

Does bureaucracy threaten firms? A multidimensional analysis of its theory and praxis from its organizational structure

¿La burocracia amenaza a las empresas? Un análisis multidimensional de su teoría y praxis a partir de su estructura organizacional

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Abstract

In today's administrative praxis, bureaucracy still manifests in firms through its organizational structure, hindering management processes through unperceived and, therefore, unstudied practices. The aim of this research is to identify the theoretical principles of bureaucracy and its theoretical-practical convergence with structuralism and its dimensions in firms. Throughout an exploratory and descriptive study, a documentary review of the significant bureaucratic theory authors and the organizational structure's fundamental researchers was carried out. This comparison made it possible to identify how the dimensions of bureaucracy closely converge with the dimensions of structuralism. This multidimensional analysis bridges the gap between the two theories, enabling organizations to understand the threat posed by bureaucracy and the impact of the main structural dimensions (centralization, formalization, and specialization) on other organizational factors —both formal and informal— while taking into account the contingencies to which their organizational structure is exposed.

Keywords: organizational structure; management operations; organizational change; organization and management
JEL Code: L22, D23

Resumen

En la praxis administrativa actual, la burocracia aún se manifiesta en las empresas a través de su estructura organizacional, lo que dificulta los procesos de gestión mediante prácticas inadvertidas y, por lo tanto, no estudiadas. El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar los principios teóricos de la burocracia y su convergencia teórico-práctica con el estructuralismo y sus dimensiones en las empresas. Se llevó a cabo un estudio exploratorio y descriptivo basado en una revisión documental de los autores más significativos de la teoría burocrática y de los investigadores fundamentales de la estructura organizacional. Esta comparación permitió identificar cómo las dimensiones de la burocracia convergen estrechamente con las dimensiones del estructuralismo. Este análisis multidimensional reduce la brecha entre ambas teorías, lo que permite a las empresas comprender la amenaza de la burocracia y el impacto de las principales dimensiones estructurales (centralización, formalización y especialización) en otros factores organizacionales —tanto formales como informales—, teniendo en cuenta las contingencias a las que está expuesta su estructura organizacional.

Palabras clave: estructura administrativa, operaciones de gestión, cambio organizacional, organización y gestión
Código JEL: L22, D23

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Introduction

The traditional model of organizations occurred under the conditions of the industrial era of the early 20th century, a period of relative administrative stability and occasional contingencies among firms. The main characteristics of those organizations were: centralized command of hierarchy, jobs with limited capabilities, simple and repetitive tasks, rules, and regulations to establish order, functional departments with specific objectives, and an orientation to the specialization of workers. Initially, the bureaucratic model's rational nature and excessive formalism were the main attraction for organizations since it established control over the elements that constituted it.

Although there is a collective belief that bureaucratic thinking is related only to the public sector, Hirst and Humphreys (2015) support the idea that "the legal-rational regulative regime of bureaucracy is not confined to the public sector or even to organizations but underpins the formal character of modern life" (p. 1535). The bureaucratic orientation is conservative, so the rigidity of its rules prevented it from adapting to the unforeseen evolution of their environment. Coble (1978) highlighted that those with such orientation (bureaucratic) are more concerned with the internal distribution of power and status than achieving organizational and individual goals. Nonetheless, the theoretical basis of bureaucracy is still present in today's administrative praxis, since, in both public and private firms, its characteristics are still identified throughout the different dimensions of its organizational structure, hindering management processes through unseen and therefore unstudied bureaucratic practices.

Weber (2002) described bureaucratic organizations from a unidimensional perspective, with a series of characteristics that constitute the "ideal type" of bureaucracy when all are present in the organization. Later, Udy (1959) showed that not all these characteristics are present in the organization, but neither is absent; this breaks with the mentioned "ideal type". These outcomes reinforce the idea that the bureaucratic scheme is best studied from a multidimensional perspective and each one by degrees. At the core of this theory are its structural attributes and manager-centered relationships, in its strict sense of "structure," referring to the differentiation of positions, hierarchies, and levels of authority in an organization. Therefore, the aim of this research is to identify the theoretical principles of bureaucracy and its theoretical-practical convergence with structuralism and its dimensions in firms. To achieve this objective and narrow the analytical focus of this study, three research questions were formulated: 1) What are the most frequently studied dimensions of bureaucracy in the literature?, 2) What are the structural dimensions most frequently cited by authors? and 3) What is the theoretical-practical convergence between the dimensions of bureaucracy and structural dimensions?

