

Bureaucratic Practices in Algerian Administration

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Summary:

The Algerian administrations are plagued by several negative practices such as nepotism, bribery, and indifference. These issues have grown progressively severe, to the extent that they are now perceived as a major threat to the continuity of organizations. This study aims to explore these practices and determine their underlying causes. We examine whether these issues stem from the personality of employees who manipulate work laws and procedures for personal gain, whether the procedures themselves hinder effective performance, or if they are due to the working conditions and pressures faced by employees. To address these questions, we traced the development of bureaucratic organizations and analyzed decisions made by authorities aimed at making the administration more accessible to citizens and adapting to international scientific advancements. Our goal was to evaluate their role in mitigating these detrimental practices.

The study concludes that these malpractices result from a complex interplay of factors, primarily including the social environment, organizational culture, opportunistic behaviors of some employees, and rigid rules that suppress creativity.

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Negligence; Bribery; Favoritism; E-Administration.

ملخص:

تتعاين الإدارات الجزائرية من بعض الممارسات السلبية كالمحسوبية، الرشوة، اللامبالاة... أصبح الجميع ينظر إليها على أنها شريحة استمرارية التنظيمات. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن هذه الممارسات وأسبابها هل هي ناتجة عن شخصية الموظف الذي استغل إجراءات العمل لصالحه، أم أن هذه الأخيرة أعاقته عمله أم أن ذلك عائد إلى ظروف العمل والضغوطات التي يتعرض لها. لذلك قمنا بتتبع مسار التنظيمات البيروقراطية وكذا القرارات المتخذة من طرف السلطة لتقريب الإدارة من المواطن، والتقليل من هذه الظواهر، لتتوصل إلى نتيجة أساسية مفادها أن هذه الممارسات ناتجة عن تداخل مجموعة من العوامل تتمثل أساساً في البيئة الاجتماعية، ثقافة المنظمة شخصية بعض الموظفين الانتهازية، القواعد الصارمة التي خنقت كل محاولة للإبداع...

الكلمات المفتاحية: البيروقراطية، الإهمال، الرشوة، المحسوبية، الإدارة الإلكترونية.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The concept of bureaucracy is closely linked to people's lives and their interests, which the state strives to fulfil through organisations with specific, rule-based objectives. This has led researchers to seek out principles that ensure stability and consistency in these institutions, even with changes in personnel, essentially relying on a scientific approach to management. Among the pioneers of this view was Max Weber, who regarded bureaucracy as the most efficient form of organisation capable of achieving goals, essentially embodying rationality according to his perspective.

However, interest in bureaucracy has significantly increased in recent years, particularly as reality continues to demonstrate that adopting this administrative style has resulted in negative phenomena such as nepotism, indifference, dependency, and delayed transactions, to the extent that many consider it a plague threatening the survival of organizations. It is observed that the general public and even politicians often associate the term "bureaucracy" with nepotism, bribery, and mediation. Thus, bureaucracy has shifted from a concept focused on organising work and ensuring its continuity to one overwhelmingly associated with unethical practices. The question then arises: Why has this shift occurred? Or, more precisely, why has the negative perception of bureaucracy deepened across various social strata and segments? To answer this question, this study explores the causes and backgrounds of these negative phenomena and the social consequences they entail, as well as the measures taken by authorities to curb the growth of the bureaucratic phenomenon.

2-DEFINITION OF BUREAUCRACY:

There are two distinct uses of the term "bureaucracy": the common usage and the academic usage. However, there is noticeable overlap between the two. In its common usage, the term "bureaucracy" refers to a kind of political insult, indicating a large organization characterized by inefficiency, inability to perform tasks, and failure to achieve objectives. It is even perceived as a social ailment that needs to be combated,

representing routine, favoritism, nepotism, complexity, bribery, and more. In contrast, in its academic sense, bureaucracy refers to all forms of organization with the highest efficiency in achieving goals.

The term was first used in 1754 by the French economist Vincent de Gournay, who considered it the operational tool of the government. Harold Laski later described it as: "The term bureaucracy is used to describe a governmental system in which control is entirely in the hands of a class of official employees whose powers limit the freedom of ordinary individuals. This system is characterized by a strong tendency to resort to formal administrative procedures, sacrificing flexibility for adherence to instructions, slow decision-making, and reluctance to experiment. In extreme cases, the work becomes an end in itself"(Hamoud & Yaseen, 2011, p. 149). De Gournay focused on the negative aspects of bureaucracy and linked it to governmental organization, implying that it cannot exist outside this framework.

Max Weber, on the other hand, defined bureaucracy as: "A large organization present in a complex and civilized political society to achieve national objectives, implement public policies, and bring them into reality. Bureaucrats are those individuals working in government administrations, selected through hereditary or electoral methods, forming a hierarchical organization governed by specific rules that define their duties, responsibilities, and authority"(Mirar, 1999, p. 137). Weber's definition associates bureaucracy with government administration, which is governed by a set of rules and principles aimed at achieving specific goals.

