political agenda (Pempel, T.J., 1990:3-4).

Opinions vary in terms to how many elected seats a party should have in the parliament and how much time in power it should spend to qualify as dominant. A specific standard of measurement for dominant party systems was put forward by McDonald in the case of Latin American politics, demanding that a single political party should control a minimum of 60 percent of the seats (McDonald, 1971: 220). For Pempel, one-party dominance means permanent or semi-permanent governance (1990: 15), while for Doorenspleet, dominance can be achieved even after a single re-election (2003). For Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi, the period of dominance should exceed at least two elections (2000: 27), while for Cox it ranges from 30 to 50 years (1997: 238). Alternatively, a more qualitative criterion for identifying dominance points to the ability of the party in power to determine social choice through policy and legislation, which is seen as an indication of increased party effectiveness in political competition (Dunleavy 2010).

The notion of ‘meaningful elections’ has been a much-cited criterion for discerning a dominant party system (Przeworski et al., 2000). It entails the following requirements: 1) the chief executive and the legislative are elected in regular popular elections; 2) more than one party exists as all opposition forces are allowed to form independent parties and compete in elections; and 3) the incumbent does not engage in outcome-changing electoral fraud without which dominant-party rule would have ended. It also includes an alternation rule, which outside the US context can be interpreted as the incumbent losing elections after a reasonable number of electoral rounds. Dominant party systems are those that fail to meet the alternation rule.

The alternation rule, however, was criticised for not distinguishing adequately between dominant parties that maintain their rule through democratic means and

those who do not (Bogaards and Boucek, 2010: 9). Using alternation as a single criterion would mean that Japan's LDP, Britain's Conservatives, Mugabe's ZANU/PF and China's Communist Party can be clustered together in the same category. Instead, in dominant *authoritarian* party systems, the parties in government are in control of not just the government but effectively of the entire political system, and can only be removed from power once genuinely free, fair and competitive elections have taken place (Bogaards, 2004, Bogaards and Boucek, 2010:2).

The proliferation of one-party dominance in a number of post-communist countries in the 1990s and 2000s has renewed scholarly interest in understanding and explaining this expanding phenomenon through further classification. The literature on dominant party-systems moved beyond its focus on observable characteristics of dominance to make a distinction between democratic and authoritarian cases on the basis of the means employed by the dominant party to achieve this state of affairs. The scholarship has hitherto adopted a democracy/non-democracy dichotomy, following Huntington's approach (1991:11) in contrast with the literature on semi-authoritarianism that has treated democracy as a continuous variable.³ The way to address the problem of demarcation between dominant parties and authoritarian dominant parties is to show that dominance is generated by the use of *extra-democratic means* by the party in power (c.f. Bogaards, 2004: 178).

The criterion mostly used for drawing a dichotomy between authoritarianism and democracy in the context of dominant party system has been a minimalist/procedural definition of democracy that requires electoral competition and inclusive participation to be unhindered by openly restrictive practices involving the use of coercion, intimidation and electoral fraud. Levitsky and Way (2002) proposed a set of criteria according to which a political system is a democracy when a) executives and legislatures are chosen through open, free and fair elections; and b) virtually all adults having the right to vote; c) political rights and civil liberties are widely protected, including freedom of the press, freedom of

³ A different view Storm (2008) built a continuum with a focus not 'on the elements of democracy missing or weakened, but on the elements of democracy present' (2008:223), which is quite useful for tracing progress in democratisation. On the other hand, Huntington's approach that 'it is either a democracy or not' can be taken to imply that the same continuum should refer to a space of 'nondemocracy' with differentiations on the basis of tougher or milder restrictions to political participation, and a subsequent range of regime types from traditional monarchies to one-party states that hold elections and multi-party systems with various forms of restrictions to political liberties.

association, and freedom to criticise the government without reprisal; d) the elected authorities possess real authority to govern and are not subject to the tutelary control of military or clerical leaders (Levitsky and Way, 2002:53).

An important charge that can be levied against this approach is that it refrains from asking the question whether dominant party systems can be seen as authoritarian on the basis of deficiencies in the dimension of government contestability, despite the fact that the electoral process is open to public participation. If the traditional threshold separating democracies from non-democracies is placed on the existence of a multi-party system that allows free entry to, and participation in the electoral contest, soft manipulative practices that shape the interactions between rulers and the ruled will be left out. Hence, by adopting a dichotomous position on democracy and authoritarianism instead of projecting a continuum, and by reducing democracy to a system of representation defined solely by the availability of political rights to voters, the literature risks stretching the concept of democracy too far to include regime types that employ milder forms of authoritative controls while formally allowing a considerable scope for public participation.

Following this 'mandate' approach to democracy (c.f. Sartori, 1967:126), one may conclude that dominance is the result of electoral choice when diverse and often conflicting preferences are channelled to central politics predominantly through the hierarchical system of decision-making in that single party. It may simply be the case that successive electoral victories by one party and quite often by a huge voting margin reflect a long-standing majority of voters' preferences. Various reasons can be invoked: the incumbent was consistently successful in delivering policies approved by the majority, while the opposition constantly failed to put forward an alternative policy agenda equally appealing to voters. The opposition may be portrayed as simply out of touch with public sentiment and very poor at political communication. Given that each political force has been previously given the opportunity to form a political party and appeal to the electorate, one-party dominance may then be seen as a fully legitimate outcome under these circumstances; a peculiar yet genuine product of free political competition developing in a democratic system (Arian and Barnes, 1974). At first glance, election results and opinion polls from dominant party systems in post-communist countries could be seen to support that view. They indicate that the opposition

parties have been indeed weak in public opinion polls and that, for that reason, they have remained unable to pose a serious electoral challenge to the incumbent (tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Election results of presidential elections by candidate in four post-communist countries: the incumbent versus the leader of the opposition

Belarus 2006, 2001, 1994	Russia 2008, 2004, 2000	Kazakhstan 2005, 1999	Azerbaijan 2003, 1998
Alexander Lukashenka 82.6%	Dmitry Medvedev 71.25%*	Nursultan Nazarbayev 91.15%	Ilham Aliyev* 76.8%
Alexander Milinkievic 6.0%	Gennady Zyuganov 17.96%	Zharmakhan, Tuyakbay 6.61%	Isa Gambar 14.0%
Alexander Lukashenka 75.6%	Vladimir Putin 71.31%	Nursultan Nazarbayev 81%	Heydar Aliyev 77.6%
Vladimir Goncharik 15.4%	Nikolay Kharitonov, 13.69%	Serikbolsyn Abdilin 11.9%	Ehtibarc Mamedov 11.3%
Alexander Lukashenka 80.1%	Vladimir Putin* 52.94%		
Vyacheslau Kebich 19.9%	Gennady Zyuganov, 29.21%		

* Presidential candidate supported by the previous President. Sources:, <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/>, <http://www.idea.int>, Embassy of Kazakhstan in London, Центральная Избирательная Комиссия Российской Федерации.

In these political systems it may be the case that the dominant party and the presidential candidate enjoy durable high levels of popularity that allows them to claim that their rule is legitimate. Any electoral irregularities observed in the elections were not too small to skew voting preferences and popularity scores and the dominant parties and candidates did indeed enjoy widespread support by the vast majority of voters. With the formal structure of democracy in place, the power monopoly of the incumbent appears to be justified as a reflection of majority preferences. Apologists of actual dominant party systems could come as far as to invoke the imagery of the dominant party encapsulating the common will of the nation and representing national unity at the level of government. If the threshold for dominant party systems to qualify as democracies is placed on the existence of an open structure of participation, the presence of some irregularities in the electorate system could classify most of these regimes at the very least as troubled democracies.

Table 2: Popularity of the incumbent in four post-communist regimes

<p>Putin (Russia) Re-elected 2004</p>	<p>More achievements as President, 60% in March 2001, 61% in March 2002, 49% in March 2003, 58% in October 2004 (The Public Opinion Foundation Database, 11.10.2004)</p> <p>Trust in political figures (2004): Putin: 58%, Minister Sergei Shoigu: 25%, Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov, 12%, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, 12%, Gennady Zyuganov, 8%.: All-Russian Public Surveys Center (VTsIOM), and gateway2russia.com</p> <p>Trust in the President: 58%, (Yuri Levada Analytical Center quoted by the Interfax news agency, December 2003)</p> <p>Trust in the President: 39% (Yuri Levada Analytical Center quoted by the Interfax news agency, December 2004)</p> <p>Trust in the President by Nation-wide: 47%, in 2003; 46%, in 2004; 52% , in 2006., 49% , in 2006 (home interviews by The Public Opinion Foundation Database)</p> <p>Approval of President Putin: 85% (ROMIR Monitoring survey and newsfromrussia.com, 2.2.2004)</p>
<p>Nazarbayev (Kazakhstan) Re-elected 2005</p>	<p>Support for Nazarbayev:77.65% (Xinhua News Agency, December, 4, 2005)</p> <p>70% (Central Asia Monitor, September 9, 2005 and Jamestown Foundation, Eurasia Daily Monitor, vol. 2. no. 170, September 14, 2005)</p> <p>70% (Eurasia Insight at Eurasianet.org, December, 1, 2005)</p> <p>76% (KazRating Agency, and Eurasia Insight at Eurasianet.org, November, 11, 2005)</p>
<p>Aliyev, (Azerbaijan) Elected 2008</p>	<p>Support for Ilham Aliyev: (78.3%, Azerbaijani ELS Independent Investigation Centre)</p>
<p>(Belarus) Lukashenka</p>	<p>‘Did you want him to be a President’: 48% ‘yes’ answers (IISEPS-Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Research, 2001), 40% -50% (BBC reporting for Belarus, September 8, 2001)</p> <p>60% support for Lukashenka, 11% for Milinkevich, 5% for Kozulin (All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center and Angus Reid Global Monitor : Election Tracker 2006)</p>

Faced with these challenging objections, the literature on semi-authoritarianism has sought to discern in-between regime types distinct from typical democracies and traditional authoritarian regimes. Terms such as ‘semi-authoritarianism’, ‘hybrid regimes’, ‘sultanistic regimes’, ‘demagogical democracies’, ‘competitive authoritarianism’, and ‘illiberal democracies’ (c.f. Linz and Stepan, 1996:38-54; Eke and Kuzio, 2000; Mc Faul, 2005; Gill, 2002:4-5; Croissant, 2004; Merkel, 2004) are amidst the colourful labels illustrating the particular deficiencies of the political systems to which they are attached. Efforts to build a more systematic

analysis have generated typologies of mutually-exclusive regime types on the basis of the properties of the political systems under consideration. For instance Gill (2002:4-5) made a regime typology of ‘façade democracies’ that includes *ethnic democracies*, describing regimes in which an ethnic group is excluded from participation in the democratic process; *plebiscitary democracies*, in which the electorate has given the president a strong mandate, ‘a carte blanche’ that enables him to increase his powers and significantly limit the powers of the legislative and the judiciary; *sultanism*, where the president obtains unrestrained power and uses the state as his own property, reducing elections to a process that simply legitimises the president’s rule; and *oligarchy*, where power-sharing is limited to members of a closed elite.⁴

In similar vein, Linz and Stepan created their own typology of non-democratic regimes: *authoritarian*, *totalitarian*, *post-totalitarian*, and *sultanistic* regimes (1996, 38-54). In authoritarian regimes, power is exercised on the basis of ill-defined but still predictable rules without an elaborate ideology. In totalitarian systems, political, economic and social pluralism has been eliminated by the unrestricted exercise of power in conditions of great unpredictability with ‘a holistic, guiding and utopian ideology’ that helps achieve mass mobilisation (Linz and Stepan, 1996, 40). Post-totalitarian regimes are either a form of degenerated totalitarianism or the early stage towards totalitarianism where social and economic diversity is limited, there is weak commitment to the guiding ideology and the members of the political elite exhibit some degree of political opportunism. Finally, sultanism refers to regimes dominated by a dynastic personality whose rule is not bound by institutional constraints.⁵ These descriptive categories, though building mutually-exclusive categories, lack a set of generally applicable criteria on the basis

⁴ Gill admitted that following a variation in the gravity, the frequency of incidents of political violence and the degrees of political pluralism, there may often be an overlap between these categories, and that some regimes will approach democracy while others will tilt towards authoritarianism.

⁵ In a sultanistic regime, compliance with the leadership is secured by the instillation of fear among its subjects and on the granting of personal rewards to its allies. The leader is glorified; he occasionally mobilises people by a combination of coercive and patronage but often uses para-state groups to attack dissenters when necessary. ‘Sultanism’ entered the political vocabulary by Max Weber. In his book, ‘The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation’ and ‘Essays in Sociology’, Weber talked of sultanates where the sultan’s rule remains unrestricted by law and relies on a patrimonial bureaucracy to control the social basis. In modern use, the use of ‘sultanism’ was attributed to the former Soviet republics in Central Asia (Beichelt, 2004:116) and to post-Soviet Belarus (Eke and Kuzio, 2000).

of which the universe of political systems can be classified into distinctive categories.

Nevertheless, one of the most important contributions by the literature on semi-authoritarianism has been to move beyond the observation of flaws of the formal structure of *participation* to include deficiencies in the dimension of *contestation*. In that way, regime types such as ‘hegemonic regimes’ (Diamond, 2004) ‘electoral authoritarianism’ (Schedler 2006) and ‘competitive authoritarianism’ (Levitsky and Way 2010; Linz and Stepan, 1996, 2010) enrich the literature on dominant party systems by pointing to the presence of dominant authoritarian party systems. Larry Diamond’s definition of *hegemonic regimes* describes systems where, despite regular, competitive multiparty elections, ‘the existence of formally democratic political institutions, such as multi-party electoral competition, masks the reality of authoritarian domination’ (Diamond, 2002, 24). In that view, dominant party systems of that type are electoral hegemonies, since the victory of the opposition party is an improbable event, requiring a level of ‘opposition mobilization, unity, skill, and heroism far beyond what would normally be required for victory in a democracy’ (Diamond, 2002:24).⁶ In similar vein, Schedler (2006:3) has used the term ‘electoral authoritarianism’ for regimes in which political offices are filled through multiparty elections, yet the electoral playing field is severely skewed in favour of the ruling party (c.f. Levitsky and Way 2010). Other authors have talked of ‘managed democracy’ or ‘guided democracy’ (Colton and McFaul, 2003; McFaul, 2005, Wegren and Konitzer, 2007). Ware has given a definition of a dominant party system in a more dramatic tone as one in which a single party never loses an election since the other parties are ‘*without hope of being in government*’ (Ware, 1996: 159 and 165).

These qualitative definitions are quite distinct from the ones seeking to capture a dominant-party system on the basis of measurable indicators. On closer examination, they tackle the classification problem with an elaboration on the distinction between ‘predominant’ party systems and ‘hegemonic’ party systems by Sartori (Sartori 1976 and 1990; Von Beyme 1985; Ware 1996). According to Sartori, a predominant party system is a system in which the major party is

⁶ Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset made a similar observation in *Politics in Developing Countries*, xviii.

consistently supported by a winning majority of the voters, when other parties are not only permitted to exist, but do exist as legal and legitimate – if not necessarily effective – *competitors* of the predominant party. The other parties exist as ‘*truly independent antagonists* of the predominant party’ (1976/2005:173). Under a predominant party system, ‘it simply happens that the same party manages to win, over time, an absolute majority of seats (not necessarily votes) in parliament’ (1976/2005:173), and a predominant party can cease at any moment to be predominant. By contrast, Sartori’s definition of hegemonic party system was of a regime in which other parties are permitted to exist but actual competition is effectively thwarted. In Sartori’s terms, hegemonic systems are regimes that offer a structure of *competition* but face limited competitiveness (Sartori 1976/2005:194).

The variety of labels for political systems reflects the wide range of authors’ views of how the regime in question diverges from their own conceptualisations of democracy. Subjective evaluations are manifested in the fact that the same set of observations has been described on the one side as illiberal democracies (Zakaria 1997), demagogical democracies (Korosteleva, 2003), managed democracies or semi-democracies (Case 1996) and, on the other, as electoral authoritarianism (Schedler 2002) and competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way, 2002 and 2010). A particular problem with any attempt to avoid overstressing the concept of democracy by referring to diminished subtypes of democracy is that it may simply mask rather than solve the problem of conceptual stretching (Storm, 2008:217). The problem is more acute for the literature on dominant party system which does not use the term ‘semi-authoritarianism’ as a way to bypass clear-cut categorisations and, therefore, needs to take a clear position about to how to distinguish between democratic and authoritarian dominant party systems.

In response to this analytical problem, Boucek and Bogaards put forward a broader set of criteria for the distinction between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems that moves beyond a purely procedural standard. A dominant party system is democratic, when a) there are legal provisions guaranteeing *de jure* political rights of equality understood as ‘one person, one vote’, freedom of speech and opinion, freedom to form and join political parties that are allowed to contest elections, and equal eligibility for public office, b) multi-party elections are held under these rules, c) for emerging electoral democracies the country has been given

a rating of 4 or better on Freedom House's scale of political rights, and d) recent elections have been considered 'substantially' free and fair, meaning that irregularities in the electoral process must have not affected the outcome. Based on those criteria, the authors classified party systems in Africa in three categories: democratic non-dominant; democratic dominant; and authoritarian dominant (Boucek and Bogaards, 2010: 203, 208).

The inclusion of an assessment of the fairness of the electoral process moves beyond a narrow approach to democracy to reflect Huntington's definition of a democratic political system as one in which 'its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through *fair, honest*, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote'. (Huntington, 1991:7, emphasis added). What constitutes, however, free, competitive and fair elections still remains open to debate. The concept of authoritarian dominant party systems could then be extended as far as to include all dominant party systems on the presumption that regular alternation of parties in government is an inherent feature of democracy (c.f. Giliomee and Simkins, 1999) and that 'true protection for the citizens of a liberal democracy lies less in the separation of powers or a Bill of Rights than in the actual use of elections to change bad and corrupt governments' (Giliomee and Simkins, 1999: xviii and 2).

A systematic effort by Greene to distinguish between what he has labelled as 'competitive authoritarian' single parties from 'predominant parties' that emerge in conditions of 'more regular democratic turnover' as well as from fully closed authoritarian regimes involved three tests (Greene, 2010b:810): to be classified as a dominant party system, a party system should meet a power threshold (1) and a longevity threshold (2); if it passes these tests, it will be classified either as authoritarian or democratic on the basis of how meaningful the electoral competition is (3). The power threshold in presidential systems requires that the incumbent controls the executive, the absolute majority of legislative seats and in federal systems, the majority of statehouses. For parliamentary and mixed systems, the party holding the premiership controls at least a plurality of legislative seats, which makes it impossible for any other party to form a government without the participation of the dominant party. The longevity threshold requires the completion of a four-election or 20-year threshold; party systems that have not yet reached the

longevity threshold are named proto-dominant party systems (Greene, 2010b:810). Once these thresholds are passed, a dominant party system is authoritarian when elections are not meaningful in the sense used by Przeworski et al. (2000) and, moreover, when the costs imposed on opposition actors in the form of intimidation and physical repression and any other forms of authoritarian controls are pervasive and fundamentally important in altering participation decisions of prospective activists (also see Greene, 2010a:156 and 158). The gain from Greene's criteria is that what constitutes 'authoritarian means to achieving dominance' can now be extended to include any practices other than coercion that eventually produce a similar effect on the terms of political competition.

Nevertheless, identifying what is responsible for imposing a cost on opposition actors, as Greene means it, is again open to interpretation of whether it constitutes a practice compatible with democracy, given that a wide range of practices create an incumbency advantage and raise the cost for the opposition in democracies too. If we agree that a dominant party system can be dubbed as authoritarian on the basis of the means by which dominance is achieved, we are still falling short of discerning which of the practices raising the cost in Greene's sense must be regarded as incompatible with basic properties of democracy. In a nutshell the demarcation problem (drawing the boundaries between authoritarian and democratic party systems on the basis of the democratic credentials of the strategies used to achieve dominance) is still contingent on addressing the conceptualisation problem (defining an acceptable standard of democracy).

The threshold for a practice to pass in order to qualify as compatible with democracy is raised by Robert Dahl's conceptualisation of democracy as *participation and public contestation* (Dahl, 1971: 4, 8, 34). The relevance of this standard is that it can be used either as a direct benchmark of democracy against which dominant party systems can be assessed, or as a criterion for passing judgment on the democratic credentials of the practices associated with the rise and consolidation of a dominant party system.

In the first case, a dominant party system can be seen as a subset of authoritarianism when it exhibits sizeable deviations in the dimension of *contestation*. For Dahl, an 'inclusive hegemony' (Dahl, 1971:8, 34) is a regime-type that provides formal structures of *participation*, namely *elections* and the right to form political parties,

but faces low degrees of contestability. In other words, there is limited *competitiveness* despite the existence of a formal structure for *competition* (Sartori, 1976). This runs counter to the expectation that the formal opportunities to vote, get elected and establish political organisations will inevitably give rise to a competitive political arena composed by autonomous parties and other independent social organisations that will strongly and vociferously articulate opposing political agendas in public debate, mobilise broader campaign support, and freely disseminate information and propaganda.

In the second case, any practice that limits government's exposure to contestation to the extent that it produces limited contestability (an inclusive hegemony) could be said to meet the criteria set up by the literature on dominant party systems for discerning a dominant authoritarian party system. More broadly, any serious hindrance to both dimensions other than the complete blocking of political participation – a characteristic of authoritarian regimes – would allow the analysis to construct distinctive regime categories.

Nevertheless, while the definition of democracy as contestation open to participation is indeed a solid benchmark on which to distinguish between democracies and non-democracies and between democratic and non-democratic party strategies, claims based on this conception may not be convincing enough for those holding a different view of democracy. The idea that contestability is an inherent property of democracy is vulnerable to counter-arguments stemming from the 'mandate approach to democracy' according to which the absence of a high degree of multi-party competition can be plausibly regarded as the genuine result of electoral choice provided that the electoral process is open to all and that no application of fraud, intimidation or violence has skewed voters' choice and political behaviour. On this interpretation, it merely happens that one party wins the popular vote by a huge margin, and popular claims, expectations and worries must be duly and fully represented into politics through the ranks of a single dominant party. This counter-argument can hardly be tackled by an axiomatic view of democracy. As a normative claim Dahl's pluralist thesis on democracy needs to justify the position that contestation is a necessary precondition for democracy. In particular, the argument required to support the pluralist thesis on contestability is expected to defend the view that political competitiveness is both a necessary and

an inevitable property of democracy against alternative approaches that regard inter-party contestability as a possible but not inevitable product of an open political system. The following section distils a common denominator from alternative definitions of democracy to support the claim that, if the basic command is to be met that democracy should give its citizens the opportunity structure required to defend themselves against state power, contestability stemming from autonomous collective organisation is a necessary condition.

2.3 A defence of the pluralist approach to dominance

The very fact that Robert Dahl's *polyarchy* is one out of the numerous definitions given to democracy is an indication of how controversial and elusive the meaning of democracy is. This pluralist conception of democracy as 'contestation open to participation' and the concept of 'inclusive hegemony' (1971:8, 34) are premised upon an essentially normative claim that a high degree of between-party competition is an inherent characteristic of democracy. It follows for pluralism that a dominant party system situated in a multi-party electoral system should be seen as authoritarian if the dominant party is not exposed to a substantial degree of contestability effectuated by strong, autonomous and competing parties.