The review of the leading authors of bureaucracy, its theoretical basis, characteristics, and dimensions helped to devise its convergence with structuralism and its praxis in firms through its main structural dimensions (centralization, formalization, and specialization). Identifying structural dimensions not only benefits the company's internal environment but also extends its impact to business models. For example, Hidalgo-Pozzi et al. (2024) argue



that optimizing business models through their organizational structures involves the continuous improvement of business processes to maximize value for customers and stakeholders. This process focuses not only on operational efficiency but also on adapting to changing market conditions and implementing technological innovations.

Literature review

The administrative theory arose due to social needs at the beginning of the 20th century. "Notwithstanding, its foundations were developing in a slow process that began from the very moment that man needed the cooperation of another to carry out certain activities aimed at his subsistence, which he couldn't carry out on his own" (Medina & Avila, 2002, p. 262).

Bureaucracy theory

In the 1940s, when academia pointed to the Classical management theory, which focused on mechanical processes, and to the Human relations theory, which kept its attention on people, a gap was created for studies focused on the administrator's job. Bureaucracy theory emerged in firms through Weber (2002). Its premise was the rationality of personnel and processes and their domination, and it was based on precision, continuity, discipline, rigor, confidence, and calculability. According to bureaucracy, the worker obeys not the person by virtue of his right, but the established rule, that is, a legal authority utilizing a contract, where the administrative team consists of officials appointed by a manager, and the subordinates are members of a formal association.

Through the following characteristics, bureaucracy is brought to bear: 1) the legal nature of rules and regulations, 2) the formal nature of communications, 3) the rational nature and division of labor, 4) impersonality in relationships, 5) hierarchy of authority, 6) standardized routines and procedures, 7) technical competence and meritocracy, 8) specialization of the administration, 9) professionalization of the participants and 10) complete forecast of the operation (Weber, 2002).

Weber described bureaucratic organizations from a unidimensional perspective by listing these characteristics that constitute the "ideal type" of bureaucracy when all are present and to a high degree. In contrast, simple or non-bureaucratic organizations would have a low degree of these characteristics. Gouldner (1964) described bureaucracy as a condition that exists across a series of characteristics rather than a single condition. These are either "present" or "absent" in the organization. Merton (1968) also studied the theoretical discourses of bureaucracy in organizations and realized that, in practice, rationality differs significantly from how it is presented in theory. This idea refers to the fact that the original approach to efficiency counters reality and administrative praxis. He called those discrepancies "bureaucratic dysfunctions", which result from excessive control of the processes and the people involved in a closed system, in this case, the organization. This refers to the fact that Weber discarded any influence of the Human Relations theory, rejecting the impact of



informal groups, and their behavior, in controlling all human activity and the administration of the organization.

Subsequently, Selznick (2015) showed that bureaucratic control fails to integrate the firm's informal elements (individuals and groups), generating unforeseen consequences in administrative practice, making it necessary to promote the flexibility, adaptability, and dynamics of its dimensions with the external environment, which, sometimes, when not aligned with the results expected by the organization, can generate adverse effects (Nair & Vohra, 2010). In this regard, Madero and Barboza (2015) stated that there are four basic agents of flexibility in firms: organizational, structural, strategic, and functional. These are the basis for designing strategies in organizational transformation and change processes. According to Aiken et al. (1980), bureaucratic organizations appear as static entities in their functioning, hindering the flexibility of their characteristics, so they cannot cope with the continuous contingencies that threaten their survival.

Dimensions of bureaucracy

Udy (1959) studied non-industrial organizations and classified each characteristic of bureaucracy with the dichotomy "present" versus "absent" to demonstrate that not all are present in organizations, but either can be absent, which breaks with the 'ideal type' previously mentioned. These results supported the statement that the bureaucratic model has a better approach from a multidimensional perspective.

To answer the first research question, we revisited Hall's (1962) findings, who renamed these characteristics as "dimensions"; delimited and listed them by major authors and their theoretical importance (see Table 1). This allowed the study of each dimension individually.

