RATIONALIZATION AND BUREAUCRACY: IDEAL-TYPE BUREAUCRACY BY MAX WEBER

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Abstract

Purpose of this study: This article intends to contribute to the discussion of the heuristic and analytical potentialities of the ideal type of bureaucracy proposed by Max Weber for the analysis of contemporary organizations.

Methodology: For this essay, a bibliographical research was carried out on this topic, complemented by our experience as sociologists in teaching and research on the organizational theme in some databases, such as Web of Knowledge, DOAJ, SCIELO, and institutional repositories.

Findings: For Max Weber, the bureaucracy presents very specific characteristics that differ, in varied situations, from the representation and application often conferred to this model of organizational administration.

Implications: Bureaucracy is a notion with great social visibility and is associated with an image where negative aspects are emphasized. However, in discursive records of a scientific nature, bureaucracy is a relevant concept in Sociology and Organizational Theory studies.

Keywords: Max Weber, Ideal-Type, Bureaucracy, Organizational Administration Model

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucracy is an inescapable notion in many types of discursive registers, whether in common language or in scientific language, and in organizational analysis, even in the critical sense (Ang, 2016, Serpa & Ferreira, 2019).

The notion of bureaucracy is associated with negative characteristics of organizations, such as delays in functioning, action centered on opaque norms, excessive requests for documentation, or even numerous difficulties in responding to requests from users or customers (Godoi, Silva & Cardoso, 2017). These socially negative images associated with the term bureaucracy shape discourses on the state, public administration, public services and business, and put scientific approaches of bureaucracy, such as Max Weber's substantive contributions, to the limit.

In the prolix discourses produced by various social sciences, different uses of the concept of bureaucracy are envisaged. In the nineteenth century, the term bureaucracy was usually employed to indicate a type of political system in which ministerial positions were performed by career officials, often under the responsibility of a hereditary monarch and contrasted with a representative political system. In the twentieth century, bureaucratic government could characterize a military dictatorship or one-party government - as if it were a hereditary monarchy - but the contrast with a parliamentary monarchy was marked (Beetham, 1988). Another use of the concept refers to the public administration as opposed to the administration of private organizations, emphasizing its relation with the government, its relation with the law, its coercive character, its connection to the general interest more than to the private, and the public responsibility for its activities. Another point of view favors bureaucracy as a non-market organization, funded by subsidy from the parent association, in contrast to that funded by the sale of its products in the market (Beetham, 1988). Another use of the concept, which forms a part of the disciplinary space of Sociology of Organizations, was shaped primarily by the contribution of Max Weber. According to this perspective, bureaucracy does not mean a kind of government, but a management system run on a continuum by professionals guided by prescribed rules (Beetham, 1988).

For Weber, bureaucracy is the typical form of rational-legal domination, where authority results from rules; and bureaucracy is a system of rules and not of people (Parkin, 1996). Bureaucratic administration is characterized by a complex division of labor, hierarchy of authority, technical competence, rules of procedure for office, rules governing

employee behavior, limited position authority, differential salary by position, separation of ownership and administration, emphasis on written communications, and rational discipline (Weber, 1966).

In modern organizations, we find these bureaucratic characteristics abundantly (Giddens, 1997). Despite the existence of multiple theoretical and methodological models that can be mobilized on how to look at and analyze an organization, the theoretical-methodological proposal of bureaucracy developed by Weber is still a central approach in the analysis of organizational configurations.

This article, to a certain extent, is complementary to that of Serpa and Ferreira (2019) and aims to contribute to the discussion of the heuristic and analytical potentialities of the ideal-type bureaucracy proposed by Max Weber. For this essay, a bibliographical research was carried out on this topic, complemented by our experience as sociologists in teaching and research on the organizational theme in some databases, such as Web of Knowledge, DOAJ, SCIELO, and institutional repositories.

Bureaucracy and Rationalization

Max Weber proposes the concept of bureaucracy in a context marked by the rationalization of the world in a society characterized by the growing relevance of the modern financial economy, the rationalization of law, the importance of mass phenomena, centralization and state interventionism, and the development of technical rationalization, by a growing impersonality in the social relation and by a process of disenchantment of the world (Weber, 1982; Pimentel, 2012; Aron, 1994; Giddens, 1997).

