

From Gurdwaras To Film Stars: Understanding Regional Political Parties Through Weberian Authority

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ABSTRACT

Regional political parties have become one of the most significant forces in Indian democratic politics since independence, shaping electoral outcomes, coalition governments, and public policy at both the state and national level. Yet despite their growing importance, the internal organizational structures and authority patterns of these parties have received comparatively less scholarly attention than their electoral performance or policy positions. This paper addresses that gap by examining how Max Weber's three ideal types of authority—traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational—operate within five major regional political parties in India: the Shiromani Akali Dal of Punjab, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) of Tamil Nadu, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) of Odisha, the Shiv Sena of Maharashtra, and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) of Andhra Pradesh. Drawing on Weber's foundational work *Economy and Society* ([1922] 1978) and a range of scholarly literature on Indian party politics, the paper analyses each party's leadership structure, succession patterns, decision-making processes, and modes of political mobilization through a Weberian lens. The findings reveal that none of these parties can be understood through any single authority type alone. Across all five cases, legal-rational authority—based on impersonal rules, transparent procedures, and institutional accountability—remains the weakest element, fulfilled in form rather than in substance. The paper argues that Indian regional parties are best understood as 'patrimonial populist' organizations: hybrid formations that combine personalized leadership, family-based succession, and community-rooted loyalty with the formal institutional requirements of competitive democracy.

Keywords: Weberian Authority, Regional Political Parties, India, Charismatic Leadership, Traditional Authority, Legal-Rational Authority, Patrimonial Populism, Party Organization, Democratic Representation, Political Legitimacy.

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical foundation of this study rests on Max Weber's tripartite typology of legitimate authority, as elaborated in his seminal work *Economy and Society* ([1922] 1978). Weber's sociology of domination offers a systematic analytical vocabulary for understanding how power is exercised, legitimated, and sustained within political organizations. His framework remains one of the most enduring conceptual tools in political sociology, with Gerth and Mills (1946) having introduced his political essays to the English-speaking world through *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, cementing the global reach of his typologies. The application of his framework to party politics—particularly in post-colonial democracies such as India—continues to yield significant explanatory insights (Bottomore,

1979; Mommsen, 1989). This paper draws on Weber's three ideal types of authority—traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational—as its primary analytical lens for examining the organizational structure, leadership dynamics, and modes of political mobilization characteristic of major regional political parties in India.

This study uses Max Weber's theory of authority as its main analytical framework. Weber, one of the founding figures of modern sociology, identified three distinct types of legitimate authority in his major work *Economy and Society* ([1922] 1978): traditional authority, charismatic authority, and legal-rational authority. Weber described these as 'ideal types'—that is, simplified theoretical models that help us understand and compare real-world political organizations, even if no single organization perfectly

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fits one type (Bendix, 1960). The central idea behind all three types is legitimacy: the reason why people obey those in power. Weber argued that political authority is not simply based on force or coercion. Rather, it depends on the belief of the governed that the authority exercised over them is rightful and valid (Weber, 1978, p. 53). This belief in legitimacy can come from different sources—from age-old customs and traditions, from the personal qualities of a great leader, or from formal rules and laws—and it is these different sources of legitimacy that define the three ideal types. As Gerth and Mills (1946, p. 78) explained in their widely read introduction to Weber's work, these types are best understood not as fixed descriptions of reality but as intellectual tools that help the analyst ask sharper questions about how power works in any given political setting. Weber's typology has remained a foundational reference point in political sociology and organization theory for over a century (Aron, 1964; Parkin, 1982), and its application to party politics in post-colonial democracies continues to generate productive scholarly insights (Mommsen, 1989; Bottomore, 1979).

Theoretical Framework

Each of the three types of authority has distinct characteristics that are relevant to the study of regional political parties in India. Traditional authority is based on long-standing customs, inherited roles, and deeply rooted social norms. People obey a traditional leader not because of any written rule but because authority has always been exercised in that way—by that family, that community, or that social group. Weber noted that patrimonialism, a sub-form of traditional authority in which political power is treated as the personal property of the ruler and passed down within a family or close circle, is the most politically significant variant of this type (Weber, 1978, pp. 231–232). Charismatic authority, by contrast, rests entirely on the exceptional personal qualities of an individual leader—qualities such as oratorical brilliance, moral courage, a heroic public image, or the ability to inspire deep emotional loyalty. Followers obey a charismatic leader not because of rules or tradition but because they believe the leader possesses extraordinary gifts that set him or her apart from ordinary people (Weber, 1978, p. 241; Willner, 1984). Weber also pointed out that charismatic

authority is inherently unstable: when the charismatic leader dies or retires, the movement faces a crisis of succession, and authority must be 'routinized'—that is, transferred into either a traditional hereditary form or a formal institutional structure (Eisenstadt, 1968). Legal-rational authority, the third type, is the form most associated with modern democratic states and formal organizations. Here, authority derives from impersonal rules and procedures. People obey not a particular person but the office or position that person holds, because that office has been created and authorized through a legitimate legal process (Weber, 1978, p. 217). This form of authority is expressed through bureaucratic organization, written constitutions, transparent decision-making procedures, and formal mechanisms of accountability (Albrow, 1970; Huntington, 1968). In democratic party politics, legal-rational authority implies regular internal elections, clear rules for leadership selection, and organizational decision-making governed by the party constitution rather than by personal command (Panebianco, 1988; Duverger, 1954).