TABLE 1

DIMENSIONS OF BUREAUCRACY LISTED BY MAJOR AUTHORS

Dimension	Weber	Litwak	Friedrich	Merton	Udy	Heady	Parsons	Berger
Hierarchy of authority	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Division of labor	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	----
Technically competent participants	*	*	*	*	*	----	*	*
Procedural devices for work situations	*	*	*	*	----	*	----	*
Rules governing the behavior of members	*	*	*	*	----	----	----	*
Limited authority of office	*	----	----	*		*	*	----
Differential rewards of office	*	----	----	----	*	----	----	----
Impersonality of personal contact	----	*	----	*	----	----	----	----



Administration separates from ownership	*	*	----	----	----	----	----	----
Emphasis on written communication	*	*	----	----	----	----	----	----
Rational discipline	*	*	----	----	----	----	----	----

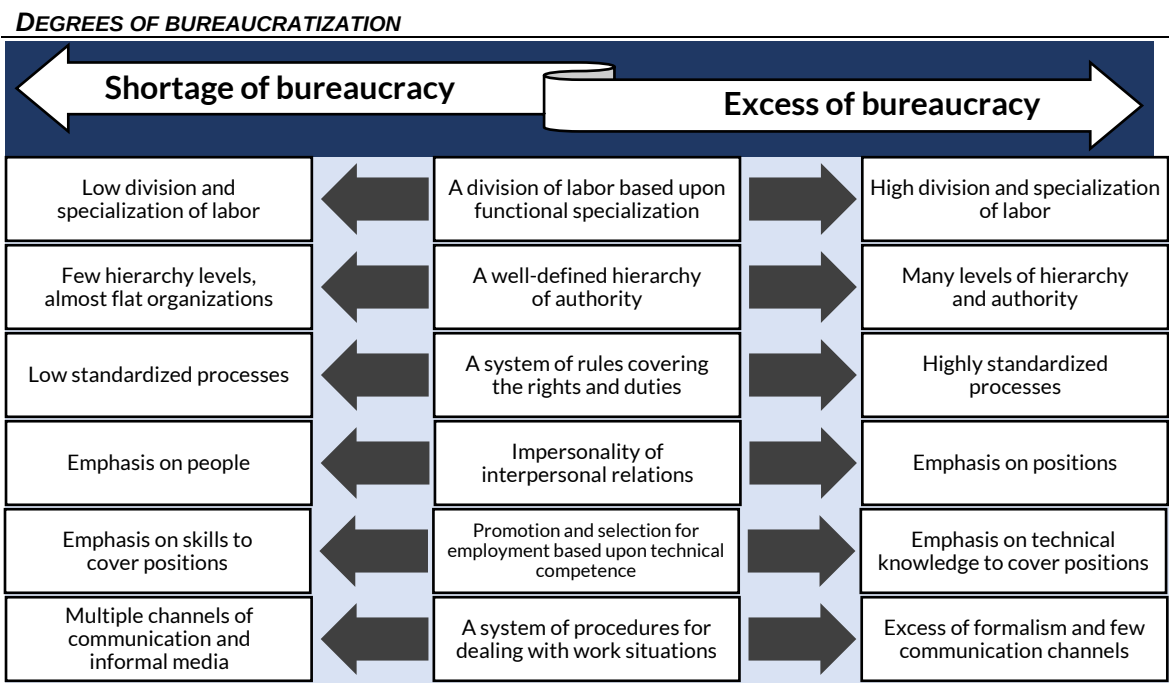
Note: *Cited by author.
Source: Hall (1962, p. 298).

From this first classification, experts established a second one with six final dimensions of bureaucracy:

1) a division of labor based upon functional specialization, 2) a well-defined hierarchy of authority, 3) a system of rules covering the rights and duties of positional incumbents, 4) a system of procedures for dealing with work situations, 5) impersonality of interpersonal relations, and 6) promotion and selection for employment based upon technical competence. (Hall, 1993, p. 33)

These dimensions are not highly correlated, so if one is at a high level, it does not mean the others manifest the same behavior. Subsequently, these dimensions were polarized in degrees, with one extreme representing a "shortage of bureaucracy" and the other "excess of bureaucracy". In these degrees of bureaucratization (see Figure 1), it was determined that each dimension has concomitant effects on other organizational phenomena, such as the behavior of workers, the effectiveness of efforts to achieve objectives, relations with the external environment, the ability to innovate, etcetera.

FIGURE 1



Source: Own elaboration based on Hall (1963).