Although most modern democracies fall short of the ideals espoused by this deontological definition and many others, definitions are important in that they create epistemological and practical yardsticks against which existing political systems are assessed. As Giovanni Sartori acknowledged, ideals and reality interact, and normative definitions of democracy exert deontological pressures on what democracy develops into: 'what democracy is cannot be separated from what democracy should be' (Sartori, 1962:4). The descriptive definition of what democracy is *relies upon* the normative view of what democracy *ought to be*. Deontological standards, however, vary depending on numerous alternative normative standpoints. Thus a better defence of the view that contestability is an inherent characteristic of democracy should relate to the *common denominator* found in various normative interpretations of democracy.

The basic concept of democracy is captured by the etymology of the Greek word 'democracy' as a combination of the words '*demos*', the citizenry, and '*kratos*', power. Brought together in a dialectical relation, democracy essentially means

‘power in the hands of the citizens’, or more broadly ‘rule by the people’. This commands a synthesis between two notions which have been historically standing in an antithetical relation. In essence, the very etymology of democracy sets up a dual, prescriptive and descriptive standard. On a normative level, this *synthesis of the antithesis* requires the subjugation of political authority to those upon which it is exercised. In actual democracies, it requires that the actual system of governance whereby political decisions are taken by central authoritative institutions come close to the *ideal form* of governance in which power is exercised *by the people and for the people*. It is important to specify how (or, if at all) this ideal can be approximated in modern systems of governance.

Various approaches have pondered on how this deontological synthesis is to be achieved. A classical and rather uncontroversial definition of democracy places emphasis on the existence of a structure of political participation open to ‘all adult citizens not excluded by some generally agreed upon and reasonable disqualifying factor’ (Pennock, 1979:9). Democracy as ‘rule by the people’ means that public policies are ‘determined either directly by vote of the electorate or indirectly by officials freely elected at reasonably frequent intervals and by a process in which each voter who chooses to vote counts equally’ (Pennock, 1979:9). This definition resonates with Schumpeter’s democratic ‘*method*’ as an ‘institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individual acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote’ (1976:269).

In similar tone, Seymour Martin Lipset saw democracy, ‘as a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism that permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political office’ (Lipset, 1960:45). This suggests that, thanks to a set of fundamental political rights equally distributed among its constituents, the citizens are expected to exercise some control over the structure of collective decision-making. In this view, the political system that approximates the ideal of ‘popular sovereignty’ involves a *process* by which citizens give a mandate to chosen candidates and parties in periodical elections.

A more minimalist view perceives citizens’ control over power as the capacity to overthrow peacefully their rulers without recourse to a violent revolution – a

possibility that in all other regime types requires the use of force. Karl Popper's minimalist definition of democracy is based on how the rulers come to lose power:

'The first type consists of governments of which we can get rid without bloodshed; that is to say, the social institutions provide the means by which the rulers may be dismissed by the ruled, and the social traditions ensure that these institutions will not easily be destroyed by those who are in power. The second type consists of governments which the ruled cannot get rid of except by way of successful revolution – that is to say, in most cases, not at all. I suggest the term "democracy" as a short-hand label for a government of the first type, and the term "tyranny" or "dictatorship" for the second' (Popper, 2002, 132).

Taken at face value, both the procedural and the minimalist view of democracy suggest that inclusive hegemonies should be regarded as democratic regimes provided they offer an open structure for participation for voters and political actors in which they participate without fear of suppression and intimidation and where they register their preferences without fraud contaminating the weight of their votes. At first glance, this procedural view of democracy requires only part of what the pluralist view demands to regard a political system as being a democracy.

Participation, however, cannot be detached from contestability. The political system of the procedural definition of democracy is such that 'citizens are free to criticize their rulers and to come together to make demands on them and to win support for their policies they favour and the beliefs they hold' (Plamenatz, 1978, pp.184-188). The right to vote is accompanied by political freedoms such as the freedom to organise collective action and make use of resources other than violence in order to exert pressure and bargain for policy outcomes. Seen through this lens, democracy is: '...government by the people, where liberty, equality and fraternity are secured to the greatest possible degree and in which human capacities are developed to the utmost, by means including free and full *discussion* of common problems and interests' (Pennock, 1979, p.7, emphasis added). While for the pluralists contestation is an integral element of the democratic process, for the procedural view of democracy contestation is the indispensable and inevitable outcome of an open structure of participation, where different viewpoints, interests and proposals are channelled to politics.

The combined reading of the two approaches suggests that the political empowerment of citizens in democracy involves more than their small share in the general vote. Instead, citizens' empowerment is extended to include the actual capacity of citizens to express views and take an active part in politics. Thus fundamental political rights equally distributed among its constituent citizens are valuable *mostly because they generate a free arena for collective decision-making*, which gives rise to a competitive political system. In this regard, it is *through collective organisation* that in a democracy each individual citizen makes an appearance from the notion of the 'demos' and by pooling resources with others gets a better bargaining position to defend their claims and interests against state power. In a nutshell, collective action empowers individuals in their political claims. Taken further, the assertion here is that, while the principle of political equality gives each citizen a share of political power of equal weight with any other citizen in the form of *political rights*, this entitlement is of no use without free collective action.

From the perspective of a procedural definition of democracy, the pluralist thesis can be seen as highlighting the distance that an actual political system should travel to approximate the ideal of 'rule of the demos'. It marks a subtle but significant refinement of which state of affairs comes close to offering individuals a strong say in authoritative state decision-making. The ideal synthesis between the 'ruled' and the 'rulers' can be redefined as group associations and organisations freely competing to define political outcomes. This is what the term *polyarchy* essentially captures, as it offers its own redefinition of the synthesis between '*kratos*' and the '*demos*', as multiple agents, the '*polloi*', participating in the decision-making structures in the form of groups in competition for access to decision-making to promote their preferences through the formal institutional channels, thereby creating various arenas of political contestation. Underlying this view is an assumption according to which each political force represents a point of view in society and promotes it to become state policy (Sartori, 1967:83). The concept of *polyarchy*, epitomises the bridging of the distance between the ideal of democracy and the actual political system not solely through the formal structure of participation in politics but, instead, through the pluralist organisation of society, whereby groups,

emerging from a social and economic context, compete for political outcomes and contest political decisions with the resources at their disposal.

Democracy recaptured by '*polyarchy*' as a form of governance constituted by the open and active participation of individuals through the groups they form is by definition an inherently *competitive* political system 'in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process' (Schattschneider 1960:141). It is:

'...a set of institutions and rules that allow competition and participation for all citizens considered as equals. Such a political arrangement is characterized by free, fair, and recurring elections; male and female universal suffrage; multiple organizations of interests; different and alternative sources of information; and elections to fill the most relevant offices' (Morlino, 1986:54).

Hence, by acknowledging the reality of the numerous affiliations and multiple preferences and identities of democracy's citizens, the pluralist thesis gives a refined meaning to the notion of *demos*, now broken down into its constituent parts, *the polloi*, and redefined as a plurality of interest groups with conflicting, often irreconcilable preferences. Democracy is about active democratic minorities, where a minority becomes a majority, or, inversely, the majority is thrown into a minority (Sartori 1967: 116). It is *a polyarchy of elected elites*, '*a selective system of competing elected minorities*' in which the unorganised majority of the politically inactive becomes the arbiter in the contest among the organised minorities of the politically active (Sartori, 1987: 167-9). In this view, the '*demos*' cannot and *should not* be seen as one single collectivity with a 'general will' which democratic politics is supposed to identify – a vision found in the monistic ideal of democracy of the early idealistic theories – but, rather, as a community with a plurality of competing social and political organisations. In any open structure of participation in place, a competitive multi-party system is bound to emerge from a context of social diversity.

A second contribution of the pluralist view on collective action is that it gives a specific meaning to the position of the individual against domination by the state. If

the etymology of democracy suggests that the individual's autonomy from – as well as defence against – the rulers is to be secured by an institutional framework whereby the '*demos*' could exercise control over the '*kratos*', the pluralist thesis stipulates that this synthesis is impossible through the political activity of individual citizens alone. Political rights equally distributed among citizens give each citizen a modicum of influence over political decision-making. Political equality in the form of equal political rights under democracy does not suffice to prevent domination. This view portrays single individuals as more or less powerless against the means of coercion and the economic resources which the state has at its disposal.

Instead, pluralism points to collective organisation as the *means* by which the individual may get in the position to exert some control over outcomes: it is by pooling resources that individuals obtain the capacity to check and influence state authority. Collective organisation may enable individuals to overcome and reshuffle existing power asymmetries that would have hindered their effective political participation and would have eventually endangered the very foundations of modern democracies as both representative and liberal. The pluralist approach is that of 'power from collective organisation' that can help individuals overcome structural disadvantages:

'Dominated and deprived individuals are likely to be disorganized as well as impoverished, whereas poor people with strong families, churches, unions, political parties and ethnic alliances are not likely to be dominated or deprived for long' (Walzer, 1995:19).

We have clarified so far that the fundamental difference between the procedural view of democracy and the pluralist approach is the position of contestability either as an inherent part of the definition or as an inevitable and desirable outcome from an open process of public participation in politics. The relevance of pluralism to other approaches to democracy is that it contends that the approximation of the core ideal of democracy is secured through group organisation in a system of mutual controls. But unlike the procedural view, the pluralist definition draws more attention to the possibility of one-group dominance from inter-group dynamics. The challenging issue raised by the pluralist approach to democracy is that the concept of democracy is recast as a question of both vertical power relations between individuals and state power and horizontal power relations among citizens and their

groups. If power in politics is primarily sourced on *power from organisation*, asymmetries in power between groups may skew relative influence on political outcomes. The analytical implications are clear. While political rights open up opportunities for individuals to form alliances and take an active part in politics, like a knife that cuts both ways collective organisation may help groups either realise or destroy democracy. While it can only be through collective organisation that democracy is secured against possible attempts by some groups to acquire a dominant position, it may also be through collective organisation that the goal of democracy now modestly understood as contestation open to participation can be lost if a group obtains asymmetrical power resources in relation to all others.

A further elaboration of this claim could be that by allowing collective action democracy simply offers groups *the potential* for a defence against state power and for some influence on state power. One-group domination can only be limited through the *countervailing powers* which other groups possess. The crucial role collective organisation plays is that it can evolve into a *system of mutual controls* providing checks on central government power. This system of mutual controls generates mutual accommodation or 'détente' among the major organised interests (Dahl, 1982: 36, 43). For pluralists, what secures democracy is a delicate *balance of power* in which no group has the power to impose outcomes on all others. This system of mutual controls is established when the cost of domination by one group is raised by the collective organisation of others pooling their resources. In that case:

'Wherever the costs of control exceeded the benefits, it would be rational for these rulers to reduce costs by leaving some action beyond their control, leaving some matters outside their control, or accepting a higher' (Dahl, 1982: 34).

Consequently, political power can only be tamed and become subject to a system of mutual controls as long as the collective organisation of individuals allows individuals in possession of necessary *resources* to ally to fend off attempts for one-group domination.

2.4 Final remarks

This chapter has developed a first line of defence for Dahl's approach to inclusive hegemony as a pertinent contribution to the literature on dominant party system by associating the pluralist thesis on democracy upon which the concept relies with more basic standards of what democracy is. It has argued that the pluralist conception is an elaboration on two fundamental questions for democracy concerning inter-group competition and domination by the state.

By deconstructing the demos into its constituents, *individuals*, and by reconstructing them into *groups*, pluralism conceives political competition as a struggle for power among groups whose outcome is primarily determined by the dynamics of collective action. In this view, collective action seen by other approaches as *derivative* of a free structure of participation is elevated by pluralism into an element *constitutive* of democracy. Political rights unlock real opportunities for participation in politics by allowing citizens to contest political proposals and outcomes *principally through collective action*. In essence, '*the demos*' consists of citizens articulating competing claims in politics through their organisation in multiple groups, and the democratic political community is *defined* by the political expression of social diversity in the form of various and autonomous collective associations. It is collective action that allows individuals to exert some influence on decision-making, to place limits to the exercise of political power and to thwart the prospect of one-group domination. Hence, a *typical democratic system* is conceived of not as one that merely satisfies the criterion of equality in voting rights but as one that meets the standard of effective competition among political forces autonomous from one other.

On the analytical level, the same perspective expects a competitive political arena to be the inevitable outcome of a genuinely open political process insofar as collective action is not suppressed by coercive power. A competitive political system will be the standard outcome of different political forces formed to represent distinct social interests that envisage becoming state policy (c.f. Sartori, 1967:83). The concept of inclusive hegemony can now be seen as an indication of an anomaly related to inter-group dynamics. If autonomous collective organisation is expected to spring up from an open process of participation, the question that unavoidably arises here is

how this state of affairs is established. Hegemony appears to be an *antithesis between process and outcome*.

The analysis above indicates an explanatory path. Collective organisation opens up the possibility of one-group domination when asymmetrical power is concentrated in the hands of one group. In the pluralist view of democracy, insofar as collective action generates a balance of power between opposing groups, collective action may prevent one group from obtaining a dominant position. More broadly, the notion of 'mutual controls' refers to a balance of power between antagonistic groups in possession of power resources.

In the next chapter, theory on democracy and historical narratives of democratisation and regime change add empirical support to the pluralist thesis by indicating that a) an open structure for political participation inevitably generates a substantial degree of political competition in the form of at least two parties having more or less similar influence on politics, and b) that one group dominance can only be achieved by the effective exercise of coercive power suppressing political expression of diverse social interests or, alternatively, through a strategy that produces an effect similar to that of coercion through the use of other sources of power and mechanisms that skew the distribution of power resources.

Chapter 3

The paradox of one-party dominance: social diversity, power resources and the state

3.1 Introduction

While the previous analysis provides a normative defence of the pluralist position that a high degree of political competitiveness is an inherent characteristic of democracy, those adhering to a ‘mandate’ approach to democracy (c.f. Sartori, 1967:126) may still contend that a dominant party system can emerge through an open process of participation in exceptional cases in which a majority freely chooses one single party to be the main addressee of their claims for a period of time. This choice may be attributed to fragmentation and organisational weakness of the opposition to capitalise on substantial political opportunities stemming from a diverse social context and to the poor political skills of its leaders who are unable to activate social cleavages and policy divisions into electoral support for their parties (c.f. Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Riker, 1983; Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Cox 1997; Bartolini, 2000; Adams et al. 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Greene 2007).

This chapter explains why this ‘natural selection’ view of political organisation in competitive conditions is ill-suited to explain the resilience of one-party hegemony. It adds more strength to its defence of the pluralist thesis that political contestability is a *necessary* element of democracy by revisiting the theory on democracy and democratisation to confirm that social diversity tends to generate multiple forms of collective action, which act as centrifugal forces destabilising the political arena. Political contestability is the *inevitable* outcome of social and political diversity. Consequently, where coercion is absent and political organisation is free, various and competing forms of political organisation will emerge to express and represent diverse and often irreconcilable interests, while mounting social and political divisions will eventually strengthen the position of the opposition. From the viewpoint of these historical narratives on regime change, one-party dominance is a perplexing outcome and can only be attributed to the presence of other critical factors affecting political behaviour and suppressing or manipulating the political expression of social diversity. The overall argument here can be framed as follows:

In the absence of coercion exercised in the forms of violence and intimidation, the political expression of competing interests can hardly be accommodated and contained within the ranks of one dominant party and social diversity will tend to be registered as a multi-party competitive political system.

Moreover, the historical narratives presented in this chapter demonstrate that both political outcomes and regime change are associated with shifting patterns of power distribution among competing groups. A typical authoritarian regime relies on the exercise of coercive power that effectively suppresses collective action and enables a group to obtain a dominant position. Given that limited contestability in a multi-party system by definition precludes the use of coercion as a means to obstructing political participation, inclusive hegemony can only be attributed to the impact of other forms of power. This, however, requires an unusual concentration of power resources in the hands of one group. The chapter turns to the discussion about the ways power as persuasion and incentives can produce an impact on preference formation and political organisation, and concludes that unusual concentrations of economic and knowledge resources can only be found in the hands of the state.

3.2 Historical accounts of democracy and democratisation: from social diversity to political competition

A large body of democratic theory has associated changes in the structure of the economy with the emergence of new social groups and the development of new political agendas and struggles. Under changing conditions, political forces were formed, came to conflict with one another, forged alliances or made critical compromises, at times leading to political change and in certain cases to the advent of democracy. For Barrington Moore, structural change gave rise to new classes, shaped their political preferences and determined power dynamics and class alliances that directed the institutional and political path of each society in diverging ways (Moore, 1967). Similarly, ‘capitalist development’ was associated with working class struggles pushing for political inclusion (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1991). For Göran Therborn (1977), working class claims were accommodated by a bourgeois class that was ‘internally competing and peacefully disunited’ and eventually had to yield to these demands after a period of resistance. In these narratives, political change was generated by a combination of economic

interests, a shifting balance of power and strategic interactions between social groups. The broader picture presented here is that social groups emerge under changing economic and social conditions, shape and revise their preferences on the basis of their understanding of economic interest and come to choose a political strategy that takes into account relative power against other groups. Seen in this light, political change can be explained as the combined effect of structural developments on group formation, group empowerment preference formation and strategic action.

By the same token, different patterns of shifting political alliances take political change in different directions. While inter-group conflict is seen as the main driving force behind political change, emphasis is placed on the volatility of alliances. For instance, the move to liberal democracy in nineteenth century France was seen as the outcome of a coalition of the emerging business class against the conservative elites (Nord, 1995). In Argentina, fears that the inclusion of other groups would prevent more aggressive forms of popular mobilisation led the conservative elites to ally with the military to resist the demands of the popular classes despite their original agreement for universal suffrage (James, 1995). In Japan, top-down modernisation undertaken by the bureaucracy before World War II was said to explain the political compliance of the business elites with the authoritarian government (Allinson, 1995).

More empirical works stress the interplay between structure and agency in producing shifting alliances, facilitating compromise and deterring clashes. The pattern here is of socially constructed groups, socially-defined preferences and inter-group alliances that reflect relative power. For instance, this is observed in studies of Latin American politics, where for the greatest part of the 20th century vacillation between democracy and autocracy was a frequent occurrence. In Latin America, shifts in the structure of the economy brought changes in the political demands and strategies of the social forces involved in competition with one another, and at times produced radical political agendas triggering military coups in response. The period before World War II when most Latin American economies were export-driven coincided with a period of authoritarianism; the ensuing period of rapid industrialisation under a protective trade regime sponsored by the state saw the rise of populist politics (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979:15). In the period of

protectionist industrialisation, diversified production broadened the social basis of participation, which included the middle classes, the national bourgeoisie and to certain extent the 'popular classes' (Cardoso and Faletto, 99, 102, 107). When, however, foreign capital invested in Latin America to bypass the tariff walls, new social cleavages and tensions appeared. It was argued that in this late stage of industrialisation foreign investment sharpened social cleavages and significantly affected the less efficient domestic firms, marginalising economic actors who had had a dominant place before (Ibid, 64,165). This development gave rise to radical opposition movements.

When economic policy opened up the economy to foreign trade and foreign investment, political turmoil was aggravated along the lines of opposing economic paradigms; on the one hand a defence of the existing form of capitalist relations in those countries and on the other an advocacy of left-wing, radical and mostly Marxist economic ideas. The crisis signalled the exhaustion of the populist nationalistic paradigm and was followed by a series of military coups as in Chile in the early 1970s. The crisis led to the establishment of a '*bureaucratic-authoritarian state*' supported by the dominant classes in the presence of the perceived threat posed by radical groups, aiming at de-politicisation through repression (O'Donnell, 1972, 1978; Linz, 1970). This regime guaranteed the move to a new type of capitalist development with extensive industrialisation led by foreign capital and state policies of public investment and fiscal discipline. Cracks within the temporary alliance occurred when middle class groups felt ignored and the local bourgeoisie threatened by the regime's preference for international capital and increased competition (O'Donnell, 1978, 8, 10). In Brazil, inter-group dynamics were also seen to be affected by economic change: the marriage of convenience between the business class and the authoritarian regime ended when the business community demanded a stronger say in political decisions that were affecting its economic interests, and pushed for a 'controlled transition' to democracy (Cardoso, 1991).

Regardless of any substantive objections to the empirical claims made by these narratives, they provide useful insights to the analysis of group formation and alliances. The pattern underlying these narratives is that a) shifting socioeconomic conditions shape groups' perception of interest, give rise to competition and define

the strategic interactions between rival groups, and b) that unintended political developments occur by changes in economic structure: i.e. by opening up the economy to foreign investment, bureaucratic authoritarianism laid the structural foundations of its decline. Political demands, sometimes radical and maximalist in extreme social conditions, are then articulated. Social tensions arise, generating radical reactions and authoritarian backlash from the most powerful groups (Kaufman, 1991). The theoretical articulation of these observations suggests that social diversity is *a fundamental factor of systemic volatility and instability*, constantly providing grounds for group formation, inter-group competition and defection from alliances. Thus the historical accounts confirm that the political expression of social diversity can hardly be contained by a single political force; *politics remains an essentially contestable arena*, unless an unusual degree of coercion is used to suppress political competition, and that in any political arena with diverse interests and shifting alliances, political monopolies unavoidably face contestation sooner or later.

Alongside this useful empirical confirmation of the pluralist thesis, historical narratives of regime change bring to the pluralist framework of analysis the impact on structure. They present a social landscape of diverse and competing social groups with distinct preferences and asymmetrical power relations. Structural change goes as far as to produce changes to preferences. Structural parameters also impinge on forms of group action and on inter-group relations and alliances. They may tie some groups in relations of interdependency or may equally generate irreconcilable tensions causing conflict between groups or fractions within a single social group. They may lead to a revision of old strategies and the formation of new alliances. They may also reshuffle relative power.

A crucial analytical point highlighted by the literature on democratisation is that inter-group dynamics are determined by shifts in relative power. Donald Whistler argued that ‘autocracies have ceased when economic, social, and coercive resources are widely enough distributed that no subset of the population can monopolize the government’ (Whistler 1993). As Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson put it, political elites may choose to launch a process of controlled democratisation when the cost of repression is too high (2005). For Tatu Vanhanen, ‘when resources become so widely distributed that it is not any longer possible for any group to

achieve or uphold political hegemony, it becomes rational and necessary to share power with the most important competitors' (Vanhanen, 1990, 83). Identifying what raises the cost of oppression and what bestows more power to one group calls for attention to the *structural dynamics* and the impact they have on relative power, as highlighted above.

The implications for the study of dominant party systems can be summarised in the form of three observations:

- a) Social diversity generates competing interests and rival groups whose preferences are formed in interaction with one other and in view of structural constraints and opportunities;
- b) Asymmetrical and dispersed distribution of resources available to groups helps prevent domination by one group;
- c) Only concentrated power resources in the hands of one group can allow the group to establish a dominant position in the political arena.

These useful insights imply that the best analytical strategy to understand hegemony is to trace relative power with reference to both structural and agential parameters. This is an important refinement to the assumptions held by political pluralism that political competition stems from social diversity and a plurality of organisations, and that inter-group associations alone may enable or prevent one-group domination. A balance of power is far from a certain state of affairs and depends on the interplay between agency and the structural context where power resources are distributed, and from which they can be retrieved. In this view, power asymmetries in a given structure may be sharp enough to allow one group to exercise unequal influence on political processes.

The added value of this review is to suggest that an explanation of one-party dominance should look at highly asymmetrical distributions of power resources among competing groups in unusual contexts. There must be an unusual concentration of power resources other than coercion in the hands of one political group that outweighs the sum of resources that all other groups together hold. The discussion now turns to examine the multiple ways in which power is exercised. How is it possible that power resources come to be concentrated in the hands of a dominant group to serve as a source of political domination? This question is an

important step towards understanding the causal mechanism by which manipulative practices, such as clientelism, affect political behaviour.

