



## WEBER'S PENDULUM: HAS PERCEPTION OF AUTHORITY CHANGED AT WORK?

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### Abstract

Weber suggests that the authority is attached to position power in modern organizations. Accordingly, employees must obey to authority of position instead of one's charisma or societal position. This perspective seems to stem from an utopic and universalist assumption that organizations are stable and unchangeable. Whereas, organizations operate in dynamic and influx environments and hence must respond adaptively to the conditions. The nature of the organizations have changed and correspondingly authority mode have shifted from the Weberian core to more non-positional, participative and personal base. The purpose of this paper is to interrogate the validity of this discourse in a developing country, Turkey, which is far from the centers where management knowledge produced. To this end, a survey and semi structured interview was conducted to collect the data in eight different organizations. Empirical evidence enable to develop an insight that rational/legal authority is still pervasive and it is, along with expert authority, perceived more intensively among other modes of authorities.

Keywords: Weber, authority, organization, work.

### 1. Introduction

Approximately, one century of Modern society is ridden with authority/duty, subordination/superiority and bureaucracy debates. While bureaucracy had been idealized by Max Weber, as the way of organizing, he had specified accordingly authority in bureaucracy.

Max Weber (1946, 1947, 1978) examined authority within the emerging dynamics of industrial society. He concerned broadly with the rise of rationality in the transition from traditional agricultural society to modern industrial society. Him historical analysis of different societies focused upon the social organizations and their corresponding forms of authority (Jaffee, 2000)

According to him, traditional agricultural societies established authority on the basis of charisma or tradition. Whereas in the industrial societies the rise of rationalization as the dominant norm, created new authority form, rational/legal authority while disfavoring traditional and charismatic authority for both public organizations and large companies. He

suggests that bureaucracy represents the ideal structure for organizations in which management holds the position power which is identified as a rational/legal authority.

However, in the late twentieth century, as with many things, authority has been an issue of inquiry related to the changes in social, economic and political accounts defined by different terms; such as postmodernity (Kumar, 1978; Harvey, 1990), new economy (Gershuny and Miles, 1983), second industrial divide (Piore and Sabel, 1984), information society (Masuda, 1981), knowledge society (Stehr, 1994) etc. It is claimed that “post-conditions” have changed the management paradigm and practices that makes bureaucratic administration obsolete. Particularly, the effects of flexibilization and shifts in the economy have led to some changes in the employment of managerial power that undermines the sovereignty of “position authority”. Instead, personal power and expertise has been employed in directing the employees (Sennett, 1993; Romme, 1997; Burris, 1989; Robbins and Judge, 2013).

Nevertheless, this theorizing about managerial authority is based on in early industrialized, well developed countries West-originated phenomenon. The question is this, to what extent this claim coincides with the reality in the other parts of the world, underdeveloped or developing countries. Thus, the primary purpose of this study, moving on from the Weberian concept of authority, is to investigate, at a local context, how employees perceive authority at work. Do employees still see, first and foremost, the position of the manager as a “*sine qua non*” of managerial power? Or as it is claimed, is “position power” in decline? Which authority types are predominantly perceived by employees? This paper, based on these questions, attempts to develop an insight on employees’ authority perception.

## **2. What Is Authority?**

The interesting problem in Weber's bureaucracy model pertain to source of authority and authority relations. Authority is defined as the given right to perform roles that are legitimated by consensual decisions. These decisions are based upon common law, institutional contracts, charters, rulings and other accepted sanctions (Kahn ve Kram, 1994; Katz ve Kahn, 1987).

There has been a substantial body of literature on authority-based issues. This can be explained by the effects of two main developments. One of them is the unexpected results - such as wars, genocide, etc. - of the modernism project that is claimed to be, at least, theoretically linked to the authoritarian tendency in societal psychology (Bauman, 1989; Adorno, 1950; Fromm, 1942, 1973). And the second one is the rise of organizations which are structured on hierarchy and subordination processes (Weber, 1947; Bennis, 1959; Presthus,

1960; Peabody, 1962). That's why philosophy, sociology, psychoanalysis, pedagogy, education, and management have examined it from distinct perspectives. Each of them has contributed to the notion of authority in different aspects (Kojève, 2007; Asch, 1956; Milgram, 1974; Mendel, 2005; Fromm, 1942, 1973; Foucault, 1995, 2010; Adorno, 1950).

However, beyond all these contributions, in organization studies, authority as one of the most crucial issues, gained its prominence with Max Weber's classical categorization (Weber, 1947) and it particularly attracted the attention of academics studying management and organization. This interest mainly stems from the supposition that all managerial and organizational processes rely heavily on how authority is accepted. Behavioral issues such as integration, conflict, harmony; or technical issues such as operation speed, productivity and efficiency are all affected by authority (Presthus, 1960).