The best way to analyze how bureaucratic practices make organizations resistant or receptive to openness is to study how these, with varying degrees of bureaucratic management, deal with a coherent idea (Brandtner et al., 2024). In this matter, the operationalization of these degrees facilitated the construction of specific profiles of organizational structures, making it possible to compare them directly with the profiles of other firms and proving that the structural attributes of bureaucracy reference the differentiation of positions of authority in an organization through structuralism.

Structuralist theory

The structuralist theory focuses on the attention to the organization from its structure, operation, and the standards it uses to complete its objectives. The reasons for its origin were:

1. The opposition and incompatibility between classical theory (formal organization), with its homo economicus, and human relations theory (informal organization), with its homo socialis, give rise to the organizational man.
2. The need to visualize the organization as a complex social unit where groups interact and share the organization's objectives.
3. The influence of structuralism in social sciences and its repercussions in the study of organizations suggests that this theory focuses on the whole, contemplating the relationship of its parts.

Structuralism extended the study of administration from factories to other types of firms, easing their comparative analysis and developing typologies of organizations. Etzioni (1975) used compliance as the basis for his typology, and the types of power applied by the organization to lower-level participants and the types of participation developed by these workers form the basis of the compliance structure. From this assumption, three types of organizations emerged:

1. Coercive organizations. They use coercion to control lower-level participants who have alienating orientations with the organization's objectives.
2. Utilitarian organizations. (Also called remunerative organizations) Control is based on retribution -economic incentives-. Lower-level participants contribute to the organization through calculative participation.
3. Normative organizations. They use normative control as their primary source of control over lower-level participants, who have a positive and intense orientation toward the organization.

Organizations are highly complex entities, and the classification schemes must show that reality. The purpose of creating a typology is to identify the critical variables that allow differentiation of the researched phenomenon, thus generating a bridge between theory and praxis. An adequate classification must consider the full range of external conditions, the full spectrum of actions and interactions within an organization, and the outcome of organizational behavior (Hall, 1983).

Mintzberg (2005) phrased that there are five control mechanisms in organizations that explain how the work is coordinated, and which are fundamental elements of their structure:

1. Mutual adjustment. Through simple informal communication.
2. Direct supervision. A person is held responsible for the work of others through instructions and controlling their actions.
3. Standardization of work processes. Its content is specified, that is, programmed.
4. Standardization of work output. Through the specification of the same results.
5. Standardization of skills and knowledge. These are normalized when the type of preparation required to carry out the work has been specified.

These five control mechanisms have an order, and as the organization's work becomes more complex and its structure grows, the mechanisms of coordination change too. Mutual adjustment leads to direct supervision, subsequently, to the standardization of work, and if necessary, it continues to the standardization of work output and the standardization of skills and knowledge successively, finally returning to mutual adaptation (Mintzberg, 2005).

In summary, structuralist theory focuses on the study and analysis of complex, formal organizations; consequently, it achieved prominence over classical, human relations, and bureaucratic frameworks. It distinguished itself primarily by expanding this analytical focus to non-industrial firms through the study of organizational structure and its structural dimensions, which define hierarchical levels, functional departments, roles, and formal channels of communication.

Structural dimensions

To understand the structural dimensions, it is essential to recognize that their implementation is reflected in the organizational structure, which performs three primary roles: 1) to meet organizational objectives and produce results, 2) to minimize, or at least regulate, the influence of individual differences on the organization. Structures are imposed to ensure that individuals (workers) adapt to the firm's demands and not the other way around, and 3) to wield authority, by which decisions are made, and the activities of the organizations are carried out (Hall, 1983). Subsequently, Daft (2011) defines organizational structure as a set of dimensions that, depending on their configuration, designate formal relationships of subordination, such as the number of levels in the hierarchy and span of control of authorities, the designation of subjects in work teams and departments, and the design of systems to ensure effective communication, coordination, and integration of efforts across departments.

To answer the second research question, we reviewed the leading authors on structuralism in firms in order to identify its main dimensions, and understand how, among public and private firms, make possible more systematic practical research on the composition and interaction of each dimension, either as a whole or individually, and

in subjects or groups, both formal and informal. Table 2 shows, in chronological order, the most studied dimensions by the leading researchers of organizational structure.

