

The Bureaucracy was Hidden in the Bathroom

A Vez em que a Burocracia Estava Escondida no Banheiro

Greice Martins Gomes
Henrique Martins de Soares
Ney Roberto Vattimo Bruck

ABSTRACT

Elaborado com base em uma situação real o presente caso de ensino busca relacionar teoria com prática por meio da confrontação de situações que envolvem nossa vida diária nas mais variadas formas organizacionais às quais fazemos parte. Propondo um método de ensino-aprendizagem participativo, visa aproximar os(as) alunos(as) da realidade da área de estudos em Administração a partir de uma percepção crítica e reflexiva da/sobre a realidade. Para tanto, toma-se como mote o conceito de burocracia que, a partir de uma perspectiva weberiana, pode ser interpretado enquanto forma de controle e dominação. Tomando isso como norte, nossa sugestão é “atuar” sobre a burocracia, justamente, por meio de seu oposto. Isso significa ponderar que, diante da normatividade, do formalismo e da fixidez da burocracia a criatividade, surge aqui como um possível caminho de desvio em direção a construções coletivas e organizacionais mais voltadas a uma perspectiva de autonomia e emancipação dos sujeitos.

Palavras-chave: burocracia, dominação, Estudos Organizacionais, caso de ensino.


RESUMO

Based on a real situation, the present teaching case seeks to relate theory with practice by confronting situations that involve our daily life in the most varied organizational forms to which we belong. Proposing a participatory teaching-learning method, it aims to bring students closer to the reality of the area of study in Administration from a critical and reflective perception of / about reality. Therefore, the concept of bureaucracy is taken as a motto, which, from a Weberian perspective, can be interpreted as a form of control and domination. Taking this as a guideline, our suggestion is to “act” on the bureaucracy, precisely, through its opposite. This means pondering that, in the face of normativity, formalism and the fixation of bureaucracy, creativity appears here as a possible path of deviation towards collective and organizational constructions more focused on a perspective of subjects’ autonomy and emancipation.


Keywords: bureaucracy, domination, Organizational Studies, teaching case.

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Greice Martins Gomes 
greice.martins.gomes@gmail.com
Ph.D. Student in Administration -
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande
do Sul
Doutoranda em Administração -
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande
do Sul
Porto Alegre/RS - Brazil

Henrique Martins de Soares 
henrique_m_soares@hotmail.com
Specialist Business Management -
Unisinos
Especialista em MBA Gestão Empresarial
- Unisinos
Porto Alegre/RS - Brazil

Ney Roberto Vattimo Bruck 
neybruck@gmail.com
PhD in Psychology - Federal University
of Pelotas
Doutor em Psicologia - Universidade
Federal de Pelotas - Pelotas/RS - Brasil
Pelotas/RS - Brazil

The Case

“It was early afternoon, crowded room, eighth grade, almost fifty students, all in that typical euphoria of puberty,” he told me, and continued, “I realized that a girl in the background did not sit [...] while preparing my things to start the class she appeared in front of me and said softly “teacher, I’m on my period, I’m not feeling well, I really need to go to the bathroom and repeated: very much,” I looked at her and said the obvious: of course!”. What seemed to be obvious, evident, unquestionable, for this teacher, of course, was not what was seen there. This is the brief beginning of a true story, which occurred in 2010 in a private elementary and high school located in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre, and which brings as a backdrop the dilemma of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a term that can be used in different ways. Sometimes in a pejorative manner and linked to some process that goes through many time-consuming, complex procedures, or even, on the contrary, as a form of rational and efficient Administration. In fact, it is all that, but in any case, it involves two variables in its essence: control and domination.

THE TEACHER-EMPLOYEE

On the day he was called to receive the news that he had been selected to teach at that school; he was approached in the hallway and received the following advice: “do not go against the board; you are already the third professor of sociology since the end of last year and we are only in July.” I also learned that day that the students did not like the subject, especially after a curricular reformulation; the reformulation ended up removing physical education class hours to put the sociology in place. “Just when I arrived to teach – he told me excitedly that “it was the passion of his life” – “there was a national textbook that should be used for classes.” “It was a book of those full of chronologies, dates, historical landmarks on theories, you know?”[...] of those who had nothing to do with the issues that these young people were interested in dealing with; it was very distant from the reality of their lives, of issues that were interesting to them such as the role of institutions, for example, the family, the government, issues related to consumption, globalization, technologies, such as fake news, about identities and things like that.”. He was a teacher for many years and had extensive experience teaching in private institutions; besides,

he was a class monitor of various subjects at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He also had, until now, played strategic roles in public and private institutions such as schools, hospitals, and businesses. He pointed out that, even before his master's degree, he carried out a work of several years with popular education in the outskirts of Porto Alegre. During his doctorate, he worked as a consultant, in Rio de Janeiro, in a research financing company. At the time of the episode to which we referred, he had finished his doctorate and said "at that stage you are trying to (re)position yourself to teach, but sometimes is not an immediate thing within the Brazilian reality ... so returning to teaching in a school and not exactly in a university seemed interesting at that moment, after all, I always really liked being among young people, I like the issues they bring, I like this moment of development that they are experiencing. I find them interesting, creative, joyful and I have always thought that I have a role to contribute socially and through teaching it is possible". As for his colleagues, he said that the majority taught classes there and in other private institutions and in general he considered that they had a more "conservative" position; "I thought that the sociology teacher had a contribution to make throughout the school because of the interdisciplinary issue that is inherent to the subjects dealt with [...] about this situation of the student who asked me to go to the bathroom, that you asked me, she was one, but there were others. They [his colleagues] did not support me, who really supported me was the pedagogical coordinator who hired me, who liked me a lot and who had a conception of teaching and learning more like mine, but she got sick a while later and walked away from school. She was the one who told me not to go against the board that day."

