

Sociological approaches explaining the phenomenon of bureaucracy and local administrative action

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Abstract

This work aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the sociological approaches that explain the bureaucratic phenomenon and administrative action, with a focus on the theoretical developments that have contributed to rethinking traditional concepts and highlighting the transformations that sociological thought has undergone in this field

. This study aims to examine the impact of the bureaucratic phenomenon on local administrative action in the Algerian administration by employing modern sociological approaches, particularly the neo-institutional approach, the strategic analysis approach, and the participatory governance approach. The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the structural causes that hinder local administrative performance. The study also seeks to assess the effectiveness of these approaches in analyzing bureaucracy, specifically in their interpretation of power and social relations within institutions, and their ability to provide theoretical and conceptual tools that help overcome bureaucratic inertia and move toward a more effective and participatory local administration.

Keywords : Sociological approach, explanatory, bureaucratic phenomenon, local administrative action

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I- Introduction :

Bureaucracy is one of the central phenomena that have preoccupied sociologists since the emergence of the modern state, as it has been closely linked to the development of institutions and administrative organizations in industrial and capitalist societies. It has become a dominant organizational model, perceived as a functional necessity for ensuring efficiency, maintaining institutional continuity, and regulating performance. However, this model has not been without controversy; it has been the subject of extensive sociological debate, particularly regarding its impact on social action, organizational relations, and administrative practices.

Max Weber, one of the foremost theorists of bureaucracy, viewed it as a rational form of administration based on principles of efficiency, neutrality, and hierarchical authority, making it an effective tool for achieving the objectives of the modern state. However, he also warned of the dangers of the "iron cage," where rigid rules and formal procedures could transform individuals into passive agents devoid of creativity and flexibility (Christensen & et al, 2007, p 21).

As societies evolved, bureaucracy became more complex, transcending its original function as a rational administrative framework to become a broader social and cultural phenomenon shaped by multiple factors, including political influence, social interactions, and cultural and economic differences. This evolution has led to the emergence of contemporary sociological approaches that seek to analyze bureaucracy and administrative action from multiple perspectives, moving beyond the classical Weberian model. The neo-institutional approach, for example, focuses on how bureaucratic organizations adapt to their social and political environments, highlighting the impact of institutional values and norms on administrative performance. Meanwhile, the network approach considers organizational relations not merely as formal structures but as complex interactions between actors, where informal power and social ties play a significant role in shaping administrative decisions.

Furthermore, the gender approach offers a critical analysis of bureaucracy, arguing that it is not a neutral system but rather a mechanism that reproduces gender disparities within institutions by structuring labor divisions along gendered lines and excluding women from decision-making roles. Meanwhile, post-bureaucratic perspectives suggest that modern organizations are no longer bound by traditional bureaucratic rigidity but instead rely on more flexible models such as participatory management, cooperative leadership, and horizontal structures that minimize rigid hierarchies.

Thus, the study of bureaucracy is no longer limited to its administrative dimensions but has become a lens for analyzing broader social and power relations within institutions. This research, therefore, aims to provide a comprehensive examination of sociological approaches to bureaucracy and administrative action, focusing on theoretical

developments that have reshaped traditional conceptions and highlighting the transformations that sociological thought has undergone in this field.

Based on the above, the research problem can be reformulated as follows:

What are the modern sociological approaches that can be applied to study the impact of the bureaucratic phenomenon on local administrative action in the Algerian administration, and how effective are they in analyzing and understanding this impact?

This main question gives rise to several sub-questions, including:

How do modern sociological approaches—such as the neo-institutional approach, the strategic analysis approach, and the participatory governance approach—explain the phenomenon of bureaucracy in the Algerian context?

To what extent do these approaches help uncover the structural dysfunctions that hinder local administrative action?

1.1. About the concept of the sociological approach

The sociological approach is an analytical method used to study social phenomena from the perspective of sociology. It aims to explain how social relationships are formed, how structures and institutions influence human behavior, and how social interactions shape social reality. This approach is based on the fundamental assumption that social phenomena are not merely individual actions but rather the result of complex processes involving social structures, culture, and economic and political forces. Therefore, the sociological approach relies on multiple analytical tools, such as structural interpretation, interactive understanding, and historical comparison, allowing for the study of phenomena from different angles to grasp their deeper dimensions.

The sociological approach is based on a set of theories and methodologies that seek to explain social phenomena within different fields of study. While the structural-functional approach, represented by scholars such as Émile Durkheim, focuses on analyzing the role of social institutions in maintaining societal stability and balance, the conflict approach, inspired by Karl Marx's ideas, emphasizes the role of economic and power inequalities in shaping social relationships. On the other hand, the symbolic interactionist approach, developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, studies the meanings and symbols individuals use in their daily lives to understand how social reality is constructed through interaction. This theoretical diversity reflects the richness of the sociological approach and its ability to provide various explanations for social phenomena.

Drawing on its theoretical flexibility and multiplicity of approaches, the sociological perspective is distinguished by its exceptional ability to adapt to contemporary social issues, making it an effective tool for analyzing social transformations and understanding the effects of globalization and modern technology on lifestyles. In this context, the literature review aligns with the sociological perspective in terms of its comprehensiveness and diversity, as it draws on a wide range of sources

from anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and technology studies. This enables a deconstruction of the dynamic relationship between technology and culture (Alsaleh, 2024, p 2).

In this context, the sociological approach is a scientific method used to understand social phenomena by analyzing structural, cultural, economic, and political factors that influence the behavior of individuals and groups. This approach is based on the idea that society is not merely a collection of individuals but rather a complex system formed by social interactions, cultural patterns, and institutional structures that shape patterns of thought and behavior. The sociological approach aims to study these interwoven relationships to understand how social phenomena emerge, evolve, and impact individuals and communities (Sharma, 2018, p110).

When applying the sociological approach to analyze phenomena, emphasis is placed on the social context in which they arise, as no phenomenon can be isolated from the societal framework surrounding it. Social institutions such as family, education, politics, and economy play a significant role in shaping social reality and influencing the behavior of individuals and groups. Moreover, historical circumstances, economic transformations, and cultural changes play a crucial role in shaping social phenomena, making the study of society a dynamic process that requires exploring the shifting factors that affect it.

The sociological approach relies on a set of theories and concepts that help analyze social reality from multiple perspectives. Structural theories focus on the role of institutions and social norms in shaping individual behavior, while the symbolic interactionist approach examines daily interactions and symbolic exchanges that construct social meanings. Additionally, the critical approach highlights power relations and social conflicts that influence the distribution of resources and opportunities within society. Thus, this approach not only provides an explanation for social phenomena but also contributes to proposing solutions that enhance a deep understanding of social structures and human interactions.

The sociological approach refers to the social perspective of analysis and understanding, focusing on the study of relationships and social interactions within society through the application of various theories and concepts. This approach serves as a multidimensional analytical tool aimed at interpreting social phenomena by exploring the dynamic interactions between individuals, groups, institutions, and cultural systems. It also highlights the meanings that individuals attribute to social reality, contributing to a deeper understanding of social processes and their complexities. Through this perspective, it becomes possible to analyze the impact of social phenomena on the structure of society and examine the connections between social structures and human interactions, thereby helping to develop a comprehensive vision of how society is formed and evolves (derbal & Nora benouhiba, 2024, p 103).