When applied to regional political parties in India, all three types of Weberian authority are clearly visible, often operating simultaneously within the same organization. Traditional authority is most apparent in the persistence of caste-based loyalty structures, the role of hereditary community leaders as political intermediaries, and the widespread practice of dynastic succession in party leadership. Srinivas's (1956) concept of the 'dominant caste' helps explain how pre-existing social hierarchies become the organizational backbone of many regional parties, as seen in the Janata Dal (Secular)'s dependence on the Vokkaliga community in Karnataka or the Shiromani Akali Dal's deep ties to Sikh religious authority in Punjab. Dynastic succession—evident in the DMK's transfer of leadership from M. Karunanidhi to M. K. Stalin, the Samajwadi Party's transition from Mulayam Singh Yadav to Akhilesh Yadav, and the National Conference's continuity under the Abdullah family—follows a logic of patrimonial inheritance that Weber would recognize as a classic form of routinized traditional authority (Chandra, 2016; Jaffrelot and Verniers, 2020). Charismatic authority is equally prominent. Leaders such as M. G. Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu, N. T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, and Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal built their political

movements primarily around their own extraordinary public personas—drawing on cinema, symbolism, and populist rhetoric to command devotion rather than mere organizational loyalty (Pandian, 1992; Suri, 2002; Chatterjee, 2012).

In such cases, the party organization functions less as an autonomous institution and more as a vehicle for the leader's personal authority. Legal-rational authority, while less dominant, is not entirely absent. The regulatory requirements of the Election Commission of India—mandating organizational elections, constitutional compliance, and financial disclosures—impose formal institutional pressures on all recognized parties, pushing them toward at least the outward appearance of rule-governed organization (Subramanian, 1999). However, as Ziegfeld (2016) and Vaishnav (2017) have observed, many regional parties satisfy these requirements in form without genuinely internalizing the principle of impersonal, rule-based authority, so that legal-rational structures serve as a formal shell around an essentially personalized and patrimonialism core.

A central theoretical argument of this paper is that the most accurate way to understand the authority structures of Indian regional parties is to recognize their hybrid character—that is, the way in which traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational elements are combined and layered within single organizations rather than existing as separate, pure types. Weber himself acknowledged that ideal types rarely appear in isolation in the real world; what matters analytically is identifying which type is dominant and how the types interact (Weber, 1978, p. 215; Bendix, 1960, p. 297). In the Indian regional party context, this hybrid structure is best captured by what this paper calls 'patrimonial populism': a mode of political organization that fuses family-based leadership succession (traditional authority), personality-driven mobilization (charismatic authority), and the formal institutional compliance required by democratic law (legal-rational authority). This concept draws on Eisenstadt's (1973) theory of neopatrimonialism—the idea that in many post-colonial states, formal democratic institutions are dominated by personal and patrimonialism authority rather than replaced by it—and on Laclau's (2005) analysis of populist reason, which shows how charismatic leaders construct powerful political identities through symbolic appeals

to the people. The Rudolphs (1967, 1987) demonstrated in their landmark studies of Indian politics that tradition and modernity are not opposites but mutually reinforcing forces, a finding that supports the hybrid model advanced here.

It is important, however, to acknowledge the limitations of the Weberian framework. Beetham (1991) argued that Weber's theory focuses too narrowly on the beliefs of the governed while giving insufficient attention to the structural and material conditions—such as economic inequality, caste discrimination, and colonial history—that shape those beliefs. Habermas (1976) raised a related concern about the inability of Weberian legitimacy theory to account for systemic crises of authority. Postcolonial scholars such as Chatterjee (1993) and Nandy (1983) have further cautioned against applying European theoretical categories to Indian political experience without adequate critical reflection, while Rai (1996) has pointed out that Weber's framework largely ignores the gendered dimensions of political authority. This paper takes these criticisms seriously and treats the Weberian framework not as a rigid template but as a flexible analytical lens—one that is most productive when used in a critical, reflexive, and empirically grounded manner. As Scaff (1989) observed, the enduring value of Weber's work lies not in providing final answers but in generating sharper and more productive questions about how authority is built, sustained, and transformed in the world of real politics.

Max Weber and Political Party

The genuine place of class is within the economic order, the place of status group is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of power and honor. In this context both status group and social order influence one another and also the legal order. On the other hand, legal order also influenced by this two group. But parties “live in a house of power” (Turner 1991 p.194).

The main aim of a political party is to capture social and political power to influence the political system. Parties may origin in a state as well as the social club. For “the party actions are always directed toward a goal which is striven for in planned manner” (Turner 1991 p.194). That goal may be personal or cause oriented. In a personality perspective, a party may

want to secure power and honour for the leader of the party. On the other hand, a party may want to initiate the program for the ideal or material purpose. As Weber narrates “parties are therefore only possible within communities that are socialized, that is, which have some rational order and a staff of persons available who are ready to enforce it” (Weber 1958).

Political parties are most important and necessary component of the democratic political system. The domain of political parties in India has changed since the time the country became a democratic political system (Suri 2005). There is no democracy without politics and no politics without the party. Regarding political party, “a party may refer to the group of more or less professional political workers (Key 1964)”. A political party is an autonomous group of citizens, and they are having the purpose of making the nomination and contesting an election in the hope of gaining control over governmental power through the capture of public offices and the organization of the government. Political parties play a unique role in the democratic system of government. Parties enable citizens to participate consistently in a system of government. Political parties bring together the fractured and diverse group as a unified group by providing a link between different branches of government (White 2006).

Political parties also play an important role in encouraging active participation in politics, holding a politician accountable for their action, and giving a platform for debate and discussion on important issues. The term party can be used in different ways according to the professional political workers. Sometimes party in the government, a party in the electorate and party in the legislature. Therefore, party can refer to several groups. Parties are necessary because they are the mediator of the people and the government, and concerning representative government, they have to organize the opinion from different strata of the society. And parties were the central intermediate structures between society and government (Sartori 1976)

With regards to the definition of the political party, their activities are numerous. Parties are engaged with everything for the society as well as a country. We cannot say a political party is just a group only meant for office but it has its own significant. It has carried

a group of people agreed upon certain principles an electoral machine, a convivial social group (Rose 1976) or it can be an institution through which a person can realize his ambition. So these multiple functions of the party have its importance to study. Because the general understanding of the political scientists is that it is impossible to achieve the democratic functioning of political system without parties.