3.3 The concept of power: coercion, incentives and economic resources

It is now clear that in order to seize the full potential of the pluralist emphasis on the ‘balance of power’ and understand how one-group dominance can be achieved and sustained without the use of coercion, it is important to discern a) the meaning and different forms of power and b) different sources of power (power resources).

The broader meaning of power conveys that actor A brings about a change in his or her state of affairs, in the sense that she has the power ‘to do something’. A narrower view of power, however, will see it as a relational concept, as ‘*power over*’, whose exercise may be needed *when* the capacity of actor A to bring about a change in her state of affairs depends on bringing a change in the state of affairs of others. The exercise of power may or may not be necessary. If the capacity of actor A to achieve the state of affairs, A_{ii} , which is her preference, depends on whether B is moving into the state of affairs B_{ii} , one way to get there is a convergence of preferences between actor A and actor B by which B is willingly moving to the new state of affairs that is equally desired by A. In that case, B prefers B_{ii} to B_i , and this easily allows A to achieve her desired state of affairs. One instance, for example, in which such a convergence of preferences is *initially* present is that of a voluntary transaction between actor A and actor B on the basis of an exchange, whereby actor B moves to the state of affairs B_{ii} in exchange for actor moving to A_{ii} . Prior to the transaction, actor A wants to trade her state of affairs for the actor’s B state of affairs, and none of the actors need to exercise any power over the other one to achieve this outcome.

Power is exercised in the event that the preferences of A and B initially diverge, when actor B does not hold that the state of affairs B_{ii} is a more desirable position in relation to his current state of affairs, B_i . Actor A may still want to make actor B move to B_{ii} . Exercise of power means that actor A gets actor B to do something which actor B would have not otherwise done. In the absence of an initial preference convergence, one way to do this is for actor A to coerce actor B to do what would enable actor A to achieve her desired state of affairs. There are, however, two forms of power alternative to coercive power. The first form involves

setting up *incentives* while the second involves exercising *persuasion* by which a convergence of preference is achieved and coercion is not necessary. Both persuasion and incentives are means by which B can be mobilised into acting in a way desired by A. They are included in the notion of power, because they involve the capacity of one actor to bring changes to the other's preferences and behaviour; in short, because *had they been absent, B would not have done what A asked him to do.*

Broadly speaking, the capacity of actor A to change B's behaviour can be achieved through the exercise of power as coercion, incentives or persuasion. As a form of power alternative to coercion, incentives refer to the capacity of an agent to place or change the set of *pay offs* that shapes someone else's preferences and behaviour. Incentives that do not involve the threat of direct coercion and punishment may involve economic rewards, often putting the targeted actor before dilemmas in choosing between alternative options with different pay-offs. *Persuasion* may equally lead actor B to behave in certain way simply by offering selective information about what course of behaviour is to B's own interests. Changes in the actors' preferences can take place in our example when B comes to believe that doing what A asks him is beneficial to him. Persuasion may also include signals of what is considered as appropriate behaviour in a given context or a set of values determining the standards of appropriate behaviour. Both information and values are *knowledge or intellectual* resources. Following the assumption that actor's rationality is *bounded* by the information received and other cognitive limitations (Simon 1985), the use of these resources may be seen as equally effective, if not more effective, means of bringing changes to behaviour than coercion by virtue of their profound effect on shaping perceptions of interest and preferences.

Both the role of incentives in directing behaviour and the role of persuasion in changing preferences merge in politics in what was described as the second and third image of power. The second image of power includes sets of values and the power of agenda setting. Agenda-setting removes certain issues from discussion directly, while predominant values could prevent a discussion aiming at their revision and the way they allow issues to be tackled. The second image of power appears:

'...when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences' (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, 7)

This point was taken further by Steven Lukes which argue for a 'third face of power', referring to the ways in which preferences are manipulated.

'To put the matter sharply, A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping, or determining his very wants. Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have – that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires? (Lukes, 1974, 23)

In similar vein, John Gaventa understood that the exercise of power changes 'the conceptions of the necessities, possibilities, and strategies of challenge in situations of latent conflict through different means, which include social myths, language and symbols, more broadly set of norms and ideas' (1979/1982, 15). For Gaventa too, power resides in the social construction of meanings and patterns that serve to get B to act and believe in a manner in which B otherwise might not (Gaventa, 1979/1982, 15-16). A study of power may also involve

'...the study of communication and information – both of what it is communicated and how it is done. It may involve a focus upon the means by which social legitimations and developed around the dominant, and instilled as beliefs or roles in the dominated' (Gaventa, 1979/1982, 15)

Arguably, in this broader view, power is ubiquitous; it is found in all instances in which an actor or a group manages to alter the preferences of others by projecting new ideas and new arguments, by setting up information and value standards and by placing sets of incentives. The exercise of power in those forms is by no means coercive in the typical sense of the word. Power exercised in the form of persuasion and incentives when there is initially a divergence of preferences leads to voluntary

changes of behaviour and possibly mutually beneficial transactions between private actors in many instances. An example illustrates this; A and B engage in a process of negotiating with each other the price of a car, which A wants to buy and B wants to sell, each giving his or her own views over the value of the car, references of its technical condition, the price and performance of other comparable models of cars, the general state of the market etc. It is possible that one party will play tricky games by limiting the source of information available with a view to influencing the preferences and behaviour of the other party. In this context, the availability of alternative sources of information is crucial to offset the efficacy of these tactics.

3.4. Power and power resources

While power takes the forms of coercion, incentives and persuasion, it can only be exercised when resources are available (Giddens, 1984, 15). Material-economic and knowledge resources make persuasion and incentives-setting possible. The association between power and power resources is particularly useful when it comes to measuring *relative power* in real contexts, such as a political system. By looking at *the distribution of power resources* among competing social and political forces the analysis can come closer to understanding the distribution of power among them. Based on the premise that relative power matters, we may then associate different distributions of power resources with different political outcomes ranging from a more or less balanced distribution of power associated with democracies all the way to social contexts in which one group dominates by possessing disproportionately more power resources than all other groups together. For instance, in typical authoritarian regimes, monopoly over state coercion enables one group to establish an autocratic rule. In that case, the power which the ruling group possesses is coercive since the use of military and police force compels others to make involuntary adjustments in their behaviour. The regime is duly characterised as authoritarian because of the coercive form of power it relies upon, constraining the behaviour of all others by punishing voice and depriving them of exit. In similar vein, we may now argue that other forms of power resources, when concentrated in the hands of one group, may also perform this task.

This analysis has three important implications for the study of inclusive hegemony. First, the balance of power, which according to pluralists prevents domination by one group, depends on the particular configuration of power resources among

competing groups. This refined picture of group competition indicates a view of politics as a process in which the power of each group constantly depends on *the recruitment and gathering of power resources* in a given structural context: the availability or not of more resources for one group in the structural context may strengthen or weaken the capacity of that group to impose outcomes on others. In addition, the unequal distribution of power resources makes democratic competition precariously contingent on new emerging asymmetries of power. The fact that organisation into group action changes the distribution of power resources means that it can also seriously disturb the balance of power which is necessary for a sustainable democracy in the pluralist framework. Power advantages may then turn into a self-reinforcing cycle: ‘...the more one has power, the more one can get scarce resources’ (Vanhanen, 1997, 23).

Second, agency and collective action may restructure the distribution of power relations to some considerable extent. By pooling their resources such as societal support and funding and by forging alliances, groups seeking to promote their political preferences in the field of politics may overcome some initial disadvantages in power resources. The changing pattern of collective organisation may strategically *reshuffle* the distribution of power resources. Even though power resources are unequally distributed among individuals, the organisation of collective action entails the potential for restoring some symmetry in power relations and resist domination by others by pooling resources. In addition, just as the defence of an individual against domination by others is possible thanks to collective organisation, similarly the defence of groups against others is secured by strategic alliances between them. As pointed out earlier in state-society relations, this observation summarises the essence of the pluralist re-conception of ‘demos’ as primarily a collective form of political participation with the *potential* of subduing state power to democratic control, and clarifies the idea that electoral politics alone do not automatically prevent one-group domination. Collective action has the potential of breaking concentrations of power and prevents one-group domination. Attempts by a single group to impose a dominant political position are expected to trigger the coordinated reaction of all others. Hence, even when one group is relatively stronger than any other group, it can hardly be more powerful than all other groups together.

Third, there are limits to what collective action can achieve. Following the conclusions drawn in the previous section that structures entail distributions of resources, it is understandable that changes of the *socioeconomic* context shift the distribution of power among groups. This view of power as structurally embedded means that certain agents or groups are endowed with greater resources than others (Smith, 2009: 84) and that these asymmetries could change over time following structural change. The prospect of a ‘balance of power’ from collective organisation, though associated with agential strategies, is primarily contingent on the distribution of the resources available. The latter is constrained by the given distribution of power resources in a social and economic context. We thus gain a more nuanced understanding of relative power as *configured but not determined* by structure. Instead it is contingent on a particular configuration of structural and agential variables. It may rely upon an unmatched asymmetrical advantage of one political group in possession of asymmetrical power resources other than coercion. This suggests that understanding one-party dominance needs to explain two interrelated processes: how an unequal distribution of power resources other than coercion can lead to one-group hegemony, and, most importantly, which socioeconomic context and which strategy can provide one group with an unparalleled and sustained power advantage to be able to offset any coordinated attempt by other groups to break its dominant position.

3.5 Power and the state

It should now be clear that one-group domination is associated with the concentration of power resources other than coercion in the hands of one group. This state of affairs, however, is highly unlikely for two reasons suggested by the previous analysis. First, alternative sources of power abound in a diverse socioeconomic context and fuel inter-group competition and, second, social diversity acts as a source of systemic instability generating conflicting preferences and centrifugal tendencies and often leading to clashes between groups and splits of group alliances.

It thus appears to be paradoxical that, on the one hand, the unequal distribution of power resources in theory can generate one-group hegemony and, on the other hand, group organisation and re-alignment stemming from a context of social diversity promises a re-balancing of relative power sooner or later. At best, it could

be argued that a dominant party can hardly become in the position to sustain an unusual concentration of power resources in the long run to such an extent that it could limit its exposure to competition, unless it controls an unparalleled source of power advantage that remains to some extent less vulnerable to shifting inter-group balances of power. The state comes centre stage here as ‘... an ensemble of power centres that offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside the state to act for different political purposes’ (Jessop, 2008, 37).

In the case of authoritarian regimes, it is the state’s mechanism of coercion that provides the ruling group with an unmatched concentration of coercion resources, which allows it to deprive political actors of political freedom. In similar vein, other forms of state resources and tools may give the ruling group an extraordinary power advantage. While coercion has been the traditional method for governments to motivate individuals to act in specific ways, more recently, governments have increasingly developed other mechanisms to assume control over agents: regulation, rationality, surveillance and risk assessment (Smith, 2009, 79). Many of these new forms of state power rely on incentives and persuasion that, instead of commanding people to act in certain ways, change the contextual knowledge in which people make choices (Smith, 2009, 84).

This view of state power is the reverse of the stance of democratic theory on state power in which the state is positioned as *the political target* of groups competing for power. Here, the state is *the most powerful means* by which the group occupying political power can determine the terms of competition and may achieve a dominant position against all others. Both the approach to democracy that emphasises popular participation, representation, deliberation, and the version of pluralism that discerns group action targeting the state can be criticised for presenting a narrow view of the state as a hollow locus of power for which citizens and groups compete. In this one-dimensional portrayal of state-society interaction, power is visible in the context of group interactions shaping *what states do* and less noticeable as *the state shaping what people do*; the ways in which the state impinges on many of the political conflicts within society is underestimated (Smith, 2009, 19).

It is now clear that these approaches should take into account the way state power has a direct involvement in inter-group dynamics. In constructing any account of political power, it is important to recognise that institutional structures have biases

that generate important resources for some groups (Eisenberg 1995, 59). Because the state is an institutional framework whose rules and norms define the distribution of power resources in a society and whose decisions affect individual behaviour by means of coercion, incentives and persuasion, the state has an active involvement in defining the terms of inter-group competition. In this case, the power of the state in setting the political agenda, filtering information flows, projecting value sets and conditioning public discourse within its hierarchical organisation and with the unmatched resources it possesses is the most powerful mechanism for political, economic and social change. State power can equally become a tool in the hands of a ruling party to affect political behaviour and limit its exposure to competition. As a result, each group has a strong incentive to capture state power and skew the distribution of power in its favour and at the detriment of rival groups.

In the case of inclusive hegemony, the use of coercion is precluded by definition. Other forms of state power involved to sustain the party's dominant position may include the state's economic resources and its unmatched power capacity of the state to incentivise behaviour through their distribution. This involves the power of the state to allocate economic resources and decide which groups will be included and which will be left outside the distribution. The government's capacity to allocate economic resources can then be transformed into a powerful set of political incentives, depending on the manner through which distribution via politics is performed; whether the allocation of economic resources has been made conditional by the party in government on the recipients exhibiting a desired political behaviour. This brings forth the practice of clientelism, which engages the distribution of state resources in party politics to recruit political supporters while punishing their opponents by exclusion from the allocation. Clientelism activates a form of state power that entails a set of incentives which political agents may find very useful in guiding political behaviour in a desired political direction.

It remains to be seen how clientelism works to skew political behaviour to a degree that considerably narrows the competitiveness of the political system to the point of sustaining one-party dominance. The previous notes suggest that if clientelism is to be introduced as the explanatory variable, a different take on clientelism would relate the practice to both party organisation in the form of campaign resources recruitment and interest accommodation. We need to address two questions: a) how

clientelism can effectively influence political behaviour and preferences on an individual basis and b) how it can produce an aggregate effect on political competition in interaction with other parameters such as social cleavages, political divisions, interest groups and within-party factions.

On the micro-level of analysis, the capacity of clientelism to affect behaviour is illuminated by the view of power as the ability of one agent to make another one move to a state of affairs where he would not have moved had it not been for her action, which involves the capacity for persuasion and incentives. On the aggregate level, the application of clientelist incentives should offer the party a clear advantage in knowledge and material resources that gets it in a 'position of power' in political communication. If electoral mobilisation depends on the availability of *campaign resources* clientelism must play a key role in the recruitment of these resources, and must produce an effect other than direct vote-buying.

These 'functions' of clientelism must be related to what the theory and the empirical studies of democratisation presented above suggested; that, on the one hand, any type of regime, be it democracy and autocracy, becomes consolidated insofar as it succeeds in providing a framework that effectively accommodates diverse and competing social interests, and that, on the other hand, social diversity acts as a source of systemic instability generating conflicting preferences, leading to clashes between groups and creating centrifugal tendencies that break alliances. The success of democracy, in particular, is attributed to the process it puts forward for the settlement of conflicting interests, which offers conflicting interests an institutionalised avenue for competition within certain limits and the chance for periodic revisions of previous decisions in a peaceful and orderly way. Since no political force can accommodate all conflicting demands, political expectations and loyalties are expected to be represented by two or more political parties alternating in power and, in addition, by factions within the parties themselves. By contrast, one-party hegemony actually lacks this open-ended pattern of alternation in power and can hardly contain the political expression of diverse interests within the confines of a single party. To be sustainable, a dominant party must provide an all-embracing and extraordinarily mode of interest accommodation that successfully and consistently retains the political expression of social diversity within the

boundaries of the dominant party. The question is whether clientelism can perform this task.

We are in search of *a mode of interest accommodation* that helps the dominant party thwart centrifugal tendencies in the form of splits, divisions, factionalism and defections. In particular, we should examine how clientelism can become a powerful tool that restructures the way social claims are expressed, from demands articulated by social groups in open public debate and through competing political organisations into the constrained forms of selective and hidden deals within one single party between patrons and their clients. This qualitative shift in interest accommodation must alter the terms of political behaviour and protect the party both from inter-party and intra-party competition.

3.6 Final remarks

This chapter has provided further empirical support for the pluralist framework according to which inclusive hegemony is a non-democratic regime by virtue of its deficiencies in the dimension of contestability. Historical accounts of democratisation and regime change validate the pluralist assumption that social diversity can hardly be contained and addressed by a single political force for too long without the extensive use of *power*. In this view, the balance of power, a state of affairs so essential for pluralists for preventing one-group domination, refers to a more or less symmetrical distribution of power resources among competing groups and their shifting alliances. Seen from this perspective, only a huge asymmetry in power relations shall limit political competition. The analysis also reveals a paradox for the pluralist view. A notably low degree of political competitiveness is still an enigmatic outcome because autonomous political organisations may at any time reshuffle relative power in an open system. The narratives presented in the chapter indicate that it is structural factors that reduce inter-group volatility competition by delineating the distribution of power between groups and creating entrenched incentives for collective action.

To explain one-party dominance, it is understood, we must look for a source of structural power that offers a single group a formidable capacity to outweigh all other groups and simultaneously prevent them from organising action to offset the influence of the dominant group. This source of power is found in the state, its

unmatched economic resources and its powerful instruments to shape preferences and behaviour. In the case of inclusive hegemony, the unavailability of state coercion as a tool for suppressing the political expression of social diversity means that other forms of state power should be at play. Our attention now turns to the economic and knowledge power resources which the state possesses. To understand why, in the absence of effective coercion, social diversity is blocked from generating a competitive political arena, *the presence of other strategies involving state power must be identified and their association with voters' choice and political behaviour must be understood*. State power can alter the basis on which groups are formed in response to a shared understanding of common interest and with a view to promoting shared preferences through politics. Clientelism comes centre-stage as the most pertinent explanatory factor, which employed by the government deprives the opposition of the capacity to recruit campaign resources by which it becomes capable of taking advantage of the substantive opportunities for ideological and political differentiation existing in a diverse society such as social cleavages and policy divisions.

Chapter 4

Political Mobilisation and Interest Accommodation: How Clientelism Works

4.1 Introduction

It is now clear that the terms in which inter-party competition takes place are contingent on inter-group relative power and the distribution of resources, and that the latter depends on the success or failure of the recruitment strategies of the groups. In politics this task is extensively performed by political parties. This chapter brings centre-stage clientelism as the practice directly related to party organisation and, consequently, as a variable affecting electoral mobilisation.

The practice of clientelism typically refers to an exchange of benefits between politicians and their constituents, ‘a dyadic alliance’ for Landé (1977:xx), or an ‘instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron’ (Scott, 1972a:92; also Lemarchand and Legg 1972:150; Kaufman 1974, 285; and Mainwaring 1999; Piattoni 2001, Robinson & Verdier 2003, Roniger 2004). The aggregate effect of clientelism on political competition has been the object of a large number of empirical studies (c.f. Clapham 1982; Kitschelt, 2000; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Mavrogordatos 1983; Piattoni, 2001, Stokes 2009; Tarrow 1977; Weingrod 1968). While theory and empirical works have already associated clientelism with the terms of political competition, the causal mechanism connecting interactions on the micro-level with macro-political developments remains implicit in empirical works. The linkage is generally assumed to involve a direct impact on client’s voting preferences (vote-buying).

This chapter establishes an alternative causal association between clientelism and electoral mobilisation in a sequence of logical arguments that help illustrate in the next chapter the conditions under which the practice of clientelism is likely to produce one-party hegemony. To establish causality from the perspective of rational choice perspective, the chapter starts by examining the impact of clientelism on individual choice (micro-level) and moves to aggregate behaviour (macro-level)

following the logic of collective action. As shown in the previous chapter, to be successful contestants, political parties need to perform two important tasks: a) to obtain an effective political organisation by recruiting *resources* and mobilising an *active support basis* in order to galvanise broader electoral support by activating social cleavages and policy divisions and b) to accommodate demands from supporters and preserve loyalties to the party to prevent defections stemming from policy grievances, irreconcilable demands or deeper social cleavages. Based on assumptions by rational choice on individual and collective action this chapter shows how clientelism performs these two tasks in ways that strengthen the party's electoral mobilisation beyond its narrow conception of vote-buying a) by inducing clients to make a contribution to the party's campaign organisation in the form of resources or active engagement and b) through the accommodation of diverse interests that signals to prospective clients special gains from supporting the clientelist party.

4.2. Assumptions of a causal link between clientelism and electoral mobilisation

The association between clientelism and dominant party systems is part of a more general theoretical task of tracing the causal process linking clientelism with political competition. As a form of political mobilisation clientelism has been mostly associated with competitive political systems and modern democracies (Weingrod 1968, Tarrow 1977, Clapham, 1982, Mavrogordatos 1983) and it is widely seen as the product of high levels of competition (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). A smaller number of case-studies have considered the input of clientelism in dominant party systems too.⁷

Despite these useful associations, assessing the impact of clientelism on political competition still confronts two crucial problems. First, empirical research confronts the difficulty of controlling all other interfering variables that affect case-specific

⁷ From a number of studies see Muramatsu and Krauss (1990: 296), Inoguchi (1990) and Christensen (2002) for Japan; Zuckerman (1979: 70), Leonardi and Wertman (1989: 223– 244) and Tarrow (1990) for Italy; Warner (1998) for France and Italy; White (2011) for Russia; and Ames (1970), Fox (1994) Cornelius (2004) and Greene (2007) for Mexico. Pork-barrel allocations of public funds to geographical constituencies were associated with the success of Mexico's dominant party (Magaloni, 2006:122-151)

political developments. Second, assumptions about the impact of clientelism on individual behaviour do not necessarily support analytical claims for its aggregate impact on political competition. In particular, the connection between micro-level and macro-level remains implicit when clientelism is brought into the analysis as an explanatory variable. As Kaufmann put it about clientelism, ‘it is all too easy, unfortunately, to assume that the organization of power and the regulation of activities within a given macro-unit is the same as that which occurs within the two-person dyad’ (1974:293). Hence, we are still in search of an effective causal mechanism between clientelism and aggregate political behaviour.

So far, the causal link between clientelist exchange and political competition is taken as given by empirical studies associating clientelism and pork-barrel politics with party strategy and political competition, and is mostly considered to involve a form of vote-buying (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002, Desposato, 2007; Dunning & Stokes, 2010; Hiskey 1999, Kitschelt et al.2010; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007:2; Schady 2000, Stokes 2005) generating network effects that influence voters’ behaviour (c.f. Weingrod, 1968; Powell, 1970; Scott, 1972b). Similar assumptions on causality have been made by works that insert the use of public resources as an explanatory variable in the analysis of semi-authoritarianism and dominant party systems (Greene, 1997, 2010a and 2010b; Colton and McFaul, 2003; McFaul, 2002 and 2005), without, however, clarifying the causal processes they assume to be in operation in order to link this practice with electoral outcomes. That clientelism produces an aggregate impact on *political* behaviour remains an implicit assumption; consequently, that clientelism may account for the consolidation of an inclusive hegemony – the actual destruction of competition through a formally democratic process – is an even stronger claim that is currently based on a loosely implicit causal connection.