In organization studies authority is generally defined as, "a source of power to manipulate or change others" (Luthans, 2011), "having control over others" (George and Jones, 2012), "the capacity to evoke compliance in others" (Presthus, 1960) or "the right given to prescribe the behavior of another" (Limerick, 1976). All definitions commonly refer to the same point that it is about "determining others' behaviors". It is, apart from other types of authorities, rests on rational legitimacy that is defined as "the formal and legitimate *right* of a manager to make decisions, issue orders, and allocate resources to achieve organizationally desired outcomes" (Daft, 2012: 246).

However, legitimacy itself does not still distinguish Weberian rational/legal authority from the other types of authorities that can also be accepted as legitimate (Presthus, 1960). What makes Weberian rational/legal authority different from others is its nature arising from a rational and impersonal order. As it is specified by Weber himself it relies on "*a belief in the 'legality' of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands*". And "*in the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order. It extends to the persons exercising the authority of office under it only by virtue of formal legality of their commands and only within the scope of authority of the office*" (Weber, 1947: 328).

As it is seen from this explication rational/legal authority is a position related (formal) authority in a particular work environment. Its capacity to influence largely comes from the rights of the chair given to the superior in a rationally ordered organization. However, in recent decades, it is asserted that, by the effects of certain transformations, the position authority in organizations, especially in specific organizations, does not function as much as it

did during the “bureaucratic age”. Instead, personal and expertise power rather than impersonal dynamics plays an important role in managing the employees.

### **3. Rational/Legal (Position) Authority And The Rest**

Since the last quarter of the 20th century, we have been living in a world nominally framed with “post” prefix- such as post-industrial (Bell, 1973), post-capitalist (Drucker, 1993), post-modern (Harvey, 1990) - in which all social and economic conditions refer to a new time period. In a post-world it is believed that all organizational and behavioral processes have changed, as well as authority relations. Technological developments (especially in electronic communications, financial systems and e-commerce), changes in societal practices, (significantly the rise of networks of markets, neo-liberalism) and new theories of knowledge, such as complexity theory, have surpassed modern notions of organization, authority and rationality (Casey, 2004).

When they were discussing the postmodernism, for example, some authors (Rosenau, 1992; Barthes, 1977) declared the death of author/authority. Of course, this is an overstatement and does not refer to the inexistence of authority. Instead, a new mode of authority that is less effective than it once was (Pfeffer, 1977). The new tendency in how work is organized involves a shift to a more participative and cooperative methods in the workplace (Romme, 1997) which is found inevitable because the issues faced tend to be too complex and interdependent to be solved by a few people in authority (McLagan and Nel, 1995). And participation is based on self-determination, which involves the power to act autonomously (Dahl, 1989; Emery, 1980).

In other words, it is claimed that the effectiveness and efficiency of these authority relationships have depended primarily on two factors: the distribution of power, both within and between organizations; and the technologies employed. As both of these have changed, societies have also undergone changes in the ways in which authority has been distributed and implemented (Robertson, 2003: 2). Along with the rising of digital technology and global competition the transition in economy from industrial to service and knowledge sector shifted types of works (Foss, 2002). All these “mega trends” (Naisbitt, 1984) reshaped the nature and structures of organizations that is metaphorically stated by Drucker as follows;

“The megalopolis of today is as different from the Grosstadt as the Grosstadt was from the city of 1800. The difference is not only in size and population. A megalopolis is the dominant habitat, whereas in the age of the Grosstadt the majority of men still lived in a rural society and produced in an agricultural economy. Whilst the Grosstadt was founded on the industrial worker,

the megalopolis is founded on, and organized around, the knowledge worker, with information as its foremost output as well as its foremost need. (Drucker, 1969: 32)

The new era created “a performance-oriented organization rather than an authority-oriented organization” (Drucker, 1969: 271) that entails different types of authorities based on participation, delegation and self-determination. The new authority type is idealized with its distance to the old bureaucratic position-authority which is not seen sufficiently functional anymore. That’s why new terms were generated to substitute the “manager”; such as coach, mentor, advisor etc. Following words represents this new managerial authority: *“There have to be people who are accountable for the organization’s mission, its spirit, its performance, its results... There have to be people who focus the organization on its mission, set the strategy to carry it out and define what the results are. This management has to have considerable authority. But... it’s not to command. It’s too direct”* (Drucker, 1993; 51).