In other words, the sociological approach is an analytical perspective for understanding social phenomena by studying relationships and

interactions within society, relying on a variety of theories and concepts. It provides a multidimensional framework that helps explain how societies are formed and develop by analyzing the dynamics between individuals, groups, institutions, and cultural systems. This approach also focuses on the meanings individuals attribute to social reality, contributing to a clearer understanding of the complexities of social processes and their impact on societal structures. Through this perspective, the connections between social structures and human interactions can be explored, allowing for a deeper comprehension of how social phenomena emerge and influence social organization and societal change.

In a sociological context, the sociological approach is defined as a scientific method aimed at studying human behavior by analyzing the social forces that influence individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and actions. It focuses on social interactions, cultural norms, and the role of social institutions in shaping individuals' behavior within society. This approach emphasizes that individual behavior is not solely determined by personal traits but is significantly influenced by the surrounding social environment. Therefore, it necessitates the study of structural, cultural, economic, and political factors that shape social relationships and various patterns of life (Mehdi & Samir Grid, 2024, p 11).

In this sense, the sociological approach relies on analyzing social structures, values, and norms that guide human actions and explain how individuals and groups interact within different social contexts. By exploring the relationship between social factors and human behavior, sociologists seek a deeper understanding of social phenomena, examining patterns of social interaction and their impact on the formation and development of societies. This approach provides a comprehensive perspective on how social phenomena emerge and evolve, contributing to the analysis of social transformations and the understanding of mechanisms of change within society.

It is worth noting, in a different context, that the sociological approach focuses on understanding and analyzing social phenomena, interactions, and patterns that shape society by providing scientific explanations for their occurrence. This approach relies on a set of concepts and theories that interpret social relationships and social reality, offering testable assumptions about society. These theories vary in scope and level of analysis, including major approaches that aim to explain general and abstract social phenomena, such as the functionalist approach, the conflict approach, and the symbolic interactionist approach. Additionally, there are mid-range approaches that focus on relationships between specific concepts, such as theories of social behavior, rational choice, and actor-network theories (Wahab & et al, 2020, p 53- 54).

The sociological approach serves as a theoretical tool for understanding and analyzing social reality by studying social relationships and the impact of structural, cultural, economic, and political factors on the behavior of individuals and groups. Since the emergence of sociology, this

approach has evolved to include the analysis of major transformations such as industrialization, urbanization, and democracy, later expanding to encompass the study of societies, organizations, and social relationships. This approach enables an understanding of social interaction on both macro and micro levels, where macro-level analysis focuses on social structures that shape society, while micro-level analysis examines social interactions in specific contexts. It also emphasizes that social action is a purposeful behavior influenced by the actions of others, whether at the individual or group level, reflecting the impact of social expectations on individuals, groups, and institutions.

The sociological approach is based on understanding social problems by analyzing them within their social and cultural contexts, rather than considering them as purely individual issues. It focuses on how social relationships, cultural systems, and societal structures influence individuals' behavior and interactions with their surroundings. This approach relies on redefining social situations so that personal problems are seen as part of broader social issues, allowing for solutions based on intervention in social structures rather than merely individual change (Straus, 1984, p 57- 61).

In this context, the bureaucratic phenomenon serves as a model for the sociological approach in analyzing organizations and institutions. Rather than viewing bureaucracy as a purely administrative issue, the sociological approach examines it as a product of the social and historical structure of society. This approach focuses on how bureaucratic rules and structures develop in response to societal organizational needs, their impact on social interactions, relationships within institutions, and the levels of efficiency or complexity in task execution. It also considers the positive aspects of bureaucracy, such as organization and discipline, versus its negative aspects, such as rigidity and excessive routine.

For example, when studying the performance of government institutions, the sociological approach can analyze how bureaucratic rules and procedures lead to delays in processing transactions, creating frustration among citizens. It can also explain how job specialization and hierarchical structures contribute to improved efficiency on one hand but may result in a loss of flexibility on the other. Through this analysis, bureaucracy is not merely seen as an administrative problem but rather understood within the broader social context that includes organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, and societal expectations of formal institutions.

Based on the previous theoretical foundations, we can define the sociological approach procedurally as an analytical methodology aimed at studying social phenomena by understanding them within the social, historical, and cultural contexts that shape them. This approach seeks to uncover the connections between individuals and institutions and analyze the impact of social structures on behavior and daily interactions. It also focuses on redefining individual problems as reflections of broader societal issues, allowing for solutions based on changes in social and organizational

structures rather than merely relying on individual interventions.(Neuman, 2014, pp 56- 57).

II- Sociological approaches explaining the bureaucratic phenomenon:

Sociological approaches seek to explain the bureaucratic phenomenon from multiple perspectives, with each approach offering a distinct understanding of the nature of organizations, their mechanisms, and their impact on individuals and society. Among these approaches, the new institutional approach focuses on how organizations are influenced by surrounding institutional rules and social values. It argues that bureaucracy does not emerge solely due to functional efficiency but is shaped by cultural norms and institutional expectations that grant it legitimacy. Meanwhile, the social networks approach views organizations as networks of relationships and interactions among actors, emphasizing how informal ties—such as personal relationships and unofficial communications—affect power dynamics and decision-making within bureaucracies, thereby creating an organizational reality that is more complex than the formal structures suggest (Carvalho & et al, 2017, p 251).

Additionally, the gender approach to organizations examines how gender roles are constructed within bureaucracies, highlighting that administrative hierarchies are not neutral but rather reflect existing power structures based on gender, thereby limiting women's opportunities to reach leadership positions. On the other hand, the post-bureaucratic approach sheds light on the transformations that have occurred in traditional organizational models, emphasizing the emergence of more flexible organizational forms that rely on innovation and horizontal interaction instead of rigid hierarchical structures. Finally, the sociocultural approach provides an interpretation that focuses on the impact of organizational culture in shaping bureaucratic behavior. It argues that values and beliefs within an organization determine the nature of administrative work, making bureaucracy not just a rational administrative system but a space where multiple cultural elements interact, influencing its effectiveness and nature.

In this context, we will explore these approaches and highlight their contribution to explaining the bureaucratic phenomenon by analyzing the various dimensions that influence its emergence and development from a sociological perspective. The new institutional approach focuses on the impact of the institutional environment in shaping bureaucracy and reinforcing its legitimacy, while the social networks approach sheds light on the role of informal relationships in shaping power dynamics and decision-making within organizations. The gender approach, on the other hand, reveals how gender inequalities are reproduced within bureaucratic structures, whereas the post-bureaucratic approach emphasizes the shift towards more flexible forms of management and organization. Finally, the sociocultural approach interprets bureaucracy as a phenomenon influenced

by social values and norms, reflecting the interaction between organizations and their surrounding cultural contexts.

II-1 New Institutionalism Approach:

Social sciences have undergone a profound shift toward institutional approaches, with the sociological stream within "new institutionalism" emerging as one of the leading trends in studying modern organizations and management. This approach focuses on understanding institutions not only as organizational structures but also as social and cultural phenomena that influence the behavior of individuals and groups. Instead of viewing institutions as mere rational responses to technical demands, the sociological institutional approach emphasizes how institutions are socially constructed through the rules and norms that grant them legitimacy and continuity. In this sense, institutions are not just static structures but dynamic patterns shaped by historical processes and social interaction, making them capable of influencing and reproducing cultural patterns and organizational behaviors.