According to Webster's Dictionary, "The term is used to clarify and define the tasks, duties, and systems carried out, supervised, and established by administrative employees. Sometimes, the term bureaucracy is used to denote inefficiency and poor performance by officials"(Al-Hassan, 2005, p. 137). Thus, bureaucracy can be summarized as: "A social, political, and administrative concept with two sides: one reflecting efficiency, precision, objectivity, and the achievement of goals,

and the other reflecting routine, slow administrative procedures, personal relationships, and other negative practices experienced by various organizations, resulting from surrounding circumstances."

Thus, bureaucracy encompasses two divergent concepts: one focusing on efficiency, rationalization, and prudence, which Max Weber advocated for, and another that represents routine, slow administrative procedures, and the predominance of personal relationships, neglect, and other negative practices. This latter concept is the more commonly held and widely recognized perception across various social strata and segments.

3- CAUSES OF BUREAUCRACY IN ALGERIAN ADMINISTRATION:

Undoubtedly, bureaucracy has become a haunting concern for Algerians, frightening both politicians and the general public, as it hinders economic and social growth, undermines political legitimacy, and increases public discontent, leading to a sense of despair and frustration in the face of an inescapable reality. Analysts argue that these flaws did not arise spontaneously but have historical roots. "Bureaucratic deviations were rampant in government roles during the Ottoman era and deepened under European rule, where many leaders were driven by a 'law of the jungle' mentality" (Al-Naqeeb, 1978, p. 79). However, the issue extends beyond this period to the French, who played a significant role in establishing Algeria's modern administrative system, such as municipalities and their various branches, districts, provinces, and the need for approvals from all these entities before making decisions. Below, we will discuss these causes in detail:

3.1- Cultural Dependence on French Colonialism

During its occupation, French authorities deliberately trained Algerian cadres to be loyal and subservient to French policies, ensuring their penetration into the depths of Algerian society and securing their continued dominance and influence. Consequently, these cadres were educated in the colonizer's language—French—which was part of the broader project to embed French roots deeply in Algerian soil and assimilate the

people into Western culture. Thus, a new generation emerged, culturally dependent on the colonizer, valuing its language and culture. Due to the significant void left by the departing colonizers, the national authorities had no choice but to rely on these cadres. Consequently, French remained the primary language within most administrations.

However, this situation did not last long. In an effort to reclaim national identity and eliminate colonial remnants, the decision was made to implement Arabization, which involved translating official files and records into Arabic. This shift produced adverse effects at various levels. A simple example of this is the transition of birth records from French to Arabic, which was carried out by French-speaking employees or those with low educational levels due to the illiteracy policies enforced by the French authorities. This forced the government to open recruitment to anyone who could read and write, leading to numerous negative outcomes that the citizens ultimately paid for. These included frequent errors in documents, often involving the addition or omission of letters, especially those that have no direct equivalent in Arabic.

Despite improvements with the establishment of specialized administrative training institutes, the strict adherence to written procedures as required by labor laws has created an ongoing issue for citizens. They find themselves entangled in legal processes to correct such errors, which involve lengthy procedures, numerous documents, and long queues. This often leads citizens to abandon their efforts, losing out on benefits provided by the state, such as loans, due to a single mistake in their documents. This has widened the gap between the administration and its users, especially with the mistreatment and indifference frequently encountered. Moreover, the continued reliance on administrative structures inherited from the colonizers has meant that decision-making and public services remain dependent on complex paperwork and procedures, paving the way for increased complications and intertwinement between these administrative bodies.

3.2-Low or Non-Existent Educational Levels Among the Vast Majority of Society

Language is the beating heart of any people and a key element of its unity, preserving its civilization and national and cultural identity. Recognizing this, French authorities, upon their arrival, sought to obliterate the Arabic language, treating it as a foreign tongue. However, they did not stop there; they systematically aimed to keep the Algerian population in ignorance by dismantling educational institutions such as religious schools and Islamic institutions, replacing them with French schools. This was done out of fear that education would awaken the Algerians to demand their rights and resist the foreign presence. Over the 132 years of occupation, this approach constituted one of the most heinous crimes ever overseen by a colonial power, leaving disastrous consequences after independence. The continuation of French legal systems and the public's ignorance of their content allowed some bureaucrats to exploit these regulations for personal gain.

Despite the state's adoption of an Arabization policy, the situation did not improve significantly. Administrators continued to manipulate these policies and laws for their own benefit. These practices persisted within the administrative system, even though the level of education improved through developmental policies implemented by the government and the widespread accessibility of information. This stagnation can be attributed to the misuse of legal loopholes by officials to achieve personal gains at the expense of the public good. Frequently, some employees intentionally delay performing their duties to pressure clients into using unethical means, such as bribery or intermediaries, to expedite their transactions. This is particularly common with critical matters such as housing files, loans, and other essential services. Citizens are often left with no choice but to either wait for extended periods, sometimes lasting years, or seek quicker, albeit unethical, solutions, exacerbating the bureaucracy and all its negative consequences.