If parties are the mediating institution between governors and governed, what task a party does? The party is one of those agencies and means by which people agree to behave or work cooperatively over the long term to secure benefit which they might not get individually. The collection of individual or legislature can decide to act cooperatively in making their decision. They can create such set of rule and regulation to structure their joint activity (White 2006). A party could provide a mechanism to solve several types of the social problem through their collective action. These problems of collective action can be settled in the verity of ways.

Concerning party and government, political parties are an organization (Rose 1976) and are concerned with the popular preference and controlling the policy-making the office of the government. Edmund Burke defines party is a body of men united promoting by their joint action the national interest, upon some defined principle in which they are agreed (Burke 1970). In this context parties and their activities are crucial for a representative democracy. Political parties recruit the member from different strata. The grass root members are gradually given greater opportunities to nominate candidates (Norris 2006). Political parties also play a key role in candidate selection for the electoral participation. According to Ranney "the process by which a political party decides which of the person legally eligible to hold an elective office will be designated on the ballot and in election communication as it's recommended and support candidate or list of candidate" (Ranney 1981). And political parties also take a significant move for election campaign which is the central feature in the life of the party. These days' new campaign style is required for the political parties for which they need to adapt their efficient organization (Farrell 2006). There are other activities which parties are playing as they mobilize voters- they bring finance

for the party, financial assistant to the local organization, compete in the election so on and so forth.

In the same way, political parties are an organized attempt to get power (Schattschneider 1942). The reality is that party aims to control the government as a whole and it distinguishes from the pressure groups, civil societies, and other organization. Since the power of government is the most important activity of a party and it follows that a real party is the one which is a significant organization in the society. There is no doubt about that, those people who want the social and political reformation along with the maintenance of political and social status quo have found parties to be institutions that promote change. Like it feels about family, and the larger society, about religion, particular interest, justice, constitutional or democratic government, pollution, abortion, the education system, war, peace and many other things. Max Weber explains “the term ‘party’ will be employed to designate associations, membership in which rests on formally free recruitment. The end to which its activity is devoted is to secure power within an organization for its leaders to attain ideal or material advantages for its active members (Weber 1968)”. Regarding a political party, a functionalist can ask a question, for example, what is the function of a political party and how does it work for making that political system?

So in a functionalist perspective of the political party can be called as an organization. The above discussion defines that the organizational features are visible in the party concerning its structure and function. So the study of political parties and their organization is utmost important. Because every party has its organizational structures like any other formal organization. On the other hand, every organization has some structure and function in an organized way, like that political parties’ also similar structure and function.

Each organization has its existence, and it concerned to facilitate the collective activity with maintaining its existence. To understand the party organization completely is all about the structure and function of the party. And according to the definition of political party it is a voluntary organization (Duverger 1964; Key 1969; Lawson 1976; Panebianco 1988;

Henderson 1976; Blank 1980; Rose 1976; Schattschneider 1942; Gherghina 2015, Harmel and Janda 1982, Katz and Mair 1994, Gunther and Diamond 2003; Prasad 1980; Suri 2005; Sridharan & DeSouza 2006; Kailash 2013; Chhibber 2014 etc ..) Party organization is like any other organization and it structured by the objective to be accomplished. The major goal of party organization is the winning of an election. The organization needed greater effort to maintain its existence and widespread support. Since party organization is made the different geographic location of the country at different levels. Only political parties openly claim to link with society and political power through placing their representative from the organization in the different position where they can exercise power on behalf of the society. Because Lawson defines political parties are the organization of public and public gives electoral or non-electoral authorization to political parties by selecting the representative of the organization. And the public claims that representatives are exercising power on behalf of the public.

Inter-Relationship between political party and Authority

Without any bewilderment, the theory of authority by Weber is a sine quo none in the entire realm of political parties and authority. For this Weber and others meticulously highlighted interesting relationship and processes occurring between the types. Blau’s “Critical Remarks on Weber’s Theory of Authority” (1963) explains two of these, in particular, components that either strengthen or weaken an authority type in regards to another.

The three authority types may be re-enforced by traits that differentiate them from other types. Traditional authority is impersonal (unlike charisma) and non-rational (unlike legal-rational). Charismatic authority is dynamic (unlike tradition) and non-rational (again, unlike legal-rational). Finally, legal-rational authority is active (unlike tradition) and impersonal (unlike charisma). Conversely, Blau means to say that traditionally is un-dynamic, charisma is personal, and legal-rational is rational. The likelihood of retaining a particular type of authority may depend on the ability of that authority system to retain the traits that make it unique and reject the traits that make it more conducive to another authority type.

To elaborate, particular authority types can lose their power to – and thus transition into – other types by some of the following ways. Revolutionary ideals can be advocated by a charismatic leader or the rational pursuit of ends via abstract formal principles can both weaken traditional authority. Revolutionary charismatic movements can be crystallized into a traditional order or bureaucratized into a rational formal organization. Finally, the irrational forces and powers of tradition or charisma can weaken legal-rational authority.

Collins observes that, for Weber, these categories of authority “do not exist merely for the sake of labeling and classifying history; they are embedded in a larger network of concepts and in an image of how they work” (Collins 1986, 6). As such, Weber’s three types of authority match up to his three categories of inequality: class, status groups, and parties. Traditional authority is the basis for status groups. Charismatic authority lends itself to a market scheme (such as the potential for life chances), and Weber considered it to be the outcome of class. Finally, parties are the codification of legal-rational authority.