In this context, the transition from "old institutionalism" to "new institutionalism" led to fundamental shifts in the study of organizations, where the focus is no longer solely on how institutions adapt to their environments, but on how the institutional environment itself shapes these institutions and guides their behavior. Researchers like DiMaggio and Powell (1991) have shown that institutions undergo processes of diffusion, isomorphism, and separation, where organizations adopt certain strategies in response to normative, coercive, and mimetic pressures. At the same time, Meyer and Rowan (1977) revealed how organizational structures often reflect the expectations of their institutional environment more than their technical needs, creating a gap between official policies and actual practices. Thus, institutions are understood not only from an internal perspective but also through their relationship with the broader cultural and cognitive structures that provide them with legitimacy and continuity (Powell & Patricia Bromley, 2015, p 765).

Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell are among the leading figures of neo-institutional sociology, which emerged following the research of Meyer and Rowan in the late 1970s, drawing on an intellectual heritage that extends to the works of pioneers such as John Commons and Philip Selznick. This approach emphasizes the importance of institutions in explaining social and economic phenomena, with particular attention to the regulatory systems between institutions rather than merely analyzing the forces operating within organizations. Although neo-institutionalism encompasses multiple approaches, the most prominent distinction lies between the economic perspective, which adopts an instrumental view of institutions, and the sociological perspective, which sees institutions as mechanisms of social coordination with cognitive and symbolic dimensions. In this view, organizations adopt institutional structures not only for functional reasons but also in response to environmental and institutional pressures.

In this context, DiMaggio and Powell introduced the concept of "institutional isomorphism" to understand why organizations tend to resemble each other rather than diversify. They drew inspiration from Max Weber's analysis of rationalization and bureaucracy in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, where Weber argues that modern rationalized systems have become an "iron cage," with rationalization leading to the dominance of bureaucracy as an irreversible process. The two scholars argue that institutional factors play the primary role in shaping organizational structures, surpassing the traditional logic of efficiency and economic competition. As organizational fields mature, interactions among key actors—such as suppliers, clients, regulatory bodies, and competing organizations—contribute to the establishment of dominant organizational models, leading to increasing homogeneity in institutional structures (Huault, 2017, p 167).

DiMaggio and Powell contend that the institutionalization process of an organizational field unfolds in four key stages: an increase in organizational interactions within the field, the emergence of dominant structures and coalitions among organizations, the rise in the volume and processing of exchanged information, and finally, the stabilization of prevailing organizational models. Through this analysis, it becomes evident that organizational similarity is not merely a direct outcome of competitive pressures or a pursuit of efficiency, but rather the result of complex institutional processes that reflect the profound influence of social practices and norms in shaping modern institutions.

Overall, the new institutional approach addressed the bureaucratic phenomenon from the perspective of organizational isomorphism. It emphasized that institutions do not evolve solely in response to efficiency requirements but are also influenced by social and professional pressures that push them toward resemblance with other institutions in the same field. This isomorphism manifests through recruitment processes that attract individuals with similar professional and educational backgrounds, leading to the creation of administrative elites that share homogeneous ways of thinking and orientations. Additionally, promotion mechanisms and continuous training within organizations reinforce this homogeneity, making individuals who reach senior positions nearly identical in terms of values and managerial behaviors (DIMAGGIO & WALTER W. POWELL, 1983, 157- 158).

Moreover, professional socialization processes play a fundamental role in unifying organizational standards within a given professional field. Employees in organizations are subjected to specific patterns of behavior and professional expectations that reproduce existing administrative structures, whether through training programs or engagement in professional networks that bring together industry leaders. Over time, adherence to these rules and patterns becomes essential for obtaining organizational legitimacy, as institutions strive to imitate successful models to ensure recognition and secure resources and support from other institutional actors.

In this context, the success of institutions is not necessarily linked to their internal efficiency but rather to their alignment with prevailing models in their field. Institutional pressures often drive organizations to adopt the same structures and policies as dominant, influential institutions, reinforcing organizational isomorphism. Additionally, continuous interactions between institutions through contracts, partnerships, and membership in professional associations further strengthen this tendency toward homogeneity, making institutions resemble closed systems that reproduce themselves and reduce the likelihood of innovation or fundamental change in management and decision-making processes.

As the sociological institutional approach evolved, its scope expanded to include the interaction between individuals and institutions, institutional diversity, and the impact of globalization on organizational systems. Researchers began to explore how actors within institutions contribute to reshaping institutional rules and norms, offering a more dynamic understanding of institutions as spaces for reproduction and change. Additionally, focusing on institutional diversity allowed for moving beyond the assumption of organizational isomorphism by studying how institutional practices are modified and translated when transferred across different contexts. In the context of globalization, the sociological institutional approach became more open to studying the influence of global structures on local organizations, contributing to the development of the theory of global society, which highlights the spread of institutional models across national borders. Thus, new institutionalism continues to adapt and evolve, maintaining its position as a core analytical framework in organizational sociology (Silva & et al, 2023, p 76- 77).

II 2-The gender approach in organizations:

Organizations are social spaces where gender power relations are formed and reproduced through bureaucratic structures that impose normative patterns of behavior and functions. From a gender perspective, organizations are not neutral; rather, they reflect gender disparities through formal and informal rules that define roles and opportunities. Bureaucratic structures, despite their claims of neutrality and efficiency, often reinforce male privileges through the division of labor, where leadership and decision-making positions are predominantly assigned to men, while women are pushed into supportive administrative roles, reinforcing the "glass ceiling" that limits their advancement. Additionally, the masculine-oriented organizational culture perpetuates this gap by favoring success criteria that emphasize authoritarian and competitive leadership styles, forcing women to adapt to an organizational model that does not acknowledge diverse leadership and management approaches (Icart & Carlos Santamaria Velasco, 2018, p 15- 16).

From this perspective, bureaucracy can be understood not merely as a rational administrative system but as a mechanism that reproduces gender power relations through organizational policies and procedures. Hiring policies, performance evaluations, and promotion procedures reflect hidden

gender biases, making imposed standards unequal between men and women, thereby perpetuating male dominance in the professional sphere. Consequently, deconstructing bureaucracy from a gender perspective requires rethinking organizational structures in ways that ensure equal opportunities and recognize gender diversity within the workplace. This approach fosters more inclusive and equitable environments that promote diversity in leadership and decision-making styles.

Since the 1970s, feminist researchers have developed the theoretical foundations of the concept of gender as a product of social relations and processes (Rubin 1975, Kessler & McKenna 1978). This perspective aligns with social constructivism, which has roots in sociological classics (Berger & Luckmann 1966). From this standpoint, gender is viewed as a social practice that produces knowledge, meaning it is not merely a pre-existing entity to be discovered but rather a phenomenon constructed through social interaction, necessitating its study as a process of knowledge production. This perspective also applies to organizations, which are seen as gendered entities. Halford et al. (1997) argued that gender is embedded in organizational forms and relationships. Accordingly, the formation of gender and organization are interconnected and interdependent processes, where organizational structures shape specific forms of gender hierarchies that reproduce power relations and inequalities.

