The Variances of Party Authoritarianism: Actors Matter

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I. Introduction

Party authoritarianism and intra-party democracy are two symmetrically opposed concepts, implying the existence of a specific power structure inside party organizations. The power structure of a party is usually characterized by the power relationship between the three faces of the party organization: Party in public office, party in central office and party on the ground (Katz and Mair, 1993). While the struggle for power between the party in central office and the party in public office is one dimension of the power structure within parties, another dimension is the relationship between the party at the local level (party on the ground) and the party at the national level (party in central office). This article elaborates the power structure of party organizations with respect to the latter dimension. In other words, this article envisages that party authoritarianism takes place when the party on the ground becomes subordinate to the exclusively made decisions by a small group of central party elite. In internally democratic parties, on the other hand, the decision-making process takes place in an inclusive manner (including all party members and in some cases even the electorate) and the local party organizations hold a certain degree of power to control the top leadership of the party.\footnote{In this respect intra-party democracy is not only comprised of Rahat and Hazan’s (2001) ‘inclusiveness’ measurement but also of a certain degree of checks and balances between the local and national levels of the party organization.}

Whether the structural changes observed within party organizations makes them internally more or less democratic has received a great deal of attention in the party politics literature. The structural changes are derived from the evidence that parties in western democracies are losing their preeminent role in representation and aggregation of interests as they become less connected to the society (Katz et.al.
1992; Schmitter, 2001; Katz and Mair, 1995; Koole, 1996; Mair and Biezen, 2001; Scarrow, 2000). This evidence has brought about two opposite hypotheses regarding the power structures of the parties so far: The first hypothesis, which is grounded in the original work of Michels (1962), is that the party on the ground – the principal – is losing its control over the central party elite – the agent – (Katz and Mair, 1995; Katz, 2001; Blyth and Katz, 2005). In other words, parties are gaining authoritarian features. The second hypothesis is that, rather than being divorced from the party on the ground, the central party elite is becoming more sensitive to the demands of the members, and strengthening their role in the party (Kitschelt, 2000; Scarrow, 1999, 2000; Seyd, 1999). In other words, parties are acquiring more democratic features.

This debate on the power structures of parties, unfortunately, focuses only on one side of the coin. That is, while the question of whether parties are becoming more or less democratic raises divergent hypotheses, the question of why parties with authoritarian power structures can or cannot become democratic does not receive much attention. In many developing democracies, yet, parties with authoritarian structures outnumber the internally democratic parties. The major reason for this is that the macro-level factors such as the political culture and the institutional structures play a fundamental role in shaping the major pattern within the power structures of parties at their formation. As Biezen (2005:169) argues, despite the many similarities between parties in old and new democracies that exist today, they have arrived at this stage by setting off from two entirely different points of departure. In other words, the parties in old (western) democracies may be becoming more authoritarian as a result of ‘party adaptation’, but many parties in new (developing) democracies were already formed with certain authoritarian characteristics at their inception.²

² For instance, it is a common perception that parties in many post-communist states have leader-dependent party organizations because of their weak grounding in civil society (Enyedi, 2006; Toka,
This article brings forth the attempt to understand—the often neglected—authoritarian party structures, asking the following set of questions: Why cannot some authoritarian parties become democratic? Are authoritarian power structures static or do they change in time? If so, what are the possible variances across and within authoritarian party structures? What causes such variances? Which type of party authoritarianism is close to being democratic? These set of questions are implicative on the micro causes of democratic party structures as well because they shed light onto what prevents the development of party democracy at the organizational level while presenting the causal inference for variance in party authoritarianism.

Case Selection: The authoritarian party structures analyzed in this study are selected from Turkey where the formation of the first parties followed a top-down, elite-driven transition to democracy, paving the way for “leaders’ dominance” as the major pattern in party structures. The authoritarian characteristics of the first parties were adopted by their successors later on. Furthermore, these characteristics have become institutionalized after the adoption of the Law on Political Parties (Siyasi Partiler Kanunu No:2820). As Özbudun asserts (2006:550):

The Turkish political parties law, adopted in 1983 by the military regime, is probably the most detailed of its kind in Europe. It contains not only party prohibitions, but also extremely detailed regulations on party organization, registration, membership, nominations, discipline, and party finance. Consequently, all Turkish parties have very similar organizational structures imposed upon them by the law.

1997; Kopecky, 1995; Lewis, 2000; Szcerbiak, 2001; Biezen, 2003). In Latin America ‘organizationally thin’ parties with low degrees of party membership is known as the contingent effect of an illiterate, rural and ‘politically unmobilized’ segment of the society (Ware, 1996:139; Gunther and Diamond, 2003:173). In the Middle East, no indigenous tradition of representation existed among political parties, and they dealt less with seizing power than redefining state boundaries and establishing new regimes; which led them to possess leader-dependent structures (Rustow, 1966).
Therefore, Turkey is an ideal, representative case where authoritarian party structures are embedded in the political culture and expected to have similar characteristics as a result of the institutional framework imposed on them.

The selected four parties – AKP, CHP, MHP, DTP – are the current parties in the Turkish party system, representing four major ideological trends and are currently present in the parliamentary office. Being a part of the system creates identical goals for parties as organizational units, each of them having the similar concern, that is, to be able to compete in the electoral arena. For the sake of the research objectives, the parties which have been away from public office for a long period of time (such as the ANAP, DP and DSP) are eliminated from the study since the major electoral defeat of these parties in 2002 elections has made their organizational structures become very unstable, leading to a number of resignations of party leaders and attempts for unification among parties. These cases, therefore, would not provide healthy analytical results in studying the power structure of authoritarian parties.

**Findings / Arguments:** Based on a cross-regional research comprising of 93 in-depth interviews with local party activists across four parties in Turkey, this study has found out that authoritarian party structures show variance across and within party organizations in a given political context. The identified four variances of party authoritarianism are: clandestine, benign, challenged and coercive. It is argued that the type of interest configuration between the local and national party actors constitutes the character of the power structure of authoritarian parties; which can be either ‘clandestine’ or ‘benign’. The constitutive effect of the interest configuration on

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3 The Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* – ANAP) has had 6 leadership changes between 2002-2009; it has also attempted to unite with the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* – DYP) before the 2007 general elections but the attempt failed. The Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti* – DSP), on the other hand, was led by one leader since the party founder’s resignation in 2004 and its MP candidates achieved to enter the parliament in 2007 only through being represented under the CHP. As the party was not successful in the local elections 2009, the party leader resigned in April 2009.

4 See Appendix for a detailed description of the empirical research and the conducted interviews.
the power structure of parties is derived from the principal-agent (PA) theory, which outlines an asymmetrical relationship between the major actors with conflictual interests in hierarchical organizations. Yet, the article emphasizes the need to apply the PA theory in a reverse form to authoritarian party structures in order to shed light on different patterns of party authoritarianism. In other words, the role of the *principal* must be assigned to the central party elite and the role of the *agent* must be assigned to local party activists.

The article further argues that the emergence of exogenous and endogenous triggers (such as legitimacy crises or electoral defeats) *causes* a change in the existing interest configuration within the party, and thus in its power structure, which can become ‘challenged’ and ‘coercive’ authoritarianism. Based on the degree of change in the interest configurations of the local and national party actors, the party may either exit from authoritarianism or return back to the stage of clandestine or benign authoritarianism. In this regard, an authoritarian party structure is neither a static nor a uniform phenomenon.

**Roadmap:** This article is organized in the following order: First, the power structure of the authoritarian parties is analyzed through the principal-agent theory, distinguishing them from the power structures of internally democratic parties. Second, the possible interest configurations between the local and national level party actors are outlined in authoritarian party structures, borrowing from the principal-agent theory’s emphasis on actors’ interests. Third section builds a theoretical framework for the possible variances of party organizations, which derive from the constitutive role of different interest configurations and the causal effect of the exogenous and endogenous triggers on the authoritarian power structure of the parties. Fourth section tests the empirical plausibility of the theoretical arguments in the comparative case study of Turkey. In conclusion, some future perspectives are
provided on why it is least likely that some authoritarian parties cannot become democratic in time.