Understandably, the range of clientelism can be traced by looking at the number of the actors potentially exposed to clientelist incentives through their involvement in the distribution of resources by government decision-making. However, there are grounds to expect that, with clientelism seen as vote-buying (as portrayed in most theoretical models Brusko et al., 2004; Dal Bo, 2007; Dekel et al. 2008; Dixit and Londregan, 1996; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Philipson and Snyder 1996; Robinson and Verdier, 2002; Schaffer, 2007; Weiss, 1988), its aggregate impact on

electoral mobilisation is uncertain because of logistical limits to the possible number of clientelist relations in relation to the general electorate, to the limited capacity to monitor reciprocity from client voters in the polls and to the presence of other factors of political mobilisation such as ideology, group interests and social divides (cleavages). It may be the case that the explanatory weight of clientelism must be at best marginal if not minimal compared with other parameters of political competition. This is a serious analytical deficiency, since understanding how clientelism works on the micro-level and macro-level in a typical party system is relevant for two reasons: to establish whether clientelism is an important if not sufficient condition for the resilience of one-party dominance (as part of the literature claims) and, if this is so, to decide on its nature in order to determine the character of the regime it produces.

For clientelism to work as a powerful strategy conducive to one-party dominance, its range of application and its intensity must be such that clientelism could serve as an effective substitute for the more invasive coercive methods used by authoritarian regimes to limit their exposure to contestability. This suggests that the use of clientelism must involve more than vote-buying and vote-selling and that important causal associations between the practice of clientelism and electoral outcomes and regime change are left under-theorised.

4.3. Empirical hints: post-communist transition and party competition

Empirical observations from post-communist transition confirm that clientelism plays a broader role in shaping the terms of political competition. Post-communist transition has offered a good set of observations for the analysis of the formation of parties in nascent political systems and for assessing the input of mobilisation strategies such as clientelism.

Following the collapse of communism, the ground was open for parties and candidates to take sides along the political and ideological spectrum. Most of the new parties lacked the historical roots that could have enabled them to build a strong support basis in a relatively short time. With the exception of the successor parties to the old communist parties, political loyalties had to be built from scratch (Keefer and Vlaicu, 2008). New parties had to devise ways for motivating support and accommodating social interests in conditions of extreme political volatility and

ideological fluidity. The shaky social and economic structure was fuelled by ongoing economic crisis and harsh economic reforms that continually posed obstacles to party strategies for political organisation and interest accommodation.

Faced with shifting public expectations and vacillations between hope and disillusionment, political parties were in search for effective ways to organise themselves internally and present themselves before voters that were very reluctant to join a party (Lewis, 2000: 98, 102, 104). To overcome this weakness, a number of parties made an appeal to issues of ethnicity and nation-building to revive old and dormant animosities from troubled times (c.f. Evans and Whitefield 1993). Attempts to shield public support generally brought poor results. The party system was a shaky mosaic of political alignments. Early studies on the nascent political systems of Eastern Europe showed low party identification of voters, increasing public apathy and higher indices of electoral volatility compared with Western Europe, (Olson, 1998: 460). Ideological confusion coupled with unstable economic conditions was hindering the consolidation of a stable party system. The problem was more acute for parties in government whose attempt to muster political support confronted soaring grievances fuelled by deep-cutting reforms, as increasingly large numbers of voters saw themselves as losers from the policies of transition.

By the late 1990s, post-communist scholars were invited to focus on the role of resources in shaping post-communist political developments (Kitschelt 1999:3). In similar vein, the study of Russian politics of mid 1990s demonstrated the importance of party organisation in mobilising communities of fate by means of collective incentives (Golosov 1998). The distribution of campaign-related resources was found to have played a more crucial role in defining the terms of party competition (Bartolini and Mair 1995). This in its turn redefined the capacity of parties for electoral mobilisation. Access to human and material campaign-related resources determined the *capacity* of each political force to project strong messages in a political context where party loyalty was to be shaped from scratch (Piven and Cloward, 1992; Kitschelt, 1995:6). But since campaign resources, much needed for effective electoral mobilisation, were in short supply, the political forces were facing a more acute and urgent problem of party organisation.

To overcome this problem, parties in the post-communist countries turned to government funding to finance their campaigns and transformed themselves into

‘cartel parties’ with strong ties to the state (Lewis, 2000: 107). Unable to make credible promises to citizens in those extraordinarily unpredictable economic conditions, a number of parties resorted to the practice of clientelism (Keefer and Vlaicu, 2005) making targeted transfers to selected groups of voters (Malloy and Mitchell, 1987, Keefer, 2005). The practice of clientelism became a central part of party strategy to build stable political alignments, and compensated for the weakness of the parties to make credible programmatic commitments. The capacity to organise a clientelist network depended on each party’s ability to capture the state apparatus. Orientation towards the state soon triggered intense competition among the major parties (Szczerbiak, 2001). Serious disputes erupted over access to state resources to be used as resources for clientelist allocation. As a result, the public discourse was dominated by accusations of corruption, and partisan use of budget funds to reward supporters (Lewis, 2000, 113-115).

Narratives from post-communist studies call for attention to the role of clientelism as a powerful tool in electoral mobilisation. They imply a causal link between clientelism, campaign resources, party loyalty and actual electoral results. However, the way clientelism exactly works to affect electoral results remains unaddressed in theoretical terms. This causal link should be broken into smaller steps unfolding the impact of clientelism in a sequence of stages: voters’ preference formation being contingent on available information; the capacity to give information to voters being dependent on the availability of resources; the availability of resources being contingent on tactics of recruitment; and, finally, preference formation being contingent on interest accommodation. The next session hypothesises the impact of clientelism in each of these stages and makes a coherent argument about causal process.

4.4 Preference formation, access to information and the recruitment of resources

The idea that, in seeking to appeal to voters, party strategies make use of programmatic and ideological agendas or, alternatively, choose clientelism to buy votes by offering direct rewards conveys a false dichotomous picture of how political competition works. Instead, clientelism interacts with other forms of electoral mobilisation and with all means of political campaign and communication. A more comprehensive understanding of these linkages is gained if clientelism is

seen as an incentivising device for party organisation – the recruitment of campaign resources and active supporters engaged in political competition. Large ideological groups and any other group of individuals who share common interests and concerns could be seen as *latent groups* that can be motivated into taking an active role in politics by selective incentives. Clientelism, by allowing parties to offer selective incentives to current and prospective supporters, helps the parties effectively address *the collective action problem* facing party organisation. In its turn, active supporters and campaign resources recruited by the targeted application of clientelism strengthen the capacity of the party to mobilise electoral support.

More analytically, resources play a key role in determining the capacity of the parties to project information to voters. Parties appeal to voters' circumstances using programmatic pledges, ideology, direct negotiation and other processes of socialisation involving values and norms. The typical view of electoral choice is that voters are expected to choose among the political candidates on the basis of the information they receive about party programmes, past record and political credibility, whether voting is primarily 'retrospective' or 'prospective' voting (c.f. Morris, 1978; Lewis-Beck, 1988; Mikhailov et al., 2002). Over time, as political parties create a party profile by repeatedly sending ideological and political messages, party loyalties are built that make voters' choice more predictable (c.f. Aldrich, 1995, Edelman, 1964; Cox 1997). Just like a recognisable brand name, party profiles identify the party with categories of social status and distinctive sets of political concerns, lifestyles and viewpoints, and create perceptions among voters that are hard to change, unless more diverse and credible information about party policies becomes available (Klingemann and Wattenberg 1992).

These hypotheses on electoral choice rely on the assumption that electoral preferences are formed on the basis of strategic and cognitive interactions that develop between political actors and society, and that this process of preference formation is contingent on the information available. This assumption is illustrated by the concept of *bounded rationality*, developed by Herbert Simon (1985) according to which, rational actors make utility-based decisions based on the information available. Behaviour is 'adaptive within the constraints imposed *both* by the external situation and by the capacities of the decision maker' (Simon, 1985, 294). The information available is combined with prior perceptions about one's

personal circumstances. Whatever perception we have of the political contestants, and – more arguably – the way we understand how to improve our own social and economic position through the medium of politics depends on the information we receive from various political and ideological contestants, and how successfully their programmes ideology are presented to be relevant to our own circumstances.

Understood in these terms, politics take place in a context of *incomplete information*. The political arena can be paralleled to an imperfect ‘market’ with high costs attached to obtaining or disseminating information. Both politicians and citizens need to acquire information about each others’ preferences and about actual or proposed policies. In this context, it is political parties that bear most of the cost of disseminating information to voters.

The logical implication is that for a party to succeed in providing information to influence political preferences, it should have at its disposal a range of mechanisms and techniques that shape perceptions of interest and, eventually, electoral preferences. It becomes obvious that the distribution of human and material resources among the political contestants matters for the relative capacity of parties to manipulate the information available to voters. As parties are expected to bear much of the cost of sending information to voters as well as retrieving information about their own general trends and circumstances, a substantial degree of party organisation is required. By contributing resources to the party’s campaign, active political members and supporters, such as party members, sponsors, journalists are indispensable for the strength of the capacity of each party to appeal to the wider public and shape electoral preferences.

Seen in the above light, the distribution of campaign-related resources among parties operating in a political system open to public participation largely delineates the relative strength of each political party to mobilise broader electoral support. For a political system to be competitive, at least two parties – the government and the main opposition party – should be in possession of comparable organisational capacities. This does not necessarily require an equal amount of resources but at least some close proximity in the distribution of financial resources, party membership, campaign activists, favourable media coverage, endorsements by prominent public figures etc. Any sharp asymmetry in the *organisational* capacities between the government and the opposition is expected to have an impact on their

mobilisation capacity, their ability to appeal to the electorate by raising political issues and criticism on the political agenda and, eventually, building a more stable pattern of party loyalties.

If it is quite clear that electoral mobilisation is very much dependent on the recruitment capacity of each party to gather and coordinate resources necessary for disseminating political messages and ideology, we now understand why a disproportionate share of campaign-related resources in the hands of one party prevents the opposition from taking advantage of social diversity and long-standing cleavages and policy divisions to muster considerable political as expected by theory (c.f. Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Limited contestation, the dependent variable in inclusive hegemonies, can now be recast as *the limited capacity of the opposition to gather sufficient human and material resources on a par with the incumbent*.

At this point, the input of clientelism becomes relevant in the context of electoral mobilisation beyond the narrow confines of direct vote-buying. The role of campaign resources and active political supporters is linked to electoral mobilisation on the assumption that voters make choices on the basis of the information available about past policy records and future policies and upon exposure to party images, ideology and party 'brand name' that require the availability of resources. As the next session demonstrates, the recruitment of resources and active supporters depends on the party's capacity to overcome a collective action problem that requires the application of selective incentives to motivate contributions, which is what clientelism does.

4.5 Party organisation: clientelist incentives as a solution to the collective action problem

The famous 'logic' of collective action explains why individuals are unlikely to be motivated into collective action simply by virtue of shared perceptions of common interest, when the anticipated collective benefit will be indiscriminately shared by contributors and non-contributors alike and when each member of the group expects to experience a small change in their personal circumstances relative to the required contribution (Olson, 1971). Unless there is some element of compulsion or a collective incentive by which individuals would be incentivised to act towards the shared good, and non-contributors are excluded from the benefit of its consumption,

or, alternatively, unless the number of individuals in a group is small so that the benefits will be significant anyway, rational individuals will abstain from taking collective action to achieve the perceived common interest (Ibid).

The logic of collective action applies by analogy to party organisation, the recruitment of active supporters and campaign resources. Party organisation is unlikely to be successful when the political goal to be achieved has the nature of a 'non-excludable good'. In politics, the collective good is a political goal reflecting an ideological view or the pursuit of a material gain to be attained by the election of a party to parliament and ideally to power. The non-excludability of the good which is to be provided by a political party to a large group is likely to render ineffective any attempt to turn members of the concerned social group that expect to benefit from the party's agenda from a dormant group to an organised and coordinated active group, insofar as the expected policy and ideological gains will be diffused among many and will not accumulate to each actor in some proportion to one's active contribution.

In any case, even when benefits from collective mobilisation are expected to accrue to a social category, its members will not be mobilised into collective action by programmatic or ideological drive alone insofar as the cost of taking an active part in political action outweighs the expected share of the benefit for each individual. Active participation oriented to achieving a collective goal will make sense for those who expect that their share of the non-excludable good will make a difference in their circumstances large enough to outweigh the cost of their contribution regardless of whether non-contributors might gain from it too. In these exceptional cases, it is rational for a single individual to sacrifice time and money to contribute to the achievement of a collective good even if a share of the same good is going to be offered to others who have made no contribution.

In this light, political mobilisation is better understood if large ideological groups or clusters of individuals that share common goals or basic concerns and aspirations are seen as *latent groups*, which will not be mobilised into political action unless motivated by selective incentives. The formation and organisation of a political party confronts the challenge of overcoming free-riding to incentivise active contributions to its cause. At best, parties will be capable of mobilising relatively

large groups only when the share of benefit promised to each member of that group is going to bring a great deal of improvement in their individual circumstances.

The collective mobilisation problem described above explains why ideology alone is too weak an incentive to motivate individual contributions as long as ideological benefits are to be shared by contributors and non-contributors alike and the allocated benefit for the contributors will be too small to compensate for their costly contribution. It is rational for a member of a latent ideological group who expects a benefit from a policy to prefer that the cost of promoting that policy be borne by others, instead of making a costly contribution oneself. It is only when a selective incentive, different from a general interest in the attainment of a non-excludable good, is offered to each member of the latent group individually, involving an expected benefit that far outweighs the cost of participation, that it is more likely that the beneficiaries will make an active contribution to the party's campaign.

For this reason, successful party organisation presupposes the granting of specific rewards to those willing to become active contributors to the party's campaign by means of active membership and financial support. There may also be concrete punishments in place for defection and free-riding that would further discipline personal strategies and would induce members and groups to act in conformity with the normative, institutional and hierarchical confines of the party as imposed by the party hierarchy. Selective incentives involving reward and punishment assist parties in creating and preserving a loyal support basis of members and supporters and in maintaining cohesion against centrifugal tendencies spiralling from competing and often irreconcilable interests and personal strategies. They help party leaders to monitor, control and coordinate party members and supporters who now have specific reasons to avoid gestures and actions that run counter to the party's electoral strategy and would hurt the party's image.

These selective incentives are provided by clientelism as a solution to the free-riding problem facing party organisation. The input of clientelism in party organisation demonstrates its broader role in electoral mobilisation beyond vote-buying. To associate a party's lead in the practice of clientelism with patterns of electoral mobilisation, it is important to get a clear view of how clientelism works on the micro-level, affecting political choices. As a *tool for political organisation*,

clientelism puts in operation a distinct pattern of collective incentives that help the parties gather political resources and build solid networks of loyal supporters.

The impact of clientelism on individual behaviour is described by typical definitions as a bilateral agreement between the patron and the client for the delivery of reciprocal benefits (Piattoni 2001a, Robinson & Verdier 2003, Roniger 2004). As Stokes (2007: 605) put it ‘the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me?’ Seen as an exchange of benefits between politicians and their constituents, ‘a dyadic alliance’ for Landé (1977:xx), the practice of clientelism seems to create an ‘instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron’ (Scott, 1972a:92; also Lemarchand and Legg 1972:150; Kaufman 1974, 285; Landé 1977:xx; and Mainwaring 1999:177). The informal nature of clientelist exchange means that adherence to the terms of the ‘agreement’ by the two parties is neither legally binding nor enforceable by courts. It depends on expectations of reciprocation by each party to the agreement and, quite often, on threats of possible retaliation in case the client fails to meet the terms of the agreement. From the part of the political agents involved, it relies on the building of trust and reputation over time, which, in the absence of formal sanctions, reduces the risk of breaking the agreements.

These micro-foundations of clientelism reveal a rational process of decision-making that can be extended beyond vote-buying to incentives for the recruitment of active supporters and contributors of campaign resources. The selective distribution of goods to clients serves as a personal motive for them to make a visible and sizeable contribution to the patron’s campaign. Again, rational calculations apply. Prospective clients are expected to evaluate the anticipated benefit against the required cost of their own contribution. The expected clientelist benefit, offered or promised, should outweigh the cost of their participation. For prospective clients, any contribution to the party beyond casting a vote incurs a high cost which can only be covered by a highly valued benefit is offered in return. Quite often the anticipation is that taking part in clientelism would be more than a one-off exchange. From the position of an insider to the party, clients will be better

positioned to demand new benefits and will have a higher chance of getting them. Economic actors who are not part of this clientelist relationship will be at a disadvantage and will be probably pushed aside to areas of economic activity outside the reach of clientelism.

In theoretical terms, a cost and benefit calculation takes into account the range and intensity of the practice of clientelism in any given context. The calculus weighs the scope for *exit* to areas of economic activity outside the reach of clientelist incentives. It also includes the probability of exclusion from the allocation process and possibly of any sanctions imposed in case they decide to refuse an offer. All instances in which the government rewards its allies serve at the same time as signals to the rest of the population of similar future benefits they could enjoy, if they decide to align themselves with the government support basis. The '*signalling*' of previous cases of favourable treatment also offers an indication of how *probable* it is that supporting the government will grant access to the same kind of rents that the government has already offered to current clients. A government that has been previously generous in offering its supporters economic rewards signals that new *rewards* of similar value are very likely to be offered to new clients once they join the government's network. From the part of the prospective clients, this is a *probability assessment* which is also dependent on the size of the economy exposed to government clientelist practices. The smaller the size of the business sector relatively autonomous from clientelism, the more attractive the option for entry to the government's network becomes.

By the same token, past incidents of the government sanctioning non-compliance and dissent are signalled as *disincentives* to prevent alignment with the opposition, showing the probability that the same type of sanctions would be imposed on actors exhibiting similar behaviour in the future. Prospective dissenters are expected to assess the severity and the frequency of previous cases as an indication of the *probability* that the sanction be imposed in their case. In their calculated decisions, individuals receive past signals and make a *risk assessment* that includes the damage anticipated, the probability of the sanction being imposed, the chances of avoiding the risk by moving to economic activities outside the political sector, and the availability of opportunities to recover the damage suffered in the future either by exit from the political sector of the economy or by entry to a rival clientelist

network. In the last case, the probability of the expected sanction imposed for dissent or supporting the opposition is weighed against the probability of gaining benefits from doing so. These notes suggest that the practice of clientelism is a very effective tool for the party to gather contributions to its organisation and gain, as a result, a strong advantage in electoral mobilisation.

4.6 Interest accommodation and clientelist networks

The longevity of the government party in power depends on how successfully its policies accommodate claims stemming from competing social and economic interests. The longer the government party is able to successfully provide a viable political platform that accommodates as many social interests as possible, the longer it stays in power. In a context of diverse and conflicting social interests, the capacity for interest accommodation faces a great challenge. Government parties are usually unable to address most social demands in the long run and inevitably experience losses in popularity as well as defections from their party basis and internal factionalism that sooner or later undermines the party's cohesion.

This tendency makes interest accommodation a more pressing problem for dominant parties (Boucek, 2012). Given that policy-making and implementation involves tough choices over who gets what, the long-term incumbency of the dominant party is more likely to aggravate social divisions and produce new tensions. To preserve their dominant position they must put in place a form of interest accommodation unusually successful in accommodating a sizeable majority of diverse and often irreconcilable social interests. It follows that understanding the stability of a dominant party requires tracing an extraordinary form of interest accommodation that is effective enough to contain claims stemming from a diverse social context within the party's ranks to prevent them from undermining its popularity and cohesion.

In that respect, clientelism as a very effective tool for interest accommodation addresses demands in an *individualised* way. This helps political parties to bypass traditional forms of policy supply to social demands that tend to generate antagonisms between affected groups leading to instability and losses in popularity. Bilateral clientelist relations between the patron and the client dilute and weaken the strength of the client's membership in social groups. Clientelism, by

accommodating individual claims, has a more significant impact on one's personal circumstances and a superior capacity to elicit loyalty and complacency than general policies whose benefits are dispersed and whose impact on individual circumstances is usually smaller. An additional advantage is that, while general policy-making places governments before dilemmas of selection that could harm and alienate certain social groups, clientelism, by contrast, entails selection among different individual claims that allows the party to deal with isolated clients and, therefore, confront a smaller scale of reactions driven by arising grievances.

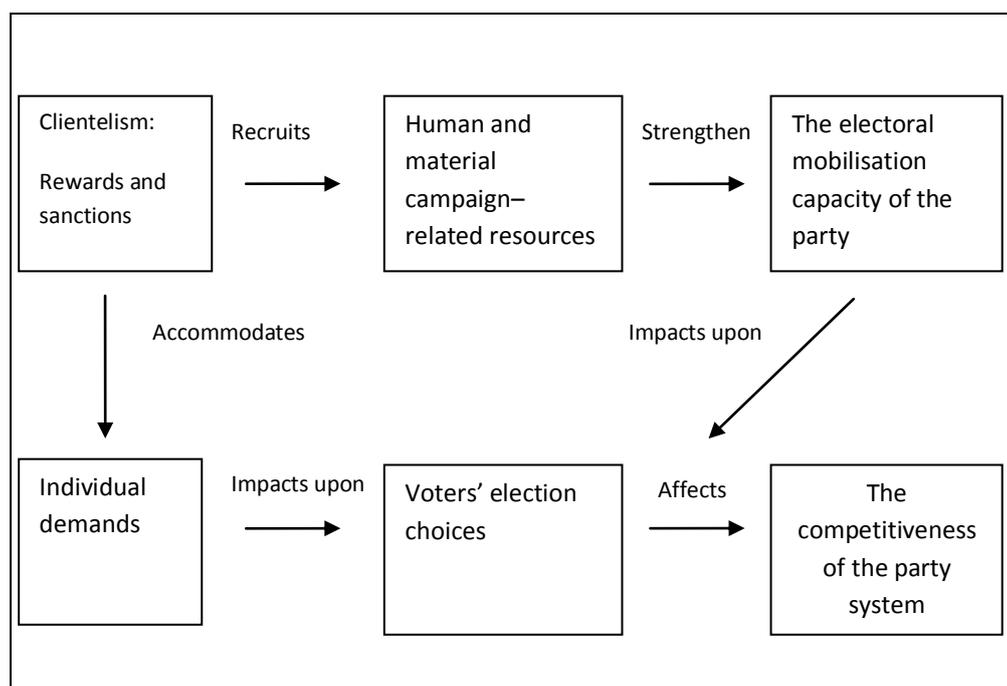
On aggregate level, by rewarding compromise, acquiescence and commitment to party unity and by punishing defection and actions of factionalism, clientelism is a powerful mechanism for interest accommodation that restructures the social sphere into stable and loyal clientelist networks controlled by the dominant party, which makes the distribution of political support more stable and predictable. Thus clientelism enables parties to shield themselves from collective action emerging from social stratification which is what typically destabilises party incumbency. Equally important is the effect of clientelism on the internal cohesion of the party. The pursue of gains through clientelist exchange within the party promises clients personal rewards on a permanent basis and becomes *the glue that binds* them into an organisationally coherent body under one leadership despite personal strategies and diverging preferences. The same practice enables the leadership to impose the terms that define the negotiations and compromises that take place within the party when conflicts between party members and groups arise.

Political allies recruited by means of clientelist exchange are clustered into *clientelist networks*. Thanks to these networks, large and socially heterogeneous groups can be mobilised and coordinated into taking an active part in the patron's political campaign. Relations within these networks are defined by the asymmetrical power of the political patrons over their clients. Clientelist networks may often be divided into smaller local and sectoral sub-networks where *eponymity* increases the degree of control and pressure and enables coordinated action. Clustered into the larger party network, the local networks may be given specific tasks and assignments and may operate in different social and professional contexts. In this way, a large supporting base for the party is mobilised and becomes centrally directed and coordinated. This has a multiplying effect. As this network expands,

more social and economic actors may see these informal networks as an opportunity for liaising with other actors, which offers them more comparative advantages against outsiders. More clients are expected to join in as the result of ‘adaptive expectations’ whereby actors tend to make choices thinking that ‘they are picking the right horse’ (Pierson, 2004:24).

