

2 Theoretical Framework

The selection of relevant theories is determined by the central research question: How different types of dominant parties influence democracies in multicultural societies? It consists of two main sub-questions:

- Which type of dominant party is prevalent?
- How do different types of parties influence main categories of democracies in multicultural societies?

Concerning the first sub-question, theories of political parties serve as entrance gate to a proper analysis. Since the research study compares two dominant parties, it refers to Pempel's concept of dominant parties. This concept operates mainly in the developed world and was applied and further developed for semi-industrialised countries by Giliomee and Simkins. On this basis, the state of the art of research on dominant parties and their implications on democracies will be analysed. However, the review shows that there is a theoretical deadlock concerning current research strategies in this field. Indeed Giliomee and Simkins recommend to further analyse dominant parties as such and thus to find out about the specific character of the respective party. A suitable party typology delivers criteria, which facilitate a comparative approach and eventually serve to categorize the selected parties. The research study will follow the party typology of Diamond and Gunther because it integrates many old and different party typologies into one and it attempts to operate with party types worldwide rather than with typical Western types of parties and therefore claims to have universal explanatory power. The criteria of this typology create the independent variables of this research. Based on this typology, the study will propose a set of indicators and pose further research questions.

The second sub-question deals with democracies in multicultural societies. Consequently, theories of democracy and multiculturalism serve as point of departure for analysing the state of the art of research in these areas. For this purpose, Smooha's

typology of democracies is selected because it focuses on the different democratic qualities as well as ethnic or racial characters of democracies worldwide. Smooha's typology provides the research study with appropriate dependent variables. In order to enhance the traceability of the study, different indicators are created and research questions developed.

2.1 Different types of dominant parties

The description of state-of-the-art of research on dominant parties sets out with the question, which characteristics distinguish dominant parties from other political parties, or in other words which characteristics qualify political parties to be portrayed as dominant parties? However, since the central research question refers to implications of dominant parties on democracies, the description of state-of-the-art of research has to go beyond concepts of dominant parties and describe in a second part the research dealing with effects of dominant parties on democracies in multicultural societies.

2.1.1 The dominant party concept

The term dominant party has not been used in a uniform manner in scientific research. The concise dictionary of politics defines the term as a political party "which dominates the government of a country over several decades, either governing on its own, or as the leading partner in coalition governments" (Mc Lean 1996: 146). This definition stresses two prerequisites of the dominant party: Firstly its long endurance in power and secondly its outstanding strength in government. Another basic characteristic was put forward by Duverger who defined a dominant party as follows: "A party is dominant when it is identified with an epoch, when its doctrines, ideal, methods, its style, so to speak, coincide with those for the epoch. (...) A dominant party is that which public opinion believes to be dominant" (Duverger 1963: 275-280 und 308-309). In this definition Duverger emphasizes the power of the dominant party to determine an epoch and the public perception of the citizens. Pempel developed another definition that encompasses all the criteria mentioned above and puts them into a more elaborated framework. He conceptualised the dominant party with the following four criteria:

- “A party must be dominant in number, it must win a larger number of seats than its opponents.
- “A party must enjoy a dominant bargaining position.”
- “A party must be dominant chronologically”, i.e. it must govern over a substantial period of time, which he indicated to be around 30-50 years.
- “A dominant party must be dominant governmentally”, i.e. it has implemented a historical project that has influenced significantly the political culture of the country. (Pempel 1990: 3-4)

In order to subsume these four criteria he adds: “The dominant party must dominate the electorate, other political parties, the formation of government, and the public policy agenda” (Pempel 1990: 4). Particularly the last criterion highlights the strong influence of the dominant party on society. A precondition for applying the term dominant party is the successful implementation of a historical project over a long period of time. With the help of such a transformatory project the dominant party significantly shapes the political culture of society. However, the criterion does not mark the type of historical project. Rather, it indicates the fundamental societal effects wrought by the historical project.

Pempel’s catalogue of criteria for single-party dominance is most accurate and comprehensive in incorporating the complexities of a dominant party and will thus serve as theoretical point of departure. However, his definition of a dominant party is problematic due to the prerequisite of a long endurance in power. That is why an identification of a dominant party is only possible *ex post*, i.e. it is only possible after the political party has been in power for many decades. In order to overcome this weakness, another definition put forward by Sartori⁶ will supplement Pempel’s criteria. Sartori distinguishes between the dominant party on the one hand and the dominant party system on the other hand. The dominant party is defined as a party that “outdistances all the others” by the amount of votes while there must be at least a 10% difference between the strongest and the second strongest party (Sartori 1976: 193-194). As he uses only one criterion to identify a dominant party, which is hardly sufficient to embrace the complexity of this research subject, his definition of a dominant party system adds the criterion that “[t]hree consecutive absolute majorities can