II. Principal-Agent Theory in Authoritarian Party Structures

Among the various forms of governance mechanisms, the principal-agent (PA) relationship is the one taking part in hierarchical organizations (Peters and Pierre, 2000; Stoker, 1998). The PA theory is particularly useful to explain the different patterns of power relationships within authoritarian parties, which are composed of certain hierarchical structures based on delegation of authority, i.e. authority that is delegated from central party leaders to the local party activists.

Yet, the usage of the PA theory in the studies of party organizations is limited to the cases drawn from western democracies where it is intra-party democracy that has originally been present in the power structure of parties. This limitation leads to a taken-for-granted manner in attributing the principal and the agent roles to party actors. In this respect, based on the threefold relationship among the local party activists (party on the ground), party in central office and party in public office, the PA model is conventionally applied to party organizations as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conventional Understanding of the PA Model in Party Organizations
According to this delegation approach, the extra-party organizations have a formal internal party selection mechanism. The party on the ground selects those individuals as leaders for the central party office who are considered most likely to achieve the party’s collective goals. These party goals tend to be policy-seeking, office-seeking, or votes-seeking (Strom 1990; Müller and Strom 1999).

On the other hand, extra-parliamentary party organizations delegate their authority to the party in public office and exercise their influence both via internal party mechanisms and via the institutions and mechanisms of the parliamentary chain of delegation. The delegation of authority from the extra-parliamentary organization to the party in public office is shown in Figure 1 with two different arrows, one originating from the party on the ground and the other from the central party office. This implies the inclusive nature of the candidate selection process, which gives equal strength to the national and local party organizations in determining their agents in the parliamentary office. If the delegation link between the party on the ground and the party in public office gets weakened in time (as shown with a dashed link), it makes the central party office stronger in determining the candidates. Yet, intra-party democracy continues to exist as long as the party on the ground has the power to control the central party office’s decisions. In this respect, what matters most for the continuity of intra-party democracy is the strength of the delegation link between the party on the ground and the party in central office so that the party on the ground has the necessary checks and balances to control the decisions of the central party office in candidate selection processes.

The conventional understanding of the PA model in extra-parliamentary party organizations can be regarded as a tool in understanding why the agent, the central party leadership, tends to shirk from its principal, local party activists. In fact, what
Michels (1962) proves with his ‘iron law of oligarchy thesis’ is that the agent (central party office) becomes the essential figure in exercising authority in time, entirely unconstrained by the principal (local party activists).

However, in the political contexts of many developing democracies, party authoritarianism is embedded in the political culture and institutions of a system, and thus the roles of the principal and the agent take place in a reverse form in the power structure of the extra-parliamentary party organization. In such contexts, where parties are established in a top-down manner through elite-driven transitions to democracy, the party structure is already constituted in a way that concentrates the power in the hands of the party leaders at their very formation (Biezen, 2003, 2005; Enyedi, 2006, Diamond and Gunther, 2003), and it is the party in central office that controls the party organization as a whole. In this respect, the party in central office – the main principal of the party organization - delegates its authority both to the local party activists and to the party in public office to fulfill certain tasks on its behalf. Figure 2. shows the delegation relationships in such a party structure.

![Figure 2. PA Model in Authoritarian Party Structures](image-url)
Where it is the central party leaders who dominate the power structure in party organizations at the very inception, the local party activists act as the agents of the party leaders to perform the given tasks in line with the party goal. For the office-seeking and vote-seeking parties, the party leaders assign the tasks of campaigning or organizing at the local level to the local party activists. During electoral campaigns, for instance, such tasks are ‘maintaining voter records’, ‘knocking on doors’, ‘initiating phone banks’, ‘organizing local social events’, etc (Eldersveld, 1964; Conway et. al, 1974). If the goal of the party is to determine and implement policies in the institutions to which the party gains access, then the local party activists can be asked to initiate such policy determination and implementation processes at the local level. With respect to delegating authority to the party in public office, i.e. candidate selection, it is, again, up to the party leaders whether to include the local party activists in the decision-making process or not (the delegation link between the local party activists and the party in public office is, thus, showed by a dashed line).

According to the PA theory, acting on behalf of the other is against the economic principle of self-interest. In this respect, within an authoritarian party structure, it is expected that the local party activists tend to shirk from the authority of the party leaders in case their interests do not overlap with their leaders. The occurrence of the act of shirking by the local party activists can be considered as a challenge to the authoritarian structures, which may lead to agency losses and agency costs in the organization. In this case, the party leaders, as the strongest power-holders in the party organization, have to apply certain control mechanisms to prevent the act of shirking. The possible shirk of the agents derives from the conflict of interests between the principals and the agents as well as the informational advantage of the agents over the principals (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991). The informational advantage of the local party activists over the party leaders is derived from their more
knowledged position about their own acts and the local constituencies that they are responsible for. The agenda of the party leaders may be loaded with national political affairs, which makes it extremely difficult for them to keep the track of the local agents in each local constituency. The principals, in this respect, have to adopt certain control mechanisms such as imposing *ex post* negative sanctions over the agents who act beyond the scope of their activity or providing *positive sanctions* in the form of material rewards. The former may include a threat of expulsion or marginalization in the party whereas the latter may be the offer for a position in the public office or simply monetary benefits.

The possible influence of the agents – local party activists – on their principal – central party office – *may lead to an exit from authoritarianism* in the party structure. Yet, such influence depends on, first, the existence of *conflictual interests* between the agents and principals, second, on the *power resources of the agents*, which vary in scope and domain. The agents who possess certain power resources can be in a more advantageous position than the other agents in the power relationship with the principal. Dahl defines power resources as the ‘*means* by which one person can influence the behavior of other persons’ (1976:37, emphasis added). The most well-known power resources comprise of categories such as patterns of social standing, distribution of wealth, access to legality, popularity and control over sources of information (Bertrand de Jouvenel, 1952; Dahl, 1961:229; Laswell and Kaplan, 1950).

**III. Types of Interest Configurations in Authoritarian Party Structures**

In order for the agents (local party activists) to attempt to shirk from the authority of their principals (central party leaders), the interests of the two actors must be conflictual. This leads us to the question of under what circumstances and why do the
interests between the party leaders and the local party activists conflict with each other?

The office-seeking, policy-seeking and vote-seeking interests of political parties (Strom, 1990; Müller and Strom, 1999) are based on a party’s position within the external competitive environment. In other words, these are the organizational interests or aims of a political party. These organizational interests may overlap with the party actors’ (leaders and activists) own interests, yet they may not necessarily have to be the same with personal-level interests. As Panebianco rightly asserts:

... a plurality of aims are often pursued within an organization, sometimes as many as there are actors in the organization. The so-called organizational aims, therefore, either simply indicate the result, the complex effect which derives from the simultaneous pursuit of particular aims by the different actors (and in that case it would be equivocal to define such an effect as an “aim”), or else they are but abstractions lacking empirical evidence (1988:7, emphasis added).

The interests of the party actors can be both material and social types. ‘Social interests’ are those derived from shared ideas, values and norms, which constitute the identities and consequently the interests and interactions of such actors in the organization. The material interests, on the other hand, are purely derived from an individual-level cost-benefit calculus. The interests of the party leaders’ are usually elaborated as being overwhelmingly material in party organizations. In other words, it is argued that the true objective of an organization’s leaders is not to pursue the manifest aim for which the organization is established, but rather the organization’s survival and together with it, the survival of their own power positions (Michels, 1962; Panebianco, 1988:7). In this sense, the materialistic tendency of the party leaders is often taken-for-granted. Even when party leaders pursue policy-seeking aims, it is argued that it is not because they care for those policies, but rather it is because there are organizational constraints that they have to take into account in
order to maintain the survival of their position (Strom, 1990; Panebianco, 1988:14; Haldrich, 1973). Yet, it is too unrealistic to consider *any party actor* having only material interests. Even in authoritarian party structures, the principals (leaders) and the agents (activists) may have both social and material interests, which affects the nature of the power relationship between the agent and the principal within the party.