3.3- Critical Conditions in the Post-Independence Period

After French colonial rule ended, Algeria's political authorities faced numerous social, political, and economic challenges. Society was divided, the state treasury was empty, and the economy was weak. This led political leaders to rely on a centralized administration during the period of 1962–1967 to unify the country and overcome the divisions deepened by the colonial regime, even after its departure. Additionally, there was an attempt to minimize public spending to the greatest extent possible, creating opportunities for some incompetent administrators to secure positions, especially with the increasing size of investment projects and the reliance on bureaucratic administration to formulate and execute development plans. This approach led to various deviations and digressions from the planned objectives.

"These deviations are not merely a product of that period but extend further back to the pre-colonial era, where widespread injustices created a negative perception of administration among Algerians that persisted even after independence. This legacy had a clear psychological impact on Algerians, diminishing their capacity for critical thinking and fostering a culture of indifference, which opened the door for administrative corruption"(Aouabdi, 1981, p. 15).

3.4-Poverty and Low Wages

"Salaries earned by individuals for their efforts play a significant role in fulfilling their material and psychological needs, reflecting on the overall organizational performance in aspects such as stability, reduced absenteeism, and regularity"(Hamoud & Yaseen, 2011, p. 175). Conversely, low wages are among the primary causes of the spread and entrenchment of bureaucratic misconduct, particularly amid rising living costs that far exceed what an employee earns. In such circumstances, when religious or ethical deterrents are weak and faced with life's temptations, the employee seeks alternatives to compensate for this shortfall. With most of their time dedicated to administrative work, employees often resort to

illicit practices. "Over time, these actions become normalized, and some employees even become driven by the desire for wealth, attempting to compensate for past financial deficits and secure their future. Thus, bribery transitions from a means of escaping poverty to an ambition for accumulating wealth, with various forms of corruption all serving this goal"(Al-Shammari & Al-Fatli, 2011, p. 40).

Many thinkers believe that economic underdevelopment in any country, particularly in developing nations, leads to administrative underdevelopment. As long as signs of economic backwardness persist, such as national production deficits and weak purchasing power among employees, the likelihood of deviant behavior increases. The deteriorating social conditions of employees create a fertile environment for the proliferation of bureaucratic ills.

3.5-Saturation of Some Bureaucrats with Low Morale

Employees often experience significant pressure from their superiors or even clients themselves, who frequently exploit their influence and personal connections to bypass legal procedures. In such cases, employees are forced to either comply or face threats and intimidation from superiors. Non-compliance can result in severe penalties, such as salary deductions, office transfers against the employee's will, or receiving poor performance evaluations that negatively impact career progression (e.g., promotions).

"What exacerbates the situation is the salary disparity between senior leadership and lower-level employees, leading the latter to feel a lack of fairness. Employees compare their experiences and those of others, and if their returns are less, they feel frustrated, deepening their sense of dissatisfaction, injustice, and resentment rather than guilt or unworthiness"(Hareem, 2009, p. 108). This frustration reduces their motivation to perform. The situation worsens when supervisors refuse to delegate authority due to authoritarianism, distrust, or selfishness and superiority complexes. This behavior forces employees to adopt a subservient attitude, worshipping their superiors, which psychologically pressures them as they feel their dignity has

been compromised, negatively impacting their performance. Employees act this way in the hope of gaining approval and ascending the ranks of power. Once in higher positions, they often replicate the behavior of their former superiors, seeking revenge for their past experiences.

Furthermore, supervisors' insistence on micromanaging every detail discourages employees from taking responsibility, developing self-reliance, and accepting delegated authority, fearing punishment later on.

4- SOME NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF BUREAUCRACY IN ALGERIAN ADMINISTRATION:

Bureaucracy has given rise to numerous administrative issues that harm both employees and clients, regardless of the source of these problems. The most significant of these issues are:

3.1- Administrative Routine

Administrative routine is a byproduct of work division aimed at increasing efficiency by reducing effort, time, and costs. However, the repetition of the same tasks daily and continuously can have severe consequences for the organization as a whole, as it stifles individual creativity and innovation. It also suppresses any attempt to unleash latent potential. For instance, civil status employees in local administrations extract the same documents in the same way every day (Saidane, 1981, p. 47). This monotonous work negatively impacts their morale, causing them to feel bored and see their tasks as trivial, gradually diminishing their enthusiasm and turning them into mere automatons. Over time, they come to view their work solely as a means of earning a salary, leading to decreased job satisfaction and confidence.

3.2- Negligence and Poor Treatment of the Public

Due to a sense of job security and a frequent lack of oversight, some employees become negligent, lazy, and indifferent to their duties, focusing only on improving their material and psychological conditions, even at the expense of their assigned work. As a result, a culture of dependence and chaos spreads within offices. One of the most common issues

clients face is the loss of their files, missing documents, delays in task completion, postponements, and even manipulation and mockery(Saidane, 1981, p. 50). When discussing oversight, it is crucial to acknowledge that both the overseer and the overseen often come from the same background, raising the question of who will monitor whom?