⁶ Sartori uses the term predominant party because according to his opinion the term dominant party has a different meaning. Likewise he also uses the term predominant party system (Sartori 1976: p. 195.) Nonetheless both terminologies refer to the same research subject. Therefore this study will continue to use the term dominant party and dominant party system as well to explain his concept so not to confuse the reader.

be a sufficient indication, provided that the electorate appears stabilized, that the absolute majority threshold is clearly surpassed, and/or that the interval is wide" (Sartori 1976, 199). Although this definition lacks some important features, such as the implementation of a historical project and the dominant bargaining position, it highlights the time perspective and gives an interesting alternative to the definition above. Sartori's criteria make it possible to identify a dominant party *ex ante* by setting criteria, which – if they are met – allow speaking of a dominant party after a period of 12-15 years in power. Taking up Pempel's definition of a dominant party and supplementing it with Sartori's indicative criteria for a prospective dominant party will therefore serve as a comprehensive and appropriate framework.

2.1.2 Dominant parties and democracies in multicultural societies

Following the definition of a dominant party the next step is to embed the dominant party in democracies in multicultural societies. Some researchers confidently place the dominant party system in the democratic realm. "Since it is more than one party to compete, it is certainly democratic in the procedural sense. And since (...) it mobilizes the modal citizens of a society, it can be said to be substantively democratic as well" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 593). Referring to Dahl's basic two criteria for a democracy, contestation and participation, Arian and Barnes see the dominant party system as a democratic system. Others, however, while accepting the minimal procedural definition of democracy, insist on alternation in office before classifying a regime as democratic (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). For them the criterion of competition means more than the opportunity to compete. The availability of competitors and civil and political liberties that create a competitive environment only prove to be viable in case of an alternation of power. In a third approach proposed by Sartori, both other approaches to dominant party systems and democracy are integrated in a typology of party systems. It distinguishes between party systems within authoritarian frameworks and within competitive frameworks (Sartori 1976: 230). A dominant party system in an authoritarian framework shows some pluralist/democratic features but is clearly not liberal democratic and unable to sustain or tolerate a competitive party system. A dominant party system in a competitive and democratic system functions according to some liberal democratic rules but is still well short of an alternation of power (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: XVii-XViii). Thus, Sartori's typology sees dominant party systems neither as fully democratic (due

to the lack of alternation of power) nor as fully authoritarian (due to some democratic features even within authoritarian frameworks). On the basis of Sartori's typology and alike Giliomee and Simkins this study defines dominant party rule not as subtype of democracy but as a particular political configuration within a framework in which at least some democratic rules or practices have to be observed (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: XV). Moreover, Sartori's typology does not only distinguish between a dominant party in two different frameworks but distinguishes between two different types of dominant parties accordingly, i.e. the predominant party that operates within the competitive framework and the hegemonic party that operates within the authoritarian framework. With this conceptual differentiation between two different types of dominant parties this typology also points to the potential of change. Although the dominant party system is a system *sui generis*, i.e. it is not a transition stage between pure types, it may be transformed into a different system like all other systems as well (Arian and Barnes 1974: 592-593). According to Sartori's typology this means on the one hand that a dominant party can work towards a more democratic environment to become a predominant party. Arian and Barnes even see the dominant party model as providing "an alternative way of understanding the emergence of competitive democracies in multiparty systems" (Arian and Barnes 1974: 613). On the other hand a dominant party can work towards a more authoritarian framework to become a hegemonic party. In any case, the typology and the definition of dominant party rule make clear that a dominant party system is on the edge between an authoritarian and a democratic framework. This understanding leaves space for different types of dominant party systems and for examining change on the continuum from one framework to the other.

In order to analyse the dominant party system in a multicultural society the most important issue is to ask for the role a dominant party plays in integrating people with different cultural backgrounds into the political system. As is to be expected, research opinions on this topic are equally various. On the one hand some see the "national political and dominant party as the primary (and only) structure for coping with the myriad of parochial and ethnic pressures" in multicultural societies (Coleman and Rosberg 1964: 691). According to this approach the dominant party contributes strongly to the integration of society because it is "a microcosm of a partially pluralist society. Its factions reflect the divisions of the society..." (Arian and Barnes 1974: 602). In such a political party the different groups negotiate together within the party and the outcome is supposed to serve all members of society. On the other hand most of the researchers point to a strongly negative contribution of dominant parties

in national integration because the majority group by and large dominates most dominant parties in multicultural societies. In such a case, dominant party rule means majority rule and is regarded a problem for multicultural societies "because it permits domination of a majority in perpetuity" (Horowitz 1993: 29). And a long-lasting domination over the state enables a dominant party to establish an ethnically based patronage system and with that "to reward its support groups and to punish or isolate its enemies" (Pempel 1990: 352). The different views reveal that a dominant party is capable of fostering national integration though particularly in multicultural societies it can also lead to a majority suppressing the minorities and thus alienating them from the state.