Distinguishing the interests of party actors as ‘social’ and ‘material’ is helpful to clarify the confusion between ‘purposive (or ideological)’ and ‘solidary’ motives in the often-referred Clark-Wilson (1961) categorization of membership motivations. The assignment of questionnaire items according to the Clark-Wilson categorization does not show consistency in several studies (Costantini and King, 1984:81). For instance, some researchers consider the ‘sense of community obligation’ as a purposive (ideological) motive, while some locate it in the solidary category (see the examples of Hofstetter, 1973 and Roback, 1980). Conway and Feigert (1968) assign ‘party loyalty’ to the purposive category, whereas most others label it as a solidary motive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Interests</th>
<th>Social Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search for power and influence</td>
<td>An interest enhancing the actor’s status in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interest in being appointed to a government office</td>
<td>Strong loyalty to the party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interest for running for public office</td>
<td>Loyalty to party leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being close to influential people</td>
<td>Concern for public issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An interest for finding a job</td>
<td>Sense of community obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making social contacts and friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. List of Material and Social Interests of the Party Actors*

Table 1 shows the motives categorized according to the social and material interests of the party actors. It is important to note that the items labeled under the ‘material
interests’ within Table 1 are different from Eldersveld’s (1964) description of ‘personal motives’ or motives that are derived from ‘self-enhancement’ (Costantini and King, 1984). ‘Personal motives’ or ‘self-enhancement’ have previously been labeled as material incentives, however, they include the interests derived not only from tangible rewards but also from intangible rewards such as status enhancement or community recognition (Costantini and King, 1984:86). However, such items are listed in the ‘social interest’ category in the above table because these are still the interests constituted by the socialization process of the actors. Such interests are not binding the strategic bargaining process between the actors; for instance, an actor’s motive for improving his social status does not create a strategic relationship between him and the other actors in the party. It is rather a motive for power or influence that leads to conflictual and strategic processes based in the power structure of the party.

![Figure 3](image-url)

**Figure 3.** The interest configuration in authoritarian parties based on material and social interests

The type of interests molds the interest configuration among the agents and principals within party organizations. Figure 3 shows the different interest configurations between the principals and the agents in authoritarian party structures based on these social and material types of interests. In this respect, the figure takes into
consideration that not only interests of the local party actors, but also the interests of the party leaders may vary between material and social types.

*Strategic interest configuration:* In a strategic interest configuration, both the principals and the agents have material interests. The behavior of the actors in the party is initially motivated by self-defined preferences, which consist of access to political power and public office. Party leaders (principals) behave in an authoritarian manner in decision-making processes because their desire for power or holding an office is more dominant than their social interests. In general, the office-seeking or vote-seeking interest of the party organization overlaps with the material interests of the party leaders because they can have access to power only by achieving electoral success, which maintains the organization’s survival.

On the other hand, in this type of configuration, the agents (local party activists) with material interests in the party organization do not necessarily take the party rules and the decisions of the principals for granted. They conform with the decision of the principals only if it increases their political utility and on the condition that the costs of compliance are less than the costs of opposition.

Within this purely zero-sum game between the principals and the agents, the principals employ a number of control mechanisms to win the submission of the agents to their authority. The administrative procedures – the discipline mechanisms already outlined in the party bylaws – may not be sufficient to control the possible shirk of the agents due to their informational advantage. Instead, providing *ex ante* positive or *ex post* negative sanctions is a convenient method. Positive sanctions (rewards or promised rewards) are important resources by which the principals affect the behavior of their agents. Appealing to the material interests of the agents, the positive sanctions are useful tools to help agents increase their utility, promising certain benefits in the power structure. These positive sanctions are also, in
Panebianco’s words (1988:9), selective incentives, which are benefits that the party leadership distributes only to some of the participants and in varying amounts. Another control mechanism is to impose *ex post* negative sanctions, in the form of a threat of marginalization in the power structure of the party. The negative sanctions may become actualized and turn into negative incentives (Olson, 1965), such as imposition of coercion or repression over the local actors whose interests conflict with the party leaders’ interests.

*Hybrid Interest Configuration I*: In this type of interest configuration, while the party leaders aim to seek power in the party and are therefore materially motivated, the behavior of the local party actors is shaped by their social interests. This type of configuration is commonly observable in many party structures as many scholars argue that party activists tend to be more policy-oriented or attached to the party ideology than the party leaders who are more office oriented (May, 1973; Müller and Strom, 1999). Activists who are profoundly motivated by non-material incentives, and are committed to the party ideology, may be less likely to compromise on issues (Hitlin and Jackson 1977; Roback 1975; Soule and Clarke 1970; Wildavsky 1965). They may also be the most likely to drop out if the party leadership does not take the policy positions that they favor, compared to the other members who are motivated by material incentives. The activists with material incentives are more likely to remain involved even if their party takes policy positions that they do not fully support, as their incentives for involvement remain less affected (Conway and Feigert 1974).

In authoritarian party structures in which the party leaders have material interests – desire for power and public office –, the policy-oriented activists do not necessarily constrain the behavior of the party leaders. In fact, the leaders would rather put up with agency costs than decentralizing policy decisions or ensuring their
accountability to party activists. In this respect, it is reasonable to expect that the policy-seeking members whose interests conflict with the party leadership choose the exit option from the party organization, and do not create a challenge to party authoritarianism. Yet, apart from being policy-oriented, the social interests of the party members may also be based on ‘enhancing social status’, ‘loyalty to the party leader or party ideology’, as described in Table 1. Such motives, in fact, have a great potential to serve to the material interests of the party leaders who seek to consolidate their power in the party. ‘Loyalty’ or ‘social status enhancement’ of the party activists can be used in a strategic way by the party leaders. The distribution of collective incentives (both solidary and purposive incentives) to these socially motivated party activists, then, keeps them loyal to the authoritarian behavior of the party leaders and becomes functional for the realization of the party leaders’ power-seeking goals.

**Hybrid Interest Configuration II:** In this type of interest configuration, the party leaders have social, the activists have material interests. The motivation of the party leaders to behave in an authoritarian way does not need to originate from power-seeking aims. Party leaders, in many contexts, have to deal with the efficiency-democracy dilemma of their party organizations (Blau and Meyer, 1956). In this sense, they may choose to maximize efficiency at the expense of intra-party democracy. To maintain their authority, they may use positive and negative sanctions to appeal to the materially motivated agents as outlined in the strategic type of interest configuration. Therefore, the outcome of this type of configuration can be expected to be similar to the outcome in the ‘strategic interest configuration’ in which the authoritarianism is maintained through positive or negative sanctions.

**Non-strategic Interest Configuration:** Within this type of interest configuration, both the party leaders and the party activists have social interests. The authoritarian behavior of the party leaders is, again, derived from their norms and
values rather than power-seeking aims (i.e. efficiency vs democracy). The activists are ideationally subordinated to the decisions of the party and the party leader. In this respect, the outcome of this type of configuration can be expected to be similar to the outcome in ‘Hybrid Interest Configuration I’ in which the party leaders use the social interests of the activists in a strategic way, keeping them loyal to their authoritarian behavior.

**IV. Variances of Party Authoritarianism**

The existence of different interest configurations within the structure of authoritarian parties collectively shows that *it is the interests of the agents that matter for the potential variance* in party authoritarianism. In other words, authoritarian party leaders, either motivated by material or social interests, tend to repress or conceal the potential conflicts within the party, yet, they have to take into account the types of interests in order to identify the true control mechanism for the potential shirk of the agents. The possible variances in party authoritarianism that emerge based on these interest configurations are clandestine, benign, challenged and coercive authoritarianism.