However, it needs to be regarded that some authors (Romme, 1997; Stewart and Manz, 1995; Wall, 1982, McMahon 1989) are skeptical about the nature of the new authority mode of which power comes from the “personal” qualifications, or expertise and that depends on specialization, participation, delegation, and self-determination. Instead, they believe that those are theory-based discourse more than practice. To some extent, it sounds like a reasonable hypothesis, particularly in developing and nondeveloped countries that are characterized by late-capitalism in which archaic authority relations still prevail. In the following part of the paper, this interrogation will be analyzed by examining the authority perception of employees.

#### 4. Method

**Sample:** Assuming that authority perception may differentiate to the nature of business, research was not restricted to a specific sector/industry. Regarding the different impacts of work nature on authority relations, distinctive sectors/industries were investigated. In this respect, the sample was planned to include participants from public and private ownerships and also from service and manufacturing industry operating in Ankara- the capital city of Turkey- to compare and see the differences. During the first step, organizations were determined by a prioritization of availability and eight organizations were agreed on to contribute to the research: five from private and three from the public sector<sup>1</sup>.

**Instrument:** The study was designed on both quantitative and qualitative approaches to increase the reliability of data and discussion, following the argument that “we need both word

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<sup>1</sup> Even more than 25 organizations were contacted to involve them in the research, only eight of them agreed to participate.

and numbers to understand the world” (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Regmi and Naidoo, 2009). In order to do that, both questionnaire and semi-structured interview were employed. For the questionnaire part, first of all a pilot study was conducted and delivered to a small group of employee to be able to revise the construct and content. Based on the theoretical suggestions and data gathered during the pilot study the main authority types were coded that were; i) rational/legal, ii) paternalistic, iii) expertise, and iv) personal<sup>2</sup>. When their representation were embodied, four corresponding figuration appeared (position, father, expert and leader). And this abstraction restructured the main question of the study that how employees portray the authority managing them; as a) a position (rational/legal), b) a father (paternalistic), c) an expert (expertise) or d) a leader (personal). Final version of the questionnaire was delivered to main sample, the employees working in those eight organizations. At the end of the survey process 151 responses were received. However, 13 were excluded due to the lack of convenience.

The questionnaire composed of two parts. The first part included demographic and multiple choice questions. Second part built on the Likert-scale items including attitude statements and asking respondents to specify their level of agreement on a five-point scale (1 – strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – disagree, and 5 – strongly disagree). The questionnaire was designed to end with one open-ended questions asking additional information about supervisor’s use and type of authority that could be disregarded within the preset questions. Second part included 22 items on three issues pertinent to authority relations; 9 items for control and autonomy, 7 items for leader-member relation, and 6 items for authority figure. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.84 that was acceptable in terms of reliability.

In the qualitative part of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five employees with each organization. For a more reliable sampling process, staff lists were employed to randomly select the employees. In total, 40 employees were interviewed. As it was randomly selected 17 of them among those who previously filled the questionnaire. Alongside the semi-structured questions, additional questions were also asked, if required, in order to deepen the interviews and each interview lasted 30 minutes on average.

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<sup>2</sup> A point should be clarified about the rationale why charismatic authority is not included in this categorization, though it is pronounced quite often both in literature and daily life. It is possible to answer this question in two accounts. First, it has been concluded in the pilot study that what “charisma” refers to is either not clear or totally fuzzy for the most participants that makes its codification complicated. Second, charismatic power is an intense form of referent power stemming from a person’s unique personality, physical strengths, or other capabilities that induce others to believe in and follow that person (Weber, 1978; George and Jones, 2012). That is why personal (referent) authority is included as an inclusive category.

## 5. Findings

**Demographic data:** Survey data was collected from 138 respondents working in eight different organizations located and operating in Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. Of those, three organizations are from the public sector, two in production (food and machine industry) and one in services (energy). On the other hand, five organizations operate in the private sector; four in services (1 software, 2 health care, 1 communication) and one in production (furniture). Table 1, exhibits the general profile of the respondents.

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of respondents by the nature of organization they work, gender, age, education and job type

	n = 138	%
<i>Nature of business</i>		
Public	66	47,8
Private	72	52,2
Manufacturing	45	32,6
Service	93	67,4
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	86	62,3
Female	52	37,7
<i>Age Group</i>		
18-24	14	10,1
25-34	39	28,3
35-44	56	40,6
45-54	18	13
55-...	11	8
<i>Education</i>		
Elementary	11	8
Secondary	37	26,8
Tertiary	90	65,2
<i>Job type</i>		
Office worker	67	48,6
Technical support	21	15,2
Production labor	34	24,6
First-line manager	16	11,6

Number of respondents from public and private sector exhibits approximately an equal distribution. More than 67 percent of all respondents work at service industry and 79 percent of them is in the range of 18-44 age. Majority (65 %) of them have high education degree and 60 percent of all seems to be white-collar work force (office worker and first-line managers). Of the 138 respondents 86 are male (62,3 %) and 52 are female (37,7 %).