However, Weber argued that bureaucracy was not a specifically modern form of organization, and in particular, there were forms of patrimonial bureaucracy based on patrimonial domination (Weber, 1966, 1989b). Patrimonialism is a form of traditional domination, characterized by the belief in the sanctity of ordinations and the seigniorial powers transmitted and accepted since ancient times, which have "existed for ever" (Weber, 1989b, 691). The dominant association is primarily an association of reverence determined by an education community. He who dominates is not 'superior', but personal 'master' and those who obey are 'subjects', while the administrative framework is composed not by 'officials', but by 'servants'. The basis of the legitimacy of the Lord is loyalty and the loyalty that subjects feel for their sovereign, who seeks to have the same relation with his political subjects that they have with their family members. The rules are obeyed (and not laid-down) by the people (Weber, 1989b; Parkin, 1996). Weber considered that patrimonial officials had certain characteristics that resembled those of the bureaucracy with regard to the functional division of labor and the hierarchy of command. However, the differences in relation to bureaucracy are more significant than the similarities. The patrimonial administration does not show a clear separation between the public sphere and the private sphere. The ruler administered the territory by personal power and in the exercise counted on broad discretionary powers. The employees were only required to faithfully carry out the orders. The bureaucrats owe obedience to the rules and never to the ruler (Parkin, 1996). The estate officers privately owned their domains that could be sold or passed on to their heirs. Administrative competence and technical ability were not attributes relevant to the position, but loyalty to the ruler was a fundamental principle (Weber, 1989b; Parkin, 1996).

For Weber, modern bureaucratic administration, based on legal and rational principles and characterized by its technical superiority and the exercise of knowledge-based domination (Weber, 1966), would be able to supplant all previous forms of administration. The emergence of this form of bureaucratic organizational rationality was not an occasional one, constituting a necessary feature of modernity (Clegg, 1990). Rationalization enhanced the design of modernity by enabling the application of general principles of reason to the conduct of human problems, fostering the capacity to respond to unstable environments and manage inherent complexity (Touraine 1988, Clegg 1990). Rational action is aimed at controlling uncertainty and rational calculation limits uncertainty in a world that could be controllable. Two conceptions of rationality are presented by Weber: "Formal rationality" refers to the means-end relation and the realization of practical and indisputable ends through a precise calculation of the means adapted to the attainment of these ends; and "Real rationality" refers to the increasing theoretical domination of reality through increasingly precise and abstract concepts (Clegg, 1990).

Bureaucracy can be seen as being embedded in a process of formalization, that is, a way of redefining, reinterpreting reality, and reclassifying its elements, centered on increasing the capacity for control and direction, enabling the extension of the institutions' field of action. Formalization, based on the "method" of classification, orders and catalogues certain phenomena of reality by assigning a linguistic expression to them and demanding the construction of concepts that represent certain aspects of the world. Classification tasks establish the rules of inclusion and exclusion and

structure possibilities for action (Wagner, 1997). However, the process of extension of modernity, that is, the set of social transformations that reintegrate individuals into a new order, is accomplished not only through a growing formalization, but also through its standardization and homogenization. Conventionalization is a means to reduce uncertainty by limiting the variation of events, actions, and interpretations that may occur. It is a collective effort to build a controllable social world. One of its aspects is to increase the possibility of understanding the social world by classifying the phenomena of society. Another aspect is to impose the use of these classifications on the whole society. The possibility of control cannot be increased as relevant groups operate with divergent definitions of important social phenomena. Homogenization favors standardizing the different and imposing order and eliminating ambivalence in the name of reason through bureaucratic control. The homogenization of structures, cultures, and outcomes of modern institutions seek to rationally manage the contexts in which they operate, marked by uncertainty and constraint, and emphasize the similarity of the forms, strategies, and processes of modern institutions for legitimacy (Wagner, 1997).

Therefore, rationalization has manifested itself in modern organizations, particularly in bureaucratic administration. However, on the one hand, the capitalist system plays a fundamental role in the development of bureaucracy, and on the other hand, capitalist production cannot persist without bureaucracy and every rational type of socialism would have to adopt bureaucratic means of administrative domination (Weber, 1966). Impersonality and the ability to carry out prospective calculations can be considered not only as constraints, but also as extremely efficient means of ensuring the legitimacy of existing structures of domination. Rational-legal domination, as a form of modern domination, has gradually replaced traditional domination as the predominant principle of legitimation (Holton, 2002).

