

24 - 26 July 2026

Copenhagen , Denmark

Technological Architecture and Professional Autonomy: A Study of Delegation Forms in a Post-Socialist Banking Environment

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Abstract

The digital transformation journey is reshaping authority relations within banking organizations, fundamentally altering how decision-making is delegated. This study explores the “autonomy paradox” in digitized environments, particularly within the post-socialist context of Albania, where increased transparency and access to information do not necessarily translate into an expansion of real decision-making authority. Given the country’s high-power distance and legacy of centralized decision-making, this research investigates whether digital systems act as a catalyst for empowerment or as a sophisticated mechanism for procedural control. Utilizing a socio-technical framework, this paper proposes that technology functions as an active decision architecture that differentially impacts informational delegation versus the delegation of decision-making authority. Through a structural model, the study examines the moderating roles of protocol standardization and manager digital competence in shaping employees’ Autonomous Professional Judgment (APJ). The primary contribution of this work lies in proposing an empirical typology of delegation forms - authentic, procedural and ceremonial within a post-socialist banking environment. By diagnosing the discrepancy between managerial reporting and employee experience, this research challenges linear assumptions regarding digital transformation, highlighting the significance of trust in leadership as a critical mediator for preserving human capital in transition economies.

Keywords: Delegation; Organizational Ceremonialism; Power Distance; Socio-Technical Systems; Transition Economies