THE SCHOOL-ORGANIZATION

It was a school known for being "rich", in his words, for having a structure of high quality, "with gyms, laboratory, a great library, school cafeteria and things like that" with more than fifty years of experience in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Belonging to a teaching network composed of 16 student units, it operates in the child education, elementary and high school segments. According to data at the time, there were more than a hundred teachers and approximately eighty administrative employees in this school. He had been hired to teach classes for the seventh and eighth grades and high school years. The normally full rooms were a challenge apart,

“sometimes between the board and the first row, I was less than a meter apart.” This school” was like most ‘private’ schools” ... In the private sector, everything is very organized, the physical space, the building, the photocopy, everything works well, everything is organized. There were different instances of pedagogical guidance, supervision; on each floor, there was a subject assistant, a person hired for this function, she/he stayed there to see if the students were inside the classroom or if the teacher needed anything; at the back of the school, there was a gate, always padlocked, anyone who wanted to enter or leave had to pass through the guard and inside the school; to enter the building, where the classrooms were, there was another gate “. If students were 10 minutes late, they would no longer be able to enter the classroom, the door was closed after the beginning of classes, and they should remain closed until the end. However, you have to keep in mind that this was a paid school, it was not cheap, and that is why it has ‘facilities’ for those who do not comply with the discipline; for example, the student who arrives late will stay in a special, air-conditioned room, he or she is treated with sympathy and such [...]. I also remember that each student received a booklet, everything that happened ended up there. It had to be taken to class, but some did not take it sometimes ... the most disciplined always had it; everything was recorded there, notes to the parents, the test days, the events, the announcements of the administration “.

THE BATHROOM EPISODE

The bathroom episode was not sporadic. All students needed to ask for authorization. He, the father of a teenager and sensitive to issues related to feminism, a movement in which his daughter actively participated, says that “something hit him” in that situation “that girl, having to ask to go to the bathroom, something so essential for any human being, as if the organization/school put me in such a place that I could decide for her, her needs as if she were unable to decide what was important to her at that moment, in that situation.” He told me that he felt particularly uncomfortable that day and thought about how he could address this situation with the class. In the next class, he arrived, left his things on the table, and said to the class, “from now on, no one else needs to ask to go to the bathroom; you can get up and just go out and go to the bathroom and come back or, if you feel more comfortable, they can say something like ‘excuse me, I’ll be back’, it’s up to you. “ He

noticed that the class was restless; some thought it was good, others thought it was funny, some seemed skeptical, but there were those who opposed it. One of these students got up and said; “But, ‘teacher, some people ask to go to the bathroom and don’t go, some want to hide to smoke, others want to go for a walk around the schoolyard ...”. Then he said to the class: “sometimes adults say they go to the bathroom and don’t go.” Sometimes we are just bored; we want to get some air, do something different. Each of you can and will have to take responsibility for your decision, for your action, and for what may happen to it. I trust that each of you can make this decision and take responsibility for it”. He told me that, in the following weeks, some students asked to leave and left but they soon returned; with time, he noticed that the requests to go to the bathroom, which were recurrent, decreased.

THINGS GOT TENSE

One day, at a school meeting, he noticed a “heavy atmosphere in the room, a certain tension.” The meeting was going well until the end when the coordinator addressed him in the middle of the group and said that the students wanted to go to the bathroom without authorization and that “this was bothering the other teachers’ class and it is against the school rules, I would like to ask you to revoke this with the class. “ His response to the coordinator was: “In my classes, I practice what I teach, socially responsibility and therefore individual; they are essential elements not only to be taught but to put it into practice. I am grateful for the coordinator’s speech, but I cannot do it. It would be a paradox between teaching and learning. In my subject, we will follow this format but I understand perfectly that the other teachers do not want to follow this, and I respect that decision, as I know they will respect mine. I take this opportunity to comment that the number of requests for students to go to the bathroom has dropped a lot in my classes, and I feel that when they do, now, it is for the right reason”.

His classes continued with the students having the possibility to decide whether or not to go to the bathroom. He also told me about two situations before this one. One of them involving the textbook, adopted as mandatory by the school; he informed the board that he would partially use it since it was not suitable for the subject and that students said it is boring and that he agreed. The second situation was about another meeting that he attended. His colleagues and the coordination

criticized the students' indiscipline, classified as "impossible" in the group's words. He intervened and said that the number of students caused part of the problem, almost fifty per class, which was not the only one, but certainly a strong reason for the indiscipline. The coordination changed the subject, and the topic of overcrowded classes was not raised nor discussed further in the group.