**Control and autonomy:** Some signs on the nature of authority can be traced within the process of how employees are controlled. The success of management is generally formulated with the degree to which authority encourages subordinates to integrate their will

and aims to the organizational objectives. And this necessitates, at least, a specific extent of freedom for the subordinates that leads to a tension between autonomy and discipline. (Baker, 2005).

Control is generally classified in two main practical sets; i) surveillance and direction and, ii) appraisal and discipline. The first one concerns how and when works will be performed while the second part is about evaluating the performance of subordinates and disciplining them within reward and punishment systems. In this respect, primary mechanisms of control are categorized as follows; simple, structured (technical, bureaucratic and professional) and technocratic control (Astley, 1985; Burris, 1989; Barker, 2005). Simple control includes practices of control such as surveillance, oppression, and direct instructions in the chain of command. Technical control refers to the structural control which is embedded in the physical and technological substructure. And bureaucratic control is related to the social organization of the structure as an instrument of control which includes vertical and horizontal disintegration, hierarchy, detailed job and responsibility descriptions. Professional control vests control in professional status group, ethical codes, formalized education and credentialing. The focus of technocratic control is the technical expertise as a basis of authority and it is generally seen in team-based organizations. Likewise technocratic control, it is believed- in recent decades- there has been a shift toward a normative control mechanism that aims to change the beliefs of subordinates instead of their behaviors (Sthyre, 2008; Alvesson, 2004; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Robertson and Swan, 2003; Reed, 1992). While simple and structural control forms mostly use process, routines and results; in this latter one, employees are enforced to control and regulate themselves.

Relying on these theoretical assumptions participants were firstly asked how they were controlled. What is questioned is about which means are intensely employed in their management. The empirical evidence reveals that rule-based formal bureaucratic control has a dominance over other control mechanisms. Almost 80 percent of all employees perceive that rules and principals are the main tools in their management. Public organizations are those in which rules and principals are more hegemonic which is supported by statistical analysis of Independent Sample t-test (see Table 2). The difference between employees' of public and private organizations perception on rule-based control form is statistically significant to the result of t-test.

**Table 2.** Perception of Bureaucratic Control Form by the Organizations, Private or Public

Independent sample t-test					
	Public organization/Mean	Private organizations/mean	Mean difference	t	significance
Control Form	1.5455	2.0000	-0.45455	-3.877	0.000*

Note: Significance at: \* $p < 0.005$

Rule-based control are perceived to a greater extent among white-collar employee intensive public-service organization rather than those in manufacturing organizations. Its rationale could be found in one of the respondents' words; O3 says that *"everything is routinized in this organization. There is no need for interpretation and there is no gap since the organization is quite system-based and institutionalized"*. From this explanation we can understand that all processes are highly structured which exhibits a mechanic order. What is seen portrays a typical bureaucratic organization and its way of practicing management power. On the other hand employees' perception on rule-based management in the software company is relatively flexible than those working in other organizations. One of three employees perceive that the authority tend to encourage self-control for the employees. In the interview part, one of the program designer from that organization, O7, states that: *"We are mostly told by our manager that we are not only responsible to design the programs also we are responsible to design ourselves. We need to adopt ourselves to the work requirements. And what he (their manager) always emphasizes is that he does not like to give instructions. Instead, he just expects us to fulfill our tasks without any direction. So we are free but actually free in a bordered area. He does not like to force us but he expect us to force ourselves"*.

This result can be read with the qualifications of both jobholders and the jobs performed. High-qualified jobholders hold complicated jobs that require high level of expertise stimulating lose control.

As a part of control, another critical query was about extent of autonomy given to subordinates. It was aimed to delineate the perception of employees that how their acts are directed and how their performances are monitored. Findings reveal that employees in manufacturing industry, both public and private, perceive relatively higher level of direct and close-control and lower level of autonomy in the processes they involve. One multiple choice question was asked employees about their managers' approach in directing and monitoring their acts. Among manufacture employees 56 % of them express that their acts are instructed in details and monitored closely by managers. This is specified by the 34 % of service employees. Data

obtained by Likert Scale question also supports this result (see Table 3). The difference of employees' perception between service and manufacture industry is statistically significant.