Clandestine and benign authoritarianism constitute equilibrium in the power structure of a party. In other words, the party leaders as the principals and the local party activists as the agents form a power relationship based on one of the four types of interest configurations. The *benign authoritarianism* takes place when the agents have material interests as shown either in the ‘Strategic Interest Configuration’ or in the ‘Hybrid Interest Configuration I’. In order to respond to the material interests of the party activists, the authoritarian party leaders have to distribute selective incentives, in other words, provide positive sanctions to the activists. This leads to the emergence of benign authoritarianism in which the local activists are aware of intra-
party conflicts and yet, the party leaders win the submission of the local party activists by the offer of material rewards (positive sanctions) (Galbraith, 1986:213). The clandestine authoritarianism on the other hand, takes place when the agents have social interests that can be manipulated by the party leaders in order to conceal the potential conflicts in the party. The local party activists who possess social interests such as loyalty to the party ideology, enhancement of their social status or simply loyalty to the party leader can easily be manipulated via collective incentives by the authoritarian party leaders. In this respect, the authoritarian party structure is *clandestine*, in which the local party activists are unconscious both about the conflicts and the exercise of power. If the conflicts were observable in this type of authoritarianism, the action in question would be to pose a challenge to the authority of the party leaders.

Yet the equilibrium in the power structure is not static and can be subject to change through the exogenous and endogenous triggers in the political system; leading to challenges against the authoritarian structure in the party, and subsequently the use of negative sanctions by the party leaders. In other words, clandestine and benign authoritarianism can turn into *challenged* and *coercive authoritarianism* respectively in time.

*Exogenous and Endogenous Triggers in the System:* The exogenous and endogenous triggers, acting through interest configurations, have the potential to alter the status quo power relationship between the agents and the principals. The endogenous triggers may come in the form of death of the party leader, corruption scandal, appointment of new powerful local actors, etc. The exogenous triggers also come in various forms such as, loss in an election, entrance of a new party into the system, or disappearance of an old one (Harmel and Janda 1994; Janda, Coleman 1998; Koellble 1996).
While interest configurations provide a *constitutive* explanation for the *status quo* power relationship between the local party actors and central party leaders, the exogenous and endogenous triggers provide a *causal* explanation for the *change* in the power relationship between the party leaders and the local party actors.

![Figure 4: The Effect of Exogenous and Endogenous Triggers on Power Structures](image)

In the time of an exogenous or endogenous development, i.e. an electoral defeat, the agents with necessary power resources can challenge the authoritarianism of the party leaders. For the power equilibrium to exist at the original stage, there must be a consensus between the principals and the agents on the authoritarian nature of the party organization; and the benign and clandestine type of authoritarianism provide that consensus. Yet, an endogenous or an exogenous trigger may lead the conflict between the principal and agent to become observable in clandestine authoritarianism, or again may change the nature or the density of the material interests of the agents in benign authoritarianism. In this respect, changing interest configurations may generate the agent’s motivational withdrawal from the goals of the principals.

This is the second stage of party authoritarianism that can be labeled as ‘*challenged authoritarianism*’ which constitutes an unsettled dispute between the local party activists (agent) and the central party elite (principal). Since the conflict takes place in an authoritarian structure, the party elite as the principal can use different control mechanisms to eliminate the challenging behavior. The administrative procedures, such as the party bylaws already limit the scope of the
activities of the party activists as agents, and there are discipline mechanisms outlined in these procedures in case their activities go beyond the legal framework. Yet, when the challenge becomes obvious, principals can use negative sanctions to control the agent’s shirking behavior. The ‘police-patrol oversight’ is one of the mechanisms that the principal uses, actively monitoring the agency behavior with the aim of remediying and detecting violations (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1987: 427). Finally, the party elite may attempt to use coercion to repress the challenging voice of the local party actors, which is based on ‘threats of expulsions’ or ‘marginalizing the role of the activists’. Coercive authoritarianism derives from ‘condign power’, which wins submission by inflicting or threatening appropriately adverse consequences (Galbraith, 1986[1984]:213).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor(s) initiating the stage</th>
<th>Stage One</th>
<th>Stage Two</th>
<th>Stage Three</th>
<th>Stage Four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal and Agent</td>
<td>Only Agent</td>
<td>Only Principal</td>
<td>Agent OR Principal Exit OR Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Aspects of the Stage</td>
<td>Benign OR Clandestine Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Challenged Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Coercive Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Party Democracy OR Back to Stage One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Quo in Interest Configurations</td>
<td>Change in Interest Configurations Through the Effect of Exogenous or Endogenous Triggers</td>
<td>Status Quo in Interest Configurations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Variance in Party Authoritarianism in Four Stages

Table 2 summarizes the variance in party authoritarianism as a four-staged process. The stage four shows the two possible consequences of coercive authoritarianism, based on whether the agent has become successful in shirking from the authority of the party elite. If agent is successful, then the consequence may be exit from authoritarianism and the emergence of intra-party democracy. If the agents are not successful in their attempts and can’t stand against the coercion, then the party authoritarianism prevails. The success of the agents depends on the degree of the
change in the agents’ sources of power, which have been outlined as information, money, enhancement of status, networking, etc. If the change in the power structure is high to the extent that the agents can resist against coercion, the chances of exit from authoritarianism are higher.

V. Analyzing the Variances of Party Authoritarianism in the Case of Turkey

The authoritarian structure of party organizations is a long-lasting and well-known phenomenon in Turkey; elaborated under the labels of ‘oligarchic tendencies’ of parties, ‘highly disciplined leadership’ and ‘overly centralized structures’ (Sayari, 1976; Turan, 1988; Özbudun, 2000). The leadership turnover is hardly possible and the delegation link between the leaders and the activists is formed in a way that the latter acts as the agent of the former. Besides, the candidate lists for the elections are usually prepared by a small group of central party elite in the extra-parliamentary party organization.

The in-depth interviews with the party activists from four parties in Turkey was conducted in four ideologically and geographically distinct local party organizations right after the 2007 parliamentary elections when the AKP received the majority of votes and came to power as the single party in government. The three parties, the CHP, the MHP and the DTP held the second, third and fourth position in the vote share respectively and entered the parliament as opposition parties. The nomination lists of the parties were all determined through the exclusive group of party elites in all four parties (OSCE, 2007:13). Therefore, the research focused on the local party activists’ reaction to this process, observing whether they were satisfied, indifferent or unsatisfied with the authoritarian nature of the candidate

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5 The local party organizations are located in four highly populated urban districts of Turkey. The names of these districts are not revealed in this article due to the reluctance that the local party activists showed in exposing their identity.
selection process. Their interests and relationship with the central party organization have been questioned in order to reveal how different interest configurations constitute divergent power relationships with the central party elite.

The selected four parties, the AKP, CHP, MHP and DTP represent four different ideologies in the two-dimensional ideological spectrum of Turkey (Çarkoğlu, 2007). On the one dimension, constituted of the pro-Islamic and the secular ends, the AKP represents the pro-Islamic identity whereas the CHP represents the secular identity. On the second dimension, there are two ethno-nationalist parties where the MHP represents Turkish nationalism and the DTP represents the Pro-Kurdish identity in Turkey.

The result of the 2007 parliamentary elections can be considered to be an exogenous trigger regarding the party structures. The victory of the AKP strengthened the sources of power for the party elite, such as legitimacy and prestige, since they successfully achieved their organizational goals. The party elite of the CHP, on the contrary, experienced a great deal of decline in its legitimacy in the party organization after the elections as the results reflected its failure as a single opposition party against the AKP in the 2002-2007 parliamentary term. As for the MHP elite, the result of the parliamentary elections could be considered as a slight success because the party was able to get over the %10 electoral threshold and enter the parliament, which was not the case in the previous 2002 parliamentary elections. As for the DTP elite, the election result was considered also as a failure because most of the votes in the DTP’s strongest support base, the Southeastern Anatolia populated with Kurdish citizens, moved to the AKP.

