

## **Problemática epistemológica y sociológica de la teoría administrativa**

### ***Epistemological and Sociological Problem of Administrative Theory***

### ***Problema epistemológico e sociológico da teoria administrativa***

**Francisco Ballina Ríos**

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México, México

[fballina@fca.unam.mx](mailto:fballina@fca.unam.mx)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2739-9245>

### **Resumen**

Este artículo plantea un debate y una discusión teórica a la problemática epistemológica y sociológica de la teoría administrativa de Latinoamérica. En la primera existe una polisemia de teorías, conceptos y significados. Y en la segunda, constatamos que estas teorías provienen de contextos sociales, económicos y culturales diferentes al nuestro. El alcance del estudio radica en su aportación crítica al debate teórico; su limitante es realizar investigación empírica en cada país. La discusión se focaliza en la crítica de la teoría convencional de la administración que desde perspectivas funcionalistas y positivistas distraen las cuestiones básicas de la sociedad como el poder, la dominación, la explotación. En contraposición a estos enfoques, se describen sintéticamente algunas agendas no convencionales de investigación en administración.

**Palabras clave:** empresas, epistemología, filosofía, organizaciones éticas, teoría administrativa.

## Abstract

This article raises a debate and a theoretical discussion of the epistemological and sociological problems of Latin American administrative theory. In the first there is a polysemy of theories, concepts and meanings. And in the second, we verify that these theories come from social, economic and cultural contexts different from ours. The scope of the study lies in its critical contribution to the theoretical debate; its limitation is to conduct empirical research in each country. The discussion focuses on the criticism of the conventional theory of the administration that from functionalist and positivist perspectives distract the basic issues of society such as power, domination, and exploitation. In contrast to these approaches, some unconventional management research agendas are synthetically described.

**Keywords:** companies, epistemology, philosophy, ethical organizations, administrative theory.

## Resumo

Este artigo suscita um debate e uma discussão teórica sobre os problemas epistemológicos e sociológicos da teoria administrativa da América Latina. No primeiro, há uma polissemia de teorias, conceitos e significados. No segundo, verifica-se que essas teorias provêm de aspectos sociais, econômicos e culturais contextos diferentes dos nossos. O escopo do estudo reside em sua contribuição crítica para o debate teórico; sua limitação é a realização de pesquisas empíricas em cada país. A discussão se concentra nas críticas à teoria convencional da administração que, do ponto de vista funcionalista e positivista, distrai as questões básicas da sociedade, como poder, dominação e exploração. Em contraste com essas abordagens, algumas agendas não convencionais de pesquisa em gestão são descritas sinteticamente.

**Palavras-chave:** empresas, epistemologia, filosofia, organizações éticas, teoria administrativa.

**Fecha Recepción:** Enero 2019

**Fecha Aceptación:** Junio 2019

---

## Introduction



We are currently facing the fact that administrative theory in Mexico is almost non-existent, since university administration centers retake theories from abroad, which have a different orientation to our reality and culture, and which also do not have well-established scientific foundations. The management models on which the administrative theory is based are based on economic liberalism, which come predominantly from Europe and the United States.

Since the 1960s, Japanese strategic organization methods have become fashionable; these are characterized by promoting the identification of the worker with the company and emphasizing the role of motivation in order to optimize productivity, using terms such as management excellence, quality circles, management by objectives (APO), just in time, etc.

This geographic centralization of the studies limits its scope and coverage. Only recently has the analysis of companies and organizations been extended to other latitudes; however, the use of orthodox methods and techniques has prevailed. Hence the importance of generating theoretical-methodological contributions that, from a critical approach, allow us to make an alternative analysis of administrative and organizational phenomena, whose explanations conform to Latin American reality.

The study of organizations has been a difficult aspect to be addressed by administrative theory, since it is a multidisciplinary field where different theories converge that are not always compatible with each other.

This article seeks an approach to the problem of administrative theory. In the first place, to recognize from a critical point of view their fundamental categories, their conceptualization and their real reason for being; second, synthetically describe where the new management research agendas are oriented.

All of the above is necessary in order to find an alternative way out of the current “jungle of administration theory”, and try to arrive at a conceptualization of the administration whose validity is universal, and that contemplates postulates that really meet current needs and future of man.

This work considers it essential to find a fair dimension of the role that companies and organizations play in our society, and within them the concrete and verifiable administrative and organizational processes, to thereby define their real and desirable profile in terms of methods and ethics, particularly in relation to our Latin American context, and even better in what concerns us as a society and as a country.

## Methodology



The method is often conceived only as the instrument used by administrative theory to systematize a series of steps. This is a serious mistake, since, although the method serves us for that purpose, it will discover, not create the concrete reality. Thus, it must first of all give us a vision of the world to penetrate the essence of things, discover the *raison d'être* of the processes and understand their development and transformation. However, every method contains a specific philosophical substrate, and each philosophical current is a worldview.

Each methodology gives us the epistemological assumptions that will form a theory of knowledge where we can detect different degrees of scientificity. In such a way that the initial questions that must be made by everyone who is going to devote to research in administrative disciplines are: 1) The conception of the world to be adopted, and 2) based on this conception, what will be the methodological instruments of those who will be worth to understand this reality?

The epistemological need of administrative theory to study and explain the processes and phenomena in our area of study leads us to resort to the social sciences. This has caused the method to be confused with the theory and philosophy of these disciplines, since the *raison d'être* of each of them is lost because they are tried to become methods in themselves.

There are also those who favor a methodological eclecticism: they believe that being eclectic facilitates research, regardless of epistemological ruptures in their scientific discourses.