Hence, the practice of clientelism serves as an effective barrier against the growth of non-clientelist parties and new entries. The latter will find it difficult to build their own clientelist network from scratch, which requires a significant amount of resources that is usually not available at the early stage of party formation when the playing field has been occupied by existing clientelist networks. Both prospective clients and aspiring politicians would find it easier to approach existing political parties to pursue their careers and promote their claims there. This advantage further increases the bargaining power of the clientelist parties vis-à-vis current and prospective clients. As a result, political activity is increasingly locked in among the clientelist parties and filtered through the hierarchical structure of the clientelist networks, while electoral volatility is further reduced through the process shown graphically in table 3.

Table 3: Causal model linking clientelism with inter-party competitiveness



4.7 Broader implications

It has been shown here that clientelist exchanges set up selective incentives for contributions to political party. By providing targeted collective incentives, clientelism serves as a strategic tool through which the political parties address the collective organisation problem facing political organisation and form wider networks of political allies. The impact of clientelism on *party organisation* affects the party's capacity for *electoral mobilisation* through three intermediary causal associations: a) clientelism as a mechanism for the recruitment of resources for party organisation, b) party organisation affecting the terms of political competition under the assumption of voters' bounded rationality, as resources strengthen the capacity of the clientelist party to mobilise electoral support; and c) clientelism providing an effective form of interest accommodation that sustains the cohesion of a clientelist group, secures its loyalty and prevents centrifugal tendencies stemming from social divisions.

As a next step to assess the aggregate impact of clientelism on political behaviour, the model needs to integrate structural parameters associated with the range of the clientelist incentives in a given context. Clientelist networks have an impact on electoral preferences and levels of political competitiveness primarily because they generate pools of campaign resources that are strategically employed by the party to project strong political messages and images. In a multi-party system the relative size of rival networks is expected to affect the relative capacity of parties for electoral mobilisation.

The size of a clientelist network depends on how many economic activities are subject to clientelist exchange. Clientelist relations develop in what can be named as *the political sector* in the economy, the sphere of economic activities in which resources, goods and services, are produced, priced, or allocated by the state directly or through transactions governed by private law to which either the government or a government-controlled entity is one party. The term covers forms of state intervention in the economy beyond state ownership: any form of political involvement in the production, pricing and allocation by government of goods and services as well as the allocation of economic opportunities by the state in the form of regulations, licences etc.

The reach of clientelism in the political sector of the economy presupposes government discrimination in the distribution of scarce resources. For instance, the owners and managers of private companies may be required to make a contribution to the party in government in return for state subsidies and other forms of favourable treatment. Private media may receive advertisement from government agencies and state-owned companies in return for their favourable political stance. Private business may be offered public procurement contracts, easy access to credit from state-controlled banks, registration with privileged tax schemes or in free economic zones, valuable information about oncoming state projects, a speeding up of the delivery of government services etc. Further government rules and procedures can subject private companies to government discrimination. Schemes of mixed ownership between the state and private actors can also provide a platform for rent-seeking. In general, any allocation of government-provided resources that is made conditional on political behaviour can be used as a strong selective incentive for economic actors who are dependent on government allocation or seeking to take a part in it to align themselves with the government party and make an active contribution in a variety of ways: by becoming member of the party, taking part in the campaigning at local level, funding the opposition party or candidate, taking part in the party's rallies and petitions, expressing political views favourable for the party in the press, the workplace or the neighbourhood, operating a media outlet sympathetic to the opposition etc.

4.8 Final remarks

The chapter has put forward a model of the impact clientelism has on electoral mobilisation that goes beyond vote-buying to include incentives for the recruitment of active political agency and campaign resources that play an indispensable role in party strategies for electoral mobilisation. In particular, clientelism more than any other strategy helps political parties overcome successfully the problem of collective action facing party organisation by raising the value of rewards offered to active contributors, by excluding non-contributors (free-riders) and by punishing defectors. The application of clientelist incentive gives rise to vast networks of clients who are coordinated into political action in support of the party's campaign. The lead in campaign resources achieved by means of clientelism gives a party an advantage in electoral mobilisation – the capacity to appeal to the electorate by

taking advantage of actual issues on the political agenda and by bringing forth alternative political proposals. This association is based on the assumption of voters' bounded rationality according to which voter's preference formation is contingent on information mostly provided to them by the parties and the media. By strengthening the party's electoral mobilisation capacity, clientelism increases the chances of the clientelist party to skew voters' preferences in its favour.

Second, clientelism works as a particular form of interest accommodation that effectively addresses claims on an individual basis and has a more significant impact on individual circumstances compared with general policies. Through individualised interactions it offers the party a tool by which to bypass, transcend and mitigate demands derived from social groups. The clientelist party obtains a unique capacity to reconfigure the social context and shape the source of political demands in ways that protect it from demands articulated *en bloc* on the basis of typical social categorisations such as class, gender, ethnic background or profession that tend to generate group action. Clientelism can thus help the party contain centrifugal tendencies stemming from heterogeneous social demands from outside social groups, personal strategies and factions within its ranks, a function which is of particular interest to the study of dominant party systems. Moreover, clientelist relations have a multiplying effect on party organisation and electoral mobilisation. Members of clientelist networks are expected to reproduce the same pattern of incentives in their own sphere of command as part of the commitments they have undertaken.

The analysis here has clear implications for the study of dominant parties. In political systems open to participation the distribution of campaign-related resources largely delineates the relative strength of each political party in mobilising broader electoral support. The strength of the dominant party can be associated with an extraordinary set of incentives and an extraordinary form of interest accommodation offered by clientelism that protect the party's power monopoly from centrifugal tendencies resulting from social divisions and grievances over politics. For a dominant party to obtain an extraordinarily asymmetrical advantage in political organisation without recourse to the use of coercion in order to directly restrict political participation, clientelism should serve as substitute of equal effect in mobilising support, stifling dissent and suppressing

diverse interests on a large scale. The association between clientelism and one-party dominance now appears to be a matter of magnitude in the range and intensity of clientelism. Following the causal analysis here, there are reasons to expect that a combination of strategic and structural variables in the practice of clientelism may give the type of clientelism that accounts for the low degree of political competitiveness observed in an inclusive hegemony. We can now expect that, depending on the size of the economy exposed to its practice, clientelism in the hands of the government party may significantly reduce the degree of contestability, whereas the presence of competing clientelist networks is likely to give rise to different patterns of political competition. The typology that incorporates all these parameters in a causal model is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

The link between clientelism and hegemony

5.1 Introductory comments

The knowledge that the practice of clientelism is common in many democratic systems and that is often associated with intense political competition suggests that inclusive hegemonies must involve a particular type of clientelism that significantly reduces the competitiveness of the political system and sustains the political dominance of a single party in ways as effective as the use of coercion. In light of the analysis presented in the previous chapters, we are in search of a particular type of clientelism that acts as an extraordinary *blocking factor* to political competition.

This type must include:

- a) Extensive and intensive application of selective incentives for the recruitment of human and material resources to be used for electoral campaign, which offer the incumbent an unmatched resource advantage and a clear lead in electoral mobilisation capacity; and
- b) Extensive range of interest accommodation by which the dominant party manages to transcend well-entrenched social cleavages and contain centrifugal political tendencies within the structures of the party.

This chapter incorporates structural parameters to associate the causal model of clientelism described previously with the emergence and consolidation of inclusive hegemony. The type associated with dominant party systems must be part of a typology linking different degrees of contestability on the basis of extreme values of the structural and agential parameters pertinent to the reach of clientelist incentives:

- a) the distribution of clientelism among political parties, b) the permissiveness of institutions, and c) the structure of the economy.

The analysis must also discuss possible objections to the rational choice assumptions underlying the causal model. The first objection is raised against the very notion of self-interested political action, in that ideology and political conviction are equally strong factors driving political behaviour. For that reason, it should be expected that the impact of clientelism on party allegiance necessarily

interacts with ideology to have a considerable impact on the overall level of political support mobilisation. The second objection is derived from the view that contestability cannot be reduced to inter-party competition and that, in the absence of ‘effective’ party opposition, a degree of competitiveness in the political system could be restored as *intra-party contestation* by the activities of factions within the party and as *non-partisan contestation* by the emergence and operation of autonomous civil society organisations provided that factions and civil society organisations possess some degree of bargaining autonomy vis-à-vis the party leadership (c.f. Goldman 1993; Gillespie et al, 1995).

In this broadened view, despite a low degree of inter-party contestation, a dominant party system can still be regarded as democratic insofar as the dominant party confronts a substantial degree of contestation from autonomous civil society organisations and party factions. This notion of contestability redefines the concept of inclusive hegemony as a phenomenon referring to a general deficiency in the way social diversity is expressed in the political arena by social and non-partisan organisations and by factions emerging from within the structures of dominant party. Seen in this light, the wide-encompassing effect of clientelism associated with inclusive hegemony on contestability should be traced on all arenas of political competition in which competing demands can be articulated, and involves the overall *re-grouping of the social sphere*’ into clientelist networks that are hierarchically controlled and operated by the dominant party.

5.2 Clientelism and the party structure: monopoly control, range and areas of ‘exit’

A model on the impact of clientelism on the overall pattern of political competition needs to take notice of three parameters determining the reach and effectiveness of clientelism, the intensity and the *scope of ‘exit’* from the reach of government’s clientelist incentives:

- a) Available resources for the government to distribute in a clientelist fashion: i.e. the size and the economic role of the state in the economy.
- b) Institutions enabling the government party to discrimination in the distribution of state-provided resources.
- c) The capacity of the opposition to counterbalance the impact of clientelism practised by the government party by its own engagement in clientelism or the

recruitment of supporters from areas of economic activity outside the reach of clientelist party.

The capacity of the party to limit its exposure to political competition depends on the *availability* of resources to be allocated in clientelist exchange and the *frequency* of government discriminatory treatment that takes place there. The availability of resources determines *the size and strength* of the government's clientelist network and it is highly contingent on structural factors. As clientelism concerns economic activities that take place in the political sector of the economy, the size of the political sector of the economy determines the number of the economic actors potentially exposed to clientelist incentives. In other words, the size of the political sector of the economy defines the *structural boundaries* to the practice of clientelism. The larger the political sector of the economy, the larger the number of economic actors exposed to government distribution of resources, and the wider the reach of clientelist incentives in the form of rewards and sanctions. By the same token, the extent to which segments of the private sector are outside the reach of discriminatory treatment allows a degree of autonomy from the government's clientelist incentives. In a large political sector, however, clientelist incentives and disincentives signalled by previous applications of clientelist exchange are likely to affect the majority of the economically active population. Economic actors understand that there is limited opportunity to avoid the reach of clientelism and will most probably adjust their behaviour. As the political sector of the economy expands, so does the scope for the exercise of clientelist exchange to new targeted groups. This is in itself an incentive for the government to increase the size of the political sector of the economy in order to increase the effectiveness of its clientelist strategy by reducing the *scope* of private sector actors for exit to areas of economic activities where access to resources is not decided by way of government distribution.

On the other hand, the extent and the nature of practices of clientelistic exchange vary depending on the permeability of the institutions and the checks in place to government discrimination in the allocation of resources (c.f. della Porta and Vannucci, 1999; Heywood, 1996). In other words, institutional rules that secure a transparent and predictable process in the distribution and allocation process can significantly limit the scope of clientelism by prohibiting arbitrary treatment and the

abuse of government discretion. The formal rules governing government distribution of resources define the *institutional boundaries* to the practice of clientelism. To increase the *intensity* of clientelism, the government party should undermine the efficacy of these institutions in order to sidestep the rules of equal treatment of equal cases and engage in discriminatory allocations of resources following a clientelist logic.

In addition, the relative strength of each party's clientelist strategy depends on the presence and relative size of rival clientelist networks controlled by the opposition parties. If prospective clients can join rival clientelist networks and anticipate future compensation for the cost of exclusion from the government's network, depending on the share each party has in the practice of clientelism, the availability of alternative networks lowers the cost of 'voicing' dissent. This in its turn defines the effectiveness of the clientelist practices of the government party in skewing the pattern of political organisation. With at least two parties developing comparable organisational capacities from clientelist networks of comparable size, the opposition party is in a better position to match the incumbent's electoral mobilisation capacity. Consequently, a more or less symmetrical distribution of 'patronage' between two or more political parties is expected to have a balancing effect on the distribution of political incentives for agency. In the opposite case, the opposition can only hope to recruit a support basis among those whose social and economic activities develop outside the political sector of the economy where clientelism is applied and who remain indifferent to clientelist incentives for that reason. In an economy with a large political sector, the chances of successful recruitment are, therefore, slim.

A typology can be built to associate different values for each of these parameters with variation in the competitiveness of a bipartisan political system consisting of the government party and the main opposition party, depending on a) the size of the political sector in the economy, b) the intensity of clientelism and c) the presence and relative strength of competing clientelist networks. Each distinctive combination of the above parameters builds up a type with a different hypothesised effect on political competitiveness. The typology presented below covers the practice of clientelism under weak institutional boundaries and, therefore, does not include cases where state intervention in the economy is subject to rules that

effectively reduce the capacity of political parties to discriminate in the allocation of economic resources in favour of their supporters. Each type of clientelism is associated with the relative effectiveness of two competing political parties in the gathering of campaign-related resources.

Four remaining types of clientelist exchange are defined by the size of the political sector – the structural boundaries determining its reach in a given economic setting – and the distribution of clientelist exchange among the political parties. Based on the analysis in chapter three on the *causal* link between the organisational capacity of political parties and electoral mobilisation capacity, each type produces a different impact on the parties' relative capacity to mobilise broader electoral support and, consequently, on the competitiveness of the party system.

Type 1: Both parties engaging in clientelism in a large political sector

In a large political sector in the economy, economic actors whose economic activities remain mostly vulnerable to government discrimination have limited scope to exit from the practice of clientelism to areas of economic activities relatively autonomous from government discrimination. Lack of exit can be mitigated by the presence of competing clientelist networks of comparable size operated by two or more parties, which gives economic actors a limited range of options. The cost of exclusion from one network can be compensated by entry into an antagonistic network promising future rewards that may cover or exceed the present cost of exclusion. The range of options for each economic actor depends on the relative capacity of each network to accommodate demands from prospective clients. As long as the distribution of clientelism is more or less symmetrical among competing parties, economic actors are able to choose among alternative political forces. Hence, the overall distribution of political support is likely to reflect the relative size of the competing clientelist networks. When the two parties frequently alternate in power or share power in coalition governments, clientelist networks are likely to be more or less comparable in size. Conversely, clientelist promises strengthen the chance of a party in opposition to gain power insofar as the dominant party does not have a disproportionately larger share of the practice of clientelism.

A share of clientelism gives the clientelist parties a comparative advantage against parties that do not engage in clientelism. While the presence of more than one

clientelist parties means that a degree of competitiveness in the political system survives, clientelist parties may find themselves capable of blocking entry to other political forces and controlling centrifugal tendencies within their ranks. Moreover, because, clientelistic networks are at the same time competing spheres of control, clientelist parties have at their disposal a powerful instrument to check the behaviour of their members. Thanks to these advantages, parties with established clientelist networks would prefer to maintain and increase the sum of clientelist exchanges by expanding the size of the political sector of the economy in an attempt to protect themselves from further exposure to competition. Given the possibility of alternation in power or power-sharing in government coalitions, clientelist parties have a strong incentive to refrain from imposing harsh sanctions on each other's supporters to avoid rounds of retaliation.

Type 2: Both parties engaging in clientelism in a small political sector

Clientelism has a smaller impact on political mobilisation in an economy with a small political sector where the largest proportion of economic actors develops activities outside the reach of clientelism. Consequently, the overall degree of political mobilisation through clientelism is expected to be lower than the previous type. Economic actors enjoy more freedom in choosing the course of political behaviour they wish to pursue and they are more likely to remain indifferent to clientelist incentives. Even in the presence of political forces with networks of clientelistic exchange, new political entries – though still at disadvantage – may find it easier to gather political support. Following the previous analysis, we expect a higher degree of public apathy, as mobilisation into active political engagement shall be limited to a smaller pool of prospective clients and to those primarily motivated by ideology. In similar vein, strategies for interest accommodation must consist of other forms of particularistic policies, which unlike clientelism cannot command reciprocity. This pattern is common in democratic countries where the government has relatively limited scope to apply clientelist incentives in the distribution of resources.

Type 3: One-party monopoly over the practice of clientelism in a small political sector

In the third type, the government party has a monopoly over the supply of clientelism in an economy with a relatively small size of the political sector. While the opposition cannot resort to clientelism as a way of mobilising supporters and finds itself still at a disadvantage compared to the government party, there is still a large pool of prospective supporters from the wide group of actors who develop economic activities outside the reach of government clientelism. The political system may retain a degree of contestability as long as the opposition's appeal to ideology and self interest succeeds in recruiting active supporters among those indifferent to the government's clientelist incentives.

Without access to clientelist incentives, however, the opposition is still expected to have greater difficulty in recruiting active supporters other than the ideologically motivated actors. Prospective clients may tend to approach the government party attracted by the prospect of gaining rents through special clientelist relations. Actors within the private sector that currently retain their autonomy versus the state are likely to be swayed to support the government in return for guaranteed economic returns and protection from open competition. It is for that reason that the government party has an incentive to enlarge the political sector of the economy in order to extend the reach of its clientelist incentives. Faced with these disadvantages, there are equally strong incentives for the opposition party to promise clientelist rewards to current and future supporter and start building its own clientelist network to offset the mobilisation tactics of the incumbent. Refraining from making clientelist promises undermines the incentivising capacity of the opposition and monopoly clientelism is, therefore, a disequilibrium state of affairs.

Type 4: One-party monopoly over the practice of clientelism in a large political sector

Low degrees of contestability can be associated with the dominant party's monopoly over the supply of clientelism in a large political sector of the economy. The large size of the political sector reduces the possibility of economic actors to exit to non-politicised areas of economic activity. Under these conditions, the opposition can only hope to garner a comparable amount of political support among

the few actors whose activities remain outside the political sector of the economy. Given the attractiveness of clientelist incentives and the added costs which actors may have to bear if they choose to develop economic activities relatively autonomous from clientelism, this group is likely to be particularly small. Any calculus of available options would favour a decision of economic actors exposed to clientelist incentives to support the government and the decisions of non-clients to exhibit complacency with the government to avoid punishment.

In this context, the opposition will find it extremely difficult to gather a comparable support network and match the organisational capacity of the incumbent. In addition, with most of economic activity subject to the government's clientelist network, there is little credibility in the opposition's promises for clientelist rewards to current and prospective supporters, unless it is perceived to have a considerable chance to gain power. This is very unlikely in a party system where there is a dominant party. Unless there is a deep social, ethnic or political cleavage whose divisive impact on preferences and loyalties cannot be mitigated by government's clientelism, the opposition has a slim chance of becoming a serious challenger and is, instead, locked in a disadvantageous position. For the same reason, a party that gains power has an incentive to build and secure its monopoly in the supply of clientelism as soon as possible and expand the political sector of the economy as much as possible to 'occupy the field'.

The model presented here makes predictions applicable to conditions of inter-party competition. The same parameters strengthening the dominant position of a hegemonic party protects it from factions within the party and other social non-partisan forms of collective action. It is expected that, by virtue of their size, dominant parties will be characterised by a higher degree of social heterogeneity and will face a more acute problem with factionalism, internal strifes and defections (c.f. Boucek and Bogaards, 2010: 225; Boucek, 2012). As government policies have an impact on the strength of the party's socioeconomic support base (c.f. Pempel, T.J., 1990:2) clashes of interest are likely to emerge both from within the party basis and outside the party, which may destabilise an inclusive hegemony. While it appears perplexing how dominant parties become able to continually preserve their electoral strength and maintain large coalitions among broad socioeconomic sectors (c.f. Pempel, 1990:2), clientelism enables them to exercise

Table 4: Types of clientelism and effect on the competitiveness of the party system

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
	Competitive clientelism	Competitive Clientelism	Monopoly Clientelism	Monopoly Clientelism
Parties practising clientelism	Two or more parties	Two or more parties	One party	One party
Size of the political sector of the economy	Large	Small	Small	Large
Political mobilisation (effect on resources)	Significantly skewed in favour of the clientelist parties	Skewed in favour of the clientelist parties	Skewed in favour of the clientelist party	Significantly skewed in favour of the clientelist party
political competitiveness	Contestable among clientelist parties	contestable	Contestable despite resource advantage for the clientelist party	Non-contestable

effective hierarchical control over all forms of political organisation such as factions inside the party and civil society organisations.

The same process by which clientelism reduces the degree of government exposure to inter-party contestability can bring about a similar effect on other arenas of contestability. Clientelist incentives permeate all forms of social organisation and have a broader impact on the political expression of socially diverse interests, constraining the expression of preferences in any form that could undermine the government party's political dominance and internal cohesion. With regard to intra-party contestability, clientelism helps the government party shield party unity in the long run and prevent splits and factionalism by punishing defection with exclusion from the network. With regard to power of civil society, clientelism undermines the autonomy of collective action in non-partisan forms by restructuring all demands as individual claims to the party and thereby subjecting social and political actors outside the party to relations of dependency within its clientelist network.

The extension of the model's applicability to all arenas of contestability redefines the very concept of limited contestability itself that chapter one has singled out as the distinctive element of a category of dominant party systems. The degree of

factionalism and competition from social organisations outside the party system is a more robust criterion for distinguishing between authoritarian and democratic dominant party systems. In this view, the term inclusive hegemony refers to an authoritarian party system which exhibits low degrees of contestation in all three arenas of contestation: *the inter-party arena*, b) *the intra-party arena*, and c) *the civil society arena*. By contrast, a dominant party system is classified as democratic if the dominant party confronts high degree of contestation stemming from its own factions and alternative forms of social organisation through which a wide range of competing interests finds its political expression.

5.3 Assumptions and objections

The model presented here relies on the rational choice assumption that political behaviour is driven by calculations of material costs and benefits employed by self-interested, utility-maximising actors when making a decision about what course of behaviour to follow and which preferences to reveal in public. The reach and intensity of clientelism is expected to have an impact on the *aggregate* pattern of political alignments through the sum of individual rational calculations that follow a generic pattern:

Expected cost > expected benefit → inaction (complacency)

Expected cost < expected benefit → action supporting the opposition)

For a sceptical reader, however, this assumption is at best a generalisation that risks dismissing the fact that in the real world of politics action is also driven by commitment to a political cause derived from ideological beliefs and values which some political actors enthusiastically endorse. The premise that an individual acts rationally driven by self-interest may well apply to market transactions but offers an impoverished view of political action.

Following this objection, it may be said that what the model has described is at best a logical possibility and there is still a considerable degree of uncertainty concerning the impact of clientelism on political action due to the contingency of political action on other equally important driving factors of political mobilisation. In particular, the effectiveness of materialistic rewards and punishments put forward by the government party in its clientelist activities depends on how appealing economic incentives are to each actor individually. It may be the case that the

rewards offered by clientelism do not equally entice everyone, while the sanctions, exclusions and punishments will fail to prevent the politically-concerned and the ideologically-driven from taking an active part in politics on the side of the opposition, making a decision that defies the high cost attached to that choice. Ideological commitment may lead some actors to dismiss the benefits offered to political alignment with the government party and to be willing to bear the cost attached to alignment with the opposition. This varies with social settings and different historical circumstances.