What worsens the situation is employees leaving their workplaces during working hours, resulting in wasted time, delayed transactions and contracts, and the accumulation of work. This harms both the client and the administration, not just financially but also in terms of reputation, as the administration loses its positive image in the eyes of the public.

Even more troubling is that most employees spend their time on trivial activities such as commenting on the news, gossiping, reading newspapers, or browsing the internet under the guise of “killing time.” This behavior stems from several factors:

- Employees lack an understanding of responsibility and do not possess the necessary qualifications for their roles.
- There is no clear job description, causing employees to be unaware of their specific duties, often due to favoritism in hiring, where a position is created without any actual need. This leads to the phenomenon of "workforce inflation"(Al-Duwaik, 2007, p. 59), as seen in recent years when the Algerian authorities hired many individuals in public administrations based on political decisions rather than actual needs.
- Manipulation of competition results to the extent that obtaining a job without favoritism has become nearly impossible. However, in some cases, the issue is due to poor employee ethics. Even with clear tasks, genuine work requirements, and transparent hiring, some employees deliberately avoid work, wasting their time unproductively. To cover up this behavior, they clutter their desks with papers to appear busy and overburdened. Sometimes, employees leave their workplace to attend to personal matters, becoming victims of prolonged and complex administrative procedures and endless tasks.

This, in turn, causes delays for others, perpetuating the cycle of bureaucracy.

In general, administrative negligence, poor treatment of the public, and a sense of entitlement to one's position are some of the most prevalent and negative byproducts of Algerian administration. These issues have become so widespread that it is rare to find an institution unaffected by them. The primary reasons for this include the lack of genuine oversight, a weak or absent sense of professional ethics, and a desire to exercise the power granted by their positions, often inappropriately, over the public seeking to complete their transactions.

3.3- Nepotism and Favoritism

Nepotism is defined as a tool or means by which an individual uses their connections with a decision-maker to achieve a benefit for themselves or others. Sometimes, it is justified under the guise of compassion, charity, or intercession (Abdel-Sameea, 2009, p. 54). The seeds of this practice are often sown when a person joins the workforce, having sought someone influential to help them secure employment. This individual, in turn, later becomes a connection for others, acting out of a sense of “reciprocity” or in exchange for future services. This dynamic transforms nepotism into a form of investment for the future, prioritizing personal interests over the public good.

These employees enter the workforce carrying a unique social culture derived from their environment and the teachings of their religion, which call for dedication and integrity in work and forbid any actions against sound human nature. Driven by enthusiasm, they strive to prove their worth and good intentions, acknowledging everyone's right to receive the same services without delay or preference. They confront the injustices they themselves faced in the past when they were merely clients. During their interaction, they adopt the culture of the organization and assimilate the ideas of its members. Among the first of these adopted cultural aspects are mediation and nepotism, where relationships of kinship and friendship become significant and fundamental in determining their roles. Instead of

embracing the goals of the organization and working towards achieving them, new calculations emerge: a person with a close relationship is above the law whenever possible, and if not, the law does not permit.

However, an employee's adoption of this culture is not solely influenced by the organization. Frequently, individuals enter the workforce already conditioned by societal norms that encourage such practices, viewing them as a social code.

Reliance on personal relationships to get work done is often justified as a way to exchange benefits. For instance, a person who holds an important position can be seen as a valuable asset in times of need. Additionally, social relationships impose on employees an obligation not to ignore them. Despite societal advancements, "regionalism, kinship, and friendship" remain potent terms that define the culture of an organization and the behavior of its members. This culture frequently results in missed opportunities for those who lack such connections. Furthermore, we must not overlook the role of clients in exacerbating this behavior. A negative perception has developed due to the accumulation of issues within the Algerian administration caused by poor management, lengthy and complex administrative procedures, slow processing, and the cumbersome nature of administrative files. All these factors drive clients to seek alternatives that spare them the suffering and long waits, especially given the poor treatment or indifference they might encounter due to the misconduct of some administrators, which costs them more time and stress. However, clients are not entirely blameless. They may engage in seeking the easiest and fastest solutions, and in this context, employees find themselves compelled to meet the needs of their friends or relatives. If they fail to do so, they risk losing their standing within their community and becoming ostracized by those closest to them, who may view them as arrogant and uncharitable, leading to estrangement or even outright avoidance.

What we can say, then, is that mediation is a deep-seated and inherited condition within the social structure. Even decision-

makers, who publicly oppose it, often resort to using it to manage their daily affairs because they internally recognize the difficulty of obtaining a service—even one that is rightfully theirs—without leveraging their influence and social networks. This recognition of the difficulty in changing societal mindsets and instilling a new culture where integrity is the reality, not just a slogan, underscores the situation. A person's standing within society is closely linked to their social network and their ability to fulfill the requests of those seeking their help in various places. As their network expands, so too does their influence within their community, to the extent that mediation has become a valued norm in Algerian society.