How can this theory apply in regional political parties in India? So the present paper will telescope the real nature of Weberian thinking of Authority concerning political parties. The special focus will be on regional political parties in India. The Weberian classification of authority is whether fit into the regional parties in India or it contradicts. In an organizational perspective, political parties are the monolithic organization. There are several regional political parties originated in India after the decline of Congress as a single dominant party. Here are some of the regional parties in India i.e. Akali Dal, AIADMK, BJD, Shiv Sena, Telugu Desam Party. By analyzing these regional parties and their function, the paper might able to define the relevance and application of the Weberian idea of Authority.

Akali Dal

The Shiromani Akali Dal was framed on 14 December 1920 amid the times of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. It was instrumental in realizing real changes in the administration of Sikh Shrines, what's more, bringing them under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. It rose as a certain political party in Punjab amid the 1936-37

elections held under the Government of India Act of 1935 (Gulati 1974). Shiromani Akali Dal, in its cause, was the item not of the governmental issues of the state yet of the Church epitomized in the Sikh Shrines (Sharma 1995 p. 343). It ceases to be a selective battling power of the Sikh people and has dependably been at the bleeding edge of all developments concerning the Sikhs in Punjab, proliferation of the precepts of the Sikh confidence, support of its different ethnic character, and adherence to the maxim of the connection of religion and governmental issues; all these have turned into its primary objectives and strategy objectives (Verma 1987 p. 257). Its part was fundamental in the accomplishment of Punjabi Suba. Without the Akali Dal, the triumphant of Punjabi Suba would have been mind boggling even with the diligent restriction of the Central government in the post-autonomy period (Brass 1971 p.314). It expresses yearnings of Punjabi provincial patriotism alongside attempting to ensure the interests of the Sikhs as a religious minority in India and abroad.

A far reaching comprehension of Akali Dal governmental issues requires catching these four viewpoints together with respect to Akali Dal: the best organized political party in Punjab, the oldest regional political party in India, the main territorial political party in Punjab and the main party that cases to ensure the interests, particularly religious, of the Sikhs everywhere throughout the world (Singh 2014).

The Akali Dal views itself as the primary representative of Sikhs. Sardar Sarmukh Singh Chubbal was the primary leader of a bound together appropriate Akali Dal; however, it got a popular recognition under the leadership of Master Tara Singh. During 1937, in the provincial election, Akali Dal performed as the very good result, and it won ten seats. On the other side, the Khalsa Nationalist emerged as a competitor, and it also won 11 seats, and the party formed the coalition government which was headed by Sikander Hayat Khan. Alongside Akali Dal sat as the main opposition party (Jalal 1994). It was not so far in the provincial election of 1946, the Akali Dal increased its vote share and won 22 seats and participated in the coalition government under the leadership of Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana along with the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League was not able to catch control, in spite of having won the biggest number of seats, which maybe suited it

fine as it fortified its Pakistan demand. The Muslim League propelled a civil disobedience campaign, cutting down the Tiwana government by March 1947. Whatever is left of the period till Indian freedom was filled by Governor's Rule (Talbot 1998).

If we can apply the Weberian concept of authority regarding regional political i.e. Akali Dal, we can find out some unique nature can be visualized. From the beginning of the party, its primary objective was to protect the interest of Sikh or Sikh nationalism (Singh 2014). But not only deals with Sikh nationalism but also the concern with the rights of the Sikh community. On the other hand, it also concerns with the regional Punjabi nationalism, and it also goes beyond the Punjabi nationalism and defends economic interest of Punjab. It also concerns for the Sikh minorities within the state and also outside of the state. Akali Dal also protects the interest of rural agrarian bourgeoisie in Punjab (Singh 2014). If we can apply the Gramscian concept of hegemony in this metaphor, we can find out Akali Dal wanted to dominate the Punjab politics by producing comprehensive policy.

However, the main and traditional setup of Akali Dal still now follows its tradition to protect the interest of Sikh and wanted to dominate the Punjab politics. So the Weberian concept of Authority is still relevant in this context. In an organizational perspective, the Akali Dal is a well and strong organized party, which does have its structure from top to bottom with their principle. And concerning internal democracy of the party also follow certain rules and regulation. The traditional and legal rational authority is still relevant in the context of the regional party.

AIADMK

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) is a political party which is having its base in the state of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. It was founded by M.G Ramachandran popularly known as MGR on October 1972 as a breakaway faction of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). AIADMK was led by Jayalalithaa from 1989 to 2016, and also she served as the chief-minister of Tamil Nadu several times. The party head quarter was donated by MGR's wife and which is situated at Royapettah, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

After the death of Jayalalithaa on December 5th, 2016 V.K Sasikala was chosen as the General Secretary of AIADMK on December 29th, 2016. Sasikala endeavored to be confirmed as Chief Minister without confronting election. O. Panneerselvam and his supporting MLAs and MPs began asserting the party leadership. On 23 March 2017, the election commission of India gave isolate party images to the two groups; O. Paneerselvam's group is AIADMK (PURATCHI THALAIVI AMMA), while Edappadi K. Palaniswami group is AIADMK (AMMA). From that point, the party is in mystery alliance together with BJP. The party is renowned for its corruption and Thermocol issue.

Charismatic leadership of M. G. Ramachandran era (1972–1987)

The party was established in 1972 as Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK) by M. G. Ramachandran, a veteran Tamil film star, and a well-known legislator, as a breakaway group of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) drove by M. Karunanidhi, the then boss priest of Tamil Nadu, attributable to genuine contrasts between the two (Kohli 1990, p. 157). Later, MGR prefixed the All India (AI) tag to the party's name (Rana 2006, p. 400). Since its beginning, the connection between the AIADMK and DMK has been set apart by common hatred. MGR utilized his fan arrange for building the party framework, and appraisals guarantee his party enlisted more than a million individuals from the initial two months of creation (Murali 2007, p. 81). The party tasted triumph surprisingly by winning the Dindigul parliamentary by-decision in 1973 and furthermore won the Coimbatore assembly by-election a year later (Murali 2007, p. 82). As of 2 April 1973, AIADMK rose as the third biggest political party spoke to by 11 MLAs in the Assembly. By 31 January 1976, AIADMK grew as the second most dominant political party represented by 16 MLAs in the Assembly. AIADMK developed near the Congress by supporting the Emergency which happened in the vicinity of 1975 and 1977.