The objection to a pure rational choice model can be seen as an invitation to acknowledge that each individual decision over engagement with politics is contingent on a combined assessment of material and non-material benefits and costs. This approach will concede that utility considerations are unique to each individual and that subjective perceptions of utility are not necessarily reduced to calculations of material rewards offered and punishment pending. Instead, the impact of material rewards and sanctions in each individual case is weighed differently against the kind of utility one expects from political activism. There is a degree of uncertainty here that compels us to make predictions based on material rewards and punishments less rigid. An estimate of the impact of clientelism on the aggregate pattern of political action can only be seen as a logical possibility. With regard to the model presented in this chapter, this means that clientelism in the typology consisting of clientelism in four different structural settings will not necessarily generate the same pattern of political behaviour, but there will probably be some variation across cases depending on the degree of ideological drive and commitment as well as many other local factors.

While the critique above concerns the deterministic endorsement of rational choice analysis, the central premise of rational choice that political actors are the same individuals when operating in different contexts of human activity holds truth. As James Buchanan has pointed out:

‘The critical important bridge between the behavior of persons who act in the market place and the behavior of persons who act in political process must be analyzed. The “theory of public choice” can be interpreted as the construction of such a bridge. The approach requires only the simple assumption that the same individuals act in both relationships.... Closure of

the behavioral system, as I am using the term, means only that analysis must be extended to the actions of persons in their several separate capacities (Buchanan, 1972: 12).

This premise suggests that, although there is great difficulty in gauging the extent to which ideology and political values matter in relation to purely material incentives in every given case, a rational choice perspective can accommodate the input of values, ideology and material rewards into a broadened view of 'utility'. While it is important to acknowledge that each individual's cost and benefit calculation is shaped by different formulations of utility in different ways, this concession should not go as far as to dismiss the interplay between material costs and benefits on the one side and other driving incentives for political action on the other. Just as the analysis should not dismiss the impact of ideology on personal motivation, so too it should acknowledge that the expected impact of material rewards and punishments on one's circumstances is weighed against ideological considerations. A synthesis is needed that should rely on a more nuanced definition of utility as perceived benefits minus costs from a course of action under consideration, which includes ideological motivations and material costs and benefits as integral parts of a rational decision over political action.

In this synthesis, while benefits from clientelism may be perceived differently by each individual, ideological motivation is not independent from the material costs attached to political participation. For ideologically-driven actors, a sanction on a particular path of political behaviour may be quite effective in deterring action in that direction when the personal cost attached to a course of political action driven by ideology outweighs the expected personal benefit. It is plausible to expect that those who prioritise non-material causes cannot wholly disregard any material costs attached to a path of action, especially when the material cost has been raised to a level that clearly outweighs the non-material benefit. It then makes sense to expect that with the exception of a small core of ideological hardliners most other affected actors will prefer to stay out of politics. For instance, even in the 'difficult' cases of ideologically-driven actors, an economic sanction may be effective in changing one's decision when it threatens to affect sensitive personal and family circumstances, posing an agonising ethical dilemma between the choice to serve a political cause and the welfare of one's family.

To deter political mobilisation driven by ideology, the cost of political activism must be raised substantially high beyond a certain *threshold of tolerance*. The higher the cost, the more likely it is that most actors will choose inaction instead of active political engagement. Finally, an individual calculation of expected benefits versus anticipated costs is sensitive to group dynamics. The effect of the sanctions imposed in deterring others from playing an active role in politics may dishearten an isolated ideologically-driven actor who may have otherwise decided to defy these costs. As previous applications of threats and sanctions had already prevented others from engaging in political activism, it is reasonable for him or her to expect that his or her engagement will make little difference. The multiplying effect of deterrence is particularly relevant for the type of clientelism which by virtue of its magnitude and intensity is associated with an inclusive hegemony.

5.4 Continuity and change: the role of agency

Given the specific terms of the type of clientelism associated with limited contestation, it is highly unlikely for any clientelist party to abandon or reduce unilaterally the practice of clientelism, since this move would offer the other parties the chance to ‘occupy the space left’. It follows that, unless an opposition party develops its own clientelist network comparable in size to that of the government party, it will be difficult to counterbalance the government’s advantage in mobilising electoral support and can only hope to recruit its own support basis from actors situated in areas of economic activity outside the political sector of the economy. On the contrary, there is an inbuilt incentive for the opposition party to attempt to build its own clientelist network to engage in clientelism, as shown in the clientelist game in table 5. In this game, it is likely that the opposition will attempt to move to the equilibrium point *a* by promising future rents in the event it gains power to prospective supporters who have been excluded from access to government resources.

Table 5: Options and pay-offs for political parties in clientelism

Equilibrium at a)		Party B	
		Engage	Abstain
party A	Promise and engage	a) Competitive clientelism (type 1 or 2)	b) Monopoly clientelism by party A (Type 3 or 4)
	Abstain	c) Monopoly by party B (type 3 or 4)	d) Competition without clientelism

The participation of the opposition in clientelism places the calculus of prospective clients in a broader perspective. It may be then rational for prospective clients of the opposition to bear the present cost of expressing dissent (as demonstrated by previous cases acting as warning signals) in anticipation for larger future benefits from raising a ‘voice’ in support of the opposition. They may be willing to bear the cost of sanctions from government retaliation now so as to be the first to establish a privileged relationship with the opposition in anticipation of higher returns offered on a ‘first come first served’ basis. Any future benefit, however, is estimated as to whether its value exceeds the current cost and as to whether it is likely to occur anytime soon. Hence, expecting benefits from the opposition is a highly uncertain bet. Utility-maximising actors who are promised future benefits by the opposition party have to assess the chances the opposition party has to gain power in the near future. As a result, to offset the competitive advantage of the party in government, the opposition’s promises have to be credible, and this largely depends on its current strength in polls. In view of these uncertainties, risk-averse economic actors are more likely to choose the more certain path of supporting the government.

Under the conditions present in a dominant party system, the opposition is trapped in a disequilibrium point by a vicious circle. The appeal of its promises depends on its credibility which is contingent on the perceptions of prospective clients of whether it is likely to gain power. In a political system where the incumbent constantly wins a large percentage of votes and the possibility for a change in

government is small, this understandably discourages economic actors from aligning with the opposition. The opposition's promises are seen as unrealistic as the likelihood that it will get in a position to fulfil them is slim. The large voting distance separating the incumbent from the opposition as well as the incumbent's longevity in power signal to current and prospective clients that any contribution to the opposition in anticipation of future benefits is likely to be fruitless and counter-productive. Those already excluded from access to the government's privileged group of supporters would rather try again to establish special links with the government or at least show complacency to avoid material sanctions.

Despite these adverse circumstances, victories of the opposition party in local elections and in trade unions may serve as a springboard for the opposition to build up credibility (c.f. Langfield, 2010). As the clientelist game suggests, the opposition can open up a turf for clientelism in local councils or trade unions that come under its control. They will tend to be perceived as indications of a higher probability of the opposition to gain control of central government and this will equally increase the credibility of the opposition's clientelist promises. The opposition can now start offering generous rewards to supporters and compensation to those punished by the government for their current alignment with the opposition. Once in control of local and sectoral posts, the reliability of the opposition in keeping current and future promises can be tested and evaluated by prospective clients.

For the dominant party, the opposition's victories are dangerous cracks in the government's monopoly over the supply of clientelism, as they open up new areas for the opposition to recruit its own support basis. With its own clientelist network growing, the opposition may become able to infiltrate and destabilise the support basis of its opponent, possibly overbidding in promises. It may also recruit displeased government clients whose claims were not properly or fully accommodated. The opposition has the chance to gradually erode the current advantage of the government party in incentivising support by means of patronage. This is a serious threat to the incumbent whose strong interest in preserving an asymmetry in organisational and motivational capacities dictates that it should be vigilant enough not to allow the opposition to win victories in small elections and, consequently, a niche in the practice of clientelism.

5.5 Continuity and change: structural constraints

Clientelist networks whose mobilisation is a necessary precondition for successful campaign are for party leaders 'inclusive groups': it is in the party's interest to include as many clients as possible to make a contribution to the campaign and increase the chances for election to office. Consequently, there is a strong incentive for the clientelist party to intensify the practice of clientelism. As the range of clientelism depends on the size of the political sector of the economy, the tendency is to add new areas of economic activity to those subjected to clientelist exchange. The propensity to increase the practice of clientelism can only be kept in check by institutional safeguards prohibiting or reducing the politicisation of the allocation process of government goods. The strength of these checks depends on legislation and constitutional norms. Understandably so, political parties practising clientelism are unlikely to be willing to impose limits to the very source of their own comparative advantage. In the absence of checks, the practice of clientelism can only be reduced when the decrease in the size of the political sector is the unintended outcome of *exogenous* shocks hitting the economy and compelling the government to perform reforms reducing the state's share in the economy and changing the character of state intervention to allow for autonomous private economic activity to come to the economy's rescue. In the face of an economic downturn threatening the very sustainability of the clientelist system, the priority may be that part of the turf for clientelism can be temporarily lost to prevent a greater systemic collapse.

An exogenous shock to a clientelist system can also be attributed to negative externalities produced by the extensive application of clientelism. The practice of clientelism involves government distribution of resources and incurs a fiscal cost of on public sector finances. The capacity of the government party to extract resources for clientelist exchange mainly through taxation and public borrowing ultimately depends on the health of the economy. Extensive clientelism, however, discourages private investment particularly when investors are uncertain about the terms of trade and feel unprotected from the whims of government discrimination. Low levels of investment and a shrinking economic activity eventually reduces the resources available to the government for clientelist allocation. As government revenue drops, the need to preserve the current level of government distribution calls for heavier

taxation and borrowing, fuelling higher government deficits and launching a downward spiral of economic downturn, fiscal derailment and public dissatisfaction. Unless the government is able to find a source of revenue independent of taxation, e.g. by collecting rents paid by foreign actors for the extraction of minerals and oil as in the case of 'rentier states' (See: Entelis, 1976; Beblawi, 1987: 51; Mahdavi, 1970; Luciani, 1994; Shambayati, 1994:308-309; Ross, 2001) or public borrowing, it remains financially dependent on domestic business activity for tax revenue.

Faced with fiscal deficits and a deteriorating economy, the government is likely to be compelled at some point to limit government spending and consequently to curtail the resources available for distribution. Depending on the severity of the economic situation, economic and social actors under increased financial strain may push in that direction as the cost of clientelism passed on each of them through increased taxation and a deteriorating economic situation increases. The cost borne may reach a point that its impact on one's economic circumstances makes it cost-effective to join or even organise forms of collective action to oppose the government's politics of extensive clientelism.

When a crisis dictates the launching of institutional reforms that curtail the expansion of the state in the economy, the erosion of the political sector of the economy occurs as the *unintended consequence* of government decisions that were necessary and difficult to avoid under deteriorating economic conditions. The combined assessment of economic and political cost considerations recommends this course of action when the political cost generated by clientelism itself and a deteriorating economic situation outweigh the political benefits from keeping the same pace of clientelist practices. The decision to implement a number of structural reforms may reduce the role of the state in the economy, limit government intervention and make it less discriminatory, for instance with the elimination of quotas and license fees for business activities and the abolition of the system of permits and allowances which are typically awarded to loyal supporters. These decisions could ultimately reduce the scope for the development of patron-client relations (c.f. Ades and Di Tella, 1999). To the extent that economic reforms reduce the size of the political sector of the economy, limiting the degree of government regulation and distribution, economic reforms will eventually reduce the scope for

clientelist exchange. This will increase the share of the private sector that enjoys relative economic autonomy vis-à-vis the government and possibly generate grievances amidst the clients left outside the new allocations of clientelist rents.

Nevertheless, the capacity for clientelist exchange is not necessarily undermined by economic reforms in all cases and clientelism may adapt to the new limitations. A shift may take place from direct allocation of resources that incur an immediate cost on public finances to other forms such as a licensing system, the provision of credit, indirect protection, tariffs etc. In these instances, the government continues to exercise discrimination in the selection of winners but without the heavy cost attached to other forms of clientelist exchange. It may be the case, for instance, that tax authorities could be asked to turn a blind eye to tax evasion by supporters of the government while searching thoroughly for irregularities in the accountant books of others; or that the deregulation of capital flows may be decided at a time when particular beneficiaries wish to transfer capital abroad, and so on.

Market reform is also likely to give rise to new opportunities for clientelism, particularly when market reform takes place in a context of intense state intervention in the economy prior to the inauguration of reforms, and when reforms reducing the state's direct involvement in economic activities fail to actively develop market-enhancing institutions (McMann, 2009). The choice of reforms, the sequence of reforms and the selection of beneficiaries from these reforms can still reflect clientelist agreements between political patrons and clients. New forms of clientelist relations between the business community and the government will develop (Pearson, 1997). The process of privatisation, for instance, can increase the government's leverage over the business sector competing for a share, when the government is at liberty to choose the winners that buy the public assets at bargain prices (Tangri 1999, 59). These types of clientelist exchange may involve more than a one-off agreement: partial privatisation of state-owned enterprises may not introduce a purely economic logic in their management, if the new managers are subject to political pressures to hire supporters and fire opponents. The practice of clientelism is thereby *outsourced* by the government party to its client private actors. As the government creates new business opportunities and allocates them to private actors on condition that they reproduce clientelist incentives in their own sphere of command, the political sector of the economy simply changes shape.

5.6 Final remarks

Drawing on the causal process described in chapter three, which links clientelism and political competition on the micro and macro-level, this chapter has associated clientelism with one-party dominance in a typology consisting of three variables whose values determine the impact on clientelism on political competition: the number of parties engaged in clientelism, the institutional framework that allows or limits the scope for clientelism, and the size of the political sector of the economy that delineates the range of clientelist incentives. Based on the assumption of rational behaviour, it is argued that on the aggregate level variations in the scale and intensity of these variables will define the reach and effectiveness of clientelist incentives and disincentives and, ultimately, affect the political choices of social actors. In an economy with a large political sector where the scope of exit from the reach of clientelist incentives is small and there is no alternative clientelist network to compensate for material losses, the government monopoly over the practice of clientelism gives the dominant party the capacity to incentivise political support and deter the active expression of dissent. In that case, the reach of clientelist incentives is such that, while formal structures for participation are present, clientelism could distort the conditions of political competition in all spheres of political activity: inter-party competition, intra-party politics and civil society activism. This extensive form of inclusive hegemony is associated with the type of clientelism:

monopolised by a single party in a large political sector of the economy, which allows it to accommodate diverse individual preferences in ways that limit its exposure to other forms of social organisation and prevent centrifugal tendencies from undermining party cohesion, as well as to achieve an advantage in party organisation that undermines the chances of other parties to mobilise considerable electoral support.

It becomes clear under which circumstances the exercise of a form of manipulative power by a dominant party results in low exposure to contestation. By virtue of this all-encompassing effect on all forms of political expression, clientelism enables a dominant party to reduce its exposure to competition to a degree comparable with authoritarian regimes. By contrast, in all other types, a degree of political competitiveness survives, since there are other clientelist networks or the political sector of the economy is small and the reach of clientelist incentives limited.

The typological theorising here opens the field for more structured and focused analysis in empirical works in search of explanatory paths against a multitude of observed tactics and strategies which, albeit found to be in operation in a given case, may not be of direct causal relevance to the phenomenon under study. The model indicates why the analysis of hegemonic regimes should keep a distance from views that see the incumbent popularity in polls as the genuine outcome of voters' choice. Limited contestability must be associated with unusual and unethical practices that interfere in the formation of preferences and behaviour.

The last piece of the puzzle is to agree on the nature of the dominant party system produced by extensive application of clientelism. Even though limited contestation is now seen as the result of intensive and extensive monopoly application of clientelism by a single party, clientelism as a form of manipulation may still be regarded as compatible with competitive democratic politics. A highest threshold should be passed that requires explaining why, when or under which circumstances clientelism should be seen as an inherently authoritarian practice.

Chapter 6

The authoritarian nature of inclusive hegemony: a note on clientelism

6.1 Introductory comments

Following the criterion used by the literature to classify regime types as authoritarian, the crucial question this chapter addresses is whether clientelism runs counter to essential properties of democracy. The literature is rather inconclusive as to the nature of clientelism that is widely regarded as part and parcel of competitive politics in most modern democracies despite the alleged distortions it produces. Although the previous chapter makes it clear why an inclusive hegemony should be regarded as severely flawed on the dimension of contestability, this particular outcome is not the product of applied violence or threat of violence on behaviour and preferences to allow the unproblematic judgment that inclusive hegemony is an authoritarian regime. Hence, albeit an extraordinary form of a party system an inclusive hegemony associated with extensive and intensive application of clientelism by a single party may still be seen as compatible with the very essence democratic politics. The opposite claim must demonstrate that clientelism is basically a non-democratic practice either because its in-built qualities run counter to a basic standard of democratic process or because it affects political behaviour in a way similar to coercion in authoritarian regimes. The chapter here develops two arguments in support of this claim.

6.2 Clientelism: legitimacy, consensus and particularistic politics.

Clientelism is widely seen as a general pathology in the particularistic allocation of state resources by government in democracies and authoritarian regimes alike (c.f. Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Lyrintzis, 1984; Komito 1985; Roniger and Güneş-Ayata, 1994; Gay, 1998; Blakeley, 2001; Kristinsson, 2001). While the practice of clientelism exerts an indirect and subtle form of manipulative power and is widely perceived to be an unethical practice, the critical question is to ascertain whether it can be considered as a practice compatible with *basic* properties of democracy or not.

Arguments in support of the view that clientelism is incompatible with democracy can be summarised in two sets, which are discussed in detail here. The first set focuses on the macro-level and sees clientelism as an abuse of state power, while the second emphasises the asymmetrical power relations that develop between the patron and the client on the micro-level.

It has been said that clientelism undermines the notion of citizenship by privileging short-term exchanges of votes over more general benefits from political representation (Escobar, 2002), that it obstructs the functioning of democratic institutions of representation and accountability, offering the incumbent an electoral advantage (Graziano 1973; Lyne 2007; Stokes 2005; Wantchekon 2003), that it constitutes the illegitimate manipulation of public resources to skew voters' preferences (c.f. Forewaker and Landman, 1997), that it hinders the development of horizontal civil society organisations (Erie, 1988; Graziano, 1977; Scott, 1972a), and that it is a degeneration of the relationship between elected officials and the electorate (Volintiru, 2010). These arguments bring to the debate normative prescriptions that raise the standard far above the basic properties of democracy – the common denominator of various definitions of democracy according to which democracy is a form of a political system which offers an open structure of political representation and allows for peaceful alternation in power and the contestation of policy outcomes. As a result, these arguments can be criticised for involving unrealistic expectations of what constitutes a functioning democracy as well as idealised standards which actual practices by office-seeking politicians in democracies also fail to meet (for similar objections, c.f. Huntington, 1991:9-10 and Schumpeter, 1956, chapters 20-22).

A minimalist approach to democracy accepts that government policies may be motivated by partisan gain and other humble driving factors (c.f. Huntington, 1991:10). The freedom of voters to exercise this right means that they are at liberty to exchange their votes for whatever payoffs they think it is in their interest. If, from the point of view of the client, clientelism is 'the proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simply: did you (will you) support me' (Stokes, 2007:604-605), at first glance clientelism seems to generate a win-win situation that leaves voters better off, as they get a higher return on their vote and experience a greater positive change in

their utility curves compared with other forms of policy supply. To consider this exchange as a violation of the notion of citizenship is to pass judgment on how voters should make use of their freedom to vote when confronted with different sets of payoffs. This claim places an idealised standard of democracy above and beyond voters' freedom to choose and defines the nature of their involvement in democratic competition in a way that contradicts the essential property of democracy, which is voters' free choice of political behaviour. Stemming from a particular view of citizenship's autonomy (Lemieux, 1987) this specific take of clientelism is countered by the very basic idea of free choice inherent in the notion of a 'right'.

The idea is that clientelism constitutes a *re-individualisation* of the provision of goods and services by government. Whatever the motive, whether it fosters rent-seeking activities and whether it changes the terms of competition for access to government resources should actually remain the issue of political debate in a democracy. Moreover., the claim that clientelism imposes costs on others (c.f. Epstein, 1985:987-988) dismisses the fact that all forms of government distribution generate negative externalities and that it is the very essence of democracy that relevant grievances and complaints about negative political externalities can be aired freely in political debate. While one is entitled to believe that certain forms of distribution are better than others and that some forms of voting behaviour are unethical, these opinions reflect subjective and ideologically debatable standards and, therefore, cannot be elevated to the status of a benchmark that determines what acceptable democratic behaviour is and what is not.

As pointed out earlier, clientelism does not force a change in behaviour but incentivises adaptive responses by self-interested actors. It emerges at the interface of two key processes in politics, on the one hand economic actors and social groups competing for goods and services distributed by the government, and on the other hand political actors competing for political office. Utility maximisation considerations apply to both politicians and prospective clients. It appears that the two processes of selection, electoral politics and the allocation of resources by the government, invite groups and individuals to take part in a form exchange on a voluntary basis, clientelist exchange, from which both parties gain benefits. For politicians, clientelism offers an effective way of electoral mobilisation while for clients it is a shortcut to exclusive access to government-distributed goods.

Clientelism is thus generated by the interaction of political demand and supply: on the one hand, demand for preferential treatment by economic actors and, on the other, supply depending on the availability of resources for clientelist exchange and the number of patrons involved in their allocation. As Gordon Tullock argued in 1965 in his paper 'Entry Barriers in Politics' the democratic process resembles an auction mechanism in which politicians bid for the right to a natural monopoly, the government. This 'right to monopoly' means that political power decides over the provision of goods and services by government decision-making in the form of a monopoly that rules out competition by any other entry. But because the right to run the state 'monopoly' is decided competitively in elections, a degree of 'marketisation' resurfaces when politicians distribute goods and services to voters. As the allocation of government-provided goods among candidate clients is made conditional on political support, to regard clientelism as a voluntary transaction may go as far as to suggest that clientelism generates a 'political market' for the allocation of economic resources. This is an informal market where mutual benefits are exchanged between politicians and social actors. Like any competitive process, this form of allocation generates an informal system of 'prices', for the goods and services provided by the government.

A plausible objection to the portrayal of clientelism as a 'political market' is that unlike ordinary market transactions clientelist exchange involves state power. Clients are subjected to government power and their transactions with the government or with state-controlled companies form part of a hierarchical relationship defined by a clear power asymmetry in a sphere of authority. They may also face discriminatory treatment, the negative side of clientelism, whose consequences they can hardly neglect or avoid. A wide array of retaliatory measures could affect their decisions and conduct, such as strict and constant auditing of books, the revoking of a license, refusal to grant public advertisement, delay in the delivery of government services, refusal to provide credit from state-controlled banks etc. These measures can be imposed on defectors and members of the clientelist network that did not fulfil as expected the duties and commitments they have undertaken in return to the favour they received.

Power asymmetry in clientelist exchange is even sharper owing to the fact that the number of patrons on the supply side is small while demand for clientelism involves

myriads of prospective clients. This disparity allows the patrons to choose their clients or raise the 'price' they could ask in return of the favour granted. This is an unequal bidding process, where the patrons choose those who are able to offer the strongest form of political support or the most resources possible. Empirical studies have confirmed that politicians selectively allocate rents to core constituents, influential interest groups and swing voters to avoid wasting resources (Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987; Dixit and Londregan, 1996). Only a small number of economically powerful 'clients' are able to negotiate the terms of the exchange. Moreover, refusal to take part in a clientelist exchange means that someone else can jump to grasp the opportunity.