**Table 3.** Perception of Autonomy by the Nature of Organizations, Service or Manufacture

	Service organization/Mean	Independent sample t-test		t	Significance
		Manufacture organizations/mean	Mean difference		
Close-Control	4.0000	3.4516	0.54839	3.006	0.003*

Note: Significance at: \*p < 0.005

In the interview process, same question was asked with different words and what employees told reinforces this finding. One of the employees working in food industry, P6, states that *“What we do is actually routine and there occurs very few extraordinary case. Despite this nature of work, both our foremen and production manager is always around. They walk around and tell us what to do step by step. I guess they follow such a way to motivate us, I don't know”*. Another employee working in furniture industry, P2, observes intense monitoring but he assumes it stems from the risks of the tasks. *“Work environment is full of dangerous technological equipment and inflammables. I guess, that is why, he (his supervisor) tends to be obsessive on monitoring and instructing us”*. When the states are decoded we could see that all steps are planned just like in “time-motion” programs which demonstrate a lower level of autonomy and trust. Though lower level of autonomy is manifest in manufacture organizations, other organizations cannot be positioned remarkably convergent to high level of autonomy. Even in the software company, some respondents perceive a close supervision when they performing their roles. And it seems to be contradictory to the previous finding on control form (to some extent self-control in software company) it could be reconciled by the occupational distinctiveness. In contrast to programmers and designers, ordinary office workers (administrative staff, buyer etc.) perceive relatively higher level of close monitoring. In this regard, higher autonomy can be interpreted as an implication of privilege endowed to “expertise power”. The least level of monitoring is found in health care marketing organization. This is because some respondents work as mobile sales representatives for medical products and their spatial flexibility keeps them at a distance from close monitoring.

Within the control issue, one of the issues is, as it is referred above, disciplining processes. It is believed that disciplining approach (rewarding and punishing) reflects some signs of authority (Fromm, Foucault). This query was actually overlooked in the survey part but it was investigated within the interviews. In terms of rewarding strategies, no difference was

found among employees' perceptions by different organizations. They commonly believe that "good performance and good personality" provide the reward. Good performance is a universal criteria to be rewarded but what the interesting is the criteria of "good personality". It was attempted to scrutinize, by deepening the interviews, what "good personality" implies. Answers basically give a personality profile builds on "compliance". To most employees, managerial authority defines "good person" as anyone who works in harmony with others and management. What one of the technical support staff T4 told represents, more or less, the perception of majority of employees interviewed: *"Our managers' rewarding policy depends on zero-problem principal. What does it mean? It means our managers generally like to reward employees who do not have problem-producing potential. If you obey the rules, fulfill the orders, don't speak unless you asked, don't object to anything and be silent then you are a good person and you deserve the reward"*. It is understood that agreeableness is an important personality character to be rewarded. On the other hand, as a complimentary part of disciplining process, punishment practice was also questioned on a case examining the reactions of authority-holders when employees made an important mistake. With this question it was aimed to see how and to what extent punishment mechanisms were employed by authorities. Most of respondents perceive that their supervisor prefers "counselling" approach in case of a mistake to correct and teach. This is an interesting result that in all organizations- except blue collar employees in private communication sector- punishment is the last option to be pursued.

However, blue collar employees working in communication organizations in the private sector, are not sure about the coaching/counselling style supervision if they make a mistake. Instead, they think that their mistake is assessed within the principals of formal procedures, and it sometimes necessitates a specific type of punishment (such as an official notice, pay cut etc.). They commonly refer to "harsh climate" to prevent poor performance. At the further step of interview an important fact was seen that this organization was a recently privatized old public organizations and ownership aimed high performance with aggressive and competitive management. Mostly because of this efficiency focus, mistakes are not tolerated.

**Leader-member relation:** Another facet of authority is the relation between superior and subordinate. It mainly implies the quality of communication, level of interaction and formalization of relations between the parts.

Because the quantity turns to be a quality, frequency of communication was firstly interrogated. Empirical evidence indicates that, almost 85 % of all employees communicate to their supervisors "several times in a day". To some extent differences are observed among the firms that stem basically from the spatial arrangements. Because some of the respondents'

superiors are employed in the headquarters in another city they communicate less frequently compared to others. In the health care marketing organization, for instance, some employees are under supervision of those who have chairs at the headquarter office, they communicate relatively rare. And their special case also leads to another result that their communication medium is either e-mail or teleconference in contrast to other respondents working in other organizations of which members communicate generally face-to-face. On the contrary, in software company, open office design brings authority-holder and subordinate together in the same space that enable all day communication. Even the difference between public and private sector is insignificant, it is statistically significant between manufacture and service sector employees (see Table 4). Manufacture sector employees more strongly perceive an intense communication. This is because, as explained before, in manufacturing organizations employees work with their supervisors, either foremen or production manager, together in a common work space which is not necessarily shared by both parts in service sector organizations.