Ideal Type of Weber Bureaucracy

Domination is not only viewed as a structure of power that demands obedience, but as a structure of power that demands obedience resulting from the will to obey (Parkin, 1996). Domination, as a probability of finding obedience to a particular mandate, can be based on various motives of submission (Weber, 1966). The kind of pretension that the holders of power have for the legitimacy of their power configures the forms or types of domination: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Traditional domination is based on the appeal to the sanctity of customs and immemorial traditions, whereas charismatic domination is based on the personal gift of a heroic figure that is in a state of grace, and finally, rational-legal domination is based on formally approved rules and statutes and has its archetype in the bureaucracy (Weber, 1966, Parkin, 1996).

The bureaucracy presented by Weber constitutes an ideal-type (Florian, 2018, Serpa, 2018, Ang, 2016) for the author, in the sense of consisting a scheme formed by theorized characteristics with which the reality can be compared. The ideal-type can be considered as a "simplified and schematic picture of the object [sic] of the research with which systematic observation of the real ... must be confronted" (Schnapper, 2000). The stylization or accentuation of essential features can be employed to synthesize the research acquisitions, and for extracting the fundamental characteristics or elaborating an abstract model with which the conduits can be compared" (p.35). Continuing to follow Serpa (2014, 2018) on the ideal-type as a mental model, it turns out that:

> "If it is too abstract [sic] or close to macrosociology, if it is too general, it explains everything, therefore it explains nothing, and its operative value is weak. Is too close to empirical data and concrete realities, it is not distinguished from historical narration, systematic description or orderly presentation of examples, and provides little understanding" (Schnapper, 2000, pp. 155-156)"

It is in this logic that Weber considers rational domination (Weber, 1989b; Giddens, 1997; Filleau & Marques-Ripoull, 2002) based on legal legitimacy (Pimentel, 2012) and assumes an increasing predominance and translates into bureaucracy, in what Matos and Lima (2007) consider, paraphrasing Weber, an 'elective affinity', that is, the relations and tensions between ideas and interests (Gerth & Mills, 1982).

The development of the modern form of organization coincides in all sectors with the development and continuous expansion of bureaucratic administration, because bureaucratic administration is always observed under equal conditions and from a formal and technical perspective, the most rational type of organization. The main source of the superiority of bureaucratic administration lies in the role of technical knowledge which, through the development of modern technology and economic methods in the production of goods, has become an absolutely indispensable domination based on knowledge. This is the trait that makes it specifically rational. It consists, on the one hand, of technical knowledge which, in itself, is sufficient to ensure a position of extraordinary power for the bureaucracy. On the other hand, it should

be considered that bureaucratic organizations, or the power holders who serve them, tend to become even more powerful by the knowledge that comes from the practice they acquire in service (Weber, 1966, pp. 24-26).

Bureaucracy is the typical form of the type of rational-legal domination in which the effectiveness of legal authority rests on a set of interdependent conceptions. The legal norm may be established by agreement or imposition, for utilitarian purposes and / or rational values. The law essentially consists of an integrated system of abstract rules and the administration of the law consists in the application of these rules to particular cases. The person who typically represents the authority occupies a "position" and the activities are subordinated to an impersonal order for which the actions are directed. The person obeys authority only as a member of the association, and what he/she obeys is the "law." Members of the association, while obedient to the one, who represents authority, should not obey him as an individual, but to the impersonal order (Weber, 1996).

In his work Economy and Society, Weber presents the fundamental characteristics of modern bureaucracy: 1. Principle of fixed and official areas of jurisdiction, ordered according to regulations, by laws or administrative rules. 2. Principles of hierarchy of positions and levels of authority: each lower position is under the control and supervision of the superior. Subordinates have the possibility of appealing from a decision of a lower authority to their superior authority, in a precisely regulated manner. 3. The administration of a modern office is based on written documents ('the archives'). 4. The bureaucratic administration presupposes a specialized and complete training of various agents. 5. When the position is fully developed, official activity requires the full capacity of the employees' work. 6. The performance of the position follows general rules, more or less stable, and can be taught (Weber, 1982).