TABLE 2

STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS LISTED BY THEIR PROMINENT AUTHORS

Dimension	Authors											
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Centralization	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Formalization	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Specialization	---	*	*	---	*	---	---	*	---	*	*	---
Standardization	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Setting	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Complexity	---	*	---	---	---	---	*	---	*	---	---	---
Administrative density	---	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Professionalism	---	---	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	*	---
Differentiation	---	---	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Stratification	---	---	---	*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Note: A=Hage and Aiken, 1967; B=Pugh *et al.*, 1968; C=Reimann, 1974; D=Pierce and Delbecq, 1977; E=Dalton *et al.*, 1980; F=Dewar *et al.*, 1980; G=Hall, 1983; H=Child, 1984; I=Fredrickson, 1986; J=Mintzberg, 2005; K=Daft, 2011; L=Kortmann, 2012

* Quoted by the author.

Source: Own elaboration based on the cited authors (2023).

This compilation shows that centralization, formalization, and specialization are the most studied in the literature, which is why they are reviewed in this research (Jansen *et al.*, 2006).

Centralization

Aiken and Hage (1966) defined centralization as the degree to which employees participate in decision-making, and with it, two crucial aspects served as factors for the scale of this construct: 1) Hierarchy of authority, "shows the extent of reliance upon supervisors in making decisions about individually assigned tasks" (p. 502), and 2) Participation in decision-making, "reflects the relative degree of participation in decisions affecting the entire organization, such as those involving the adoption of new programs, new policies, and the hiring and promotion of personnel" (p. 502).

Cordes-Berszinn (2013) argued that "an extremely high degree of centralization would mean that only one group of people or even only one person makes every decision within an organization. All other organization members are just executors of what the centralized decision-maker decides" (p. 123). Therefore, a high degree of centralization provides a more robust organizational order since the centralized entity determines all system behavior. In opposition, a meager degree of centralization implies that each



organization member is empowered to decide for themselves what to do and how to do it.

Formalization

Aiken and Hage (1968) highlighted that, to estimate the degree of formalization in an organization, it is necessary to consider three key aspects, which served as factors for the scale of this construct: 1) Job codification "reflects the degree to which job incumbents must consult rules in fulfilling professional responsibilities" (Aiken & Hage, 1966, p. 502), 2) Rule observation, "reflects the degree to which employees are observed for rule violations" (Aiken & Hage, 1966, p. 502), and 3) Specificity of jobs, "degree to which the procedures defining are spelled out" (Aiken & Hage, 1968, p. 926).

Caetano (2017) pointed out that "standardization can enhance organizational capabilities to be aligned with national and international best practices as well as to develop internal competencies, routines, and processes that can leverage an innovation journey towards excellence" (p. 8). So, through formalization, firms establish a framework of reference and standardization to achieve their primary business objectives and the replicability of activities among workers.

Among the advantages of a centralized and formalized structure is that it produces uniformity across policies and actions, reduces the risk of errors by staff needing more information or skills, takes advantage of expert skills, and allows closer control of operations (Katsikea et al., 2011). Therefore, once workers have internalized all the rules and procedures necessary to carry out their activities, they can organize their tasks for their good and the organization's benefit.

Specialization

Responsibilities in a bureaucracy are distributed in a fixed manner, such as formal duties; this implies a systematic division of labor and, as a result, a high degree of specialization. Nonetheless, specialization in activities originated from the classical approach to administration, where the functional basis of firms is the division of labor since, as an organization grows, it tends to increase the differentiation and specialization of its organizational units.

For Zapata and Sigala (2010), two types of specialization can be found in organizations; these were established as factors for the scale of this construct: 1) Task specialization. It responds to a decomposition of work into multiple activities assigned uniquely to each worker, leading to limited jobs with unique qualifications. 2) Knowledge specialization. It is linked to the amount, variety, and depth of knowledge and skills a worker must possess to execute activities with high uncertainty and difficulty understanding. As an organization grows, task complexity replicates this behavior due to the considerable number of activities and members generated with this expansion.

Methodology

An exploratory and descriptive study was conducted, based on a documentary review of the significant authors of bureaucratic theory and the fundamental researchers of structuralism. The literature review was conducted between the fourth quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2026, following these steps:

1. Identification of the research question, which became the focus of this study: Does bureaucracy pose a threat to firms?
2. Selection of the theories relevant to this study: bureaucracy and structuralism. These theories formed the basis for the introduction and the literature review.
3. Identification of five key constructs: “bureaucracy,” “dimensions of bureaucracy,” “structuralism,” “structural dimensions,” and “organizational structure.” This facilitated the formulation and resolution of the first two research questions.
4. Search for the constructs in both English and Spanish in scientific databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Dialnet, as well as in digital library catalogs.
5. Triangulation of key ideas across the key constructs to establish convergence among the selected theories. This was done to answer the third research question and achieve the objective of this paper.