Nonetheless, even if clientelism is seen as an extreme and quite 'dark' form of particularistic politics it is still not clear why it is necessarily a non-democratic practice. It can be argued that all policies involving selection could be used by the government party for partisan gain and that all instances of government selection are allocations by government monopoly that unavoidably involve power asymmetries between the government and those claiming access to goods and services distributed by the government. For democratic theory, it is asymmetrical government power in the selection of policies that creates inter-group confrontations and substantiates the *raison d'être* of a democracy.

This line of argument suggests that clientelism should be considered as compatible with the very essence of democratic politics, an actual derivative of inter-group competition. All politics are particularistic and involve discrimination in the provision of goods and services. To expect universalism in politics is 'unrealistic, unattainable and possibly not desirable' (Piattoni, 2001:29). The relationship between accepted forms of political particularism and clientelism might have been portrayed as that of an ideal and its corruption (c.f. Barnes and Sani, 1974; Zuckerman, 1977) and one that hinders the attainment of normative agendas (c.f. Littlewood, 1981; Schneider et. al. 1972) but, pragmatically, it can also be seen as 'a dialectical relationship between what is theoretically desirable and what is practically possible' (Piattoni, 2001:18; c.f. Weingrod, 1968; Powell, 1970; Silverman, 1970; Lemarchand and Legg, 1971; Boissevain, 1966; Gay, 1998). In this view, clientelism is just one of the historical forms in which interests are represented and promoted, a practical (although in many ways undesirable) solution

to the problem of democratic representation. (Piattoni, 2001:3). Clientelism can be regarded as particular manifestation of particularistic politics which is fully compatible with democratic politics as a form of a dyadic relationship that is complementary to other institutional forms (c.f. Landé, 1983).

This function of clientelism stands in sharp contrast to the coercive tactics of physical repression, intimidation and electoral restrictions that clearly render a dominant party system *authoritarian* by restricting political participation and preempting accountability between the rulers and the governed. Unlike subtle manipulative tactics that skew preferences in a non-coercive way, these are real pervasive authoritarian controls that leave little choice for prospective political activists. Violence works through intimidation and fear of physical punishment, while clientelism involves incentives in the form of rewards and disincentives by means of exclusion and discrimination. At first glance, the two sets of practices seem to differ substantially as to how they produce changes in behaviour.

Unless something concrete is said about whether or in what circumstances clientelist exchange is not the product of free choice and the result of consensual agreement, clientelism can be duly regarded as a form of exchange in the political distribution of resources and a phenomenon derivative of competition for access to goods and services distributed by the government. More should be said about power relations and domination to allow a claim that clientelism, or at least a form of clientelism, contravenes basic properties of democracy as defined by a minimalist approach to democracy stripped off subjective and unrealistic visions of how its ideal form should be.

An argument in that direction is that clientelism is an abuse of state power that distorts the playing field and by virtue of its scale generates an authoritarian regime (Levitsky, 2010; also Greene, 2010a and 2010b). The underlying idea is that the state with its centralised and all-pervasive authority becomes a partisan resource that interferes with the emergence of political competition from the social context by blocking the emergence of contesting political forces. With its unmatched human, intellectual and material resources, state power involved in political competition generates a degree of distortion large enough to limit contestation. The resulting asymmetry violates the organic link between social diversity and political pluralism described in chapters one and two. While the state is in itself the target of

competing political demands, clientelism reverses the direction of social influence as the tool that enables one group to impose political outcomes on society.

This argument makes a general claim about the democratic credentials of state involvement in political competition by a single party on the basis that clientelism like any other form of state power is an instrument used in shaping preferences and behaviour and that like coercion it may have a similar *impact on political competition* – skewing the political expression and collective organisation of diverse social interest and reducing the level of the government's exposure to contestation. This view can be associated with the normative standard of contestability discussed in chapter two. Clientelism can be seen as a corruption of state society relations, when government intervention in the economy is no longer a tool for debated, agreed upon and revisable political change but is snapped by political parties and misused to push the strategic behaviour of individuals to a desired direction. It thus alters fundamentally the pattern of social organisation and alters relative power between the party and social groups. The state becomes *a partisan tool that actually pre-empts such a debate*, producing a distorting impact on the pattern of political competition at times so intense that it becomes difficult to challenge, check, and debate particularistic politics and state power applications. It distorts the very process through which the demos is expected to be able to exert some influence on the exercise of state power. Instead, state power captured by a few political parties and used as a partisan resource generates a top-down process of tampering with social diversity and political preference formation. It is in this context that clientelism as a form of exercise of state power over individuals for the purpose of achieving partisan gains should be seen as inherently incompatible with the ideal essence of democracy.

The objection to this argument is that all forms of state intervention in social and economic life may be driven by the government party's desire to attract supporters and recruit contributions. The claim, therefore, that clientelism is an abuse of state power is generic enough to include competitive multi-party systems where clientelism has an intense and widespread presence. Clientelism as a form of state power employed in the context of political competition has had an extensive presence in many competitive political systems: from the late 19th and early 20th century USA (Shefter, 1994), to Latin America (Geddes, 1994), and the

Mediterranean (Gellner and Waterbury, 1977 Lyrintzis, 1984). Licences, state employment, public contracts, privatisation are among the many forms of clientelistic exchange developed between politicians with state and private actors (c.f. Ades and di Tella, 1997). Other lawful forms of state policy, including distributive policies and general regulation, are commonly used by the incumbent party to secure re-election. While the practice of clientelism produces a highly distortive effect on the conditions of political competition, it is generally viewed as a by-product and a shortcoming of democratic competition. This very real property of modern democracies is epitomised in the notion of the 'cartel party', which uses the resources of the state to ensure their own survival (Katz and Mair 1995).

By the same token, all forms of public spending can be criticised as spending by politicians directed to please voters. In short, many forms of lawful exercise of state power may give the incumbent an electoral advantage which minor parties outside the government clearly lack. What is more, particularism, office-seeking politics and incumbency advantages cannot be eradicated from democratic government, for it is precisely the purpose of democracy to allow contestation of particularistic allocations and to expose all uses of state power by the government to criticism and debate.

An alternative argument is to maintain that elections are not meaningful when the costs imposed on opposition actors in the form of intimidation and physical repression and any other forms of authoritarian controls are pervasive and fundamentally important in altering participation decisions of prospective activists (Greene, 2010a:156 and 158). When clientelism is associated with dominant party systems, it is easy to understand why dominant parties derive extraordinary resource advantages and thereby increase their chances of winning elections but it is far from evident whether this should be considered as a form of authoritarian control. Many other manipulative uses of state power by the incumbent could raise the cost for other minor parties to be effective contestants. If we follow this maximalist stance on clientelism as an abuse of state power that raises the cost on the opposition, competitive party systems that involve cases of two or more clientelist parties may equally not qualify as democracies. In this logic, the terms of party competition cannot be regarded as fair when the playing field is heavily skewed in favour of the clientelist parties.

Nevertheless, it is quite common that government parties make use of resources from the public budget to generate electoral advantages. In all these forms state power is widely used in many forms to skew voters' preferences and generate incumbent's advantage in electoral mobilisation in democratic systems too and can be seen at worst as a pathology of democratic politics. It is one thing to acknowledge that both clientelism and physical repression engage state power to bring changes to preferences and behaviour and it is quite another to claim that both practices are in effect coercive. As long as the political arena remains open to all political entries and elections are not tainted with fraud or widespread violence, an inclusive hegemony that relies on extensive practice of clientelism by the dominant party is an unusual outcome that can be still classified at worst as a flawed democracy. More should be said about what is meant by 'the abuse of state power' and by 'fair competition', given that state power is involved in party politics in the form of pork-barrel policies, patronage, electoral law restrictions and incentives, state funding for parliamentary parties, etc all generating advantages for the bigger parties. Regardless of the fact that clientelism raises the cost of the opposition activities in Greene's sense, what should be shown is that the practice itself is incompatible with the basic political freedom to choose one's path of political behaviour freely, as enshrined in democracy.

The hypothesised association between clientelism and one-party dominance developed in chapter three and four provides some useful hints as to where to look if we are to support the opposite view. The next sections develop two arguments in support of the view that clientelism is a form of particularistic politics that runs counter to basic standards of democratic politics on the basis of the normative analysis in chapter two and the causal model presented in chapters four and five. The first argument looks to the kind of impact produced by clientelism on political behaviour and the way clientelism interferes with contestability to claim that clientelism should be equated with the more conventional means of violence and physical intimidation. Clientelism can be regarded as an essentially non-democratic practice because it violates the requirement that particularistic claims should be exposed to open contestation in public debate. Hence, clientelism has *an inherently non-democratic nature* shielding individualistic claims to government from exposure to criticism. The second argument seeks to establish that intimidation by

violence and particular forms of clientelism under certain circumstances work *in similar ways* to force changes in the behaviour of individuals. The analogy between clientelism associated with one-party dominance and the use of state coercion lies in the nature of the impact they both have on political behaviour by punishing ‘voice’ and excluding ‘exit’.

6.3 Clientelism as an illegitimate form of particularistic politics

The argument that clientelism produces a distorting impact on fair competition is too weak to distinguish it from other forms of particularistic politics in democracies that generate advantages for the incumbent, unless additional reasons are given as to why the clientelist exchange differs from all other forms of state involvement in the economy. The discussion therefore can be narrowed down to whether the use of state power to skew the recruitment of political resources undermines core properties of democracy.

In that direction, Robert Putnam’s distinction between different forms of particularism, puts forward a useful idea. Policies were divided between ‘clientelist’, where particular interests are promoted to the detriment of the general interest, and ‘civic’ politics, where preferences are expressed through broader categories of interest (Putnam, 1993). The former category is clearly portrayed as an anomaly in relation to particularistic politics. As noted earlier, the problem with this dichotomy is that there is no consensus on what kind of policy serves this ‘general interest’. The term ‘general interest’ may refer to numerous subjective and possibly contradictory perceptions. Particularistic demands can be masked behind a rhetoric that astutely makes references to the notions of general interest and common good to cover a highly distributional intention. We can retain, however, this distinction as a starting point for drawing a more robust line on the basis of the manner in which particularistic demands are articulated and, ultimately, supplied.

If a clear boundary should be drawn between legitimate and illegitimate forms of particularistic politics, a promising claim is to assert that selective and even discriminatory allocations of goods and services by the state are legitimate political practices in conformity with basic democratic standards insofar as both the demands themselves and the process of selection are exposed to open debate in the formal structures for public participation and contestation put in place by democratic

institutions. Simply put, particularistic demands are required to be exposed to public scrutiny and particularistic demands selected through this process are legitimate only when they have been subjected to an open process of public deliberation and eventually to voters' approval in elections. From a minimalist perspective on democratic theory, particularistic politics can be driven by rather 'dark' motives and employed for cynical reasons, as long as competing claims are openly challenged and debated in the formal processes of representation and decision-making. In that event, authoritative decisions on selection are legitimate even if they are driven by self-interested motives.

This realistic criterion acknowledges that there are plural and often irreconcilable sources of demands and that it is the very essence of democratic competition to provide an open forum in which some of them are selected while others are not. Particularistic politics is an inevitable feature of policy-making and remains legitimate insofar as it meets the requirement of publicity, which serves as a check on the selection process itself, by providing others with some protection and defence against competing claims and exposing all claims and government decisions to public debate and criticism. An optimistic view of this position is that, in responding to competing demands that have been articulated in an open process of debate and deliberation, the government will tend to produce forms of policy delivery that are as compatible as possible with prevalent perceptions of 'common interest'. A more pragmatic approach is to expect that 'going public' means that the government will have to show some concern to competing views and interests, and that an open selection process will provide a check on possible abuses of discretionary power.

Clientelism clearly infringes the above requirement as it involves agreements that are kept away from public scrutiny. Patrons and clients bypass public scrutiny exactly when they deem that transparency and due consideration of other demands could be a cause for delay and a major hurdle. The clientelist way of allocating resources contravenes the basic requirement of publicity and the essential rule-of-law requirements of transparency, due consideration of all cases and non-discrimination in the application of a selection criterion in other identical cases. It thus runs counter to the command that selective allocations of goods and services by the government should take place in conditions of open debate so that all

affected parties could have the opportunity to be aware of them and challenge them. On this basis, clientelism is not merely a departure from the notion of *legitimate* particularistic politics but *a practice that destroys the very basis on which particularistic politics is expected to take place in a democracy.*

The same requirement of publicity and exposure to debate distinguishes clientelism from pork-barrel politics narrowly defined as the selective allocation of a public resource to a given constituency or group by politicians in anticipation of public support. Although both clientelism and pork-barrel politics are forms of favouritism involving the use of state resources to influence political preferences, pork-barrel politics lacks an explicit agreement between the politician and the beneficiaries for the exchange of favours. The distinctive element in pork-barrel politics is that selective allocation takes place in the absence of a hidden exchange, without a clear and explicit agreement between the politician and the beneficiaries that would include a priori pledges from the beneficiaries to reciprocate. Like clientelism pork-barrel politics is part of a strategy aiming at political mobilisation (c.f. Ansolabehere and Snyder 2002), however, benefits from pork-barrel politics are often diffused among a usually large group of beneficiaries. While pork-barrel politics remain a highly controversial tool for partisan motivation, insofar as the scale and nature of the practice is such that pork-barrel allocations can be identified and exposed to open debate, the practice conforms to the standard of what constitutes a legitimate political activity compatible with democracy.

Clientelism is now understood to be incompatible with basic democratic properties not in terms of the *impact* it has on political competition (as explained in chapter four) but because of the incompatibility of the *process* it puts forward with basic democratic norms requiring open contestation. It is this particular feature of clientelism that instils a notion of unfairness in the conditions of political competition when its application is systemic and extensive. The practice of clientelism occurs in democracies too with less conspicuous effects on the degree of political competitiveness. In these political systems a degree of contestability survives thanks to the existence of more than one clientelist networks.

6.4 Clientelism, exit and voice

The argument that clientelism is an essentially authoritarian practice and, consequently, an inclusive hegemony generated by its extensive application in an authoritarian regime can undergo a tougher test. A higher standard can be put in place according to which it should be shown that the impact generated by clientelism *on one's freedom to choose a course of behaviour* has a similar nature to that of violent coercion. To consider clientelism as essentially authoritarian, the practice should not be assessed in terms of the form of its impact on political competition to be seen as an unlawful form of particularism, but it should be compared with the coercive forms of power employed by typical authoritarian regimes in terms of the effect each of them has on individual free choice of political behaviour. This criterion brings us back to the micro-level of clientelist exchange.

While the use of state power in both practices constrains behaviour and distorts the political expression of diverse social interests, at first glance, each practice seems to affect behaviour quite differently. The impact of coercion on one's cost and benefit calculations is particularly invasive, involving the exercise of physical violence and intimidation that compels the targeted actors to adapt their behaviour accordingly or face physical punishment. By threatening the personal freedom, physical integrity and possibly life of the targeted actors, coercive power deprives individuals of the basic freedom to choose a preferred course of action. By contrast, relationships between patrons and clients appear to entail consensual agreements based on concomitant wills by which both parties gain significant mutual advantages. Even when these relationships entail asymmetrical power, the terms of 'agreement' could be said to resemble the type of contract whose terms are decided by one party and the consumer is simply asked to 'take it or leave it'. While clientelist exchange involves a highly asymmetrical power relation between the patron and the client, it still stands far away from the kind of insidious dilemmas coercion places on choice, forcing adaptations in behaviour against one's will by threatening great harm.

If coercive power is defined by its capacity to force changes in behaviour against one's will, the coercive aspect of clientelism can be traced in measures of exclusion, discrimination and material retaliation employed by government to deter defection and support of the opposition; the negative side of clientelism, which incurs serious material costs. As argued in chapter four, the efficiency of punishment depends on

the availability of opportunities for exit. Actual cases of punishment imposed on opposition supporters show the *probability* that the same sanction will be imposed in the future on any individual who considers following a similar path of behaviour. They also serve as warning signals to existing clients about the cost attached to defection. These calculations of risk, though varying on individual basis on the basis of personal circumstances and degree of risk aversion, involve:

- Assessing the *severity* of the cost in view of the social position in which one is situated (impact assessment).
- Evaluating the *probability* of the cost. This looks at the *rate* of occurrence that can be traced in the severity and the frequency of relevant incidents by the government acts (signalling).
- Evaluating the possibility of mitigation or compensation by looking at whether opportunities exist for exit to spheres of private economic activity relative autonomous from clientelist practices.

Risk calculations take into account the size of the private sector autonomous from government discrimination where new economic activities outside the political sector of the economy can be found; the larger the size of the private sector autonomous from state action, the higher the chances to 'exit'. By contrast, the larger the political sector of the economy is, the smaller the opportunities an economic actor has to 'exit' from the clientelist network to avoid or mitigate any cost suffered due to unapproved behaviour; and the smaller the scope for exit, the smaller the degree of freedom one has to choose a path of behaviour against the will of the patron. As a result, the extensive application of clientelism in inclusive hegemonies can raise the opportunity cost of political activity to levels comparable to the costs imposed on individual choice by coercion in authoritarian regimes and in any case could limit individual freedom in ways similar to coercion in an authoritarian regime. Under these circumstances, a clientelist exchange can no longer be seen as voluntary agreement insofar as the targeted individuals cannot opt out without suffering some form of serious and inescapable damage to their personal welfare.

With limits to exit from its rewards and punishments, the party can direct political behaviour through clientelist exchange in a way that pre-empt the emergence of

competition and limits its exposure to other sources of political contestation. Under the circumstances described in the type of clientelism associated with inclusive hegemony, clientelism of the type associated with inclusive hegemony *goes as far as to deny 'voice' by depriving exit*. Moreover, by constraining free choice in ways similar to coercive power, clientelism generates and embeds relations of domination inside the client group. The absence of alternative clientelist networks in a large political sector of the economy increases the dependency of clients on the clientelist party, which generates forced integration into a structure of command and control. Far from a network of individuals freely pooling their resources to achieve a number of shared goals, the clientelist group is now a sphere of authority and domination, where blockages to 'exit' and the material punishment and sanctioning of 'voice' commands the clients' subordination to the ruling elite.

6.5 Final remarks

The last chapter has presented a set of arguments in support of the view that inclusive hegemonies with low degrees of contestation produced by extensive application of clientelism are authoritarian regimes. Drawing on the literature's standard to classify dominant party systems as democratic or authoritarian on the basis of whether the strategies, tools and practices generating this outcome contravene basic standards of democracy, the chapter has examined whether clientelism can be considered as an authoritarian exercise of state power.

Two arguments are presented. The first argument on 'the legitimacy of particularistic politics' observes that clientelist allocations of benefits are hidden transfers kept away from public deliberation. It argues that clientelism contravenes the very essence of democracy that authoritative allocations of resources by state power are only legitimate if they are previously exposed to open debate and public scrutiny. The second argument about 'the analogy between force and clientelist co-optation' examines the distinct way by which the particular type of clientelism associated with an inclusive hegemony impinges on preference formation, in search for direct analogies between clientelism and state coercion. A party's monopoly control over the supply of clientelism in a large political sector of the economy gives the party the extraordinary capacity to punish defectors and opponents by positive material retaliation and exclusion from the clientelist network. Dissent inevitably receives punishment owing to lack of exit, and members of the client

group have to yield to pressures for behavioural change possibly against their will. This deprives individuals from free choice of behaviour. For any of the above reasons, dominant party systems generated by the particular type of monopoly clientelism can be duly classified as authoritarian regimes.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: pluralism, dominance and political analysis

7.1 Summary of the analysis

The concluding chapter presents a summary of the arguments made in the previous chapters followed by a discussion about their broader implications for the wider literature in the field and, more broadly, the study of politics from a group-based perspective. The thesis has developed a twofold argument about inclusive hegemonies, an ideal-type dominant party system with contested democratic credentials. The starting point is Dahl's prominent definition of democracy as contestation open to participation, which has raised the dimension of government contestability to a constitutive element of the definition of democracy next to an open structure of participation.

The application of a Dahlian approach to dominant party systems suggests that dominant party systems facing low degrees of contestability should be classified as authoritarian by definition regardless of whether they offer an open structure of participation. That the pluralist position relies on a normative conception of democracy which remains highly debatable suggests that the notion of authoritarianism cannot be effortlessly extended to this type of party system without facing objections as to the very basis upon which this heavy judgment relies. To support a Dahlian approach requires the development of a more nuanced argument that takes into account the criterion set up by the established literature for classifying dominant party systems as democratic or authoritarian, according to which the processes and strategies used by the dominant party to establish and maintain its dominant position should run counter to core democratic principles. A more demanding formulation of this benchmark is to ascertain that a dominant party system is authoritarian if it meets two requirements: a) there is low government contestability in all three arenas of contestation (it is an inclusive hegemony) and b) the means employed to achieve this state of affairs are essentially non-democratic.

Attempts to extend the conceptual boundaries of dominant authoritarian party systems by other approaches to dominant party systems and semi-authoritarianism have used the notions of meaningful elections and fair competition to argue that a

number of strategies involving the use of state power skew the playing field and increase the cost of the opposition to act as an effective political force. The thesis argues that these positions still remain questionable. It is still not clarified whether the practices should be seen as effective hindrances to competitive politics or merely as pathologies of politics, which to a smaller extent are observed in viable democracies. Although the literature has been nothing but parsimonious in listing tactics and strategies that allegedly enable a party to become dominant without the need to place significant limits to the formal structure of participation, it remains a theoretical challenge to explore whether and why any of these tactics and strategies potentially associated with the rise and consolidation of a dominant party are essentially non-democratic before passing a hefty judgment about the character of the regime associated with them.

To define the character of inclusive hegemony, the thesis followed a number of analytical steps. It adopted a critical stance on Dahl's definitional standard and sought to build a more robust defence of his claim that *inter-party contestability* should be taken as an inherent quality of democracy, by juxtaposing the pluralist definition of democracy with alternative meanings of democracy, namely the 'mandate approach' and democracy's basic etymological interpretation. The second chapter has provided a minimalist synthesis in defence of the view that contestability is an essential quality of democracy.

The third chapter paid a visit to historical narratives of democratisation to add empirical strength to the claim that a dominant party characterised by a low degree of *contestability* is a particularly puzzling political phenomenon. The story of democratisation portrays a picture of politics in which inter-group political competition reflect inter-group relative power and shifting group alliances. Two patterns are discerned which can be read as a refinement to the pluralist framework; first, groups are formed on the basis of shared interests often consisting of individuals that belong to the same social categories such as class, ethnicity, religion, and gender; and second, relative power and political preferences are associated with social positions, changing socioeconomic conditions and shifting distributions of resources and power. Historical narratives of democratisation and regime change demonstrate that societies are constantly divided by long-standing social cleavages and emerging policy divisions, and that political communities

facing conflicts of interest will almost inevitably exhibit a considerable degree of political competition.

What the narratives of political struggle and democratisation highlight is that social diversity generates a competing political arena, which, unless suppressed by violent means, tends to provide political forces with multiple opportunities to form collective action and compete in politics. The multiple memberships of individuals in social categories on the basis of income, class, employment, location, ethnic origin, and gender offer various grounds for collective action expected to be channelled into politics in the form of a multi-party system reflecting a wide range of political and ideological diversity. Consequently, chapter three argues, social diversity is a source of *systemic volatility*, which acts as a centrifugal force in politics and constantly undermines attempts by groups or group alliances to concentrate political power. Subsequently, in political systems open to participation, contestability is the inevitable outcome of the activities of autonomous and competing political forces, within-party factions and civil society organisations representing opposing and often irreconcilable interests. Hence, one-party dominance becomes a perplexing phenomenon due to the fact that long incumbency tends to generate new divisions and to accumulate more grievances among groups experiencing losses. This should be treated as an indication of anomalous conditions in political competition.