3.4- Bribery

Bribery is defined as: "the act of giving money by someone in need to an official responsible for fulfilling a need or interest that the official ought to address without such payment—or for the purpose of denying a right and establishing a falsehood. In reality, bribery is a payment for a service that should be performed without any financial incentive" (Malika, 2010, p. 21).

Despite the clear legal provisions regarding the exploitation of work for personal gain, and despite the social environment being an Islamic one that absolutely and explicitly prohibits such behavior, and despite individuals being steeped in this culture even before joining the workforce, it is observed in the trajectory of Algerian organizations that this culture is theoretical and clashes with reality. Many employees exploit the law and their positions to achieve personal goals and gains by delaying work or slowing its completion, forcing citizens to offer something in return. Bribery varies in form and nature; it can be of material value or involve tangible goods. It is understood by different names—some call it a gift, others assistance, and still others a gratuity—but everyone recognizes that regardless of the term used, it is bribery.

However, the blame cannot always be placed solely on the employee. The issue may be related to administrative routines and the associated lengthy procedures and designated times for completing transactions. A certain percentage of citizens try to

bypass these routines, which can mean resorting to other means to facilitate transactions, including some forms of corruption like giving bribes to certain employees in exchange for expediting or facilitating a transaction, even at the expense of other employees who are waiting for their transactions to be processed through usual procedural channels (Abdel-Sameea, 2009, p. 54).

Over time, some employees come to view such bribes as a rightful part of their entitlements, especially as some citizens resort to flattering administrators by offering bribes without a real need, in anticipation of future needs—considering the employee as a resource for times of necessity. With time, due to the frailty of human nature, this behavior becomes normalized and considered a legitimate right and a motivator towards better performance.

3.5- Long Queues and Cumbersome Administrative Procedures

One of the most frustrating issues for employees is the burden of administrative files, even for simple procedures. For example, obtaining a nationality certificate requires presenting the birth certificates of not only the applicant but also their father and grandfather. This creates a challenging situation for citizens who often find themselves navigating various court offices to correct errors in documents or to register a grandfather who might not be listed in the civil registry. Consequently, citizens must wait in long queues, moving from one office to another, which often leads to abandoning their requests, resulting in missed opportunities.

The overcrowding in waiting lines has become a defining characteristic of most, if not all, Algerian administrative offices. Obtaining official documents has become a daunting task that burdens citizens, who would rather lose their money than risk losing their crucial documents, especially in cases requiring substantial paperwork like housing or loan applications.

3.6- Favoritism

Favoritism, or what can be described as "administrative flattery," is one of the key traits distinguishing various Algerian administrative departments. Employees often strive to show

loyalty to higher-ranking officials who hold decision-making power, driven by the desire to achieve personal goals. One such goal is career advancement, which can lead to increased income, new positions, and greater authority. Since superiors often influence the promotion process through their evaluations, employees generally try to avoid conflicts with their bosses and look for ways to please them, even endorsing ineffective proposals. In some cases, employees may even resort to tattling on their colleagues to secure a favorable position and gain privileges like promotions, office leadership roles, leniency regarding mistakes, or absences from work.

Conversely, some managers attempt to gain favor with certain employees, offering them undeserved privileges and preferential treatment, regardless of competence. This creates a negative impact on skilled employees, fostering feelings of frustration and resentment due to the resulting environment of inequality and bias.

3.7- Waste and Illicit Gains

"Squandering is one of the most widespread phenomena at the individual, governmental, and organizational levels, characterized by excessive spending on non-essential items, coupled with a lack of responsibility when assessing projects and negligence in their implementation. Added to this is the phenomenon of embezzling state funds for personal purposes(Al-Duwaik, 2007, p. 55). Embezzlement has become a common phenomenon in the absence of oversight and accountability, and amid the collusion that characterizes the relationships among employees. Employees exploit their positions to engage in commercial deals for their benefit or that of their relatives and acquaintances, under terms detrimental to the organization they work for. Examples of this include awarding tenders to their relatives, or to a company in which they are partners, divulging work secrets to others who profit from them in return for money, and forging documents using their official position and resources for direct or indirect personal gain(Matar, 2011, p. 243). This also includes using state property for personal interests, such as using office phones for private

calls, which leads to a loss of time and increased costs, or improper use of company cars resulting in damage or high maintenance costs. Additionally, the misuse extends to office equipment such as photocopiers, computers, printers, notebooks, and pens, redirecting them for personal use."

Administrators often trivialize these actions and consider them normal. Even citizens, whenever possible, try to benefit from their acquaintances working in government offices, despite the rising condemnation and religious prohibitions that consider such actions as theft, punishable for both the perpetrator and the beneficiary alike.

5- ALGERIA'S STRATEGY TO MITIGATE BUREAUCRATIC DRAWBACKS:

In response to the prevailing conditions and the negative phenomena associated with bureaucracy, which have adversely impacted various administrative institutions, Algeria has sought to adopt a new policy aimed at curbing these detrimental behaviors. The strategy began with amending laws inherited from French colonial rule, which no longer aligned with the social objectives of the young nation, and replacing them with laws supporting social and economic development goals.