The purest kind of exercise of legal authority is one in which a bureaucratic administrative framework is employed. The whole of the administrative framework under the 'supreme' authority consists of officials acting in accordance with the following principles: (i) they are individually free and subject to authority only in respect of their official obligations; ii) they are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of positions; iii) each position has a clearly defined sphere of competence; (iv) the position is filled by a free contractual relationship; v) candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualifications, in the most rational cases the qualification is tested by examinations, and the employees are appointed and not elected; (vi) they are remunerated with fixed wages in cash and are in most cases entitled to pensions; (vii) the position is considered to be the sole or principal occupation of the official; viii) the position establishes the fundamentals of a career, a promotion system existing on the basis of seniority and merit, where promotion depends on the judgment of superiors; (ix) the employee works off the ownership of the means of administration and does not appropriate the position; and x) the employee is subject to a rigorous and systematic discipline and control in the performance of the position (Weber, 1966).

However, three elements can be considered as fundamental in the ideal type of bureaucracy: formalistic impersonality (of rules, procedures and appointments), the character of experts and employees, and the existence of a strict hierarchical system, involving subordination and control (Weber, 1989b; Crozier, 1981).

For Weber, the main and the most generalized consequences of bureaucratic domination would be the tendency for 'leveling' in the interests of a universal recruiting base on the basis of qualification and specialization; the tendency towards 'plutocratization' in the interests of the longest possible technical learning; the predominance of a spirit of 'formalist impersonality' without hatred or passion, in which dominant norms imply a strict duty without regarding the formal considerations, in an equal way for 'all people' (Weber, 1989b).

The impersonality and formality, ensured by bureaucratic rationalization, ensures that organizational objectives would not be confused with personal motivations or other interests (Godoi et al., 2017), dealing with situations rather than with people, treating all formally equal (Weber, 1989b) and increasing predictability in the functioning of any organization (Ferreira, 2004; Filleau & Marques-Ripoull, 2002).

The achievement of this desideratum implied the emphasis on bureaucracy as an administration, based on specialization on the one hand, and based on discipline on the other. In the first component, obedience is invoked as a means to an end and the individual obeys, in part, because of the feelings about the norm. In the second component, obedience would be an end in itself, as the individual obeys the order mainly because of the position occupied by the person who commands, regardless of their feelings about the norm or order (Gouldner, 1966).

Therefore, Gouldner (1966) suggests that Weber implicitly referred not to one, but to two types of bureaucracy: the 'representative form of bureaucracy', based on rules laid down by agreement and technically justified and administered

by specialists; and the so-called 'punitive bureaucracy', based on the imposition of rules and pure obedience (Gouldner, 1966, p.58).

Challenges of Ideal-Type Bureaucracy

Weber established the ideal type of bureaucracy by selecting and emphasizing the characteristics that he considered to be his hallmark. The choice of characteristics of bureaucratic administration that is supposed to be more typical or significant implied a departure from the atypical ones. Weber tended to focus on the positive functions of the system and ignore its dysfunctions (Parkin, 1996). Weber asserts the superiority of modern rational organizations that correspond to their ideal-type of bureaucratic management; however, one may question whether the author implicitly does not attribute the success of these organizations to the existence of their negative aspects, as organizations reduce its members to a situation of standardization and homogenization (Crozier, 1981; Wagner, 1997).

Post-Weberian developments on bureaucracy are marked by fundamental ambiguity. On the one hand, a significant number of authors argue that the development of bureaucratic organizations corresponds to the emergence of rationalization and is therefore intrinsically superior to all other possible forms of organization. On the other hand, other authors view bureaucratic organizations as if they were the expressions of Leviathan, through which the slavery of human species is propitiated (Crozier, 1981).

However, as Weber points out, the ideal-type of bureaucracy is a mental construction in its conceptual purity and cannot be found empirically in reality. It would be to empirical research that the task of determining, for each singular case, to what extent this ideal construction approaches or diverges from reality (Weber, 1989a).

Positive aspects

For Weber, the irresistible diffusion of the bureaucracy resulted from domination by means of knowledge - specialized knowledge and factual knowledge - and by its purely technical superiority, in comparison with the other forms of organization. The specialized knowledge and the technical formation were fundamental in the application of the technical rules and norms in organizations, allowing an integral rationality. Only a person with technical training would be eligible to join the administrative framework of an association, and could he be hired as an official only under such conditions (Weber, 1989b).

The administration of the bureaucratic type was considered as the most efficient of organizations and as an ideal-type. The closer the bureaucracy is, the more the organization is effective and efficient in its standardized functioning (Giddens, 1997; Ferreira, 2004), constituting this ideal-type a historical form of rationality and scientificity (Ferreira, 2004).