BUREAUCRACY CLASS

As he was teaching about Max Weber, the teacher decided to discuss the bathroom issue as an ingredient to his class. It started by projecting the following image onto the whiteboard, as shown in figure 1 below:

Figure 1 Mafalda and 'her' Bureaucracy



Source: Pinterest (2020)

“To continue our last class on Max Weber, today I brought you this little book. I already told you the other day about this collection ... it's called *Primeiros Passos*. The first edition of this one is called 'What is Bureaucracy.' This book, and several others from this same collection, are available for free on the internet. I suggest you take a look; it has several interesting subjects ... It is intended to be brief and summarized, but the collection was made with great authors invited by the publisher. In this one, the guest was Fernando Prestes Motta, a professor in the field of Administration, recognized as one of the important names in Brazil on the subject of bureaucracy. And why am I saying this? Because it is necessary to do this type of exercise, to see who the author is, what his importance is, in short, from 'where' what you are reading comes from. Now, let's go back to our main author. Weber is

known, among other things, as an organization theorist. The school cafeteria here at the school, the store that sells building material on the corner, your cell phone operator, Facebook, Google, but also a nursery, an asylum, barracks, a hospice, a hospital, and of course, our school, they are all organizations.

I am saying this because for the author I mentioned [Fernando Prestes Motta], 'organization' is like bureaucracy; it means that in any organization, to a greater or lesser degree, there will be bureaucracy. It emerges as a mediating element between particular interests and general interests, as we must not lose sight of the fact that organizations are human productions and not mere autonomous devices. From this perspective, it refers not only to a formal organization system but to a system of conduct. Furthermore, bureaucracy is a term that can be used in various ways, sometimes in a way linked to some process that goes through many procedures, becoming something known as slow, like Mafalda's "bureaucracy." In others, it is seen as a form of management considered rational and efficient. Indeed, it is all of that, but we are particularly interested in two aspects inherent in any form of bureaucracy and present in any organization: control and domination for our discussion today. To understand bureaucracy, we have to look at history. In pre-capitalist organizations, production was handcrafted by master craftsmen who had control of the technique and knowledge of the production of the goods (the shoemaker, the gunsmith, the perfumer), and he was the one who directly sold his product. The producer controlled both the product and the labor process; thus, there was no separation between capital and labor - a fundamental characteristic of capitalism (MOTTA, 2017). Hence, the division of labor arises, not exactly due to technical superiority, but because in this way, the specialization of tasks, breaking it into smaller and unrelated parts of knowledge as a whole, removes control over the product from the old craftsmen (workers), and puts it in the hands of a single agent. Therefore, the total control of the product passed from the craftsman (of the Middle Ages) to the owner of the means of production. So, it is possible to say that bureaucracy is a rational system built from the division of labor. However, in a specific form of production organization, it expands as a form of social relationship. It enters society in general through the idea of control, the predominance of formalism (veiled or not), the existence of written norms (on paper or not), in hierarchical structures (over who commands and who obeys). The behavior becomes

disciplined and characterized as wrong/incorrect if the ‘norms’ are not followed. Traveling along this path, we will encounter bureaucracy as a form of power and domination. Power because it is organized so that some (few) can impose their will on (many) others. Now, when this imposition of will becomes accepted as valid, as coherent, certain, unquestioned by those who are submitted, power becomes domination - within a Weberian perspective.

In general, bureaucracy is the opposite of autonomy, both individual and collective. It can create habits, informal norms, ideas, and imagination, becoming responsible even for forms of intersubjective control, making us not only controlled but that we start to control others in favor of this formal structure. It limits the range of thoughts and attitudes available to the individual. The behavior that people should adopt (students, soldiers, Google employees, the elderly at the nursing home, children at the daycare center) are specified and delimited by (management) control systems that - when attended in the expected way - bonuses and reward systems (grades, pay, wages/prizes, treats) can be granted. As you can see, bureaucracy is not a distant thing; it is almost everywhere; present and up-to-date, it is part of our life. Now that these initial considerations were made, I would like to bring the example of a current situation that we all experienced to reflect on the topic. I will call this situation that we will analyze and discuss in this class “The time when the bureaucracy was hidden in the bathroom ...”.

THE OUTCOME

All of this occurred in a short period. The teacher was on probation during the facts narrated here. He was called to the school office and fired when he was about to complete three months working there. He thinks he did what he should. He was happy with the experience and believes that if the coordinator who hired him were there, “the one who got sick soon after and left school,” he probably wouldn’t have been fired. The interviewer thinks the opposite. Both of us will never know. Even with the narrated facts, which tell us about an institution with a history of dismissal of sociology teachers, we cannot fail to consider that there are consequences in the face of the decisions and positions taken in the organizational environment. They go far beyond the rules; there are political aspects, informal groups, and other factors that must be weighed. In any case, he told me that students are still looking for him

today, on social networks. The students said the classes were great and that they were finally enjoying the subject. I heard that a new teacher was hired, that the textbook started to be used again, and that the students began to feel bored again in class. But one thing was not the same; a while later, under pressure from students supported by a group of parents, it was instituted that students could go to the bathroom, now, without having to ask for authorization.