One of the primary steps taken was the establishment of educational institutions and training centers dedicated to administrative development, such as the National School of Administration with its various branches, administrative training centers, and judicial training centers, as well as universities and university centers. These institutions aim to create a skilled national workforce capable of managing and enhancing the performance of public administration.

Additionally, Algeria has introduced punitive laws and regulations to oversee and regulate the disbursement of public funds. The state has established bodies tasked with monitoring the administrative management of government institutions and auditing and evaluating developmental projects. This oversight is achieved through continuous site visits by the President of the Republic and relevant ministers, alongside ongoing work sessions with administrators to assess project progress, identify

obstacles, and devise suitable solutions. Moreover, punitive measures, including dismissal, have been enacted as consequences for non-compliance.

Recognizing that legal measures alone are insufficient and acknowledging the vital role of human resources in creating a healthy work environment, the Algerian state has focused on reviving professional ethics among its employees. It has pursued a policy of internal awareness within institutions to mobilize staff against all detrimental behaviors. Given that Algerian society is grounded in Islamic teachings that explicitly prohibit theft, embezzlement, negligence, and promote sincerity and dedication to work, the government aimed to leverage these ingrained values to build a strong administration within a sound environment.

To reinforce this, the state issued circulars emphasizing the importance of safeguarding public assets and managing them responsibly. Workshops and seminars were held to clearly illustrate the risks of misconduct and the misuse of authority, and how such actions can undermine rights and deviate from the organization's objectives.

While the outcomes of these efforts may vary, the influence of religion in instilling values and ethics among employees is undeniable. Algerian society is deeply rooted in Islamic culture, which forms an integral part of its identity. This, of course, does not mean that Algerian employees have not deviated from the teachings of their religion, as they remain human with their own ambitions and personal goals, which they strive to achieve even if it means abandoning these teachings. It is well-known that the Algerian employee has not yet fully grasped the concept of the public good and that the position they hold is not their personal property, and they cannot manipulate and execute as they please. However, the state's recognition of the importance and role of religion in modifying behavior has prompted it to make every effort to increase awareness among its employees and to convince them of the dangers of actions that do not serve the public interest, while encouraging self-monitoring.

Despite all that has been discussed, it is important to reiterate that every individual has personal goals, and like any employee in the public sector, a higher salary remains a priority. Employees are often motivated primarily by financial incentives, which is why the Algerian government has raised the minimum wage and adopted a policy of price support to increase purchasing power. This approach aims to prevent employees from deviating or seeking illegitimate sources of income. The discrepancy between rising prices and the slow growth of production contributes to the spread of corruption, especially in the absence of a solid work ethic. Improving the moral and social standing of employees can mitigate bureaucracy, but it will not completely eliminate it, as deep-rooted bureaucratic issues can originate from the highest levels and not just the lower ranks. In recent years, purchasing power has reached its lowest levels, coupled with significant price increases in the international and national markets. This has heightened the risk of employees engaging in unethical activities.

From this analysis, we can conclude that the Algerian government's policy is based on two main pillars: the first involves strict punitive measures, while the second focuses on recommendations and guidelines aimed at stirring professional conscience and emphasizing the importance of adhering to ethical standards.

Regarding the first pillar, the Algerian political system has assigned the responsibility of monitoring administrative actions to:

- **Parliamentary Representatives:** They are granted full authority to access all necessary documents and information from the administration and have the right to attend local council sessions. However, representatives often agree that the administration can manipulate facts and data.
- **The Court of Accounts:** This body has opened several cases that resulted in the conviction of some officials at both local and central levels, which generated media attention. However, the ultimate outcomes were

disappointing, with some officials fleeing abroad or being released due to a lack of sufficient evidence or the absence of evidence altogether. These officials managed to hide incriminating evidence, encouraging others to engage in corruption, believing they could escape justice in light of collusion within oversight bodies. It can be concluded that the primary issue, especially in developing countries, is not a lack of laws punishing corrupt officials but rather the selective application of these laws in the absence of true justice, which is yet another form of bureaucracy.

Continuing efforts to eradicate bureaucracy and its disadvantages, the establishment of the Ombudsman of the Republic authority was implemented, functioning as a monitoring body striving to bridge the gap between the administration and citizens. Additionally, roundtables and seminars were organized at the National School of Administration, titled "Judicial Oversight of Administration in Algeria: Results and Prospects." Several meetings were also held focused on improving the performance of local community employees in the central provinces. To facilitate the provision of services to customers in various administrative and public institutions, the Algerian government adopted a series of measures, such as distributing sorting machines in postal centers and enabling bill payments via the Golden Card. However, these measures have not eliminated long queues due to the citizens' mentality, who prefer traditional methods of managing their affairs, and either lack internet services or face high internet costs.