The DMK-drove government was rejected by a Central proclamation of corruption allegations in 1976. The AIADMK cleared to control in 1977, trouncing DMK in the assembly election. MGR was confirmed as the seventh Chief Minister of the state

on 30 June 1977. MGR stayed in control till his passing in December 1987, winning three back to back assembly election held in 1977, 1980 and 1984 (Kohil 1990). In 1979, AIADMK turned into the original Dravidian and regional party to be a piece of the Union Cabinet, when two AIADMK MP's, Satyavani Muthu and Aravinda Bala Pajanor, participated in the fleeting Charan Singh Ministry which took after the Morarji Desai-drove Janata Party government of 1977–79 (Rana 2006).

Relations between the Congress and the AIADMK gradually wound up noticeably stressed. In the mid-term parliamentary election of January 1980, the Congress lined up with the DMK, and the Coalition won 37 out of the 39 parliamentary seats in the state; and the AIADMK won only two seats (Murli 2007). After coming back to control, the new PM, Indira Gandhi, expelled various state governments having a place with the opposition parties, including the AIADMK government.

Decisions to the state assembly were held in late May 1980 with the opposition DMK proceeding with the appointive alliance with the Congress. In a large inversion of fortunes following its lowering in the Lok Sabha election, the AIADMK won an agreeable majority in the state assembly election by winning 129 seats out of 234 and MGR was confirmed as chief minister for the second time on 9 June 1980 (Murli 2007).

In 1984, even with MGR's coming up short well-being and ensuing hospitalization abroad, the party figured out how to win the assembly election in a coalition with the Congress. Numerous political scientist considers MGR's personality and charismatic leadership now of time as "reliable," and a sensible continuation of his on-screen "great chap" picture, reinforced by his "legendary status" in the mind of the masses (Murli 2007). MGR kept on getting a charge out of public help in his third residency, which finished with his demise on 24 December 1987.

Leadership of Jayalalithaa (1989–2016)

The AIADMK aligned with the Congress and cleared to control in the assembly election of 1991 under the authority of Jayalalitha who turned into the second female Chief Minister and the tenth chief minister of the state. Numerous political scientists have attributed

the avalanche triumph to the counter occupant wave emerging out of the death of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Murali 2007) by speculated Tamil separatists battling for a country in neighboring Sri Lanka. The resulting government, including Jayalalithaa, was blamed for extensive scale defilement. However, Jayalalithaa figured out how to clutch control for a full term of five years. In the 1996 assembly election, AIADMK proceeded with its alliance with the Congress yet endured a massive defeat, winning just four out of the 234 get together seats, with even Jayalalithaa losing from Bargur (Singh 2014).

The AIADMK framed a coalition with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Vaiko's Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), another breakaway group of the DMK, amid the parliamentary election in 1998. AIADMK imparted energy to the BJP in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee headed the government in the vicinity of 1998 and 1999, (Rana 2006) yet pulled back help a year later, prompting the fall of the BJP government at the middle. Following this, the AIADMK at the end of the day lined up with the Congress.

On 27 September 2014, Jayalalithaa was sentenced in the Disproportionate Asset body of evidence against Jayalalithaa by a Special Court which indicted each of the four denounced, in particular, Jayalalithaa and her partners Sasikala Natarajan, Ilavarasi and V.N. Sudhakaran, and condemned all to four-year primary detainment. Jayalalithaa was additionally fined ₹100 crores, and her partners were fined ₹10 crore each. The case had political ramifications as it was the first situation where a decision boss pastor needed to venture down by a court sentence. She was indicted for the third time generally speaking and was compelled to venture down from the central clergyman's office for the second time.

Because of her renunciation, O. Panneerselvam was confirmed as Chief Minister on 29 September 2014. Jayalalithaa was denied safeguard by the High Court and moved the Supreme Court for safeguard. The Supreme Court allowed abandoning 17 October 2014. On 11 May 2015, the high court of Karnataka said she was vindicated from that case, and she was in this manner sworn in again as Chief Minister. On 22 September 2016, she was admitted to Apollo

Hospital, Chennai because of fever and lack of hydration. After delayed sickness, she died on 5 December 2016.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Charismatic Leadership of Naveen Patnaik

After the 1996 Lok Sabha election, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was confirmed in on May 16th, 1996 as the prime minister of India. He has resigned because he could not win the vote of confidence in Lok Sabha on June 1996. And Deve Gowda had assumed office as a Prime Minister of India leading the United Front of 13 parties. The Janata Dal had played a significant anti-congress role in the national and most northern state party systems and Karnataka and Odisha. But after 1996 Lok Sabha it steadily shrunk in size and political importance of the party in Odisha had cast an ominous shadow over its existence.

After 1996 election Biju Patnaik died in 1997. After the death of Biju Patnaik, 15 legislators of Janata Dal out of 46 in the state Legislative Assembly had been showing a pro-BJP line for the party. Sarata Kar, Vedprakash Agrawal, Biswa Bhusan Harichandan joined BJP those are previously Cabinet minister in Janata Dal Government (Bhuyan & Muni 2010). However, another group opposing these pro BJP leaders led by Bijaya Mahapatra. So in this connection, there were two separate blocks have been made. One group of people from Janata Dal showed pro-BJP line, and another group was trying to form the regional party against the Congress dominance in Odisha. Naveen Patnaik is the son of was ready to take the leadership of the dissatisfied group of Janata Dal. Several senior leaders came to the front to oppose the leadership of Naveen Patnaik, but many another leader of Janata Dal openly supported the leadership of Naveen Patnaik i.e. Dilip Ray, Union Minister, Bijay Mahapatra and several MLAs of Western Odisha along with A.U Singh Deo and Prasanna Acharya (Bhuyan & Muni 2010).