Regarding the selection criteria, the literature review and results section included authors whose studies were based on Weber’s characteristics of bureaucracy, which is why the included documents date from the mid-20th century. However, for the discussion and conclusions, all research prior to 2017 was excluded, so that the included documents reflect the current business paradigm. It is important to declare that all sections included researchers who considered both public and private organizations.

Results

Once the premises of bureaucracy theory and structuralist theory were reviewed the dimensions of each are analyzed to understand the evolution of their study and their theoretical-practical convergence in firms.

The Convergence of Bureaucracy and Structuralism

To answer the third research question and demonstrate the convergence between bureaucracy and structuralism, Table 3 shows how the first and second classifications of the dimensions of bureaucracy were reinterpreted within structuralism to be studied through their dimensions (structural dimensions) in the organizational structure of firms.

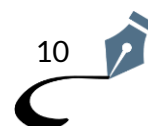


TABLE 3**CONVERGENCE AMONG DIMENSIONS OF BUREAUCRACY AND STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS**

Dimensions of bureaucracy (1 st classification)	Dimensions of bureaucracy (2 nd classification)	Structural dimensions
• Hierarchy of authority. • Limited authority of office.	• A well-defined hierarchy of authority.	• Centralization.
• Procedural devices for work situations. • Rules governing the behavior of members. • Emphasis on written communication.	• A system of rules covering the rights and duties. • A system of procedures for dealing with work situations.	• Formalization.
• Division of labor. • Technically competent participants.	• A division of labor based upon functional specialization.	• Specialization.
• Rational discipline.	-----	• Complexity.
• Administration separates from ownership.	• Promotion and selection for employment based upon technical competence.	• Professionalism.
• Differential rewards of office.	-----	• Differentiation.
• Impersonality of personal contact.	• Impersonality of interpersonal relations.	• Stratification.

Source: Own elaboration (2026).

Given that centralization, formalization, and specialization are the structural dimensions most frequently cited in the literature and most extensively studied in organizations, the following convergences emerge. Centralization refers to the locus of authority to make decisions that affect the firm (Pugh et al., 1968); thus, it follows from Weber's (2002) characteristics of bureaucracy, mainly of "hierarchy of authority", by considering control and authority through a very marked hierarchy of command as the axis of functioning in the organization. Although there are several definitions of the construct, they all refer to the concentration of power and the hierarchical level of authority to make a decision.

Formalization emerges from Weber's (2002) following characteristics of bureaucracy: 1) the legal nature of rules and regulations, 2) standardized routines and procedures, and 3) complete forecast of operation, and by Gouldner (1964), 4) the system of rules and regulations. Like centralization and formalization, specialization was established based on the characteristics of bureaucracy: According to Weber (2002), 1) rational nature and division of labor, 2) standardized routines and procedures, and 3) professionalization of the participants, and Gouldner (1964), 4) division of labor based on functional specialization.

This multidimensional analysis demonstrates how bureaucracy, from a theoretical perspective, converges with structuralism from a practical standpoint, highlighting that bureaucratic practices still exist in firms and pose a threat to them through their organizational structure, primarily through centralization, formalization, and specialization, which either facilitates or hinders relationships between functions,



components, and processes within a company, thereby revealing how it organizes itself to achieve its objectives. For this reason, a company's operations and functions stem directly from its organizational structure design and the configuration of its dimensions (Palafox, 2025).

Discussion

In the existing organizational paradigm, where the uncertainty of the business environment prevails, the management of a firm has no place for a bureaucratic scheme, or where organizational structure is studied as a whole or from a unidimensional perspective, such is the case of Domínguez et al. (2020) and Hendryadi et al. (2019), who brought together various aspects of both bureaucracy and structuralism in a single study, specifically 'organic structure' and 'bureaucratic culture', respectively.

Joseph and Gaba (2020) argue that new organizational structures differ from the traditional bureaucratic hierarchy; rather than exhibiting vertical integration or sequential interdependence, they reflect systems of “epistemic” interdependence and hyper-specialization among their agents, and as certain aspects of organizations become increasingly interrelated, it becomes difficult to identify the optimal combination and design of structural dimensions to achieve the desired results.