One of the most significant projects adopted by the Algerian government was the "Electronic Citizen – E-Administration" initiative, launched in late 2013. This initiative aimed to positively leverage information and communication technologies in all administrative functions, including planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluation (Ashour & Al-Nemri, 2013, pp. 199-200). The goal was to enhance institutional performance and strengthen competitiveness by eliminating paper-based

transactions and establishing electronic offices through extensive use of technology. This transformation allows for public services to be converted into digital processes, organized in pre-defined sequential steps([Al-Salmi, 2008, p. 32](#)). Citizens now only need a biometric identification card and a national number to resolve all their administrative issues, thus ensuring quality public services.

Among the key achievements of this initiative are:

- Enabling citizens to obtain all civil status documents instantly from any municipality across the country without needing to travel to their original municipality.
- Allowing Algerian expatriates to request birth certificates online and receive them from their registered diplomatic or consular representation.
- Enabling biometric passport applicants to track the processing stages of their applications.
- Allowing citizens to obtain vehicle registration plates automatically without needing to travel to the province of registration.

The adoption of e-administration has not been limited to municipalities and local entities. The justice sector has also experienced a significant leap with the introduction of digital signature and authentication systems for judicial documents. This advancement allows citizens to obtain nationality certificates and criminal records via email, submit document correction files through the electronic services portal, and expand these services to all sectors, including educational institutions and social security services.

The push towards e-administration came as a result of the Algerian government's recognition of the importance and benefits of this management style on multiple fronts, including: "developing administrative activities, securely storing documents and records to facilitate their retrieval and minimize the risk of loss, and providing quick access to information and files to expedite processing"([Madhkour, 2022, p. 159](#)).

In this context, the Ministry of Interior and Local Communities revealed a communication directed to the

governors and district heads dated June 2, 2020, outlining a plan to digitize all administrative documents requested by citizens under a "zero paper" system through the establishment of electronic platforms (an information system for updating civil status, Document Platform, License Platform, Complaint Platform, Digital Registry Office). Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior has mandated that all local administrative bodies provide an email address available for citizen use.

During a previous government meeting with governors held on February 17, 2020, at the United Nations Palace and the International Conference Center, which included local officials and representatives from various sectors, the participants emphasized the urgent need to change local management practices to create wealth and improve citizens' daily lives. They called for the rapid generalization of local government digitization and the elimination of bureaucracy. The discussions also highlighted the need to train staff in information and communication technology (ICT), a goal that has been realized with the announcement by Minister of Labor, Employment, and Social Security HachemiDjaâboub of the launch of 10 new digital applications and platforms. These include facial recognition services for retirees, an individual account platform for employee activities, remote maternity leave compensation requests, and the electronic retirement account service at the National Social Security Fund for non-wage earners.

Recently, the completion of the "National Strategy for Digital Transformation" project was announced. This strategy aims to change management styles, establish principles of transparency, combat all forms of bureaucracy and corruption, ensure equal access to information, and improve service delivery([National Radio, 2024](#)).

The reliance on e-administration represents a qualitative leap through which the Algerian government seeks to keep pace with global developments. However, in an investigative report by journalist Jamal Eddine Boucha from *Ennahar* newspaper, several administrators from the Bir Mourad Raïs municipality expressed concerns. They reported that some employees and

officials are actively working to obstruct the government's efforts to modernize local governance and move towards digital administration, motivated by personal interests related to limiting their managerial power. The local government has been trying to address these challenges through the Ministry of Interior's "Ashki" portal, an electronic platform that allows any citizen from anywhere in the country to submit complaints, raise concerns, or even appeal to relevant authorities(Boucha, 2022).

Another pressing issue has been the lack of coordination among state institutions. Some administrations have refused to accept electronically issued documents, claiming they have not received instructions to approve such documents and continue to rely on traditional paperwork from the original administration. This situation underscores the deep-rooted nature of bureaucratic practices in Algerian culture, which will be difficult to eradicate completely.

6. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

Anyone familiar with the reality of the Algerian public administration will recognize that there is a clear shortfall in organizational performance, encompassing several practices including:

- Poor treatment of citizens by employees and the exploitation of their influence to achieve personal benefits for themselves and their acquaintances.
- Disregard for time and absenteeism from the workplace, which disrupts public services and undermines citizens' trust in the government apparatus.
- Manipulation of rules and administrative procedures, exploiting loopholes in the laws to serve personal interests at the expense of the public good.
- Job trafficking and illicit gain, whether it involves embezzling funds from the institution, squandering and using its properties for personal or familial benefit, and exerting the influence bestowed by their positions to extort citizens for illegitimate gains.
- Favoritism and flattering superiors, prioritizing personal interests even at the expense of colleagues, to the extent

of engaging in slander, causing tension, disputes, and conflicts within the organization.