When Biju Patnaik was alive, most of the MLAs from western Odisha suggested a grand alliance with BJP by creating a new regional party or joining BJP as an anti-Congress force. And they have tried to convince Naveen Patnaik to form a regional party on the line of Haryana Vikas Party or Shiv Sena (Bhuyan 2010). The state unit of Janata Dal called an urgent meeting to discuss the party strategy for the ensuing Lok Sabha

Polls. The meeting assumes that there was one group of members are supporting an alliance with BJP in the Lok Sabha elections of March 1998. But the majority of the Janata Dal leaders opposing the idea of joining hand with BJP and they want one to one contest with Congress.

So the dissatisfied group in the state Janata Dal were getting ready to launch a regional political party around mid-December 1997. And the Janata Dal dissidents had decided to form a new regional party at the residence of Bijaya Mahapatra. There were several names has been suggested by the leaders to keep the name of the party like Kalinga Janata Dal or Janata Dal Biju (Bhuyan 2010).

In the Mid-December 1997 Naveen Patnaik at his father's residence Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar announced that he and a significant number of the legislature were breaking away from the Janata Dal top form new regional party that is Biju Janata Dal. And Naveen said "my father had a lot of dreams for Odisha. To realize these dreams is our goal" (Bhuyan 2015). He also promptly declared that the new party would have an alliance with the BJP. Immediately after the announcement of Naveen Patnaik to form the Biju Janata Dal, Ashok Das state chief of the truncated Janata Dal said we are the real party which will strive to fulfill Biju Babu's dreams.

BJD under Naveen Patnaik Leadership

In Odisha politics, BJD is an end product of the Janata movement and which is the dominant political party under the president ship of Naveen Patnaik. Today we can say BJD is a regional party and a regional force (Sethy 2004). According to Bhabani Sankar Mahapatra, a journalist of Odisha says regional parties like BJD will continue in Odisha politics until the national parties not focusing on the regional aspiration. He describes the social base of BJD is accommodative, and its electoral base is very wider all over the Odisha.

During the mid-1990s Janata Phenomenon has taken new shape under the leadership of Biju Patnaik. Later on, Naveen Patnaik who has consolidated and extended the base of the party particularly for the post-Mid 1990s. At the early state, the Janata Dal emerged and captured the office as an anti-Congress (I) agenda under the leadership of Biju Patnaik. On

the other side, the 27% of OBC reservation consolidate its support base among OBCs which still prevails in BJD.

At the end of the nineties, Patnaik exercised immense hold in the BJD. As president of BJD, he had already increased the strength of his followers and supporters in the BJD. The entrants of 2000 assembly mostly owed their positions to him. Even a few members of the Jena group and other opposition parties were attracted by his popularity and joined the Patnaik group after the election. His position in the government further helped him to consolidate his position. Having failed to counter his growing influence Jena and his supporters found themselves gradually losing power within the party. This goes in the case of Bijay Mohapatra, a president of OGP, the factional group of BJD in post-2004 assembly elections.

No leadership no matter how grand and August in history can afford to live immune from criticisms, controversies, cleavages, conflicts and chaos and this logic very well envelopes the politics of BJD so also it sounded an ephemeral death knell to party supremo Naveen Patnaik's leadership in the shape of dissenting voices of Bijaya Mahapatra and Dilip Ray in the polls of Rajya Sabha, 2002. Added to this political rifts and upheavals, the banner of protest raised by the hands of western district for separate statehood gained currency by the mushrooming of small western Odisha inclined pressure groups like KEM, KP, etc.

Year 2002 marked the 1st instance of leadership dwindling due to rift in the BJD when Bijaya Mahapatra, the then chairman of PAC who was backed by Dilip Ray, the then union minister of state for coal who was neither, was an official nominee opposed Naveen Patnaik decision to nominate A.U Singh Deo, the vice-president of BJD for Rajya Sabha polls who eventually lost the Rajya Sabha polls. However, this is the very first time when BJD party in general and Naveen Patnaik, in particular, tasted the taste of dissidents dissenting dosages and also experienced the situation of splits within BJD mostly nourished by BJP. But Naveen Patnaik handled the situation with most Democrat spirit as a mature politician.

The sojourn yet the fertile growth of Odisha Gana Parisada (OGP) under the tutelage of Bijaya

Mahapatra also gave a stiff resistance to Naveen's leadership. The OGP sprang out with the aim to encroach opposition's position in Odisha by sidelining the Congress as the major contender for the opposition. However when OGP as a political forum transformed into a political party in 2004 polls and when its president Bijaya Mahapatra lost elections from Patkura assembly segment the OGP lost its pertinent. So here we can see that it is the inner party democracy of BJD and efficient management by Naveen for which Naveen successfully formed the government for the second time.