The sanctions continued to be applied to those who “went to the bathroom to smoke a cigarette or just go for a walk around the school.” According to the news, these situations also became less recurring. Today, he teaches at an important Brazilian institution, and his name is recognized, quoted, and requested within his area of expertise. He ended our interview smiling and serene, quoting the chorus of a song that said: “foot on God and faith in the teepee”. From our conversation/interview, the message that stayed was bureaucracy is “not good or bad” in itself, nor by itself. Dysfunction occurs when there is oppression, arbitrariness scenarios, or even disrespect undertaken through it.

Teaching Notes

DATA SOURCE

The present material was constructed with sources of primary origin so that the information presented in the narrative is based on a real situation that occurred through an open interview, a model usually used for individual cases (MINAYO, 2011). Regarding its structure, the interviewer introduced the theme allowing the interviewee to have the freedom to discuss it; as questions arose, they were answered within an informal conversation. Some adjustments to the plot, regarding the subsection “A class on bureaucracy,” were made to adapt to the teaching case model and the proposal for discussion to be instigated; however, such adaptation was informed and consented by the interviewee. As the present material is a problem situation experienced by real protagonists, it was decided to omit the names of the participants and the organization. It is understood that such absence does not interfere in interpreting the content or even in the apprehension of the dilemma that permeates the case.

TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The case has the educational objective of developing the capacity for analytical and critical judgment, relating theory to practice, confronting the complexities of specific situations that involve our lives in the most varied organizational forms to which we belong, making the teaching process more dynamic and creative. It was thought of as a contribution at the undergraduate and graduate level for the areas of Organizational Studies, General and Public Administration, but also the Applied and Human Social Sciences in general “given that the phenomenon of bureaucracy is present in all social spheres” (DE FARIA; MENEGHETTI, 2011).

The present work offers an inductive teaching-learning method, of a participatory nature. It aims to bring students closer to the reality of the field of Administration Studies, from a critical and reflective perception of reality.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What situation comes to mind that could be considered a form of bureaucracy acting on you, on your freedom of choice, participation, and action? (it can also be a story about someone or a situation that you know about).
2. What does the student’s request to go to the bathroom have to do with bureaucracy? What relationship is there between such an episode and an organizational perspective?
3. “It [the bureaucracy] is capable of creating habits, informal norms, ideas, and imagination, becoming responsible even for forms of intersubjective control.” Name one or two situations in which bureaucratic domination has shown itself in the characters as a form of intersubjective control. Reflect with your group about the following question: why, as managers, would it be relevant to be aware of such situations?
4. What are the possible “solutions” that the group could propose for such a situation? 4.1) *in search of an individual way out*: how else could the

teacher have addressed this situation, and what results do you foresee that he would achieve? How else could the school manager have addressed this situation? What results do you predict it would achieve? 4.2) *Looking for a collective way out*: what kind of collective articulation could have been made in this situation, and what results do you foresee that this group of people would achieve?

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

The lesson plan was designed for a class of between twenty and thirty students, divided into four smaller groups, and has an expected duration of three and a half hours, considering that the individual reading of the case takes place in the classroom. From a sequential chain, the proposal is composed of five parts/moments. The first serves as an ice-breaking moment; that is, it is intended to help the group start the debate and introduce a topic for discussion; in the second and third part, there are debates between the groups. On the other hand, the fourth is a dynamic (skit), and in the last, the class ends, as shown in Table 1 below.

Chart 1 Outline for the lesson plan

Moment	Conc- ner- ning the question	Estima- ted time	Activity	Objective	Theoretical Reference
Preparation	1, 2, 3 e 4	20	Individual reading of the case in class		
Ice-breaker (part I)	1	20	Each group member reports a situation. The group chooses one of them to tell the large group.	Observe/perceive that bureaucracy, to a greater or lesser degree, is present almost everywhere and takes place with/in each one of us (subjective aspect)	Bureaucracy, Weberian perspectives in organizational studies
Debate (part II)	2	15	Each group tells the larger group its representative story. Group discussion	Exercise conceptual articulation (organizational aspect).	
Debate (part III)	3	15	Group discussion	"Realize" as a possible path to change.	Bureaucracy as an exercise of power, control, and domination.
Group dynamics (skit)	4	20	Skit preparation	Relax, work together, play, create, exercise the abstraction of new perspectives	Bureaucracy, possible deconstruction paths: collectivity and creativity
Closing	1, 2, 3 e 4	60	35* Teacher closing	Review the general content, the main points discussed by the students, evaluation of the class, and the students' perception of the meeting.	

*Total time considering 4 groups
 Source: Prepared by the authors (2020).

The first part begins with question number one (1). The large group is divided into four groups of less than five students or more. In each of these groups, its members tell a story (personal or some case known to them) in response to the question. After all the members shared their story, the group will choose one (1) jointly, among all, as the most illustrative. A representative from each smaller group will then tell/share the ‘story of the group’ with a large group. For the first moment — when each member tells their stories in the smaller groups — the time spent is twenty minutes. For the second part — where each group tells the ‘story chosen by the group’ to the large group — the total time for all four groups to share their story is ten minutes. The objective of this moment of the class is to observe/perceive the subjective aspect of the bureaucracy; that is, that, to a greater or lesser degree, it is almost everywhere and is carried out with/in each one of us.