> "Precision, velocity, clarity, knowledge of the archives, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction in the friction and costs of material and staff – are brought to the optimum in strictly bureaucratic administration, especially in its monocratic form bureaucracy is "dehumanized" insofar as it manages to eliminate, from official business, love, hate and all personal, irrational, and emotional elements that escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy, which is praised as its special virtue." (Weber, 1982 [1948], pp. 249-251)"

Weber referred to efficiency as a complex of values and procedures that included the quality of behavior (e.g. velocity, uniformity of action, extent of field of action, and cost-effectiveness of operation) (Beetham, 1988). Some examples of the efficiency of bureaucracy for Weber can be stated as: decisions and procedures based on general criteria; at an average level of competence in interpreting the law thanks to the training provided; full-time remuneration reduces the temptation of corruption; (Giddens, 1997), and based on the experience of specialized professionals (Godoi et al., 2017). Formalism could attenuate the emergence of arbitrariness (Weber, 1989b).

Negative aspects

Although Weber claimed technical superiority over other forms of organization and management, the bureaucracy was a human creation, though fatally compromised by its technical functioning, and human beings were rapidly losing their control (Clegg, 1990). The impersonal forces of the rationalization of bureaucratic domination would tend to dominate human action producing meaning and transform the modern world into an "iron cage." The "iron cage" arises when a preoccupation with the means and instruments removes a preoccupation with human ends or when the means become ends (Weber, 1983; Holton, 2002).

"Presently, the rational calculation is present in any activity. Through it ... each man becomes a cogwheel of the machine and, aware of this, he has the main desire to become a bigger cogwheel ... it is horrible to think that the world may one day be filled by these small cogwheels, small men clinging to small jobs and thirsting for the bigger ones [...] this passion for bureaucracy is enough to drive a person to despair" (Weber, cit. in Mayer, 1956, cit. in Clegg, 1990, p. 35)"

As a result, dysfunctions arise in the functioning of the bureaucratic organization (Filleau & Marques-Ripoull, 2002; Cour, 2018) in the interpretation of the law (Pimentel, 2012) as well as the informal dimension that tend to originate a large number of formal, but not acting officers. This is partly because the lack of flexibility can be gained by unofficial adjustments to formal rules (Giddens 1997: 355). Ultimately, the rule functions as an end in itself (Giddens, 1997; White, 2017). The individual obeys order, pushing away judgments about his rationality or morality, mainly because of the position occupied by the person who commands (Gouldner, 1966). In order to achieve normalization and standardization of employee behavior, the discipline implies the development of a ritualistic attitude of employees, whose resulting rigidity makes it difficult for employees to respond to particular demands of their tasks and, at the same time, this rigidity promotes caste spirit, opening a gap between civil servants and citizens (Crozier, 1981). The rigidity of employee routines is associated with the following elements: the extension of the development of impersonal rules, the centralization of decisions, the isolation of each hierarchical category and concomitant increase of group pressure on the individual, and the development of parallel power relations around the remaining areas of uncertainty (Crozier, 1981).

It is therefore normal for the whole organization to experience a tension between the ideal of rationality - clear objectives, effectiveness, regulation, planned change - and the reality of the actors' practices and functioning. These are not devoid of rationality or coherence, but are prisoners of multiple logics, a culture, a habitus, inheritance, and multiple constraints (Perrenoud 1994: 142).

The potential dysfunctions generated by the bureaucracy could be mitigated by the emphasis on professionalism, with the adoption of a set of attitudes regarding work and professional identity that could enhance the functional autonomy and responsibilities of framing or coordinating activities by the employees, justifying their pretensions with non-economic principles, such as quality, altruism, skills, professional behavior, etc. (Larson, 1977; Rodrigues, 1998).

"Thus, the greater the professionalism that is employed in the organization in the Weberian views of bureaucratic rationalization, the greater the guarantee of a greater governance of this organization. A vision that is not explored in the literature is this positive empowerment assimilated by the professionals of an organization" (Godoi et al., 2017, p.442).

Another relevant aspect focuses on the effects of the exercise of immense power that the bureaucracy confers on the superiors without regulating that power. The 'iron law of the oligarchy', established by Michels, is that a cadre of professional officials gradually frees itself from the control of other members of the organization and monopolizes the decision-making power. The constitution of this oligarchy represents a reduction in the level of employee participation and the degree of democracy in bureaucratic organizations (Michels, 1966).