In the past decade, the concept of "doing gender" has increasingly shaped academic discourse, particularly in Scandinavian countries where this perspective originated. Joan Acker's work played a crucial role in developing this approach, notably through her article *"Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations"* (1990), written during her research fellowship at the Swedish Center for Working Life. The origins of the concept of "doing gender" can be traced back to the work of Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987), who introduced an ethnomethodological perspective emphasizing the routine accomplishment of gender through everyday social interactions. Their analysis emerged in response to criticisms of the concept of "gender roles," which was seen as obscuring power relations and inequalities, as well as critiques directed at radical, Marxist, and socialist feminist theories for focusing on macro-level structures while neglecting individual agency. Thus, West and Zimmerman's perspective bridged the gap between macro and micro levels, enabling an understanding of gender as a dynamic practice continuously constructed through social interactions (Linghag & Klara Regnö, 1990, p 3).

The gender approach in organizations represents a theoretical development and an epistemological shift that reflects the interaction between feminist theory and organizational studies. Pioneering works such as those of Acker and Van Houten (1974) and Kanter (1977) highlighted the gendered structuring of organizations, illustrating how social structures reproduce gender inequalities in the workplace. Later, Joan Acker (1990, 1992) deepened this perspective by analyzing how organizations become gendered through institutional norms and practices, reinforcing stereotypes

about men and women despite claims of organizational gender neutrality. Feminist scholarship, including works by Ashcraft and Mumby (2003) and Wilson (1996), expanded the discussion by critiquing gender blindness in organizational theory, arguing that such blindness was not a mere oversight but the result of exclusive epistemological projects that deliberately ignored gender. In parallel, research reviews by Broadbridge and Hearn (2008) and Alvesson and Billing (2009) examined the tensions between individual and structural interpretations of gender relations within organizations, reflecting the complexity of integrating a gender perspective into organizational structures. As a result, feminist theory has become a fundamental force in questioning gendered organizations, adopting multiple approaches—such as radical feminism, liberal feminism, and poststructuralism—to uncover the mechanisms that reinforce gender inequalities and promote social justice in work and organizational contexts (Rodriguez & Elisabeth Anna Guenther, 2022, p 4- 5).

In this sense, the gender approach in organizations serves as an analytical framework that reveals how gender relations are shaped within organizational environments and how structures and practices contribute to reproducing gender inequalities. This approach is based on the premise that organizations are not neutral spaces but are permeated by invisible processes that determine roles and career trajectories based on gender. Organizational policies, performance standards, leadership styles, and even the language used within institutions can all reflect gender biases that perpetuate certain privileges for men at the expense of women or limit opportunities for non-dominant groups. In this context, the gender approach contributes to questioning traditional structures and highlighting how organizations produce patterns of dominance and marginalization based on gender, opening the door to reform policies aimed at fostering gender justice in the workplace.

Moreover, the gender approach is not limited to analyzing gender gaps but extends to deconstructing stereotypical perceptions of leadership, work, and productivity. By adopting a more inclusive perspective, it becomes possible to rethink professional success criteria beyond traditional gendered frameworks, allowing for the emergence of more diverse and equitable leadership models. The gender approach also emphasizes the importance of recognizing the intersections between gender and other factors such as race, social class, and nationality, thus enhancing a deeper understanding of organizational experience as shaped by overlapping systems of power and discrimination. Hence, integrating gender analysis into organizational studies is not merely a theoretical correction but an epistemological transformation that contributes to redefining the foundations of institutions and the ways individuals interact within them.

II 3- Post-bureaucratic approach:

The post-bureaucratic approach has emerged as a modern organizational model that seeks to overcome the limitations of traditional bureaucracy by emphasizing flexibility, decentralization, innovation, and

interaction with the external environment instead of rigid hierarchies, standardized regulations, and formal procedures. Many researchers argue that organizations have increasingly adopted more open and adaptive models, leading to a redefinition of administrative autonomy. While bureaucracy constrained employees within strict hierarchical structures, post-bureaucratic organizations grant employees functional autonomy based on market demands and organizational environment requirements. From this perspective, there has been a shift toward reducing rigid rules and regulations in favor of enhancing accountability and focusing on outcomes, where institutions are now evaluated based on their efficiency and ability to deliver added value to society rather than merely adhering to formal rules.

Pioneers of this approach, such as Parker and Bradley (2004), assert that economic and technological transformations, particularly in recent decades, have been the key factors behind the rise of post-bureaucratic management. The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has led to the emergence of new organizational forms, such as networked management, e-governance, and remote work, which have contributed to enhanced communication, innovation, and decentralization. Additionally, the expansion of globalization and privatization has pushed governments to reconsider their regulatory roles, leading to the adoption of more flexible approaches that engage with civil society and the private sector. As a result, public institutions have moved away from relying on permanent employment and rigid specialization toward adopting more open and adaptive models, emphasizing temporary and consultancy-based work, thereby maximizing the utilization of external resources instead of being confined to traditional institutional boundaries (Kalimullah & et al, 2015, p1- 2).

The key features of post-bureaucratic management include reducing organizational hierarchies, fostering intersectoral partnerships, prioritizing results over procedures, and leveraging digitalization and technology to improve the quality of public services. Within this model, performance is now assessed based on the value delivered to society rather than merely controlling costs and complying with internal regulations. However, this approach faces challenges, including the need to balance flexibility with accountability, ensuring digital security amid increased reliance on technology, and mitigating the negative impacts on job stability and social equity. Nevertheless, post-bureaucratic management remains a promising model that aims to build institutions better suited to the demands of the knowledge era, transcending the constraints of traditional bureaucracy, thereby reshaping the nature of public services and making them more responsive and open to their environment.

According to Charles Heckscher, one of the leading theorists of the post-bureaucratic approach, modern organizations no longer rely on rigid hierarchical structures. Instead, they adopt flexible methods based on trust, collaboration, and shared accountability. In this context, decision-making is no longer confined to the traditional administrative hierarchy but is instead

shaped by interactive networks where individuals contribute to guiding the work based on competence and commitment to shared values. This transformation enhances institutional dynamism, making adaptability to changes and rapid responsiveness to challenges among the key characteristics of modern organizations (Heckscher, 1994, p 51- 52).

Furthermore, the post-bureaucratic approach emphasizes the development of work relationships based on continuous dialogue and recognition of individual capabilities, which reduces centralized authority and fosters creativity and innovation within the organization. Success is no longer tied to the rigid application of standardized procedures but rather to the cultivation of an organizational environment that encourages knowledge exchange and promotes teamwork. As a result, institutions evolve into more open and sustainable entities, capable of navigating the growing complexities of the modern work environment.

The post-bureaucratic approach has undergone significant developments since its emergence as a reaction to the traditional bureaucratic model, emphasizing organizational flexibility, institutional culture, and reliance on shared values and norms rather than rigid rules and hierarchical structures. In this context, Paul du Gay (2000) contributed to analyzing the cultural and managerial transformations accompanying this approach, noting that post-bureaucracy does not necessarily entail abandoning administrative structures but rather reconfiguring them in ways that better align with evolving work environments. On the other hand, Alvesson and Kärreman (2004) discussed shifts in control mechanisms, asserting that control in post-bureaucracy has become more ideological and social, focusing on shaping employee identities rather than enforcing strict rules. Meanwhile, Maravelias (2003) pointed out that this model has reshaped the relationship between individuals and institutions, where organizational commitment is now based on self-direction and personal responsibility rather than coerced compliance. Although post-bureaucracy aims to foster innovation and flexibility, some researchers, such as McSweeney (2006), have argued that these transformations may, in some cases, reinforce new forms of dominance and informal control, necessitating a reassessment of their impact on modern work environments (SIEBERS, 2009, p 65- 68).