Moving from political rifts and party shifts let's focus on the rationalistic aspirations that created the tornado in 2004 polls when the demand for Kosala state gained currency. This requirement was fuelled by the formation of Kosala Ekta Manch and Koshala state since 15 years ago. Their claims were based on regional disparities, and coastal Odisha favored developments. According to Premlal Dubey president of Kosala Vikash Party, the demand for Kosala state is due to the negligence of western Odisha developments. He feels that the government's primary concern is with the coastal regions which the area of the west has been largely neglected. Much regional organization (western part), such as the Western Odisha Jana Jagaran Parishad (WOJP), the Western Odisha Liberation Front (WOLF) - argued that this backward region are the victim of acute poverty and deprivation which are major features of life in western Odisha. Under the leadership of Patnaik, the demand for special category status to Odisha as a continuous demand to solved the problem raised by many organizations in western Odisha. The separate Kosala State was do not supported by the BJP's Central & State

leadership. The BJD rejects the idea of an independent state as demanded by Kosala Gana-Parishad (KGP) and Kosala Ekta Manch (KEM). It is true that Kosala movement if intensified few months before the 2004 assembly elections. But later the movement declined because of no explicit ideological commitment between the leader and lacking awareness of people of these regions. According to Naveen Patnaik "The Demand of Kosala Raj is based on narrow considerations of the different culture (Katki-no-Kataki) and languages (Sambalpuri-none-Sambalpuri) of the people of the area which would be

divisions within Odisha.” He added that some narrow outlook of some organization (without naming), which would make Division in the state in anti-social, anti-reform and backward looking. They forgot the existing reality politico-economic compulsions in Odisha might not

help in its plan for the creation of the separate state shortly.

Shiv Sena and Bal Thackeray's Leadership

The Shiv Sena was organization originated in 1966 with the intent of a movement by Thackeray. In the early stage, it originated with some of the objectives. There are some important factor behind the rise of Shiv Sena (1) the nativism and regionalism in Maharashtra culture and politics, (2) the origin and development of the city of Bombay, (3) demographic and emigrational structure of greater Bombay (4) occupational structure of Bombay (5) economic structure of Bombay. These are the major factor behind the origin of Shiv Sena in Bombay.

By keeping the objectives of Shiv Sena, there are regulations and formal communication and decision-making systems, and the actors have different position and ranks. Decentralization and differentiation are the hallmarks of all structured and complex organization. The author has tried to demonstrate that though the Shiv Sena was more organized in 1974 than it was in 1966. The Shiv Sena has taken up diverse issues and expanded its support base to survive as a vital organization and to protect the interest of those it purported to represent.

The Shiv Sena organization revolves around a single charisma leader. In many ways, we can say Thackeray was a typical charismatic leader. But Thackeray has himself encouraged a certain amount of formalization in the organization without losing either his grip over it or his charisma. There was a segment of people were made aware of Thackeray's superior ability by his lieutenants and supporters. When the Shiv Sena started in 1966 in centered mainly around Thackeray as a Sena Pramukh OR Chief of Shiv Sena. More people wanted to participate in Shiv Sena, and the effect was sudden, forceful and unexpected. In the early stage, it was not an organized structure, but it was purely an individual effort on the part of Bal Thackeray and a few of his close friends. The author

has argued Thackeray was more or less forced to organize. As he was the member of RSS, the first model that came in his mind to open Shakhas but the opening of Shakhas was not well organized. As the author has mentioned according to Thackeray, he did not want to hold up a movement. Everything happened too quickly for him, but he constantly maintained that those who join with him should be willing to obey him as their leader. He did not want to believe in democracy.

In this way the dictatorship of Thackeray continued then in 1968, the municipal election came up, and Shiv Sena decided to contest. The organizational structure of Shiv Sena is divided into several branches like The Shakhas, Corporation, Bharatiya Kamgar Sena, Employment Bureau, Chitrapat Shakha. Bal Thackeray was the chief of all the branches, and he was the ultimate ruler of all the shakhas. In the 1968 election, these offices played the significant role in the electoral campaign and electoral success of 42 wards.

In this way, Bal Thackeray was running the Shiv Sena as a chief of the organization. In the field of organization and the activities of the Siva Sena revolves around Bal Thackeray. He was the chief decision maker of all the business of the organization. He has structured the organization and appointed the member for every unit of the organization; control the meetings, communication with the members of the Shakhas. The Shakha members' handled all kind of problems like from husband-wife quarrels to leaking pipes and employment problems. They have accepted all kind of people to, regardless of their religion or caste but never a communist.

The street violence and so-called extra- parliamentary tactics, where coercive methods are mainly used, run through most of the Shiv Sena activities. In spite of the fact that it participates in the Corporation and the legislature, it has abandoned its coercive methods. Thackeray himself has never condemned these activities and on the other hand, encourages the flame of violence by threats and provocative speeches. The tactics of patriotism and Hindu Rastra made Shiv Sena more successful. In the present time, the ideology of Shiv Sena deals with national integrity and survival of Hindus are the core attention which made him success over the period.

In this light, we can understand not only the increasing formalization of the Shiv Sena's organizational apparatus but also the gradual development of its ideological structure from a purely one-point program to a much wider ideological platform which seeks to assimilate large number into its ranks as well as consolidate their allegiances to its ideology. And also the dictatorship of the leader also played and significant role in the success of Shiv Sena. Now Bal Thackeray's son Raj Thackeray also functioning the party as his father. The soul final decision maker of the party is Raj Thackeray, and he is the ultimate authority of the party. The party is also a successful party in the Maharashtra Politics due to its charismatic leader. So both charismatic and traditional authority is still visible in the Shiv Sena.

Telugu Desam Party

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is having a distinct history in Indian politics. The party was formed in March 1982 by N.T Ram Rao known as NTR. NTR was a famous Telugu cinema actor. He captured the electoral office in January 1983 (Suri 2006). If we take the example of other regional political parties in India, TDP has emerged differently not like any sustainable movement or any ideological orientation (Suri 2006). The puzzle is there were several explanations made by different scholars of political science for the emergence of TDP in undivided Andhra Politics. But Prof Suri's four thesis on the advent of TDP is a popular argument. According to him, there is few reason behind the emergence of TDP. The first explanation is about the conflict between main two peasant group Reddis and Kammas. Reddis have captured the power of the state under the umbrella of Congress. But Kammas wanted to be in authority, so they backed TDP. Second, the development of TDP was not only the support of Kammas but also several other peasant and backward castes. The third interpretation is the centralization of power during Mrs. Gandhi's rule. Differently it undermines the state autonomy both in party and government matter, which was the main reason behind factionalism. The fourth explanation was the political economy approach. This method explains the conflict between Reddis and Kammas. People thought Kammas are the wealthy and bourgeois community and dominating in every field (Industry, cinema, hotel, liquor business, etc.) of the state (Suri 2006).