According to this picture, it would be plausible to expect that the authoritarianism within the AKP must be either clandestine or benign right after the parliamentary elections. As the party in government, it is expected that the AKP’s
The central party office can easily satisfy the demands of the materially interested local party activists due to its access to state resources. Similarly, the loyalty of the socially interested party activists to the party organization or to the top leadership is expected to be high after the major victory in party elections. It is also expected that the authoritarian structure of the MHP, as the nationalist party, must carry the characteristics of clandestine or benign authoritarianism due to the same reasons with the AKP organization. Yet, the occurrence of clandestine authoritarianism may be expected to be higher in the MHP because the party leadership’s access to material sources is not as high as the AKP.

On the other hand, it would be plausible to expect that the CHP and the DTP are likely to be the cases of challenged or coercive authoritarianism, considering the failure they experienced in 2007 elections. In other words, the interest configurations within these two parties are expected to be subject to some sort of alteration due to the decline in the legitimacy of the leaders who failed to actualize the organizational aims of their parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents in District K</th>
<th>Local Political Context</th>
<th>AKP Principals</th>
<th>MHP Principals</th>
<th>CHP Principals</th>
<th>DTP Principals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secularism (CHP support)</td>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>Clandestine</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Clandestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agents in District D</td>
<td>Pro-Kurdish Stance (DTP support)</td>
<td>Clandestine and Benign</td>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>Benign</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agents in District T</td>
<td>Nationalism (MHP Support)</td>
<td>Clandestine and Benign</td>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>Benign</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents in District U</td>
<td>Religious Conservatism (AKP Support)</td>
<td>Clandestine</td>
<td>Challenged</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Clandestine</td>
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Table 3. Variance in Party Authoritarianism Among Sixteen PA Structures
However the findings from the empirical study have shown that party authoritarianism varies not only across but also within party organizations (See Table 3). These findings based on sixteen PA relationships (4 parties x 4 districts) support the hypothesis that it is the interest types of the agents that identify the nature of interest configurations and the power relationship within parties, because the interests of the agents are shaped to a large extent by different local contexts.

The Variance in the AKP Structure: In District D and District T, the authoritarian party structure of the AKP showed clandestine patterns after the 2007 elections. District U is already dominated by the AKP votes and the influence of the AKP ideology (conservatism) is ascendant there,\(^6\) therefore it was easy to see that the local party activists were either loyal to the party organization or to the party leader, without questioning their ineffective role in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the AKP leadership conducted surveys on the candidates among the local party activists. While such surveys did not change the final decision of the AKP leaders on the candidate lists, they provided certain collective incentives to the activists leading them to possess a sense of belonging to the party. As one activist stated:

\begin{quote}
‘The surveys that the central party committee carried out during the candidate selection process contained questions like what a parliamentarian should be like and where he or she should be from. There were no suggestions or names of the possible MP candidates on the surveys. But the central party committee took our thoughts into consideration, and I am happy with the results.’\(^7\)
\end{quote}

In District T, on the other hand, the local party activists mainly had either material or social interests, to which the top leadership of the party responded by distributing

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\(^6\) See Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix for the domination of the AKP in District U according to the 2002 and 2007 national election results.

\(^7\) Interview with another local party member from the AKP, District U, 17 October 2007.
both selective and collective incentives. For instance, as unemployment certainly constituted a big social problem in District T,\(^8\) most of the young AKP activists who did not question the authoritarian decision-making process of the party, were serving for the party with an interest to obtain an employee position in the future.\(^9\) Those with social interests, on the other hand, just like in District U, received a sense of belonging to the party, a social incentive, through filling out the surveys that the AKP leadership conducted among the activists, and therefore creating clandestine authoritarianism in the party. As one activist stated:

The candidate selection process took place through tendency surveys. The active members shared their opinions and the central party office gave the final decision. There could have been primaries, but I was satisfied with the results. Our party is very democratic.\(^{10}\)

In District D, the opinions of some of the AKP’s local party activists on the candidate selection process provide important insights for clandestine authoritarianism, as well, deriving from the loyalty to the leader or the ideology of the party. For example, one district party member in District D stated that:

‘Of course, our party leader should have the weight in candidate selection process. We would not be working for the party unless we believed in our leader’s decisions. I have not been affiliated with any party until the AKP. Our leader and his perspectives are the reasons for why we are here today.’\(^{11}\)

A similar attitude from another district party member in District D on the candidate selection process is as follows:

‘The central party committee asked our opinions on candidate selection before the elections. Our opinions are partly influential; we fill out

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\(^8\) Interview with a local media representative, District T, 10 October 2007.

\(^9\) Among the interviewed two young university graduates, one of them already had started working as an employee of the party, while the unemployed other had certain intentions to find a position in the party.

\(^{10}\) Interview with a local party member from the AKP, District T, 9 October 2007.

\(^{11}\) Interview with a local party member from the AKP, District D, 28 September 2007.
surveys about the candidates and the results of these surveys are evaluated at the central level. But I believe that the central committee should give the final decision. I do not see any authoritarianism in my party.12

Apart from clandestine patterns, the benign type of authoritarianism was also observed in the relationship between the local party leaders and the central party leaders within the AKP in District D. The local leaders in District D stated that they were spending nearly each day on party work, from morning to evening:

‘I spend all my time on party activities. Everyday, I either work in the local office or attend outdoor party activities. Since the previous local party chair resigned after declaring his candidacy for the parliamentary office, I have been appointed as the new chair of this district party organization. Since then, I am very busy.’13

The local leaders often prefer to have close ties with the AKP central party office because the AKP, once again, became the single party in the government after the 2007 elections and gained major access to state resources. The central party leaders are easily capable of providing selective incentives to the local party activists. In fact the AKP bylaws also designate the allocation of 30 per cent of the party budget to the local party organizations; which is a great incentive for the local party activists and professionalization of politics even at the local level.14

The most interesting case regarding the variance in the authoritarian party structure of the AKP was the relationship between the AKP leadership and the local activists in District K because in this case, the local party activists pose a challenge to the top leadership. It is because, in times of observable conflict, the agents with necessary power resources can challenge the authoritarian behavior of their principals.

12 Interview with another local party member from the AKP, District D, 28 September 2007.
13 Interview with the AKP local leader in District D, 28 September, 2007.
District K has been one of the problematic districts for the AKP organization as the district lacks a great deal of the AKP support due to the influence of the CHP secularism in the constituency.\textsuperscript{15} Due to this lack of support and incapability of capturing a high number of votes in District K, the AKP central party organization lacks legitimacy on the party ground. An influential local party leader of the AKP in District K stated that:

‘The candidate selection process was undertaken by central enquiry in this constituency. There should have been a primary because it is the local people who can determine the best candidates for office. We were highly disturbed by this behavior of the central party office and we sent a complaint note to the central office… The party leader should not interfere in the decision-making process that belongs to the locals. Regarding the national policy issues, the central party office sometimes takes our opinion but I do not think that they even pay attention to our opinions in making their decisions.’\textsuperscript{16}

Furthermore, it has been observed that the AKP local party organization in District K, under the guidance of their local party leaders, has developed a great association with the low classes and the poverty-stricken migrants living in suburban areas known as the gecekondu inhabitants. The local party chair stated that:

‘Whenever they [the gecekondu inhabitants] are in trouble, they call us. They have made me a legend here. For instance, even a woman delivering a baby calls me to take her to the hospital. Then the rumor spreads, and they treat me as a hero. It is sometimes hard to deal with these because people begin calling you when they demand any kind of help…’\textsuperscript{17}

The AKP local party organization, thus, is aware of the fact the majority of support for the AKP in District K comes due to the local recognition of their status. In this respect, they have generated their own power vis-à-vis the central party office. The

\textsuperscript{15} See Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix for election results.
\textsuperscript{16} Interview with an AKP local leader in District K, 6 October, 2007
\textsuperscript{17} Interview with the AKP local party chair in District K, 6 October, 2007
local party leaders did not have real ideological attachment to the party leaders as they obviously stated.\(^{18}\) In this respect, they have the power to challenge the authoritarian behavior of the central party office as they did, after the candidate selection process.