The analysis of the dominant party concept and its implications on democracies in multicultural societies is ambiguous. The description of the state of the art research rather resembles a collection of possible implications of dominant parties than a coherent system that delivers explanations as to why the specific dominant party exerts certain implications. Researchers like Pempel (1990) or Giliomee and Simkins (1999) attempted to cluster certain strategies and behavioural styles of dominant parties in industrialised and semi-industrialised countries respectively. Nonetheless, the different case studies in their books reveal that a dominant party might have very different implications on a democracy in multicultural societies: Some integrate the population into the political system and some disintegrate them. Some transform political systems to a fully-fledged democracy while some pave the way for an authoritarian system. Similarly, Spieß (2004) compared two dominant parties in his dissertation, the Indian National Congress in India and the ANC in South Africa. His research highlights the significance of dominant parties, especially the strategies of the party elite, for the development of political systems. By identifying important categories he evaluates reasons for the dominant position in the party system and mechanisms of control and competition that dominant parties use to maintain their comfortable position. In his conclusion Spieß singles out three major factors why South Africa will go another path than India and even draws up scenarios, albeit none has come true after ten years (Spieß 2002 and 2004). Alike Pempel (1990) and Giliomee and Simkins (1999) also Spieß' insightful analysis describes causes and maintenance of one-party dominance. However, all the approaches are rather descriptive than able to explain why the political system develops to the one or the other direction. This research aims at going beyond a descriptive approach with the following leading question: Why do some dominant parties exert positive effects on democracies while others exert negative ones? In this vein, this study aims at contributing

to a framework that explains rather than describes the implications of dominant parties on democracies in multicultural societies.

2.1.3 Selecting the party typology of Diamond and Gunther

In order to explain why some dominant parties exert positive and some negative effects on democracies the research has to look deeper into political parties and differentiate between relevant party characteristics. For that reason the research interest requires to go beyond the common research on dominant parties and to take up a different approach. The identification of suitable party characteristics can best be delivered by an appropriate party typology. There are many different party typologies available in political science literature but most of them are not suitable for the comparison of the selected cases. Firstly, most of the party typologies were derived from studies of West European parties over the past century and a half, and the kind of party types described in these typologies have been affected by social and technological environments extremely different to the environments in developing countries. To give an example, the much more heterogeneous composition of the population in developing countries has strongly influenced the structure of political parties (Diamond and Gunther 2003: 168). Secondly, most of the older party typologies concentrate on one specific dimension or perspective only and locate the political parties accordingly. There are typologies based on functional criteria that mean an organizational *raison d'être* or some specific goal of the party. Other typologies are organizational and distinguish between parties that have "thin organizational structures and those that have developed large infrastructures and complex networks of collaborative relationships with other secondary organizations". Furthermore, typologies can be based on sociological criteria that means "on the notion that parties are the products of various social groups" (Montero and Gunther 2002:14). Finally, a few researchers mix the different criteria but without creating a coherent and comprehensive system of criteria.⁷ Spieß for example identifies "four processes of constant fine-tuning and adaptation to changing social conditions" that dominant parties use to uphold their strong position (Spieß 2002):

⁷ Diamond and Gunther (2003) and Montero and Gunther (2002) give more detailed views over the different party typologies and their advocates.

- Interaction with opposition
- Selective mobilization
- Factionalism and party coherence and
- State-party collusion and patronage.

This set of criteria forms a good analytical framework for his analysis because it sheds light on different areas of party political behaviour. However, the criteria are not an integral part of a comprehensive system and some important criteria are missing.

The two fundamental problems of a party typology drove Diamond and Gunther to create a new party typology. On the one hand they introduced new party types in order to depict the many political parties in the developing countries that are fundamentally different to the ones found in the developed world and in conventional typologies. Particularly the introduction of ethnicity-based parties is highly relevant for the selected countries of this study. On the other hand their party typology integrates different sets of criteria - organizational, functional and strategic - into a coherent framework. Both these characteristics have contributed to the attractiveness of the typology for this study.

By means of the organizational, functional and strategic criteria it is possible to determine the type of political party.⁸ First of all, this typology uses organizational criteria to identify five broad types or 'genera' of political parties (Diamond and Gunther 2003: 171). These genera are the following:⁹

- Elite-based parties
The organizational structures of these parties are minimal and based upon established elites and related interpersonal networks within a geographic area. Consequently, a national-level party structure is based upon an alliance among locally based elites. The electoral commitment of those parties consists of the distribution of particularistic benefits to residents or to clients at the bottom of a patron-client hierarchy.

⁸ Randall 2005 best describes the procedure of how to categorize the parties.