The second part of the class begins with question number two (2). The large group remains divided into groups of less than five students or more who can remain the same or have their members changed. The instruction is that the group discusses the issue. The estimated time for this activity is twenty minutes. This moment’s objective is to exercise an approximation between the dilemma situation and the concept, now, from an organizational perspective.

The third starts with question number three (3). The large group remains divided into groups of less than five students or more who can remain the same or have their members changed. The instruction is for the issue to be discussed by the group. The estimated time for this activity is twenty minutes. This moment is to reflect the theme, particularly relating it to power, control, and domination, and, from there, to reflect on the change and resignification in the relational and social scope.

The fourth part is a skit, a small play in which the groups will create and dramatize a situation that involves two types of emotions. For this exercise, the teacher will give each group an instruction that will inform where (the place) an event will start and where it will end (see table 2 below) and also a list of emotions (see Table 1, in the ‘Appendix’ section of this material). The groups will choose from the list of emotions a negative one (which will start the dramatic act) and a positive one (which will end the same) and, in possession of this, they will have about twenty minutes to design/create the group skit and approximately five to ten minutes to introduce themselves to the large group. Let’s take an illustrative example: assuming that a group has re-

ceived the instruction “g,” the role- play would start “at a gas station” and end “with a pizza delivery man ringing the house bell”; thus, the group will choose one negative emotion from the list (for example: anxiety, depression, sadness, shame and so on) to start the play, as well a positive emotion from the same list (for example: love, friendship, altruism, patience, pleasure and so on) to close the dynamic. An essential part of this dynamic is that everyone should participate in the staging. If any student does not wish to participate in the dramatization, she/he may, in this case, assume the “role” in the play of an object or animal in the scene. The purpose of this dynamic is to exercise the current perception and transformation capacity through a playful bias that permeates the collective construction and the exercise of creativity, alternatives that aim to overcome the control and domination present in bureaucratic organizations. The fifth and final part of this class closes the meeting based on a brief review of the content by the teacher, discussion about what emerged in the groups in the face of the debates of questions one, two, and three, using, appropriately, the propositions indicated in the next section “alternative analysis” and, finally, the evaluation of the class and perceptions of the students about the meeting.

Table 2 Where the skit begins and ends

Situation	Begins	Ends
a	At the school office, asking for the student's school history	At a reception of newcomers of the course
b	Filling an online job application form	Embarking for an overseas internship
c	At the pharmacy, buying throat lozenges	On a friend's birthday
d	Coffee break from an academic event	On an Airbnb in Praia do Rosa
e	Receiving the rejection of an article in a magazine	Binge-watching a TV show over the weekend
f	At the supermarket cash register	Being informed about an honorable mention of your final paper

g	At a gas station	With the pizza delivery man ringing your home bell
h	In a meeting at the office	Receiving a gift
i	Calling your mobile operator	At a family lunch
j	Preparing a class presentation	Camping in the wild
k	Boxing your things for a house move	Picnic in the park with your boy-friend/girlfriend

Source: Prepared by the authors (2020).

ALTERNATIVES FOR ANALYSIS BASED ON THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES THAT SUPPORT THE CASE

From a purely descriptive viewpoint, managing is planning, organizing, coordinating, commanding and controlling, “however, we are not always aware of the fact that managing is planning, organizing, coordinating, commanding and controlling [and] being managed means being planned, organized, commanded and controlled. “ Therefore, the Administration also has a political meaning that is often neglected, that is, the fact that *to manage is to exercise a delegated power*; thus, it allows to direct the behavior of the other or others: “There are many ways to exercise power. You can impose, you can coerce, you can corrupt, you can persuade, you can seduce, you can manipulate. In many situations, all these possibilities can enter the power game, and it is not always easy to discern one modality from the other” (MOTTA, 2003, p. 369, emphasis added). That is why we understand this case as a way to teach and reflect on administrative and management practice, aiming at one of the elements that most relate to power and control: the concept of bureaucracy. Below, we present possibilities for articulating the questions capable of pointing out ways to articulate the debate and formulate responses to dilemma situations.

Questions 1 and 2 - what is bureaucracy, Weberian perspectives in organizational studies.

The concept of bureaucracy has been debated in several areas of knowledge, but it is undeniable that the great contribution on the topic was made by Max Weber, whose arguments served as a basis for several other researchers from

different epistemological currents (DE FARIA; MENEGHETTI, 2011). Weber (2015) observes, especially, the process of rationalization of society in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age. In this context, the transformation of a social world based on the practical calculation of consequences gives rise to the instrumental-legal rationality that is instituted and changes the relationships in society, causing the modern bureaucracy to consolidate. It is a result of a process that has, in its essence, the purpose of concentrating the material means of administration in the hands of the capital-holding elites through the development of large capitalist companies (WEBER, 2015).