\textbf{The Variance in the MHP Structure:} Within the MHP, clandestine authoritarianism was observed particularly in the district party organization in District K. One local party leader from the MHP local organization clearly stated that:

‘Any decision made by our leader is right. I am not smarter than Devlet Bahçeli. He gave us the right to vote electronically on the candidate lists prior to the elections. He provided this opportunity to us… Authoritarianism? I am irritated by this word. Any person who has the capability, wisdom and foresight becomes the leader. This is natural. We need a leader to govern us. Atatürk was a leader, he saved this country by himself. Nobody can object to this. Today as well, only one man can save us all.’\(^{19}\)

Another local MHP leader in District K stated that:

‘I was quite satisfied with the candidate list. I did not have any preferences. I do not think there is authoritarianism in our party, it is loyalty to the leader that matters. Furthermore, our party can be considered as democratic because our leader does not make the decisions on his own, he makes them after negotiating with his advisors in the central executive committee.’\(^{20}\)

One local party member in MHP-District K, on the other hand, stated that:

The central party organization conducts a research in cities and districts while preparing the candidate lists. This research is something above us. We are probably unaware of several things while the decisions are made. But I was satisfied with the list and I believe in the sincerity of our leader.’\(^{21}\)

These examples show that even though the decision-making on the candidate selection process was under the strict control of the party leaders – no matter electronic voting was offered to the party members – the local party actors do not

\(^{18}\) Interview with two local party leaders in District K, 6 October 2007.
\(^{19}\) Interview with one MHP local leader in District K, 6 October, 2007.
\(^{20}\) Interview with another MHP local party leader in District K, 6 October, 2007.
\(^{21}\) Interview with a MHP local member in District K, 6 October, 2007.
believed in the authoritarianism within their party, satisfied with the decisions made, mostly because they trust their leader.

Yet, just like the District K case for the AKP, District D is a place where the MHP lacks a great deal of support. The nationalist ideology of the MHP creates a certain disadvantage for the party to gain votes in this district, which is highly populated by the Kurdish people. Despite the lack of MHP legitimacy in this district, the party, for the first time, achieved a great success in gaining a great deal of votes in 2007 national elections. The MHP completed the race as the third party, following the DTP and the AKP and leaving the CHP behind. As one local member stated, this could be regarded as a victory for the MHP organization, which did not exist in the province of Diyarbakır at all, prior to the 2003. The success was, to a great extent, a result of the local MHP organization’s effort, and particularly its leader’s discourse and behavior in appealing to the local people. The MHP local leader was, at the same time, a candidate running for office in 2007 elections and he clearly stated that if his own personal position was not supported by the central party office, he would not work for the party in the region at all. His recognized social status and economic well-being in District D created an extra source of power for the MHP local party organization, challenging the MHP central office’s decisions on candidate selection. The MHP leader in District D stated that:

‘Politics is about serving the people. I do not know and care about what other parties do but the MHP pursues a policy to serve to this country. I promised to undertake six grand projects for the development of District D if I was to be elected an MP. That’s what I explained to the people here. Construction of highways, railway system, dam project over the Dicle river, etc. It is also in my area of interest to bring the District D Soccer Team to the Super League and it was one of my commitments to the people in District D too.’

22 Interview with a MHP local member in District D-Merkez, 29 September, 2007.
23 Interview with the MHP local leader in District D-Merkez, 27 September, 2007.
It is plausible to state that, to some extent, the MHP’s policy discourse at the local level managed to overshadow its nationalist ideology discourse in District D, leading the party to acquire the third place in elections. The local party members have stated that the central party office prepared the candidate lists together with their local leaders, who were powerful in District D and initially leading the most influential local leader to run for the office himself.

The MHP is the most dominant party in District T in electoral terms, and therefore, both the central party office and the local party office have legitimacy in that region. The power of the local party organization in the district of District T is derived from the split between the party in central office and the party in public office (municipality of District T in this case). On issues that are not revealed by the interviewed local party leader in District T, the MHP in the municipal office contradicts the interests of the central party office.\textsuperscript{24} The local party organization in District T acts as the agent of the central party office and has also a very conflictual relationship with the MHP mayor, himself. In this respect, the local party organization in District T has a great informational advantage over the local politics and behaviors of the MHP municipality, which the central party leaders take very seriously. In this respect, the local party leaders are aware of their power and right to affect the decisions of the central party organization. The authoritarian behavior of the central party office was highly challenged by the local party members in District T. As one member stated:

‘The central party office determined the candidate list without asking our opinion. One of the leading candidates was not really wanted by our constituency because he cannot appeal to the people. I do not think he can serve to the people in District T because he is originally not from here, he is from Hatay. Since any candidate is likely to be elected from District T because of the dominance of the nationalist ideology here, the central party office placed this candidate on top of the list. As a result,

\textsuperscript{24}Interview with the MHP local party leader in District T, 10 October, 2007.
he was elected but we were very disturbed and sent our complaints to the central party office. The central party office cannot ignore the local dynamics here.\textsuperscript{25}

The MHP in District U initiated an attitudinal challenge to the central party office regarding the authoritarian nature of the candidate selection process, yet this attitudinal challenge is least likely to turn into a behavioral one due to the lack of certain power resources of the local party organization (information, status, economic well-being, control of local constituency). The local party leader in District U stated that:

‘The candidate selection process was extremely undemocratic. I do not believe that the e-voting system was influential at all. It was rather symbolic or even deceiving. The candidate names that I brought to the attention were not even considered. If we are to give accurate information on the candidate selection process, I am telling you that it was not democratic.’\textsuperscript{26}

\textit{The variance in the CHP structure:} The CHP leader, Deniz Baykal, after the electoral defeat of the CHP in 2007, was subject to a lot of criticisms by the ideologically motivated district party organizations, located in the Aegean region where District K is located.\textsuperscript{27} His legitimacy declined within the party as a result of the failure in achieving the collective goals of the party. Furthermore, one of the most representative public opinion surveys on the parliamentary elections demonstrated that among the CHP voters, the percentage of the people who recognized the need for a new party and the need for a new leader in solving Turkey’s problems was 34.8 per cent and 59.6 per cent respectively.\textsuperscript{28} The distrust for the Baykal administration was

\textsuperscript{25} Interview with an MHP local member in District T, 10 October, 2007.

\textsuperscript{26} Interview with the MHP local leader in District U, 18 October, 2007.

\textsuperscript{27} ‘CHP Ege Örgütleri Ayaklandı’ [The Aegean CHP Organizations Revolt], \textit{Yeni Asır Gazetesi} (Regional Newspaper), 5 October 2007, p.6.

\textsuperscript{28} The research company KONDA carried out this survey within a six-month period in eight series among more than 25,000 respondents and published its report one week before the parliamentary elections on July 22, 2007. ‘Sandığın İçindekini ne Belirtedi? [What Determined the Inside of the Ballot Box?]’, \texttt{www.konda.com.tr} (accessed 10 April 2008).
therefore evident among the voters. Following the outbreak of this distrust, a new faction within the party emerged under the leadership of the Şişli mayor, Mustafa Sarıgül who, after the parliamentary elections, began making statements in the media about his intentions to be the next CHP party leader and sharply condemning the Baykal administration for the CHP’s failure in elections.²⁹ He attempted to gather up all the CHP opposition members under his leadership and organized backdoor meetings with the provincial and district party chairs.³⁰ However, Sarıgül soon was expelled from the party based upon the decision of the party disciplinary committee.