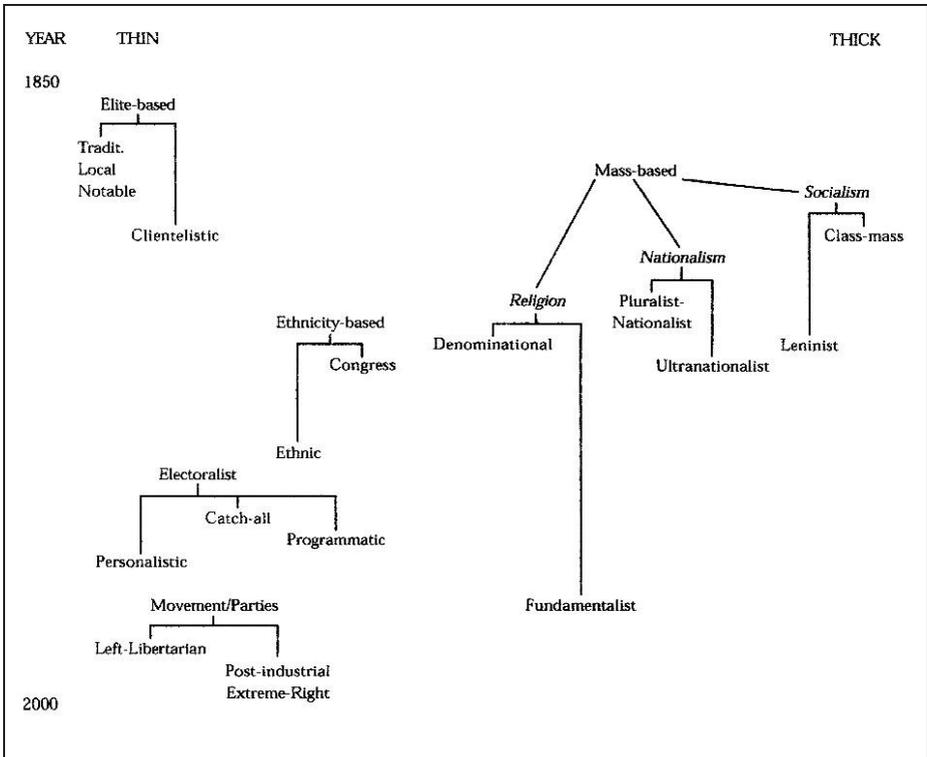
⁹ The short description of the different genera is based mainly on Diamond and Gunther (2003). The integration and discussion of other typologies at this stage would blur the division into the five genera, confuse the different terms and would not contribute to a clear delineation of the theoretical reference frame.

- **Mass-based parties**
Mass-based parties are characterised by a large base of dues-paying members who remain active in party affairs even during periods between elections. They seek to penetrate into a number of spheres of social life with the help of affiliated trade unions and other social organizations. On the one hand these affiliated actors serve as political allies and so help to mobilize support. On the other hand they project programmatic objectives of the party from the electoral-parliamentary arena into a variety of spheres of social life. Moreover, a mass-based party builds up extensive arrays of supportive organizations, e.g. party newspapers and networks of local party branches that are established nationwide and which also serve as socialising hot spot for its members.
- **Ethnicity-based parties**
Ethnicity-based parties do not have such an extensive and elaborate organization as mass-based parties. But what distinguishes them most are their different political and electoral logics, i.e. they do not advance a programme for the entire society but for the interests of a particular ethnic group or coalition of groups. Their predominant goal is to use existing state structures to channel benefits towards their electoral clientele.
- **Electoralist parties**
Electoralist parties are organizationally thin and maintain only a relatively skeletal existence. However, at election time they spring into action to serve their primary function, the conduct of campaigns. For campaigning they utilise modern campaign techniques such as television and other mass-communication media rather than mobilising their own party members or affiliated organizations. Due to the centrality of campaigning those parties rely heavily on professionals who skilfully carry out such campaigns as well as on a party candidate who is chosen according to charisma and personal attractiveness rather than the length of service or formal position within the party.
- **Movement parties**
Movement parties straddle somewhere between political parties and movements. Their organization is still characterized by a certain fluidity of party structures. This genus is particularly appropriate for newly emerging parties prior to their institutionalization, such as the Labour Party in Britain.

In a second step, subtypes within the five genera will be identified by analysing the nature of the party's programmatic commitments. Finally, the respective political

party will be categorised into subtypes by examining the strategic and behavioural norms of the party. The following figure gives a good overall view over the five genera and their respective subtypes.

Figure 1: *Species of Political Parties*



(Source: Diamond and Gunther 2001: 173)

This new party typology approach combines the structural criteria (organization/structure) with the functional (ideology/program) and the behavioural criteria (political behaviour) to a coherent and comprehensive system (Erdmann 2002: 269).



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