According to this author, the modern bureaucracy has central characteristics, namely: it is governed by fixed and official areas of jurisdiction, ordered by laws and administrative rules; establishes a relationship of authority, bounded by rules on means of coercion and consensus; creates a hierarchical relationship, defining posts and levels of authorities, in addition to a system of command and subordination with management of activities and tasks delegated by authority; with it, the administration is formalized by means of documents, which end up regulating people's conduct and activities; in a specialized bureaucratic administration, specialized training is assumed; the activities and tasks of a job, which can be learned by any worker, should be described and delimited by the creation of more or less stable positions; the occupation of a position is an impersonal and transitory profession and, furthermore, specialized training aims to generalize the position and transforming it into a profession. In summary, for Weber (2015), bureaucracy expresses the purest type of legal-rational domination. In this type, the leader/ruler has his/her position of authority by designation or election; it occurs both in the State and in a private company, in an association for utilitarian purposes, or even in a union of any nature with a hierarchically articulated administrative framework.

Furthermore, the concept of bureaucracy can be considered an elementary assumption for the existence of the theory of organizations since it is from the bureaucracy, as a form of rationalization, that modern complex organizations became effective as objects of analysis. In this sense, according to De Faria and Meneghetti (2011), in the discussion on the topic in the field of organizational analysis, especially in critical studies in the area, two authors stand out: Mauricio Tragtenberg and Fernando Cláudio Prestes Motta. Tragtenberg, an author notably averse to any form

of bureaucratization that would hinder the autonomy of individuals, considers the process of bureaucratization to be a social phenomenon in which current thinking itself is held hostage (DE FARIA; MENEGHETTI, 2011). In Tragtenberg, De Faria, and Meneghetti (2011) also clarify, bureaucracy materializes the most perverse face of capital; therefore, in his studies, the author is clearly concerned with creating defense mechanisms against its effects. It means that when reflecting on the aspect of impersonality, for example, the author understands that it becomes an alibi for eventual injustices; moreover, when the means are unrestrictedly adequate for the purposes, people are invariably identified as the central factors of failure in an evident detachment from a broader organizational analysis.

Prestes Motta (2017, p. 7) states that “bureaucracy is a social structure in which the direction of collective activities is in charge of an impersonal hierarchically organized apparatus, which must act according to impersonal criteria and rational methods.” The author understands bureaucracy in three ways: as power, as control, and as alienation; that is, the bureaucracy would be an instrument of the dominant class that imposes its ascendancy on the other classes; therefore, the “bureaucratic way of thinking leads man to emptiness and the struggle for small positions in the social hierarchy of prestige and consumption” (PRESTES MOTTA, 2017, p. 13). Such domination is made by organizations (companies, schools, parties, unions, and others) and by the State by establishing a specific way of life, according to the interests of the capital (DE FARIA; MENEGHETTI, 2011). The hierarchy plays a significant role in the bureaucracy as control, establishing a relationship of vigilance and essential discipline to guarantee submission. The author has an interesting perception, as he understands that the role of bureaucratic organizations is not only associated with the production of goods, capital, services, nor with the (re) production of labor as a labor force or guarantee of survival of the worker through wages; the bureaucracy aims to guarantee social control through the establishment of power relations that always occur between the unequal (PRESTES MOTTA, 2017).

Question 3 - bureaucracy as an exercise of control, power, and domination.

Domination, in Weberian theory, is the inculcated, internalized, internalized disposition, or even uncritical obedience and without resistance, recognized as valid by the people over whom it is exercised; in the session “The validity of legitimacy”, in

his work *Economy and Society*, Weber (2015, p. 170) equates the term to authority when he writes “in each individual case, domination (“authority”) can be based on the most diverse reasons of submission: from unconscious habit to purely rational considerations, referring to purposes.” Therefore, the dominated must believe that the actions they maintain with the dominant are legitimate and that they have a reasonable and acceptable justification. This symbolic dimension does not allow domination to be confused with power, connected concepts but still distinct, since legitimacy appears as an intrinsic component in the first one. This means that domination — as a state of affairs in which the person(s) who impose their will on another person(s) believes they have the right(s) to do so, as well as the governed believes that he/she must obey; it is necessary to have principles and beliefs that make it legitimate, both in the eyes of the one in charge and the one who obeys (WEBER, 2015). The principles and beliefs make domination legitimate and guarantee stability.

Weber (2015) listed three types of legitimate domination: legal-rational, traditional and charismatic. The traditional is based on tradition and on the belief of sovereign’s legitimacy - what has always existed is valid; in the charismatic, there is no conception of a hierarchy or competence, that is, in place of an administrative framework, there is the idea of disciples, followers, and trustworthy people. On the other hand, legal or legal-rational domination is based on the legality defined by objective legal norms and statutes. In summary, for Weber (2015), bureaucracy expresses the purest type of legal-rational domination; in this type, the leader/ruler has a position of authority by designation or election.

Concerning the theme power, it is possible to discuss with the students the question of the organization itself as a form of power and, in the case of this study, would manifest itself, especially, as ‘disciplinary power’ (MOTTA, 2017, p. 35). The disciplinary power can be found in other institutions, “generally those organized in closed places and with rigid bureaucratic structures, such as the factory, the asylum, the convent” (MOTTA, 2017, p. 36). According to Motta (2017), disciplinary power is an essential aspect of any formal organization in bureaucratic capitalism; its logic is social — before being organizational — because its objective is to produce docile bodies whose productive potential is released and the political potential is inhibited. It is also pertinent to discuss with students that this type of (disciplinary) power is not “something from the past” and “is not present in modern companies”.