The District K, together with other districts in the province of Izmir, is located in an overwhelmingly secularist context, strictly protecting the Republican principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, close to the ideology of the CHP. The district party organizations in Izmir and the neighbor provinces have initiated a collective challenge against the party leader, after the defeat in elections. Yet, the reaction from the party leader was coercive and the members of these district party organizations were subject to marginalization (and later on forced to leave the party). The local party organization of District K was, therefore, subject to these ex post negative sanctions; the threat of expulsion from the party. The interviews conducted in District K took place in a very tense, uneasy atmosphere in which the local party members and leaders hesitated to provide sincere answers related to candidate selection or internal party democracy.³¹

The district party organization of the CHP in District U is another organization subject to the coercive authoritarianism of the party leader due to similar reasons. In fact, by the time of the interviews, the organization had a new local chair, appointed

³⁰ Interview with an ex-chair of the CHP provincial organization in District D, 29 September 2007.
³¹ The interviews in District K took place three months after the elections when the public criticisms on the CHP leader, Baykal were intense.
by the party leadership. The new local chair explained that the previous local administration in District U was removed as a whole due to the conflicts with the party leadership.\textsuperscript{32} What was rather observed in District U was a transition from coercive authoritarianism to a clandestine authoritarianism with the new appointed local CHP administration. The local party chair stated that:

‘Our leader might seem antipathetic for our society nowadays but what can we change about this situation? People cannot determine its leaders in a capitalist society today, it is the system that determines the leaders. I will be an active party member within the CHP, no matter what. I have been with the CHP for long years. The principles of Atatürk are what we are here for.’\textsuperscript{33}

Yet, the local party organization in District T is different from the CHP cases in District U, K and D where it is benign authoritarianism that dominates the party structure because the similar kind of challenge was not observed by the local party activists against the party leader. The reason is based on the material interests of the local party activists in District T, which are satisfied by a number of positive incentives and tangible rewards. A very close relationship between the local party leaders and the CHP parliamentarian was observed. In fact, the local chair in District T has mentioned his kinship with this parliamentarian. Being close to influential people, in this respect, provides a great motivation for the party members in this district organization, accepting the domination of the central party office in decision-making. One of the local leaders openly stated that:

‘The district party organizations are subject to the policy program that is prepared by the central party office. We do not take part in policy formulation processes. In this sense, it would be true to say that there is authoritarianism within the CHP.’\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} Interview with the CHP local leader in District U, 19 October, 2007.
\textsuperscript{33} Interview with the CHP local leader in District U, 19 October, 2007.
\textsuperscript{34} Interview with the CHP local leader in District T, 9 October, 2007.
The Variance in the DTP structure: The local party activists in the local DTP organization in District U, K and T also provide three instances of clandestine party authoritarianism, analyzed through the attitudes of the local party actors. Even though the candidate selection took place in a very top-down manner, the activists all gave very similar answers to the questions on the power structure of their parties, stating that no matter how centralized the process was; their party, with all its members, accept these decisions because they are all united within this party. It is derived from their high level of ideological attachment to the party. In this respect the 2007 national election results did not cause the same degree of challenging reaction within the DTP against the party leadership as was the case in the CHP. The following quotations from the conducted interviews in the three districts justify this common view within the party:

‘The parties have an authoritarian structure in Turkey; there is no alternative to authoritarian structures. But this is not the case in our party. The leaders do not have the ultimate power, the decisions are taken through negotiations, in a democratic manner.’

‘It was the central party office that determined the candidates in our party. Primaries could have been an alternative, but we supported the selected candidates. The central party office issues a notice about the decisions, and we fulfill our duties according to these decisions… I do not think that in our party we have an authoritarian structure.’

‘We can state that it is the people that decide on the candidate lists in the DTP. After all, many public meetings and negotiations were held on this issue even though the final decision on the candidate lists was made by the election committee of the central party office… It is true to state that the party structure is centralized. However, in our party, all local leaders, members, central party leaders as well as the representatives of public office think in the same line. We are all united on these decisions.’

35 Interview with a DTP local member in District K, 5 October, 2007.
36 Interview with a DTP local member in District K, 6 October, 2007.
37 Interview with a DTP local leader in District K, 5 October, 2007.
‘The candidate selection process was initiated collectively. We all shared our ideas on who should be on the list. Yet, there was an election committee formed by the central office and the committee gave the final decision. Some problems do arise when the decisions are not welcome. But we all agree on the list at the end. This is not authoritarianism.’

‘I think that the candidate selection process should be democratic, the opinions of the local party activists must be given due recognition. DEHAP and HADEP [predecessors of the DTP] were centralized; but the DTP is organized in a horizontal way. The central election committee asked our opinions… We rarely disagree on the outcomes. In the end we all come to agree with the decisions and that’s how we compete in elections, as a united front.’

‘It should be the people who determine the candidates through primaries. It is not the case with our party but ours is the most democratic party compared to other parties. I cannot see any authoritarianism in our party.’

Yet, the relationship between the local and national party level of the organization was based on a different power structure in the case of District D. Even though the district party organization of the DTP in District D, at first glance, showed similar patterns with clandestine authoritarianism, it was, in reality subject to benign authoritarianism. The district party organization, particularly the local party leaders had very close ties with the public officials in local offices. In fact, a representative of a university in District D has observed that:

The DTP as a party organization has a material bond with the municipality in District D. It is very obvious that the two institutions work very closely; in District D, they do not keep such bonds secret.

Because District D is very dominant with the Kurdish population, the pro-Kurdish DTP is very powerful in that district. The local context in District D, therefore,

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38 Interview with a DTP local member in District U, 17 October, 2007.
39 Interview with a DTP local leader in District U, 17 October, 2007.
40 Interview with a DTP local member in District T, 8 October, 2007.
41 Interview with a the Representative of a well-recognized university in District D, 27 September 2007.
produces materially motivated party activists expecting to be given positions in the municipal public offices. A similar remark was made by the representative of a local newspaper about the DTP, while he was explaining the degree of loss that the DTP experienced in the 2007 national elections in District D:

The DTP is a party, which articulates its sincerity and care for those disadvantaged groups in the society. However, during the election process, the local party leaders and members displayed a very antipathetic behavior, driving luxurious cars in public, even within the poor and underprivileged neighborhoods. People want to know how the party officials in District D have become so rich.42

In this sense, the party leaders and activists in District D may tend to conceal their true aims during the interviews and in fact have material benefits derived from the party activities.

VI. Evaluation

The sixteen cases of ‘power relationship’ between the local and national party actors have outlined four patterns of party authoritarianism in Turkey: clandestine, benign, coercive and challenged. In order to ensure that the agents, local party activists, work toward the goals set by the principals, the principals need to take the agents’ interests into account. The interest configurations constitute the type of party authoritarianism. In other words, the differences in the type of the actors’ interests shape the nature of the power relationship: The agents with social interests, loyal to the party or the leaders, are less aware or less concerned about party authoritarianism. Yet, the party leaders must provide collective incentives (such as the e-voting system or surveys as were the cases in the AKP and the MHP) to sustain the agents’ loyalty.

42 Interview with the representative of a local newspaper in District D, 25 September 2007.
Through these collective incentives, the agents feel a sense of belonging to the party even though they do not influence the decisions. This type of power relationship is clandestine authoritarianism. The agents with material interests, on the other hand, require receiving selective incentives such as offers in public offices (the DTP in District D), monetary benefits (the AKP and the DTP in District D) being close to influential people (the CHP in District T). This power relationship is benign authoritarianism. These two types of authoritarianism continue to be present in the political system and form the status quo in the power relationships as long as the agents’ interests are not affected by exogenous or endogenous developments.