In light of the above remarks, the opposition's weakness to capitalise on policy divisions and attain some electoral gains in a dominant party system of open participation cannot be effortlessly attributed to the weakness of its party strategy or to its failure to learn from consecutive electoral defeats and identify flaws in previous political campaigns that would enable it to reassess its political messages, improve its organisational capacities and possibly change its leadership. The theory of democracy and regime change points to a different explanatory path. If authoritarianism is typically sustained by a monopoly in coercion suppressing the political expression of diverse social interests, inclusive hegemonies must involve the exercise of other forms of power equally effective as coercion in bringing about a similar political outcome. Explaining the consolidation of an inclusive hegemony requires an account of how other forms of power such as persuasion and incentives may lead to limited contestability against a context of social diversity that tends to

generate an uneven distribution of preferences and an uneven distribution of resources. Starting with the premise that the distribution of campaign-related resources largely delineates the relative capacity of each political party to mobilise broader electoral support in a political system open to participation, an explanation of the establishment and stability of dominant party systems should examine how disparities in the *organisational* capacities between the government and the opposition emerge and how this asymmetry results in an advantage for the dominant party in mobilising broader electoral support. Given the fact that the diversity of social interests would tend to generate a diversity of power resources too, the question is to identify which causal process makes possible the emergence of a hegemonic party out of an open multi-party system.

Chapter four unfolds the association between clientelism as a tool of recruitment of campaign resources and electoral mobilisation. The chapter argues that, while social divisions and cleavages offer multiple sources of campaign resources for inter-group competition (c.f. Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), the formation and organisation of a political party faces a collective action problem. Political organisation – a form of collective action vital for electoral mobilisation – does not automatically stem from shared perceptions of interests, common public causes and ideology. To address the problem of free-riding, parties need to set up selective incentives to incentivise active contributions to party organisation and activate political engagement. Just as the coercive power of the state gives the ruling group the capacity to suppress dissent and command compliance, an equally strong incentivising mechanism can be found in state involvement in the allocation of economic resources and opportunities. A solution to this problem is to make the distribution of resources conditional on a desirable pattern of behaviour by the recipients, the clients. Since the rewards offered in clientelist exchange tend to make a considerable impact on one's utility curve, they may, therefore, act as a strong incentive for actors to engage in party activities and make sizeable material contributions. This take on clientelism in chapter four goes beyond the typical view of vote-buying to identify a process by which the party obtains an unmatched advantage in incentives for the recruitment of active supporters and, consequently, a lead in human and material resources employed in order to mobilise broader electoral support.

Having identified a causal variable, a dual process is presented linking clientelism with electoral mobilisation: on the first stage, clientelism induces contributions to party organisation in campaign resources and, on the second stage, the advantage gained in resources for campaign strengthen the party's capacity for electoral mobilisation. At the same time, clientelism offers a mode of interest accommodation that re-organises social claims into hierarchically controlled networks of clients and thereby helps the party prevent centrifugal tendencies that could undermine its cohesion, such as defections and internal factionalism.

The analysis in chapter five extends this causal model to explain the outcome of limited contestation, the defining characteristic of inclusive hegemony. At issue here is to gain a theoretical grasp of how clientelism acts as successful substitute for coercion in constraining political behaviour to the extent that it produces a hegemonic one-party regime in a multi-party system open to the participation. Chapter five shows how under certain structural conditions clientelism can indeed produce limited contestability. The aggregate effect of clientelism on the overall pattern of political mobilisation depends on a number of structural and agential parameters: namely the range of clientelist incentives and the intensity of the practice. These parameters determine whether clients have some scope for exit. Limiting exit reduces the degree of one's autonomy and increases the degree of one's dependency on the clientelist party. Clients are clustered into large clientelist networks where behaviour is supervised and checked. Limited exit also reduces the scope for the opposition parties to recruit supporters among those indifferent to clientelist incentives.

The aggregate effect of the widespread and systematic application of clientelist incentives in that type deters the development of autonomous forms of political organisations in all arenas of contestation. In addition, not only does clientelism affect party politics but it also reshapes power relations within the dominant party and between government and civil society, two alternative arenas for social actors to contest government policies. Under the type associated with political hegemony, clientelism serves as a 'blocking factor' hindering the development of open contestation as effectively as suppression in typical authoritarian regimes. This particular function gives a specific meaning to Duverger's early definition of a dominant party as one whose influence exceeds all others for a generation or more

(Duverger, 1954:308) and draws a clear distinction between democratic and authoritarian regimes.

In light of the previous analysis, chapter six addresses the question whether inclusive hegemonies should be seen as authoritarian regimes, following the standard of the literature on democracy that the nature of the regime is defined by the factors associated with its emergence and consolidation. Although this categorisation is unproblematic in the case of typical authoritarian regimes that rely on the use of coercion, fraud and intimidation, a decision on the nature of one-party dominance that relies on extensive applications of clientelism to limit its exposure to contestation requires the development of a convincing argument about the nature of clientelism itself, which avoids idealised, unrealistic and disputable expectations of what democracy should be and rather refers to widely accepted distinctive properties of democracy.

Two arguments are presented in support of the view that the practice of clientelism, under particular circumstances, contravenes essential democratic properties. First, unlike other uses of state power that give the incumbent an advantage in electoral mobilisation, the clientelist agreement fails to meet the requirement that demands in a democratic process should face public scrutiny, a requirement based on the basic conception of democracy developed in chapter one. Second, low contestability in this particular type of clientelism, albeit not the result of physical violence and intimidation, deprives exit and punishes voice thereby directing political behaviour in the same way as coercive power. Dissidents face a spectrum of exclusion and material retaliation if they choose to express dissent and exhibit undesired behaviour. The chapter concludes that both this type of clientelist incentives and coercion are applications of state power that share *similar purposes and functions* and, for that reason, a regime generated by their practice should be duly classified as authoritarian.

The causal process linking resources and electoral mobilisation relies on rational choice assumptions to make causal arguments on the micro-level. The analysis here has used the less contested assumptions that political engagement is motivated by collective incentives and that voters make their decisions on the basis of the information available to them (bounded rationality). The theory here turns assumptions implicit in empirical works into analytical arguments and clarifies

causality as a sequence of causal processes between a) clientelism and party organisation (as a form of collective action by which campaign resources are gathered and employed) and b) party organisation and electoral mobilisation, brought into a model that takes into account the size of the political sector of the economy and the institutions in place. Based on the same assumptions of rational behaviour and bounded rationality, it is expected that the aggregate level the sum of individual risk assessments responding to the set of clientelist incentives and disincentives approximate the number of actors who are engaged in the political sector of the economy.

Ideal-type constructions and abstract theorising help empirical research sort out various observations to might favour a purely descriptive approach citing a basket of factors and, instead, discern in-depth causal associations. Modelling the causal linkage between a regime-type and a set of explanatory variables is particularly useful for empirical studies as it allows empirical research to make claims of causality on the basis of observations of values of the explanatory variables. If a particular configuration of variables, namely clientelism and a large political sector of the economy, is found in an empirical case, this can be seen as a sufficient empirical evidence for a causal variable explaining the emergence of a dominant party system. Empirical research of a case study that has identified the presence of the model's parameters in a particular dominant party system can then argue with a higher degree of certainty that clientelism is the main causal factor associated with the stability of one-party dominance.

A final note is that the building of a logical sequence of arguments based on initial assumptions about human action has touched on a number of broader analytical questions: how does the distribution of power resources impinge on political competition? How do non-voluntary structural attachments trigger collective action? What is the input of structural-economic properties in the interactions between groups? If relative power matters, what is meant by power and in what ways do different forms of power relate to each other and to party competition? How can power resources be incorporated into an analytical framework on group formation and behaviour? In the following 'opening-out' section, the broader ontological implications of the previous analysis are discussed and made explicit as to how they may offer a refinement of the pluralist framework.

7.2 Broader theoretical and epistemological implications

7.2.1 Structure and agency

In seeking to explain the puzzle of one-party dominance, the dissertation has made adaptations to the pluralist approach to collective action. It has placed pluralism in a 'structure and agency' framework that takes into account the role of power, structural properties and power relations in mobilising political action and triggering political behaviour. It has also revised the pluralist ontology, which places the group as the unit of analysis, to be consistent with methodological individualism and rational choice in acknowledging that collective action emerges as the result of selective incentives motivating individuals to pursue their goals by means of group action.

The marriage of rational choice with pluralism here suggests that without specifying sets of collective incentives, collective action cannot be taken as given. Involuntary memberships in socioeconomic categories such as class, income, gender, ethnicity etc, do not automatically generate group action. A pure structuralist approach fails to give due consideration to the role of agency and selective incentives that, by punishing free-riding behaviour and by offering targeted benefits for a group of individuals that outweigh expected costs, make it worthwhile for rational individuals to pursue collective action. The ontological norm is that, for the purpose of empirical work we can talk of collective action when we see it happening and, alternatively, for the purpose of theory building in the thesis is that we may hypothesise a set of selective incentives triggering collective action. The assumption derived from neoclassical economics according to which individuals are utility maximisers adjusting their behaviour depending on the set of incentives has a central place in the thesis' analysis, when, for instance, explaining the link between party organisation and clientelism as a tool that motivates contributions to the party's campaign in return for access to government distribution of resources and by threats of exclusion and material retaliation. This rational-choice framework for the explanation of aggregate political patterns allows the thesis to support the claim that by incentivising political alignment with the party, a clientelist party gains an advantage in human and material resources which it uses to mobilise broader electoral support.

Equally, the thesis' ontological approach gives due consideration to the input of structure in collective action. It acknowledges that the application of selective incentives to motivate collective action is confined by the presence of structural preconditions offering substantive grounds for collective action. Social divisions, grievances and ideological differences form the basis of collective action, which agency activates into concrete political engagements. A view of political action as a reflection of the social context takes into account the input of structural categorisations that create 'communities of fate' along divisions based on class, gender and ethnicity with shared social experience, patterns of behaviour and predispositions, and possibly perceptions of interest that *might* give rise to collective action. For the purpose of theory-building, the technical language of utility maximisation should not overshadow the input of these specific social parameters defining collective action. As the reading of works in democratisation in chapter two illustrates, a 'structure and agency' approach can locate the formation of interests, political preferences and collective action in objective properties related to economic and social status upon which selective incentives may apply to trigger political action. Depending on how costs and incentives are configured by human agency, structural factors *may* shape shared perceptions of common interest and may be the main triggering factor for collective action.

Structure is brought centre-stage in chapter five, where the range and effectiveness of clientelist incentives was said to be dependent on the size of the political sector of the economy governed by political incentives and on the position of economic actors therein. In the case of a dominant party, the political sector of the economy allows the practice of clientelism to act as a blocking factor for forms of political action, despite the presence of social and political divisions expected to act as centrifugal forces. Here, clientelism was presented in its interaction with other driving factors of political action such as ideology, social status, political grievances, social cleavages etc, which were are integrated factors in one's rational calculation of expected benefits, costs and risks. This impact of structure on agency captured by the rational model of behaviour has explained how clientelism restructures collective action into hierarchical, command-and-control networks against other social conditions that push in the opposite direction. Broadly speaking, such a scheme allows the analysis to integrate and gauge comparatively the impact

each of these structural parameters has in a given case. At the same time, consistent with methodological individualism, the thesis allows for a wide scope for agency. Depending on the availability of structural opportunities, agency can shape the structural context in which incentives are set up to trigger collective action. As shown in chapter three, a political group that occupies power may use the state's formidable power capacities to change key structural properties and relations which enable it to command support and punish defection.

The broader suggestion is that any hypothesis that seeks to associate a phenomenon with a number of explanatory variables should identify the combined effect of structural relationships and particular sets of incentives for political action on political behaviour. By tracing the interplay between incentives and structure, political behaviour, though not determined by incentives, becomes more predictable and can be incorporated in theoretical generalisations. This also suggests that political change can be analysed with reference to changes in the incentive structures as either the intended effect of collective action or the unintended consequence of structural change. Structural shift such as economic and technological change, tend to destabilise existing sets of incentives, possibly triggering changes in political behaviour as a result. For instance, as explained in chapter four, exogenous shocks to a national economy can limit the effect of clientelism on politics, by limiting the clientelist resources available to the government party and by dictating economic reforms that limit the scope for clientelism.

7.2.2 Balance of power

The same framework adopted by the dissertation to avoid the pitfalls of structural determinism and the danger of overreliance on agency informs the concept of balance of power, which appears to be precariously dependent on both the distribution of resources in a given structure and group strategies and alliances.

For classical pluralism, political domination by a single group is prevented in a system of mutual controls that establish a balance of power between competing groups; this is the crucial precondition for a viable democracy. For some, the problem, however, is that power resources are unequally distributed among individuals. Existing inequalities of power in contemporary societies seem to make

impossible the ideal of a 'balance of power' sustaining democracy (Gould, 1988, 99). The pluralists' take on this criticism places great reliance on group action and shifting alliances. The underlying premise is that the distribution of power resources in any given context is constantly reshuffled by the collective organisation of individuals. A 'balance of power' can then emerge from group alliances that produce re-alignments in the distribution of power resources. This increases the prospects for democracy in conditions of inequality. In the pluralist framework, most importantly, members of a weaker group can combine their resources, raising the cost of control, and thereby overcoming domination on certain matters important to them (Dahl, 1982, 33, and 35). A system of mutual controls may emerge from within a context of economic inequality among individuals. However, collective organisation may generate new power asymmetries. Even when the distribution of power among groups is somewhat symmetrical, it is still possible that a number of groups could collude to outweigh others.

Chapter three brings new light to this debate by acknowledging the input of structure in explaining why the possibility of collusion by certain groups against others is a rare occasion. It is understood that, because social diversity generates conflicting and irreconcilable preferences, no group alliance will be able to fully accommodate preferences in the long run and sooner or later this will confront centrifugal tendencies, internal splits and factionalism. Nonetheless, it is shown that a sharp asymmetry of power can be achieved and sustained when an extraordinary source of power resources falls in the hands of one group. In authoritarian regimes state coercion is the typical form of power used by a single political group to suppress dissent, defection and opposition. Other forms of state power, however, can produce a similar impact on political behaviour and, on aggregate level, on political competition. Thus to understand dominance in the absence of coercion, the role of other power resources, economic resources and knowledge/intellectual resources, in politics should be carefully examined. As chapter two explains, the balance of power is a delicate state of affairs contingent on both the relative distribution of power resources among competing groups and the reshuffling of power relations through group alliances. It is pointed out that, on the one hand, distributions of power resources are related to the economic structure while, on the other, the economic structure can be strategically manipulated by a political group

in control of the state with the purpose of skewing the distribution of resources. This view reflects a mixed ontology that incorporates in this analysis the interplay between agency and structure.

The second analytical premise the thesis adopts is that groups are not simply aggregations of power pooled by their members but they also constitute spheres of authority in relation to their members. At first glance, the value added of this premise is that it adds the dimension of intra-group dynamics next to the pluralists' emphasis on inter-group competition (c.f. emphasis on factionalism within the dominant party by Boucek, 2012). Since most groups are governed by a group leadership through a hierarchical structure that ensures a degree of co-ordination of collective action, it is intra-group power relations experienced by individual members of the group which, by constraining behaviour, may seriously obstruct the genuine expression of preferences and ultimately limit the degree of contestability within the group.

On closer interpretation, intra-group and inter-group dynamics are co-dependent. The capacity of a group to constrain the behaviour of its members depends on the conditions of recruitment and the range of alternative options its members have. What mitigates the power of leadership to check or even dictate the behaviour of group members is whether members have some scope for exit from the group to either form or join alternative organisations. As the terms of entry to and exit from a group for individuals depend on the availability of alternative options for collective organisation, the range of options determine the power of the group on its members. The plurality of social organisations enables individuals to opt in and out of the group and choose among alternative spheres of authority. A plurality of groups offers *alternative arenas of socialisation* and competing sources of information and persuasion. By contrast, limited opportunities for entry and exit from one group increases the power of the group leadership over its members. Lack of exit, ultimately means that group membership is no longer voluntary, the product of free will, when a decision to leave the group would inevitably incur a high cost. Lack of exit to other groups also means that dissenting voice within the group's sphere of authority is highly costly. In the absence of different spheres of authority, no client is in a position to negotiate their terms of entry and to some extent or mitigate the losses by exiting the group later on. Under these conditions,

membership in a clientelist group organised and controlled hierarchically becomes essentially a relationship of dependency on, and subordination to the patron's authority. This constrains how members of a group reveal their preferences and choose to behave to a degree that contravenes individual, freedom essentially defined as the freedom to choose among competing spheres of authority which ones to join and the freedom of exit from them.

The ensuing question is what delineates the range of options for collective action. As chapter three has indicated, the number of associations tends to reflect the degree of social diversity in a given context, which offers multiple opportunities for the individual to enter or exit from group membership. Thus limits to the number of possible group affiliations are primarily structural, given that collective action is largely contingent on shared experience and common perception of interest referring to social, economic and cultural status. Because individual attachments to non-voluntary categories such as class, ethnicity, gender etc, do not easily change at will, they reduce the opportunities each individual has given his or her social status for engagement in collective action to a smaller subset of existing or potential groups. On aggregate level, structural attachments place limits to the number of associations each individual can choose from, and determine the relative size of collective associations. Thus entry to and exit from an association is not random. Both group formation and inter-group mobility are contingent on the existing pattern of attachments of individuals to social categories in a given socioeconomic structural context. Yet a wide range of choice still exists as most individuals simultaneously belong to more than one non-voluntary associations and can choose to take part in more than one group simultaneously. This at the same time increases their exposure to different sources of information.

Limits to political pluralism can also be placed by agency. The structure and agency view of group formation presented above suggests that agency can apply a strategy that interferes in the way socioeconomic structure generates multiple and competing social and political organisations. A group aspiring to establish a dominant position in society and politics could employ a strategy that raises the cost of forming alternative political organisations by interfering with selective incentives on a large scale. Such extraordinary capacity can only be found in the power of the state with its resources for coercion unmatched by any other organisation, a huge incentivising

power by legislation and regulation, and the widest possible scope to redistribute economic resources and allocate economic opportunities. A deeper effect of state power is that the group in control of the state may shape incentives for political action in a desired direction by restructuring the social basis from which political organisation emerges. The outcome of widespread and systematic application of this form of manipulative power is the underdevelopment of autonomous organisations and restrictions to the avenues through which diverse social interests find political expression and accommodation.

7.3 Epilogue: implications for normative democratic theory

The analysis has unearthed a number of crucial and rather disquieting implications for democratic theory. Clientelism exposes the risks by government distribution of economic resources on political freedom. The analysis casts doubt on the views that in the absence of coercion exercised by one group, social diversity will inevitably generate a considerable degree of political competition, that one- group domination can be averted by the alliance of antagonistic groups in a system of mutual controls; that social diversity provides individuals and groups with the resources necessary to form groups and have a visible and vocal presence in politics; and that parties are merely organisations seeking to gain access to state power to represent bundles of preferences, the idealised vision of party politics in Western democracies. At the same time, the ubiquity of clientelist practices across a variety of political systems shows that rather than a pathology of competitive politics, the practise is inbuilt in the way politics interfere with the allocation of economic resources, and a potential danger for the viability of competitive politics. These two findings may undermine confidence in the resilience of representative democratic institutions, as the increase of state action in the economy can increase the range and intensity of clientelism.

With the state's distributive mechanism in the hands of one group there is a high risk that, under certain conditions, a hegemonic regime can be established by manipulating preferences and behaviour through clientelism applied in *all arenas of contestation* – party politics, civil society autonomy and within-party contestation. To paraphrase Nicholas R. Miller, (1983), clientelism will seriously block 'pluralism as dispersed preferences' to evolve into 'pluralism as dispersed power' through group action.

Hence, the typical image of democratic politics that sees state power as the target of competing groups and declares that in a system open to participation the state's overwhelming power can be tamed by the activities of competing groups could be criticised for presenting a limited view of the role of the state in politics, one that reduces it to an assembly of interacting agencies under a government elected by and accountable to the public. The same criticism applies to the view of political parties as the main channel of political representation, expressing the demands, expectations and complaints of the members and social groups they represent. Rather, chapter three and four indicate that the political party can evolve into a sphere of authority over its members and a major force shaping the very content and forms of expression of social demands. The party obtains such a capacity owing to the state's unmatched capacity to skew the conditions in which political competition takes place, interfering in the way social demands and interests are articulated, defended and accommodated in politics, undermining individual autonomy and reshuffling relative power among social and political groups. Resilient constitutional checks on government power can be undermined through the same process, when citizens are asked to decide on constitutional amendments that would grant stronger powers to the government, while forming their preferences on the basis of information provided by the government party. The same process by which the normative prescription of democracy of *citizens in control of power* is supposed to be realised can allow the rise of an actual monopoly of power without recourse to violent coercion, by the decision of a majority in conformity with the formal institutions of representative democracy.

This alarming and rather depressing analysis offers useful insights to the normative agenda of democratic theory that seeks to find institutional ways to tame the power of the state. First, it could be read as a challenge for the neorepublican's conception of democracy, which gives primary importance in the capacity of people to *contest* 'whatever it is that government does' (Pettit, 1997:ix) and which sees the relationship between state and the people 'as one between the trustor and the trustee' (Pettit, 1997:8). There are now serious reasons to be sceptical whether political institutions alone could guarantee that a representative-democratic state shall act as a trustee for non-domination, given that there is a strong incentive for the ruling group to use the state as the mechanism to obtain a dominant position.

Given that there are inbuilt incentives for a client-patron relationship and insofar as government interference in the distribution of economic resources can produce a distortive effect on behaviour and preference formation to the point that it can lead to *actual monocarcy* reproduced through the democratic process, to envisage a state-society relationship as one between trustor and trustee is an overly optimistic position.

Pluralistic politics is now understood to be a precarious state of affairs highly dependent on a social basis vulnerable to state action. This brings back the basic question posed by the very etymology of democracy as *demos* and *kratos*; how to control state power. The normative question *how* people can exercise control over the state remains unresolved. The arguments presented in the thesis question the feasibility of the ideal democratic imagery. They bring centre-stage the liberal preoccupation with the amount and intensity of government authority exercised on individuals, and the concern with dominance and oppression in the relation between state power and the ideal of political empowerment through democratic politics (c.f. Young, 1990:3). Insofar as the elected government is seen as the legitimate actor at liberty to decide over the scale of distribution of resources, with few checks on the growth of the political sector of the economy that determines the range of clientelism, there is a danger that a hegemonic regime may be established through the very institutions of democracy.

We may now contend with more certainty that effective checks on state power should be found beyond the sphere of formal political institutions. If the agenda for analytical and normative democratic theory is to suggest ways that thwart the possibility of domination through the exercise of all forms of state power, we hold the argument that political outcomes, including more fundamental cases of constitutional change, are intricately linked with relative power dynamics between competing groups. In state-society relations, decentralised power resources allow multiple and relatively autonomous groups to put in place a pattern of mutual controls that keeps all forms of state power at bay. While it is through collective action that checks on state power can be placed, the effectiveness of group action depends on their capacity to find and draw the necessary resources from a social and economic context relatively autonomous from the state. In short, political

pluralism rests upon a pluralist socioeconomic basis, and democracy precariously relies on the vibrancy of social and economic pluralism.

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