Max Pagès (1987), for example, developed his research with a large multinational corporation. His observation was that the subtle character of disciplinary power in modern companies occurs through an affective and intellectual identification of individuals with the organization. This means thinking about a disciplinary power acting on “the drive system of individuals, who start to promote the goals and policies of the company actively”; that is, there is an introjection/assimilation by individuals of the requirements set by the organization (MOTTA, 2017, p.37). Through this process, organizations manage to channel the energy of individuals to their maximum benefit without employing a system of punishments that work based on repression. In this format of disciplinary power, the subject, totally submissive, works for the organization as if it were for himself/herself; he/she experiences the feeling that the organization is part of them. There is, therefore, the taking of the individual by the organization at the level of the unconscious; this taking is especially strong because it is parallel to a dissolution of the critical instance. Here, the individuals are not afraid of being punished if they are not successful; being successful becomes vital for them (PAGÈS, 1987).

The bureaucracy, therefore, can be discussed as a system of domination based on the reproduction of domination of nature — including the man in relation to man himself (control over bodies, basic needs, over whether or not he can “go to the bathroom”). As De Faria and Meneghetti (2011, p. 438) states, “bureaucracy can create habits, informal norms, ideas, and imagination, becoming responsible for intersubjective control”; thus, submission, standard behaviors, and disciplining are not originated “only in an objective way” as the bureaucracy is instituted in the organization. A discussion in this sense broadens the debate, as it is observed that bureaucracy also invests in intersubjective control; this movement is essential for the control to be effective, as classmates are opposed when the teacher transfers the freedom of choice of whether or not to go to the bathroom to the students or, still, the student who “snitches” on his classmates.

Question 4 - possible paths: collectivity and creativity.

Students are expected to be able to move towards both individual and collective solutions. Concerning collective actions, the text subtly reveals that the union of forces between students and a group of parents managed to invalidate

the guideline on the issue of control and access to the bathroom, passing on to students the freedom and responsibility for such deliberation. In this sense, Motta (2003, p.6), referring to university education - but it is related to the teaching case in question - argues that “the alternative is the creation of channels for real participation by teachers, students, and employees in the university environment, who may oppose the institution’s bureaucratic sclerosis.” According to this author, participation (of the executive, the worker, the teacher, the student, etc.) is not a magic remedy to the evils of the bureaucracy that surrounds us; however, as experience demonstrates, in the case of a teaching organization, like the one we portray here, the mere presence of students in collegiate bodies is already a “factor of their moralization” (MOTTA, 2003, p. 6). It means that collective and individual actions are, to a certain extent, connected.

Hence, regarding individual actions, Motta (2017) addresses the question of creativity as a possible bridge for overcoming the dichotomies inherent to control and domination. According to the author, creativity appears as an element that would favor the process of acceptance, on the part of the individual, of the essential rules for the organization; at the same time, this creativity would enable her/him to face the rejection of what is only relevant in a peripheral sense and which would negatively impact relations between subjects. When guided in these terms, the individual can often influence the organizational collectivity, which means a lot because the individual-organization relationship is a relationship between unequal ones (MOTTA, 2017). As it turns out, our main character managed to do it, even though it happened after he left.

Following this line of thought, the suggestion here is to work on overcoming through its opposite. It means that creativity can be understood as a “creative” path of diversion given the normative and formalism of the bureaucracy’s fixity. What modifies the harshness of control and repression, inherent to bureaucracy, can be, in this sense, what refers to utopia, that is, about dreams, about invention, the fantasy of another place, another situation, another possibility within the same situation as an exercise of displacement to another opportunity of looking. An interesting comic strip of the character Calvin (see figure 2 below) makes an indirect reference to precisely this type of displacement when the boy runs away from the classroom, saying he is going to the water cooler, and creates a world of fantasy and challenges

within his own closet — in proximity to this case and the content discussed at this final moment. The strip can be projected to the students, at the end of the class, together with these observations, reinforcing the latent content (creativity) and the purpose (displacement to exercise new looks) of the dynamics of the skit exercise that they performed. Therefore, this dynamic proposes an integration of paradigms and not their exclusion, just like an integration strategy. Even if the hegemony of the functionalist paradigm in the field of Administration is axiomatic (PAULA, 2016), it is understood that a path of possibility goes through an approach that emphasizes subjective issues; in this final exercise, these issues are represented by playfulness, collective construction and through the exercise of reflexive creativity, followed, in this way, by teaching and learning proposals focused on a perspective of autonomy and emancipation of the subjects (CANOPF, 2018).

Figure 2 Stupendous Man, creativity as an element of displacement for new looks



Source: Pinterest (2020).