Overall, post-bureaucracy assumes different ways of controlling work. Technical control is manifested in managerial efforts that directly regulate employee behavior by setting performance goals and behavioral standards, relying on work codification, regulations, and protocols that focus on the physical aspects of job performance. In contrast, ideological social control seeks to persuade individuals to adapt to the organization's values, making them not only comply with rules but also adopt an organizational identity that enhances their commitment to continuous improvement. This mechanism targets the "hearts and minds" of employees, reinforcing their connection to institutional values. However, these control methods may impact racial and ethnic discrimination in the workplace, as

ideological social control leaves greater room for subjective biases that may lead to favoring certain groups over others. Meanwhile, technical control, with its clear and measurable standards, allows less room for subjective judgments. Based on this, some perspectives suggest that individuals from racial and ethnic minorities tend to prefer technical control to a greater extent than their majority counterparts and show greater reservations toward ideological social control.

II 4 - The approach of social networks:

The social network approach to organizations focuses on understanding organizational relationships from a dynamic perspective, emphasizing interactions and connections between individuals over time. From this standpoint, social networks provide an alternative to traditional models that focus solely on formal structures, highlighting the importance of informal social interactions in shaping individual behavior within organizations. Georg Simmel is considered one of the founders of this approach, having laid the theoretical foundations for network analysis through his study of social interaction patterns. Meanwhile, Mark Granovetter developed the concept of "the strength of weak ties," which explains the role of weak relationships in spreading information and providing new opportunities within organizations.

Additionally, Ronald Burt contributed to the development of this approach through his concept of "structural holes," which suggests that organizations are not fully interconnected but instead contain gaps between different groups. Individuals who bridge these gaps have strategic influence within the organizational network. On the other hand, the studies of Katz and Kahn analyzed organizations as "interwoven networks of roles," where information and resources are exchanged through repeated interactions among individuals. This perspective demonstrates how social relationships surpass formal structures in determining organizational dynamics (TICHY & et al, 1979, p 508).

The impact of the social network approach has extended to various fields, such as the study of voting behavior and the diffusion of innovations, as seen in the works of Katz and Lazarsfeld. Concepts such as density, centrality, and clusters serve as essential analytical tools for understanding these networks. From this perspective, the social network approach provides a comprehensive understanding of organizations as interconnected systems where power and influence emerge through social connections rather than merely through formal hierarchies (Whelan & et al, 2013, p 197).

From a Sociological Perspective, the social network approach in the study of bureaucratic organizations serves as an important framework for understanding relationships among organizational actors, whether at the internal level (within the organization) or the external level (between organizations). Studies on internal networks focus on analyzing the links between employees and organizational units, which helps uncover leadership patterns, the distribution of power, and the flow of information within the institution.

As for studies on inter-organizational networks, they have emerged over more than four decades, building on the works of researchers such as Monge and Contractor (2001) and Oliver (1990). These studies highlight that organizations seek to establish strategic relationships with others to achieve competitive advantages and reduce uncertainty in their environment. Collaborative relationships begin with limited and formal interactions, and then evolve over time into interconnected relationships that foster trust, knowledge exchange, and resource sharing. Organizational network analysis is an effective tool for understanding adaptation strategies and responses to environmental changes. This aligns with theories such as the resource dependence theory by Pfeffer and Salancik (1998), which asserts that organizations strive to form relationships with parties possessing the necessary resources and skills to ensure their continuity. Networks also provide opportunities for knowledge transfer and enhance organizational legitimacy, aligning with the new institutional approach of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), where interwoven relationships help shape prevailing norms within organizational fields and push institutions toward institutional isomorphism. Studies such as those by Cook, Madhavan, and Brescat (2006) indicate that organizations occupying central positions in networks have a greater capacity to influence their organizational domain, thereby strengthening their position in the market (SOZEN & et al, 2009 , p 27- 32).

At the micro level, social network analysis enables the study of various phenomena within organizations, such as leadership dynamics, the formation of organizational cliques and clans, and even the interpretation of social isolation patterns that may affect individual motivation and productivity. By analyzing individuals' positions within the network, it is possible to identify potential leaders or informational brokers who may hold significant influence, regardless of their official position within the organizational structure.

Despite the challenges associated with collecting network data due to the sensitivity of personal information, technological advancements and the increasing reliance on digital platforms provide new tools for analyzing organizational networks.

Recently, communication through social networks has become an essential part of the dynamics of modern organizations, offering new possibilities for enhancing internal interaction and coordination among individuals. While some hypotheses emphasize the necessity of communication within organizations, others suggest that social networks provide an additional dimension to this communication, potentially reshaping traditional organizational structures. In bureaucratic contexts, characterized by multiple administrative levels and formal communication channels, social networks can help mitigate structural rigidity by creating flexible spaces for employee interaction and facilitating a more seamless flow of information, independent of traditional bureaucratic complexities. Integrating these digital tools into organizational communication strategies can contribute to building a more cohesive professional community, where

communication becomes more spontaneous and less constrained by rigid administrative barriers (Vargas-Hernández & Cecilia Morales-Del-Rio, 2019, p 45).

However, this transformation presents challenges for bureaucratic organizations, which rely on formal structures to regulate processes and decision-making. With numerous branches and organizational channels, the unstructured reliance on social networks may weaken hierarchical authority and reshape control mechanisms within the institution. Therefore, it is essential to develop long-term strategies that integrate social networks in a way that balances organizational flexibility with administrative control requirements, allowing for improved communication mechanisms without compromising institutional stability.

Adopting a dynamic communication approach within traditional bureaucracies could be a crucial factor in overcoming challenges related to functional isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. This makes social networks a vital tool for reinventing the bureaucratic model in alignment with the demands of the digital age.

III- Sociological approaches explaining local administrative action:

Modern sociological approaches provide a diverse understanding of local administrative action by analyzing decision-making dynamics, the interaction between actors, and the influence of economic and technological contexts. The participatory governance approach focuses on the role of civil society and local actors in policy-making and implementation, viewing local administrative action as a participatory process aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability. This contributes to achieving more democratic management that takes into account the needs of citizens through continuous dialogue and negotiation. The resource dependence approach, on the other hand, analyzes how local administrations rely on external actors, such as the central government or the private sector, to secure the necessary resources. According to this approach, the ability to negotiate and develop partnership strategies are critical factors in determining the effectiveness of local administration (Filgueiras & et al, 2023, p 2).

On the other hand, the strategic analysis approach presents a perspective focused on the individual and collective roles within local organizations, viewing administrative actors as strategists who seek to achieve their interests by building alliances and developing negotiation strategies within power networks. This approach integrates with the digital sociological approach, which highlights the role of modern technology in reshaping local administrative action through the use of big data, digital platforms, and e-government, thereby enhancing efficiency and transparency. Consequently, these approaches offer integrated insights into how local administrative action is influenced by interactions between actors, resource dependence, and digital transformations, providing a deeper understanding of local administration dynamics in contemporary contexts.