**Table 4.** Intensity of Communication by Service and Manufacture Sector

	Service organization/Mean	Independent sample t-test		t	Significance
		Manufacture organizations/mean	Mean difference		
Communication intensity	2.4194	2.0000	0.41935	4.824	0.000*

Note: Significance at: \* $p < 0.005$

Another dimension was related to interaction and participation between superiors and subordinates. Participants were asked if their superiors share information with their subordinates and ask their ideas in decision making process. And 24 % of all employees perceive that they are “never informed” about the developments. This perception reaches the highest point, 45 %, in blue-collar intensive public organizations. Same question was addressed in the interview process and 3 of 5 respondents, in this organization, highlighted the minimum information flow from top-down and minimum exchange of views between parts. One of them P5, for instance, answered as follows: *“We just know what we have to do. They command and we do. We are only informed about the details of our task. We are let to know the technical and operational details of the jobs, that’s all. And we are hardly asked about our views, it is exceptional. This is what we get used to”*. In contrast, most level of positive answer arises among the members of the software company. A linked question was designed in yes/no form that asked the attitudes of subordinates if they could express their ideas, concerning work issues, when they think differently than their supervisors. The least level of positive answers again comes from the respondents working in the blue-collar intensive

public-manufacture (machine industry) organization. Among all respondents, 39 % of them answer this question as “no”. Health care marketing company (100 % of all respondents) and software company (88 % of all respondents) are the leading organizations answering these question positively that can be interpreted as an implication of higher tendency in terms of participation and interaction. When Pearson Chi-Square test is applied it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.005$ ) between manufacture and service organizations. However when public and private organizations are compared a statistically significant difference can be seen (see Table 5). Expression of opposite ideas and participation is relatively higher in private organizations.

**Table 5.** Exchange of Opposite Ideas Between authority Holder and Subordinate by Public and Private Organizations

	Pearson Chi-Square Test		significance
	Value	df	
Exchange of Opposite ideas	22,683	1	0.000*

Note: Significance at: \* $p < 0.005$

When gender is considered as a variable for contradiction/compliance to authority it is found that men are much more prone to express their opposition than women. While 88 % of men tend to express their opposition, 61 % of women feel freedom to voice their opposition. Pearson Chi-Square test indicates (see Table 6) that the difference between genders is statistically significant. And this result is in accordance with the findings of previous researches (e.g. Hofstede, 2001) which claiming that men are expected to be much more assertive than women.

**Table 6.** Exchange of Opposite Ideas by Genders

	Pearson Chi-Square Test		significance
	Value	df	
Exchange of Opposite ideas	12,335	1	0.000*

Note: Significance at: \* $p < 0.005$

In the interview stage an additional query was about the extent of informal relations. Participants were asked if they talked about personal issues and develop informal relations with their superiors. Findings show that, as it is specified by the majority of all respondents, what they generally communicate is work-related matters. Even some social events, such as monthly dinner, are arranged by organization itself (in private communication and public-service organizations) for motivation and socialization, those events help employees to socialize with their “horizontal peers”. What mostly puts an authority holder and subordinate

in close relations occurs in work travels (Health care marketing organization). When they travel together they need to “force the personal borders”. It is concluded that higher level of informal relations in this organization stems also from spatial arrangements where superiors and subordinates work together in a shared space that encourages them to talk about personal issues. One of the respondents provides the following explanation “*we work together in a small office during all long day. And even our tables are face to face. How can you avoid taking personal matters?*” The second highest level is observed in public-manufacture organization (food industry). Actually it shows a contrast finding with what previous evidences indicate that subordinates are directed in mostly one-way (top-down) communication and have little involvement. That’s why, in this organization, authority exhibits a *paternalistic* nature as the members emphasize that their superior is “*sometimes like a close friend but sometimes like a very tough boss.*” Everything is defined and determined by the “father” manager. He determines the borders of leader-member relation and even sometimes he provides “advices about their private lives”.

In sum, physical layout and spatial dynamics (work setting, work travels) is an important determinant in authority relations. As it can be understood from the connotation of the word “relation” it is significant to be able to “in contact”. Participation and involvement of subordinates in management processes is higher in software and health care marketing organizations while it is lowest in public-manufacturing and private manufacturing (furniture) organizations. On the other hand, public-service organizations seem to be most formal in leader-member relations.