An electoral defeat, as an exogenous trigger, may bring an endogenous development, such as a legitimacy crisis within the party. The emergence of a new agent with new and influential power resources or a specific antipathetic behavior of the principal, as endogenous triggers, may also create new dynamics within parties, altering the existing power relationship within the party structures. When the public distrust on the CHP leader reached a great momentum, the agents began to challenge their party leader. A decline in legitimacy is a decrease in the power resources of the principal. However, as seen in the cases of District U and K; the principal’s power derived from the discipline mechanisms stated in the bylaws helped to repress these challenges through the use of negative sanctions; that is ‘marginalization’ in the role of the local actors who initiated this challenge. This led to the emergence of ‘coercive authoritarianism’.

Yet, as it was observed in the MHP case in District K, T and U as well as the AKP case in District K, challenged authoritarianism may also arise based on endogenous developments. In District D, the appointment of the new local chair with a high social status and economic well-being helped the MHP votes rise in the region, changing the power structure, the MHP central party office had to accept the
challenge and included the MHP district party organization in the decision-making process, i.e. candidate selection. This acceptance, still, can be understood through the electoral imperative of the central party leaders; which would also benefit from this situation. In District K, on the other hand, the social status and recognition of the AKP local party chair in the local environment helped him challenge the authoritarian decision-making process of the CHP leaders. Yet, in this case, electoral imperative was not helpful since the AKP votes in this region did not show a great deal of change to make the principals accept the challenge.

Given this analysis, it is plausible to raise two final questions for future implications: Is it possible to foresee any possible exits from authoritarian party structures? Which pattern of authoritarianism is more likely to develop into a democratic party structure? First of all, it seems that electoral defeats and being in opposition generate a trigger for change in the incentive structure of parties. Such an attempt in an authoritarian party structure has the potential to develop into a democratic one because the process involves a trigger for change. Unsatisfied with the elite cadres of the party organization, the party activists had the motive to challenge the authoritarianism. Yet, the CHP case has shown that the party activists who initiated the challenge against the top leadership were subject to marginalization through being removed from their power positions in the party. The coercion exerted by the leadership through negative incentives, in return, strengthened the authoritarian control of the party organization, leaving no possible chance for democratization. Only if the power resources of the agents, information, economic wealth, political skills or networking outnumber the power resources of the principals in quantity and quality, is such democratic change likely to happen. On the other hand, between the two types of authoritarianism, benign and clandestine, the benign authoritarianism is more likely to turn into a challenged one in case of an exogenous or an endogenous
trigger because the conflict of interests between the agents and the principals are observable and repressed only through material benefits. In clandestine authoritarianism, yet, as the case of the DTP within the District K, U and T has proved, social interests of the agents such as ideological attachment or loyalty to the party leader are less likely to cause a change in authoritarian structure of the party.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX: METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON THE FIELD RESEARCH

The timing of the interviews: The interviews were conducted in a three-month time in the selected districts, following the 22 July 2007 national elections in Turkey. The early timing of the interviews particularly helped to obtain accurate information based on the refreshed memories of the LPLs and the LPMs on the authoritarian nature of the 2007 candidate selection process.

Interview techniques: Sometimes party members, activists, leaders may be reluctant to reveal the truth about their parties during the interviews. They may, in addition, take difficulty in maintaining their objectivity while speaking about party affairs. The answers of the interviewees can be based on formalistic statements, either because they may have been instructed to give formalistic replies, or because the real answer is not something that they can make public. Party activists are, in fact, bound by the party bylaws that they have to obey and subject to the authority of their central party leaders.

In order to overcome the problem of objectivity, the interviews were conducted in a friendly conversational atmosphere. To obtain high quality information in interviews, the interviewer is usually dependent on the cooperation of the conversational partners. Yet, in line with the ethical obligations, the interviews have been conducted ensuring that the interviewees – local party activists – are protected from any harm. Their permission was asked in recording the interview and they were informed about the intended use of the research. In many instances, the interviewees have requested not to reveal their identities and to turn off the recorder in case the information they provide may simply get them in trouble. In this respect, the identities of the interviewees are concealed in this study.

The selected samples: In order to determine the power relationship between the principals and agents in authoritarian party organizations, the interviewed local party actors were selected from local party organizations in the four districts of Turkey. The selection of these districts depend on two criteria:

1. The districts are located in urban areas: There is a need to distinguish the structures of local party organizations located in urban areas from those located


in rural areas in Turkey. Those located in urban areas are more organized and less shadowed by one-person rule, in other words they are least likely to be local oligarchies. Therefore for practical purposes to find a diversity of local party members and leaders, the districts are chosen from urban areas with a high level of population density in Turkey.

2. The districts have highly different political contexts from one another: The local political environment (context) can be an influential factor in molding the interests of the local party actors: For instance, a party may have received a major defeat in elections at the national level while at the same time gained the majority of votes in one local constituency. This situation may increase the legitimacy of the local party leaders in that constituency altogether. But at the same time, it may decrease the legitimacy of the central party leaders in that local constituency, altering the equilibrium in the power relationship between the principals and agents. Thus, this study includes four politically distinct districts representing four major ideological trends in Turkey, chosen according to the 2002 and 2007 national election results. In each district, one political party has electoral supremacy over the others. In District K, the overwhelmingly secularist character of the local electorate supports the CHP organization. In District D, the DTP is the dominant party due to the existence of a strongly pro-Kurdish population. In District U, the AKP has the dominant position due to the religious conservative ideology of the electorate. And finally, District T is dominated largely by the nationalist ideology, represented by the electoral ascendancy of the MHP. See Table A1 and A2 Below.

Table A1: 2002 National Election Results over Districts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AKP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>MHP</th>
<th>DEHAP (DTP)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District U</td>
<td>%44.56</td>
<td>%21.98</td>
<td>%4.25</td>
<td>%7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District K</td>
<td>%15.79</td>
<td>%36.79</td>
<td>%6.50</td>
<td>%5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District T</td>
<td>%12.57</td>
<td>%22.35</td>
<td>%22.58</td>
<td>%11.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District D</td>
<td>%16.14</td>
<td>%5.08</td>
<td>%1.16</td>
<td>%60.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In 2002 elections, the MHP and the DEHAP could not overcome the 10% threshold and be represented in the parliament.
** DEHAP was closed by a court decision in 2004 and replaced by the DTP in 2005.

Table A2: 2007 National Election Results over Districts***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AKP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>MHP</th>
<th>Independents (DTP)***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District U</td>
<td>%51.80</td>
<td>%23.85</td>
<td>%7.96</td>
<td>%6.42</td>
</tr>
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<td>District K</td>
<td>%27.121</td>
<td>%43.569</td>
<td>%11.824</td>
<td>%3.267</td>
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<tr>
<td>District T</td>
<td>%22.585</td>
<td>%23.598</td>
<td>%36.873</td>
<td>%6.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District D</td>
<td>%37.993</td>
<td>%1.941</td>
<td>%1.841</td>
<td>%51.968</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

***In order to overcome the %10 threshold, the MP candidates of the DTP declared to participate in the elections as independent candidates. The percentage of votes for the independents does not represent the whole DTP. Yet it shows the closest results for the DTP votes.

The number of the interviewees in each district was determined in an even and
balanced manner for each of the four parties: The objective was to conduct a total of 96 interviews; which would make six interviews for each party in each district: Three party officials from local executive boards (representing the LPLs) and three active members, usually but not necessarily from the women or youth wings (representing the LPMs). The number of successful interviews was 93 in total (See Table A3.).

Table A3. The number of interviews conducted with local party activists across parties and districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Political Context</th>
<th>AKP</th>
<th>MHP</th>
<th>CHP</th>
<th>DTP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPO in District K</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secularism (CHP support)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LPO in District D</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Kurdish Stance (DTP support)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LPO in District T</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism (MHP Support)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPO in District U</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Conservatism (AKP Support)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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