III 1- Participatory governance approach:

Participatory governance is a modern approach to enhancing democracy by engaging citizens in decision-making processes, going beyond traditional forms of political representation. Based on the ideas of classical thinkers such as Rousseau and Mill, who emphasized the importance of active participation, this approach has evolved thanks to the contributions of contemporary theorists like Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl, who focused on electoral participation. However, in the 1960s, new trends emerged advocating for broader participation, as research by Carole Pateman, Jane Mansbridge, and Ben Barber demonstrated the feasibility of democracy through direct engagement in local governance institutions. Experiences in participatory governance, such as the participatory budgeting initiative launched in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in the late 1980s, have reinforced the significance of citizens' active involvement in decision-making regarding the allocation of public resources. These experiences inspired several countries, including India, Mexico, and the United States, to adopt similar mechanisms that help address democratic deficits and promote a more equitable distribution of resources (McNULTY & BRIAN WAMPLER, 2015, p 3- 5).

Participatory governance is based on a set of key assumptions, primarily that active participation enhances the quality of administrative decisions and that its success depends on various factors, such as the support of political parties, the effectiveness of civil society organizations, intergovernmental relations, clear regulatory frameworks, available resources, and the political will of local leadership. Comparative studies, such as those by Van Cott, Wampler, and McNulty, have shown that the success of these mechanisms is linked to the flexibility of institutional designs and the responsiveness of political actors and civil society. In the context of local administration, participatory governance plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and accountability, providing citizens with a platform to hold administrative officials accountable and influence decisions affecting their daily lives. By adopting this approach, local institutions become more capable of addressing developmental challenges, ultimately contributing to social justice and strengthening citizens' trust in local governance.

Vivien Lowndes considers the local level to be the cornerstone of democracy building and the enhancement of citizen participation. It represents the space where individuals interact with politicians and public officials, receive public services, and organize themselves into local communities. Lowndes emphasizes that citizenship is deeply rooted in community identity and belonging and that civic engagement and political participation revolve around this level. She also argues that local governance provides an educational environment that fosters a deeper understanding of citizenship in its various forms, thereby empowering citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes (Gaventa, 2002, p 34).

However, an excessive focus on the local level can be problematic, as the concept of the "local" is used in different ways by various actors, such as global development institutions or political parties, making it a tool to justify diverse—and sometimes contradictory—agendas. This highlights a key challenge of participatory governance: while local participation can promote a more inclusive democracy, it can also be used to entrench neoliberal policies that weaken the role of the state or to reinforce excessive centralization that perpetuates unequal power relations. Therefore, a critical analysis is needed to assess how the discourse of participation is employed and to determine whether it genuinely creates opportunities for effective democracy-building or merely serves to accommodate and legitimize dominant agendas (Vivier & Diana Sanchez- Betancourt, 2023, p 221).

Bureaucratic responsiveness is a fundamental component of participatory governance, as the effectiveness of citizen participation depends on the ability of local administration to engage with their demands and integrate them into decision-making processes and public policies. This requires local officials to go beyond their traditional role as policy implementers and adopt a more interactive approach, enabling them to listen to the community, analyze its needs, and make decisions that reflect these aspirations. In this context, the ability of government actors to adapt to local challenges through communication and collaboration with citizens is essential for enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of participatory governance. The success of this responsiveness also depends on the integration of participation mechanisms within administrative structures, which contributes to strengthening trust between citizens and local government. According to Eckerd and Heidelberg, local bureaucracies and officials are not merely passive recipients of political pressures and external policies; rather, their work within the political environment requires flexible and innovative policy implementation, especially in the realm of participation, where they are expected to achieve efficiency goals while ensuring inclusivity and bottom-up decision-making (Sjoberg & et al, 2017, p 349).

On the other hand, administrative effectiveness is influenced by various organizational factors, such as the level of autonomy, availability of resources, and the complexity of bureaucratic procedures. Local officials determine not only the nature and extent of participation but also how different policies interact within the institutional system. Therefore, enhancing the capacity of local actors to innovate and adapt to changing contexts is a crucial condition for the success of participatory governance. The administrative official thus becomes an active agent in creating an environment that facilitates bottom-up decision-making, thereby reinforcing inclusivity and effective responsiveness to the needs of the local community.

III 2- The strategic analysis approach:

The strategic analysis approach, as presented by Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, is based on the principle of organized action, which relies

on relationships between actors within social systems. In their book *The Actor and the System* (1977), they defined the framework of strategic analysis by linking it to the concepts of power and uncertainty, where actors interact within specific contexts through strategies aimed at achieving their individual and collective interests. According to Crozier, strategic analysis is based on two fundamental elements: the first is the concept of "analysis," which parallels the meaning of "theory," and the second is "strategy," which serves as an alternative to determinism, as actions are not mere automatic responses but are guided and intentional. These actions evolve based on the pressures and resources available to actors within a given period, making strategic direction constantly shifting according to the social and institutional context (Merabti & Ali ALLIOUA, 2023, p 20- 21).

This approach is particularly evident in understanding local administrative action, where administration is viewed as a dynamic space in which decisions are made based on strategies rooted in power and uncertainty. Crozier argues that relationships within organizations can only be understood through an analysis of "strategy-game" and "power-uncertainty," where the social actor is a central element in this analysis. The local administrative actor does not operate in an environment governed by fixed rules but is in constant negotiation with various stakeholders influencing decision-making. Power is exercised within reciprocal relationships in which actors possess zones of uncertainty that they use as leverage to achieve their objectives. As noted by Amblard, Bernoux, and Herreros (1996), the expansion of regulatory frameworks increases areas of certainty, leading to a redistribution of power among local actors, each seeking to assert their influence based on their control over strategic information and resources.

In this context, strategic analysis views local administrative action as the result of ongoing negotiations between actors striving to advance their interests within a complex regulatory environment. According to Crozier and Friedberg, power within organizations is not exercised solely through formal structures but also through influence and bargaining processes shaped by mutual interests among actors. The organization, in their perspective, is a space for strategic interactions centered on power, influence, and negotiation, where administrative decisions are made through intricate exchanges of interests and compromises. Under this understanding, strategic analysis becomes an effective tool for comprehending the mechanisms of local administrative action, as it helps reveal the nature of decision-making, the intertwined stakes, and the complex relationships that govern interactions between actors in the administrative sphere.

The strategic analysis approach is based on the idea that local administrative action cannot be understood solely through formal rules and procedures but is shaped by the strategies of actors seeking to achieve their interests within the organizational system. According to this approach, local administration is not merely the bureaucratic implementation of policies but rather a space for interaction and negotiation, where local actors—such as

elected officials, administrators, and civil society—use their available room for maneuver to influence administrative processes and make decisions that align with their stakes and objectives. From this perspective, local collective action becomes a dynamic process that reflects power balances within the administrative system (Martin, 2012, p 101- 102).

In the context of local administration, the strategic analysis approach highlights that actors do not merely comply with laws but actively reshape them to serve their strategies. Relationships within the local administrative organization are built on continuous negotiation and adaptation, as each actor seeks to leverage available resources—whether information, networks of influence, or strategic positions—to strengthen their standing within the administrative system. Consequently, local administrative decisions are produced through the interaction of interests and strategies, making administrative action more flexible and responsive to local realities. At the same time, however, it remains subject to the logic of power and influence that governs relationships among different actors.