So these are the few reason behind the emergence of TDP. But the question is how it sustained?

If we analyze TDP in a Weberian point of view, TDP is the most dominant political party in Andhra Politics due to its charismatic leader. Two different phases we can find out regarding TDP and Andhra Politics. The first phase was dominated by NTR (1982-95) and the second one is continuing under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu (1995-2017). During NTR period, he was an influential leader, and he believes that he captured the power in the state due to him and his hard work (Suri 2006). He was the ultimate decision maker of the party as well as the government. Though there was to two different phase with two different leaders but one is thing is common that is centralization of power. If NTR era revolved around democratic dictatorship, Chandrababu era was a democratic centralism (Suri 2006). The party revolves around a single leadership. So ultimately the Weberian concept of charismatic is authority as applicable in both the case. The substance of the party is highly centralized under a charismatic leadership. On the other hand, the traditional nature of authority and continuing in TDP from NTR to Chandrababu Naidu.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined how Max Weber's three types of authority—traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational—operate within five major regional political parties in India: the Shiromani Akali Dal, the AIADMK, the Biju Janata Dal, the Shiv Sena, and the Telugu Desam Party. The evidence gathered from these cases makes one thing clear: no single Weberian type is sufficient on its own to explain how any of these parties actually function. The Akali Dal was built on traditional authority, deriving its legitimacy from the Sikh community's religious heritage and its historic role as the protector of Sikh interests (Singh, 2014; Brass, 1971). The AIADMK and the Shiv Sena were shaped almost entirely by the extraordinary personal charisma of their founders—MGR and Bal Thackeray—where the leader was the party, and the organization existed primarily to serve his will (Kohli, 1990; Murali, 2007). The BJD and the TDP represent cases where charismatic authority was either inherited from a legendary predecessor, as Naveen Patnaik drew legitimacy from the memory of Biju Patnaik, or

transferred between leaders of contrasting styles, as the TDP moved from NTR's populist charisma to Chandrababu Naidu's technocratic centralism (Bhuyan and Muni, 2010; Suri, 2006). In all five parties, legal-rational authority—the kind based on impersonal rules, transparent procedures, and institutional accountability—remained the weakest element, present largely as a formal requirement of electoral democracy rather than as a genuine organizational principle. The dominant pattern across these parties is what this paper calls 'patrimonial populism': a mode of political organization where power is concentrated in a single leader or family, loyalty is built on personal devotion and community identity, and the formal structures of democratic governance serve as an outer shell around an essentially personalized core.

Perhaps the most important lesson that emerges from these case studies is that charismatic authority, while enormously powerful in building political movements, is also deeply fragile. Weber warned that charisma is inherently unstable—it cannot outlive the leader without being transformed into something else, either through hereditary succession or through institutional formalization (Weber, 1978). The AIADMK after Jayalithaa's death in 2016 is a powerful illustration of this warning. Within months of her passing, the party fractured into competing factions, and its organizational coherence—which had always depended on her personal authority rather than on strong internal institutions—collapsed almost immediately. The Shiv Sena followed a similar trajectory after Bal Thackeray's death, with leadership passing to his son Raj Thackeray in a manner that resembled dynastic inheritance more than any democratic or institutional process of succession. Even the BJD, which has managed its leadership transitions more successfully, owes much of its stability to Naveen Patnaik's ability to personally consolidate power and neutralize internal dissent—as seen in his handling of the Bijaya Mahapatra challenge and the Kosala statehood agitation—rather than to strong party institutions (Bhuyan and Muni, 2010). The TDP's experience confirms this further: when NTR was removed from power through an internal coup led by Chandrababu Naidu in 1995, the party did not have institutional mechanisms capable of managing the transition democratically, and the outcome depended entirely on the personal political

calculations of key leaders and MLAs (Suri, 2006). Taken together, these cases suggest that the weakness of legal-rational authority in Indian regional parties is not merely an organizational inconvenience—it is a structural vulnerability that repeatedly produces crises of succession, factional conflict, and instability whenever the dominant personal leader is removed from the scene.

Weber's theory of authority was developed more than a century ago in a very different political context, yet its relevance to contemporary Indian regional party politics is striking. As Collins (1986) observed, Weber's authority types are not merely labels for classifying history; they are embedded in a deeper understanding of how power actually works in human organizations. This paper has shown that the organizational logic of Indian regional parties—their leadership styles, their succession patterns, their mobilization strategies, and their relationship with followers—can be understood far more clearly through the lens of Weberian authority than through the formal language of party constitutions and electoral rules alone. The persistence of traditional and charismatic authority in these parties is not a sign that Indian democracy has failed to modernize. Rather, as the Rudolphs (1967) demonstrated in their landmark study of Indian politics, tradition and modernity in India are not opposites—they are mutually reinforcing forces that produce distinctive and genuinely original political forms. The regional parties examined in this paper are modern democratic organizations that win elections, deliver welfare, and represent the aspirations of millions of people, but they do so through authority structures that remain deeply personal, familial, and community-rooted. Understanding this reality honestly and clearly is essential for anyone who wishes to understand Indian democracy—not as it should be in theory, but as it actually is in practice. Weber gives us the tools to do exactly that, and this paper has tried to use those tools faithfully.

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