Other Challenges

A reifying conception of the notion of bureaucracy implies this as a condition that is present or absent, assuming that organizations are either wholly bureaucratic or non-bureaucratic, obscuring a perspective that emphasizes bureaucracy as a form of organization that exists over a series of dimensions, each in the form of a continuum (Hall, 1966). Several empirical studies indicate what is commonly addressed as totality, bureaucracy, which is not an integrated whole. The configuration nature of the degree to which dimensions appear suggests that organizations are composed of commonly attributed dimensions, but that these dimensions are not present in their entirety to the same degree in concrete organizations (Hall, 1966).

In the organizational configurations, proposed by Mintzberg - privileging the relations of interdependence between the strategic vertex elements, hierarchical or intermediate line, operational nucleus, technostructure, logistical support services and the mechanisms of coordination and control: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of procedures, standardization of results, standardization of qualifications - two types of bureaucratic configurations, namely, the mechanic and the professional, are identified. The mechanical bureaucracy configuration is characterized by a high complexity, formalization, and centralization, and seeks to achieve efficiency by prioritizing procedures to control highly specialized work in simple and stable environments. This configuration is constituted by all elements of the structure, in which the technostructure, the logistical support, and the extensive hierarchical line stand out. Its main

coordination mechanism is the standardization of work processes. The key substructure of the organization is the technostructure that ensures coordination and elaborates the rules and norms that govern the organization.

For its part, the professional bureaucracy configuration is characterized by the predominance of the operational center, a reduced hierarchical line, and an equally reduced techno-structure, but extensive logistical support. Coordination is based on the standardization of qualifications, which are generally acquired outside the organization. The professionals have a great control over their own work. This type of bureaucratic configuration combines standardization with decentralization. The main coordination mechanism is the standardization of qualifications. The main design parameters are training, horizontal work specialization, and horizontal and vertical decentralization (Mintzberg, 1995).

CONCLUSION

It is true that any organizational model, allowing a theoretical and methodologically oriented process of simplification of reality, presents potentialities and limitations for the analysis and administration of an always complex object: the organization (Rosado, 2015, Cunha & Cunha, 2002; Cour, 2018); we consider that the theoretical-methodological proposal of the ideal-type bureaucracy, developed by Max Weber, continues to be pertinent to this desideratum.

The ideal-type bureaucracy is a conceptual abstraction developed to understand the complexities of the organizational world, since we cannot grasp phenomena in their entirety as Weber aptly states (Parkin, 1996). In order to understand an organization, the central characteristics of the organization to be analyzed are isolated and accentuated, and characteristics that can be considered marginal are suppressed or devalued. This procedure can lead to the ideal-type bureaucracy not being a perfect representation of its real object, as Parkin (1996) states.

Weber recognizes that selecting the elements that will make an ideal-type is somewhat arbitrary. What is considered and accentuated and what is abandoned is to some extent influenced by the type of problems to be investigated and by the questions that arise, so it does not make much sense to say that an ideal type is right or wrong. For a given type of research, it may be better to select one constellation of elements and for another the most appropriate set may be different (Parkin, 1996, p.11)

Can one question how to assume that concepts elaborated by accentuations and abandonment of certain characteristics, conditioned by various choices, are instruments of scientific demonstration? How to establish the validity of ideal-types? Weber responds to these questions on the grounds that, first, validity is linked to the plurality of perspectives and possible interpretations: there is in each case only one procedure and one legitimate result. It maintains that the validity of the ideal-type is defined by its pertinence: logical pertinence, inherent in the norms regulating the rational exercise of thought; and heuristic pertinence, that is, operability. This operability of concepts will be both more significant and less general; the elaboration of types serves mainly to account for singular social configurations (Silva, 1988, 63)

To consider bureaucracy as an ideal-type can make it possible to determine in what particular aspect an organization is bureaucratized. Hence, the notion of bureaucracy, as it is often used, may not be that rational form described by Weber, but particular configurations of the bureaucratic model may be the most rational form for particular activities (Hall, 1966).

LIMITATIONS AND STUDY FORWARD

The empirical researches to be developed from the contributions of Max Weber and other authors, defenders or critics of the Weberian perspective, could contribute to answer this challenge and, perhaps, to promote the scouring of Weber's conceptions and the emergence of other theoretical- methodological and subsequent substantive research.

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