The central focus of this teaching case is the debate on the classic theory of bureaucracy, as a way of introducing the theme into organizational studies. Still, it seems convenient some final propositions, even briefly, about what the current literature points out as ways of overcoming. To do so, we will take four perspectives: the division of tasks, the allocation of tasks, the recognition and reward systems, and the provision of information. In a rigid bureaucracy, top-level management provides the architecture of the tasks when it comes to task management. To control the entire process, the operation is divided into fixed official legal areas. The managers

of each of these areas divide the task into smaller subtasks, dividing tasks into a top-down process. In less bureaucratic systems, teams would have the autonomy to establish the sub-tasks and tasks necessary to achieve the overall team goal. For example, a particular consulting team that works with a specific client may face a unique challenge that will require a creative and unusual solution and, in this case, the group would have the authority to decide the best way to face that challenge (MARTELA, 2019). With regard to the allocation of tasks, in a classic bureaucracy, the allocation of tasks is also done in a top-down approach. Having established the broader tasks necessary to meet organizational goals, top management allocates them to the next level of management, which in turn makes allocation decisions in relation to its subordinates. Thus, each manager is responsible for giving tasks to the employee level directly below them. In less bureaucratic systems, teams usually have the authority to divide tasks among themselves as they wish, hence creating pockets of decision power (inevitably inherent in the organizational process as a whole) that are more distributed and less unequal (MARTELA, 2019). In such engenderings, teams tend to form spontaneously around topics of interest so that an informal governance process allows anyone, even the youngest members, to propose changes in the roles, responsibilities, policies, and decision rights in their group of work (BURTON et al., 2017). Regarding recognition/reward systems, in a traditional bureaucracy, there is usually no assumption that tasks would be intrinsically rewarding since alienation from work is seen as one of the unfortunate side effects of greater rationalization and efficiency. Consequently, compensation in the form of wages and bonuses is the main reward mechanism. Also, in less bureaucratic systems, monetary compensation is the primary reward mechanism; however, given the more open, interactive, and dynamic structure, people can be motivated by the ability to work on more exciting projects in a more creative way. From this perspective, in less bureaucratic organizations, there would be the assumption that people are not passive and lazy, but quite the opposite: that they are active and willing to perform well if they are given a task that they consider intrinsically motivating (DECI; OLAFSEN; RYAN, 2017). Finally, under the provision of information, we have that the limits of the tasks in the bureaucratic structures, as they are organized in a rigid way and with precise instructions, limit the distribution of comprehensive information. In turn, in less bureaucratic organizations, transparency and the active distribution of import-

ant information appear to guarantee each employee’s ability to make decisions that benefit the whole (LEE; EDMONDSON, 2017).

MAIN SOURCES FOR ADDRESSING THE CASE

Table 3, shown below, presents a list of complementary references that can assist teachers in the theoretical construction of this teaching case. A brief explanatory note follows the reference on the reason for the indication.

Table 3 Indication of main sources for addressing the case

Title	Reason for suggestion	Reference	Area
What is bureaucracy	In this small but enlightening work, fundamental questions are addressed, such as: what is the meaning of bureaucracy? Who does it serve? Bureaucracy is approached from various perspectives, including power, domination, and alienation.	MOTTA, F. C. P. O que é burocracia. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2017.	Organizational Studies
Economy and society	One of the most important works of the theoretical Weberian framework	WEBER, M. Economia e Sociedade (volumes 1 and 2). Brasília: UnB, 2015.	Sociology, Organizational Studies
Bureaucracy as organization, power, and control	The article analyzes how Maurício Tragtenberg and Fernando C. Prestes Motta, two leading authors of Organizational Studies, approach the topic of bureaucracy.	DE FARIA, J. H.; MENE- GHETTI, F. K. Burocracia como organização, poder e controle. RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas, v. 51, n. 5, p. 424-439, jan./fev. 2011. DOI: 10.1590/S0034-75902011000500002	Organizational Studies

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

APPENDIX

Below, we have available in table 1 the 'list of emotions' to perform the skit involving the analysis of the case.

Table 1 List of emotions

Lista das emoções			
Aggressiveness	Courage	Hysteria	Pity
Affection	Guilty	Hostility	Possessiveness
Distress	Curiosity	Humor	Pleasure
Joy	Contentment	Humility	Laziness
Altruism	Creativity	Humiliation	Concern
Ambivalence	Depression	Inspiration	Peace
Friendship	Confession	Interest	Anger
Love	Fascination	Indecision	Remorse
Anguish	Contempt	Envy	Disgust
Anxiety	Pity	Wrath	Resignation
Antipathy	Deception	Isolation	Resentment
Anticipation	Doubt	Intrigue	Miss someone
Apathy	Disappointment	Lust	Sympathy
Regret	Selfishness	Bitterness	Arrogance
Arrogance	Empathy	Bad mood	Suffering
Self-pity	Hope	Fear	Loneliness
Avarice	Euphoria	Melancholy	Surprise
Kindness	Enthusiasm	Hardship	Fright
Bliss	Epiphany	Disgust	Tranquility
Benevolence	Excitement	Nostalgia	Boredom
Affection	Fanaticism	Hate	Shyness
Greed	Happiness	Pride	Sadness
Compassion	Coldness	Passion	Vanity
Confusion	Frustration	Patience	Veracity
Jealousy	Gratification	Panic	Shame
Embarrassment	Gratitude	Compassion	Revenge

Source: Adapted from Sabercoletivo (2020).

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