These practices result from an interconnected set of economic, social, organizational, and political factors:

- Employees may refrain from exercising the powers their roles grant them due to a lack of confidence in their capabilities and fear of making mistakes that could lead to accountability and scrutiny. As a result, subordinates often refuse the delegation of authority from their superiors, which disrupts the interests of citizens who lose confidence in state institutions.
- The rising cost of living surpasses what employees earn, accompanied by a decrease in purchasing power. Especially with a weak religious deterrent, employees may resort to illegitimate practices to compensate for this shortfall. Over time, what begins as seeking additional income to cover living expenses escalates into pursuing substantial wealth. Consequently, the regular salary loses its significance as it gets replaced by illicit earnings. This shift leads to increased selfish behavior and a gradual acceptance of compromising performance standards, exploiting clients' urgent needs to expedite their transactions.
- The influence of societal culture and its moral values on employee behavior is profound. The view that mediation, circumventing laws, and favoritism constitute social solidarity is prevalent. As social ties strengthen, the likelihood increases that employees will misappropriate rights to others undeservingly, driven by the desire to maintain social network connections and fear of being ostracized by their community.
- The absence of effective oversight and a deterrent force that punishes violations contributes significantly to misconduct. It is often observed that senior employees or politicians engage in unlawful activities freely and, even in cases where their guilt is proven, manage to evade punishment due to insufficient evidence or its

concealment, leveraging their influence. This undermines the ordinary citizen's trust in the authority and integrity of the law.

- Citizens lose trust in the governmental apparatus when they encounter opportunistic employees who procrastinate and delay processes, leaving them no choice but to exploit their own influence, social connections, or resort to bribery as the easiest and fastest way to meet their needs. Over time, this behavior becomes normalized, leading to a resigned acceptance that this is an unchangeable fate, thereby not only accepting but also adapting to this imposed reality.
- The weak religious restraint among both employees and clients plays a role as well. Given the urgent need to expedite processes and the complexity of administrative procedures, individuals seek the quickest paths even if they are illegitimate. Despite knowing the prohibitions, they find justifications to cover their unethical behaviors contrary to the principles of Islamic Sharia, attributing blame to the employee. Similarly, employees find excuses for their actions, sometimes blaming superiors for undue pressure, or justifying their misconduct with the high cost of living, ultimately resulting in persistent injustice and inequality among individuals.
- The existence of legal loopholes facilitates the achievement of personal interests, especially when employees are left to judge matters amid routine and complex procedures without clear timelines for task completion.

The Algerian authority has tried to address these issues by enacting and amending laws and procedures, with the latest being the shift to e-administration to keep up with international scientific developments—a necessary and unavoidable step. This measure has alleviated the burden on both employees and citizens, yet it has not completely eradicated these practices. The lack of internet access across the entire country, especially in remote areas, and the high costs of accessing these services,

often lead citizens to prefer visiting physical offices where they don't have to pay extra fees. Furthermore, some officials resist these efforts because e-administration reduces their control and dominance.

Thus, we arrive at a fundamental conclusion: bureaucratic practices have become like a cancer eroding the body of administrations, and there is an urgent need to find solutions to these issues before they worsen further.

7. CONCLUSION:

In summary, bureaucracy is a double-edged sword. It organizes, coordinates, and arranges the work of employees; however, the misuse of bureaucracy by administrators, their abuse of power, and their exploitation of its mechanisms turn it into a negative phenomenon. This misuse weakens the state's authority in the eyes of society and shakes the public's trust in its institutions due to the pervasive culture of corruption, which leaves its mark on the country's economic and social structure. It undermines development plans and programs and erodes societal ethics and values. What was once socially unacceptable has now become seen as a necessary evil, to the point where it is socially accepted under the pretext that "necessity justifies violations."

Sadly, this reality is often accepted even by those who outwardly champion the fight against corruption. Nepotism, for instance, has become a norm even for politicians advocating state reform, as they themselves resort to it when it suits their interests. Similarly, bribery has found acceptance among large segments of society, with many openly admitting to using it to achieve their goals as if it were completely normal. It is not uncommon to encounter someone boasting about using their institution's assets for personal gain, without facing any criticism or disapproval, to the extent that one might say the ethical fabric of society is nearing collapse, replaced by new norms. What was once rejected in an Islamic society governed by customs and traditions is now increasingly tolerated. This shift is due to the rise of negative values such as disregard for ethical rules and the transition from collective community values to individualistic

ambitions, particularly in the context of globalization and the new cultural dynamics it has introduced.

It is true that the Algerian government has made significant efforts to eradicate this phenomenon from its roots, especially in recent years under the "e-administration" initiative, which has yielded positive results across several sectors. However, the lingering negative consequences of bureaucracy remain evident. This leads to the conclusion that the core issue lies in a lack of professional ethics and inadequate self-regulation. The problem does not reside in the work regulations themselves but rather in the employees' ability to circumvent them. Additionally, how citizens respond to these pressures, and whether they find fair and attentive ears, remains a significant factor.

Therefore, the essential takeaway is that any meaningful change must begin with a shift in mindset, prioritizing ethical education over purely legal measures. Moreover, it is crucial to impose strict penalties on anyone who deviates from their assigned role, with accountability extending to both employees and clients. There should also be greater flexibility in the application of work regulations to align with the needs of citizens. Employees should be given the opportunity to express their opinions and raise concerns about their working conditions, regulations, and procedures—especially those that negatively impact their performance—and appropriate solutions should be sought.

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