On the other hand, Mustafa et al. (2022) studied the relationship between digitalization and business processes, with an emphasis on organizational structure—specifically, the configuration of the dimensions of centralization, formalization, variety of competencies, interdependence, and integration. The different configurations were represented from three perspectives: bureaucratic, ambidextrous, and post-bureaucratic. Their results demonstrated that a post-bureaucratic structure characterized by collaboration and participation, interdependence, organic coordination, and relational and social connectivity fully reflects current digital realities.

Understood (or misunderstood), bureaucracy appears obsolete or irrelevant to current management theory and praxis, only for its effectiveness to be (re)discovered later. For example, any sustained effort to mitigate or adapt to challenges will require key features of bureaucracy, such as formalized performance indicators based on the triple bottom line, sustainability standards, and an ethic of neutrality—rather than favoritism—in their application. Therefore, organizations must understand these advantages and move away from bureaucratic structures with vertical and control-oriented hierarchies and evolve to structures with horizontal designs (and mindsets). (Barba & Montoya, 2018). Therefore, “we ensure that our deployment of bureaucracy against these grand challenges is emancipatory, and not an extension of domination” (Monteiro & Adler, 2021, p. 452).

Aneta et al. (2025) reported that companies, especially public ones, must develop more holistic policies to ensure a balance between new organizational dimensions—such as artificial intelligence—and employee efficiency and discretion in decision-



making. This stems from the rigidity inherent in bureaucracy and the application of its various dimensions as a whole within organizational culture.

Conclusions

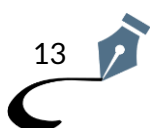
The aim of this research was to identify the theoretical principles of bureaucracy and its theoretical-practical convergence with structuralism and its dimensions in firms, and to determine whether bureaucracy still exists and represents a threat to them. A multidimensional analysis of the convergence between the two theories reveals that bureaucratic practices still exist in firms, manifesting individually through structural dimensions within the organizational structure. This constitutes a threat, as a model characterized by high centralization, formalization, and specialization, affects the dynamics among actors, processes, strategies, and organizational outcomes.

While it is possible to seek modern structural and management models that move away from bureaucracy and structuralism, theory and praxis show that structural dimensions are central to the study of firms' formal structure. For this reason, the synergy between its dimensions and other organizational factors must be carefully considered. Cohen and Franco (2017) argued that organizational structure implies stability, while the "evaluation process" suggests changes. The organization generates commitment, while the evaluation instills skepticism. Thus, "evaluation should lead not only to the discovery of better strategies to meet the established objectives but also to the modification of objectives, strategies and the organizational structure itself" (p. 144).

Leso et al. (2023) reinforce the idea of a multidimensional study arguing that leading organizations recognize culture and structure "as a critical enabler of innovation because it tends to create the conditions to have the 'right' people who 'fit' the company and ensure that people with the right skills can thrive within the culture—creating commitment to change" (p. 155). Consequently, public and private firms must develop instruments, methodologies, and policies taking into account the synergy between their structural dimension of interest, ensuring that these are integrated into both their formal and informal structure. This will give rise to flexibility, adaptability to change, evaluation, creativity, innovation, knowledge, and other significant challenges organizations face, considering the contingencies to which their organizational structure is exposed.

Future lines of research

Several constructs related to the organizational structure have emerged as possible variables to be included in a theoretical-methodological model and, at the same time, function as a reference framework for future research. Based on the above, the structural dimensions reviewed in this research (centralization, formalization, and specialization) can be used as variables with other constructs of interest for the organization, such as innovation. For example, the structural theories of innovation



specify the characteristics and relationships each dimension of the organizational structure must have to generate innovations.

These are: 1) The dual-core theory of innovation distinguishes between administrative and technical innovations (Daft, 1978), 2) The theory of innovation radicalness refines the term innovation into the terms of radical and incremental innovations (Dewar & Dutton, 1986), and 3) The ambidextrous theory identifies two stages in the process of adoption of innovation, initiation, and implementation (Duncan, 1976). Each type of innovation of these theories requires that the structural dimensions be configured in a particular way to facilitate or inhibit them. This demonstrates that the new organizational models present a design focused on the flexibility of the dimensions instead a unidimensional bureaucratic approach. 



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