**Authority figure:** This study basically investigates the perception of authority modes coded as follows; rational/legal, paternalistic, expertise and personal. One of the multiple choice question addresses the most prominent characteristic of the authority holder<sup>3</sup>. It is found out that three characteristics are predominantly stated; decisiveness (26 %), conceptual competence/proficiency (27 %) and commitment to rules/principals (22 %). Actually, all three together do not represent a pure state of a specific authority mode. Instead, they create an eclectic mode consisting of expertise and rational/legal authority. Decisiveness can be a characteristic of all authority modes, meaning that it is not a distinguishing part of any authority mode. Considering the data obtained through interviews it is seen that decisiveness (44 %) and conceptual competence/proficiency (36 %) are the leading characteristics in private organizations while commitment to principals (46 %) and conceptual competence/proficiency (40 %) are the primary in public organizations. When it is regarded on the basis of manufacture-service sectors,

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<sup>3</sup> Those characteristics was determined in the pilot study and then related or synonym ones combined under one item.

decisiveness and conceptual competence/proficiency are the more specified characteristics in service organizations while decisiveness and commitment to principals/rules are the salient ones in manufacture organizations.

In the subsequent step, figuration of authority was tackled and respondents were asked how they saw their superiors, as; a legal/formal director, a competent manager, a fatherly authority, or a model leader. Data indicates that they perceive authority holders mostly as a "competent manager" (47,8 %) that can be associated with expertise authority. Second intensely perceived figure is the legal/formal director (32,6 %) which corresponds to Weberian position authority. The least perceived figure is the "fatherly authority" (8,7 %) which is stated by mostly employees of public-manufacture organization that operates in food industry. Pearson Chi-square test indicates that the differences among organizations are statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ). Expertise authority reaches the highest perception level among software (57,7 %) and health-care marketing (53 %) organizations. On the other hand rational/legal authority seems to be dominant in public-service organization (58 %) and the private one in communication industry (44 %).

The data obtained through the interviews reveal an interesting reality about the dominance of the expertise authority in private sector. Hereunder, as O9 states that; *"...managerial positions require vocational and technical information with high skills in the industry. That's why those well-equipped people, even if they don't have a managerial positions, are respected by others in the company. Everyone tends to ask everything to these high-skilled people and they sometimes would have greater influence than managers, as if they play a manager role. And because this is known by ownership of the company, those high-skilled people assigned to managerial positions to prevent the emergence of dual execution"*. To this statement, qualifications of those skilled members make them an "informal authority" in the organization and that's why they are assigned to managerial position to obliterate their "shadow authority" that may lead to conflicts.

Finally, within the interview process, respondents were asked to define metaphorically their relationship with their superior. When they faced difficulties they were provided four alternative options; commander-officer, father-son, teacher-student, and leader-follower which symbolically correspond respectively to authorities of rational/legal, paternalistic, expert, and personal. A surprising result is found which is not consistent with previous results that obtained through survey. Almost half of the answers (45 % of all interviews) portrayed a leader-follower relation. However, when the interviews were deepened it became clear that the leader-member relationship reflects a formal/mechanic relation in most respondents' views. Some of the

interviewees- who did not see their superiors as a model leader in the previous question defined their relations with leader/follower metaphor- were asked to explain this inconsistency with a reframed questions. The answers clarified that some interviewees attribute a different meaning to the term “leader” in defining their relationships. One of them is T7 working in communication industry: *“what I do generally is to “follow” (quotation mark is respondent’s gesture) the instruction of my superior and this means that I am directed by him or I suppose I am led by him. He is naturally in leading position. If I had right not to follow probably I would not”* A supporting comment comes from another employee, O8, from the public-service organization: *“Actually, I was in between the commander-officer and leader-follower options. However the identity of officer evokes a quite passive figure. I am not that much passive. That’s why I refer to leader-follower option; otherwise my superior does not have the leadership skills.”* It is understood that, even they intend to refer to a different relation mode, they actually refer to a “formal/mechanic” relation which is produced by the power of rational/legal authority. On the other hand, the second most referred one (33 % of all interviews) is teacher-student metaphor which is associated to the expert authority. Interviewees, particularly those from the software company (3 of 5 interviewees), perceive a teacher-student relationship. Father-son (7,5 %) is the least perceived one that stated by only 3 interviewees, all working in public-manufacture industry (food industry). Also two interviewees stated a “companion relation” which implies a quite informal and equal relation.

Considering the all queries, what the noticeable result is formal/legal and expertise authority more pervasive than the others. When the parts of puzzle are combined, an eclectic portrait emerges that is featured by the colors of these both authority modes.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The primary purpose of this study is to test the theoretical discourse that Weberian rational/legal position authority has been replaced by more participative, expertise and personal authorities which empower autonomous and self-determining subordinates. In other words, it is aimed to shed light the question which authority mode is more dominant in business organizations. Analytical structure is built on three related issues of authority; control and autonomy, leader-member relation and authority figure. The findings are summarized in Table 7.