Overall, we can say that the strategic analysis approach interprets local administrative action as the result of a complex interaction between actors and organizational constraints, where the organization is not merely a bureaucratic machine but is socially constructed through the stakes and strategies of individuals. According to Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, actors within local administration have margins of freedom, which they seek to expand through negotiation strategies that take into account the existing balances within the organization. Moreover, this rationality remains relative, given the diversity of actors, their differing interests, and available resources, making local administrative action a dynamic process based on negotiation and adaptation to constraints and organizational structures (Oussama & BADRAOUI Soufyane, 2024, p 151- 153).

III3- Dependency approach to resources:

The resource dependence approach (RDA) views organizations as open systems shaped by external environmental conditions. As Pfeffer & Salancik (1978:1) emphasize, understanding organizational behavior requires analyzing its broader environmental context. This approach explains how organizations, while constrained by their environment, adopt strategies to reduce uncertainty and dependence on external entities controlling vital resources. At the core of these strategies is power—the ability to influence resource flows—where organizations seek to minimize their vulnerability while strengthening their control over critical resources.

From this perspective, local administrative actions are seen as deliberate efforts to manage external dependencies and navigate resource constraints. According to Pfeffer & Salancik (1978), organizations employ various strategies to achieve this, including mergers, vertical integration, joint ventures, governance structures such as boards of directors, political engagement, and leadership succession planning. These actions reflect attempts by local entities to maintain relative autonomy in complex environments, where effective management depends on strategic

networking, negotiating access to resources, and ensuring institutional sustainability. However, these strategies do not eliminate dependence but rather transform it, creating new patterns of interdependence and influencing power dynamics within and between organizations. Analyzing local administrative actions through the **resource dependence approach** thus highlights how organizations navigate environmental pressures, manage resource access, and sustain their position within broader networks of influence and exchange (Hillman & et al, 2009, p 1404- 1405).

Furthermore, the resource dependence approach, as formulated by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik, emphasizes that organizations do not operate in isolation from their environment; rather, they rely on vital resources such as money, materials, personnel, and information, which are controlled by external entities. This dependence places organizations in a delicate balance between striving for autonomy and being subject to external constraints. The extent of this dependence depends on the importance of the resources to the organization, the degree of control external parties exert over their distribution, and the availability of alternatives. Therefore, rather than interpreting organizational challenges solely through internal factors, it is essential to consider the impact of the surrounding environment and the organization's ability to adapt to and effectively manage these external influences (Pugh & David J. Hickson, 2007, p 79- 80).

To address this dependence, organizations adopt various strategies, including adapting to external constraints, restructuring relationships through mergers and expansion, negotiating with key actors in their environment via alliances and agreements, and influencing the legal and political framework to create a more favorable environment. Additionally, managerial leadership plays a crucial role in managing these dependencies, as changes in organizational structure can reshape power dynamics within the organization. This, in turn, affects its ability to make strategic decisions that enhance its autonomy and strengthen its position in the market.

In the context of local administrative action, resource dependence can be interpreted as the driving force behind decisions made by local officials. The relationships that link local government bodies with various actors influence their ability to address local challenges and grant them greater capacity to impact the local environment according to their priorities. For instance, agreements and partnerships between local authorities and other organizations help reduce reliance on resources that are beyond their control, thereby enhancing local administrations' ability to respond effectively to changing circumstances (Cangussu & et al, 2023, 802- 803).

Moreover, this pattern of interaction can reflect a process of "selection" similar to what biologists observe in population ecology theory, where the surrounding community favors institutions that demonstrate adaptability and innovation. Through this approach, local decision-making can benefit from such interactions to foster a more sustainable and resilient

environment, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of local administrations and their ability to adapt to contemporary challenges.

III 4- The digital sociological approach:

The digital sociological approach emerged as a response to the massive expansion in the use of digital technology and its increasing impact on social life. With the spread of the internet, social media, and big data, it has become necessary to analyze how social relationships, individual identities, and patterns of human interaction are being reshaped in the digital environment. In this context, sociologists have focused on studying issues such as online interaction, the digital divide, the influence of algorithms in shaping public opinion, and the role of digital platforms in either reinforcing or undermining new forms of power and control. This approach has relied on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, employing big data analysis techniques, online surveys, and digital ethnographic studies to understand patterns of digital usage and their social impacts.

Pioneers of digital sociology have played a pivotal role in developing this approach. Deborah Lupton is one of the most prominent researchers in digital sociology, focusing in her work on the interaction between digital technologies and social structures. She explores issues such as embodiment, identity, and everyday digital practices. On the other hand, Neil Selwyn continues to advance this field by examining the impact of technologies on education, political participation, and cultural changes in the digital age. Researchers in this field emphasize that digital technologies are not neutral; rather, they shape and govern social relationships in complex ways, necessitating a critical and reflective approach to their study (Dyczek, 2024, 246- 247).

Digital technology has become an essential part of local administrative action, as digital governance contributes to improving the management and organization of communities. This role is manifested through two main dimensions: the first concerns the integration of technology into public administration, as seen in health emergencies, where digital tools are used to monitor risks and enhance rapid and effective response. The second dimension relates to the development of laws and regulations that govern digital use and address the social challenges arising from digital transformation, such as the spread of misinformation on social media and its impact on public opinion (Zhao & Mingyu Wang, 2023, p 8).

However, digital governance faces significant challenges. On one hand, excessive control over the digital space may strengthen state authority in a way that could restrict freedoms. On the other hand, there are still difficulties in regulating digital monopolies and effectively overseeing the operations of major platforms. In this context, the digital sociological approach helps analyze the relationship between power and technology, contributing to the development of more balanced and just governance strategies amid ongoing digital transformations.

In reality, digital transformation constitutes a fundamental shift in the patterns of local administrative work, as it necessitates a reconsideration

of organizational structures, institutional culture, and leadership methods. From the perspective of digital sociology, this transformation affects power dynamics within local institutions, where traditional hierarchical structures are being replaced by more flexible models that rely on communication technology and big data. This enables greater transparency and accountability in local governance while bringing about fundamental changes in decision-making processes and interactions with citizens. Moreover, administrative leadership is required to develop new digital skills that enable them to guide teams in continuously evolving digital work environments. This necessitates an integrative management approach that balances the benefits of modern technologies with the promotion of societal values (Zolfaghari, 2023, p 27- 28).

Furthermore, the digital sociological approach contributes to understanding how employees adapt to technological transformations and their impact on organizational culture. The reliance on digital solutions, such as cloud computing and the Internet of Things, reshapes interaction methods between local administrations and society, thereby enhancing civic participation and redefining the relationship between the state and its citizens. However, this transformation poses challenges related to resistance to change, disparities in digital competence among employees, and the need to create a flexible organizational environment that supports innovation and sustainability. Therefore, local administrative action in the digital age requires strategies that ensure the integration of modern technologies with the cultural and social fabric of institutions, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency and achieving sustainable development.

IV- Applying modern sociological approaches to the topic of the impact of the bureaucratic phenomenon on local administrative action in the the Algerian administration

From the perspective of our discussion of modern sociological approaches, we can consider that the most theoretically consistent pathway for addressing the impact of the bureaucratic phenomenon on local administrative action in the Algerian administration is clearly delineated through four main approaches: the New Institutionalism approach, the Social Capital approach, the Participatory Governance approach, and the Strategic Analysis approach. This selection is based on a set of epistemological and methodological considerations that enhance the understanding of the bureaucratic phenomenon in its local sociological dimension, while also highlighting the complexity of administrative and social interactions.