First, instead of being able to portray a manifest conclusion I can draw attention to signs that let to develop some certain arguments. One of them is the claim that Weberian rational/legal authority being replaced by a more participative, flexible and personal authorities is not totally supported by the findings of this research. On the contrary,

rational/legal authority is one of the relatively more perceived authorities along with expertise authority. However the dominance of expertise authority- as the most perceived authority mode- reinforces the partial verification of the claim. All three parts of the analysis - control and autonomy, leader-member relation and authority figure – does not give a clear picture of one authority mode. Instead it exhibits an eclectic authority structure in which the facts on rational/legal and expertise authorities can be seen more apparently.

Even disparate control structures coexist and develop in overlapping patterns (Burris, 1989) bureaucratic control is, more or less, the common part of control type in all organizations. Rules and principals are, to a large extent, salient component of processes which is highly structured by management, especially in public organizations and that indicates the sovereignty of Weberian rational/legal authority. On the other hand, relatively flexible attachment to rules and principals, in two private organizations, provides a basis for a normative control that builds rules in personal *ethos*. Service organizations are, averagely, characterized by moderate autonomy and control while manufacture organizations are featured by low autonomy and close monitoring. Within the disciplining process, rewards are more employed than punishments which is in accordance with “trendy authority modes” discoursed in recent decades.

**Table 7.** Summary: Authority Perception at Work

	Public		Private	
	Service	Manufacture	Service	Manufacture
<i>Control and Autonomy</i>				
Control type	Bureaucratic	Simple Bureaucratic	Normative Bureaucratic	Technical Bureaucratic
Autonomy	Moderate	Low Autonomy	Moderate	Low Autonomy
Discipline	Autonomy/control Constructive	Close monitoring Constructive	Autonomy/control Constructive Procedural	Close monitoring Constructive
<i>Leader-Member Relation</i>				
Communication intensity	Upper moderate	High	Upper moderate	High
Involvement	Moderate	Low	High	Low
Formalization	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate
<i>Authority Figure</i>				
Leading Characteristic of authority	CCP/CP	CPR Decisiveness	CCP Decisiveness	Decisiveness CPR
Authority mode	Rational/legal Expert	Rational/legal Expert Paternalistic	Expert Rational/legal	Rational/legal Expert
Authority Relation	Commander-officer Teacher-student	Teacher-student Father-son	Teacher-student Commander-officer	Teacher-student Commander-officer

CCP: Conceptual competence and Proficiency

CPR: Commitment to rules and principals

In terms of relations between superior and subordinate- communication, participation and formalization- data do not prove the existence of a pure mode of a specific authority. Communicative work environment opens the relation channels in the organizations. However, close relations largely stem from the spatial condition, especially in manufacture organizations, in which both superior and subordinates mostly work in the same work setting that enable to intense communication. It decreases the formalization level but it does not necessarily increase the participation of employees to the decision-making processes. Participation is high only private-service organizations.

Public-service organizations nurture rational/legal (positional) authority more intensely than the others. We can see the leading characteristics of positional (rational/legal) authority, such as, commitment to principals, structured processes, more formal relations etc. However, this profile blurs at some points where rational/legal and expertise authority intersects. In other words, both authority modes coexist in an eclectic mode. In terms of control practices and relations between two parts, the public organization, characterized by the majority of blue-collar employees, exhibits weak indication of paternalistic authority. Expertise and legal/rational authority modes are also more strongly perceived in private organizations. However, one of the organizations, the one characterized by the majority of by blue-collar employees, stands relatively closer to the former one, in between rational/legal authority and expertise which may be caused by the fact that it has been recently privatized, and it follows a more instructive and centralized management style instead of informative and participative one to change the old structure and create a new design in a short run.

In the third part of the analysis on authority figure, rational/legal and expert authority come in sight more explicitly with moderate differences among sectors. Even both authority modes are dominant in all organizations their rank differentiates. Expert authority is more intensely perceived in private-service sector while it follows rational/legal authority in public sector. Also slight signs of paternalistic authority can be observed in public-manufacture sector.

When demographic data is included in analysis, to the result of Pearson Chi-square, there is a significant difference ( $p < 0.010$ ) between genders. For both genders, expert and rational/legal authority modes rank as the first two. However the extent of perception is significantly different. Among women, perception of expert authority is 62,5 % while it is 41 % among men which may be caused by the fact that men manager are much more direct and “bureaucratic” against their congeneric subordinates. On the other hand age and education does not cause a significant difference on the perception of authority mode.

As a consequence, keeping limitation of the study (sample size) in mind, the discourse narrating that the position authority is replaced by participative, expertise and personal authorities in recent times is not totally supported by the findings of this study. Results indicate that though expert authority seems to be sovereign; it is not alone and rational/legal authority keeps his throne in reserve.

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