First – The New Institutionalism Approach: provides a profound theoretical framework for understanding bureaucracy as a cumulative product of organizational culture and the historical and political contexts

surrounding administrative institutions. It does not view administrative institutions as abstract legal entities, but rather studies them as dynamic social structures shaped through continuous interaction with their social environment. This approach is essential in analyzing local administrative action because it reveals how institutions reproduce themselves through informal rules and deeply rooted values that are often absent from legal texts but highly active in the daily administrative reality. It also helps expose the limitations of administrative reforms that overlook these cultural dimensions.

From a practical perspective, and in the context of the impact of bureaucratic phenomena on local administrative action in Algerian governance, the new institutional perspective can be effectively utilized to understand the state's role in reshaping the institutional environment in a way that overcomes bureaucratic rigidity. In developing and emerging countries, it is now widely acknowledged that the "new role" of the state lies in building a flexible and enabling institutional framework that elicits a positive response from local actors—both administrators and citizens—thereby enhancing efficiency and reducing obstructive bureaucratic practices. In the Algerian context, political actors bear the responsibility of developing institutional mechanisms that foster collaboration among various local stakeholders, encourage resource and information sharing, and strengthen the legitimacy of administrative practices through community participation in policy design and implementation. This contributes to the creation of a more coherent and integrated administrative system (Amroune & et al, 2022, 17- 18).

Nevertheless, one of the key limitations of our current analysis lies in the retrospective nature of measuring the impact of bureaucracy on variables related to local administrative action. Therefore, in future research, we recommend exploring the role of local actors—particularly administrative officials—in leading this organizational transformation and assessing their influence on the success of initiatives aimed at reducing bureaucratic constraints.

Second – The Participatory Governance Approach offers an alternative vision of local administrative action, based on democratic interaction and consultation among various actors, including citizens, civil society organizations, and local authorities. This approach gains its relevance from its ability to deconstruct the traditional bureaucratic model rooted in centralization and hierarchy, by promoting a philosophy of open governance

and accountability. It enables an understanding of how broadening the base of community participation can reshape administrative decision-making, enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. It thus highlights the need to shift from a logic of control to a logic of cooperation in managing local affairs.

In this context, the Algerian authorities have adopted the principle of participatory governance as a tool for reforming local administrative action and addressing the negative repercussions of bureaucracy. This is achieved through expanding the powers of local communities and encouraging the involvement of local actors—citizens, civil society organizations, and elected institutions—in shaping development policies and programs. By enabling residents to participate in identifying their priorities and monitoring the implementation of development projects, the gap between administration and society is reduced, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of administrative decisions (belatel & Ammar alloni/, 2024, p 196).

Thus, participatory governance serves as a central mechanism for transforming administrative action from a closed bureaucratic logic to an open participatory one. It restores the importance of the local role in managing public affairs and confronts bureaucratic dysfunctions by rebuilding trust between the administration and the citizen.

Third – The Strategic Analysis Approach allows the study of local administration as a field of interaction and conflict among actors with differing interests and strategies. In this sense, it sheds light on the negotiation relationships and hidden stakes that govern actual administrative practice, which are often far removed from the logic of legal texts. This approach makes it possible to understand how power dynamics are positioned within the administrative system, how alliances are formed, pressures exerted, and decisions made. Through this analysis, one can trace the mechanisms of power reproduction within local administration and the place of bureaucracy within the network of interacting interests.

In this context, Michel Crozier's analysis of bureaucratic dysfunctions deepens our understanding of the impact of bureaucracy on local administrative action in the Algerian administration. At this level, bureaucracy rarely serves as a source of innovation or wealth creation; rather, its function is centered on control, regulation of relations, and

resource management without generating real added value. By positioning itself as a domain for power distribution and the accumulation of privileges, local bureaucracy becomes an obstacle to development initiatives. It derives its “legitimacy” from controlling the social surplus generated by collective labor, rather than directing it toward meeting community needs. Thus, this closed structure contributes to reinforcing administrative stagnation, weakening participatory action, and marginalizing local actors, thereby deepening the gap between administration and the local community (Benmansour & et al, 2017, p 142).

From this perspective, combining these approaches provides a rich theoretical horizon for analyzing the bureaucratic phenomenon in its local context. It enables an understanding of the interplay of cultural, social, and political dimensions in shaping administrative action. This pluralistic framework also makes it possible to grasp the tension between bureaucratic rigidity and the demands for change, between formal hierarchy and community initiatives, and between control-based logic and participatory principles—thus offering a comprehensive sociological entry point that aligns closely with the nature of Algerian administration.

Conclusion

The different sociological approaches to bureaucracy and local administrative action represent attempts to understand the dynamics governing administrative organizations and their relationship with society. The development of these approaches reflects deep transformations in the structure of institutions and their roles in light of social, economic, and technological changes. While bureaucracy still forms the foundational organizational framework in many institutions, the development of sociological thought has revealed its limitations in keeping up with evolving requirements, leading to the emergence of critical and reformative approaches aimed at moving beyond bureaucratic rigidity towards more flexible and effective models.

The institutional approach highlights how bureaucracy is not just an organizational model but also the product of the historical and cultural contexts surrounding institutions, meaning that any administrative reform must reconsider the social and political factors that shape them. On the other hand, the post-bureaucratic approach presents alternatives aimed at reducing administrative complexity and enhancing flexibility within organizations, advocating for the adoption of new management styles based on horizontal interaction, innovation, and empowering individuals. In this context, administrative reform is not only about changing organizational structures but also about reshaping institutional culture to align with the challenges of the modern era.

At the local level, the participatory governance approach offers a new perspective on administrative action, emphasizing the need to involve

various stakeholders, including citizens and civil society organizations, in decision-making processes to ensure more transparent and legitimate management. This approach reflects a shift from a central, authoritative model of local administration to one that is based on consultation and interaction with the social environment. Additionally, the digital transformation adds a new dimension to administrative action, with the digital sociology approach shedding light on how technology impacts the dynamics of local administration, including enhancing transparency, accountability, and redefining the relationship between the state and citizens through interactive digital mechanisms.

Based on the aforementioned theoretical insights, we can assert that the neo-institutional approach, the strategic analysis approach, and the participatory governance approach offer advanced sociological frameworks for understanding the phenomenon of bureaucracy in the Algerian context and for analyzing the dysfunctions of local administrative action.

The neo-institutional approach highlights that bureaucracy is not merely a rational organizational model but the product of institutional structures shaped by cultural values and specific political histories. This implies that administrative reform must involve a reconfiguration of the institutional framework, taking these factors into account.

The strategic analysis approach focuses on the interactions between local actors within the administrative space. It reveals how bureaucratic practices are produced through negotiations, power struggles, and the monopolization of resources, explaining the persistence of administrative inertia despite superficial reforms.

The participatory governance approach, on the other hand, proposes an alternative to centralized decision-making by emphasizing the role of citizens and civil society in shaping local policies. This approach promotes transparency, accountability, and effective governance through inclusive participation.

Collectively, these approaches go beyond merely diagnosing structural dysfunctions; they provide analytical and conceptual tools to understand the dynamics of the administrative system and support a transition toward a more flexible and responsive local administration. This transformation is grounded in dismantling bureaucratic rigidity, enhancing participatory mechanisms, and rebuilding trust-based relationships between the administration and society.

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