The epistemological principles of administrative theory will be given by the thematic conception of the world, coming from its ontological aspects (deeper assumptions of reality) and gnoseological from the empirical principles of various fields of knowledge. This means that our ontological assumptions will acquire scientific truth by cognitively demonstrating the type of relationships, mechanisms and procedures that occur in reality. This happens because what is approved or disapproved is not the facts of the ontic level, but the gnoseological representations.

We must observe here that the spontaneity of knowledge is the attribute of some acts of will of the individual. It is the man who is free, sometimes, to direct his gaze or his thoughts, his attention, his body, thus governing his knowledge. Here is why epistemology means criticizing, choosing, choosing, therefore, judging the value of true knowledge.

In this respect, in every cognitive process an object of study is established - in our case companies and organizations -, its observation and measurement, which produces an

image in the empirical field. At this level of analysis it is already possible to distinguish the epistemological perspective used by the observer, which transforms, through certain theoretical-methodological means or tools, the image or the theoretical construct of the object of study. At this point, organized knowledge is achieved through cyclic feedback of epistemological forms with reality, with models, with theoretical constructs confronted with the empirical field, in a feedback process.

In that sense there is a different interrelation between the object of study and the different organizational images, through different epistemological currents: skepticism, rationalism, idealism, realism and empiricism.

That is why the debate of being or not being of the administration implies discovering in what sense it exists. We must delimit the language of the must be of being. And all of this entails delimiting the ideological, economic and cultural profiles from which the different theories and approaches come, evidently linked to the power groups that generate them.

The social sciences construct concepts that have some usefulness both classifying, terminological and humanistic; but in most cases they are typical-ideal constructions that come from reality; In addition, they are conventional approaches. Concepts such as business, organization, public limited company, administration, leadership are representations that partly exist and partly become a must be (or also in what should not be).

Having said all this, we will then work on clarifying the general concepts of administration and organization, and then notice the differences between organizations and companies, and the role that power and domination relations play in the latter.

## Discussion

From the point of view of the critical theory, it would be necessary to distinguish the abstract discourse, the discourse of the categories and that of the concepts that are presented by the administrative theory, as well as the motives and meanings through which this discourse is combined, which in many cases are nothing more than words or fictions that exist by convention.

Let us analyze the etymological meaning of the word administration, which comes from the Latin *ad* ('direction', 'trend') and *minister* ('subordination' or 'obedience'), and that means 'the fulfillment of a function under the command of another'. Here the

diversity of this word in various historical and geographical contexts is not contemplated. The concept of administration becomes, in this way, a concept to investigate and, even more, to corroborate.

In this sense, the only real thing, as Lilienthal (1967) has pointed out, are the administrators, individuals of flesh and blood, who interact in the coordination of companies and organizations, in diverse historical and geographical contexts. Administrators coordinate human and material resources; from it the most varied experiences derive for the conclusion of pre-established ends.

The multiplicity and ambiguity of administrative theory has been repeatedly pointed out with the word jungle coined by Koontz and O'Donnell (1991, pp. 27-29), who, by the way, contribute to increasing this confusion by not clearly distinguishing between theories and management approaches that attempt to systematize in its "operational approach" proposal (p. 44); proposal that brings together concepts, principles, techniques and knowledge of all administrative approaches, trying to combine theory with practical application.

However, this pair of authors cannot convince their colleagues, for example, how to make compatible approaches as diverse as the "administrative process" with the "decision theory approach" or the "mathematical approach to the science of the administration". It would be formidable for companies to find a combined formula between Taylor (1978) and Senge (1997), almost impossible to conceive, as if a chemist wanted to maintain the balance between water and oil.

Eclecticism and confusion increase if we analyze the existing "jungle" within these "theories", as in the case of the administrative process, where there are many variants ranging from Henry Fayol (1973), Lyndall Urwick, Koontz, O'Donnell (1964) and George Terry (1982) until Mexican authors Agustín Reyes Ponce (1996), Isaac Guzmán Valdivia (1966) and J. Antonio Fernández Arenas (1991).

The meaning and content of the administration have experienced countless interpretations. Each of them contains scope and limitations, as presented in table 1. Different approaches or notions of management.

**Tabla 1.** Diferentes enfoques o nociones de la administración

Enfoque	Autor	Alcances	Limitaciones
Administración como proceso administrativo	Henry Fayol L. Urwick L. Gu G. Terry	Estableció los principios funcionales de la empresa pública y privada. Asimismo,	No profundiza en las variables humanas de la producción y el trabajo.

	Otros	identifica las etapas del proceso administrativo.	
La ciencia de la administración	Taylor Gantt Gilbreath	Esta escuela destaca la aplicación del método científico, el uso de la estadística y técnicas cuantitativas en la solución de problemas gerenciales.	Es una interpretación sumamente mecánica de la conducta.
Administración como profesión	Douglas McGregor	Consiste en precisar que la administración es una profesión relacionada con el conocimiento sistemático y probado en la práctica.	Es un enfoque eminentemente pragmático.
El administrador sujeto de la administración	Peter M. Senge Daniel Goleman	Se preocupa por definir qué es un administrador, qué hace, cómo distribuye su tiempo, qué funciones desempeña, cómo optimizan el trabajo, el tiempo el talento, etc.	Son enfoques instrumentalistas, eficientistas; no consideran las condiciones de otros agentes de la producción.
La administración como institución	Peter Drucker	Considera la gerencia ( <i>management</i> ) como uno de los más importantes acontecimientos de nuestra era. Coloca a las grandes corporaciones y organizaciones como planes del nuevo orden mundial	Es notoria su falta de objetividad.
Administración como arte	Administradores empíricos	Destaca la experiencia como forma de aprendizaje y entretenimiento de los administradores.	El empirismo limita.
Administración y toma de decisiones	Herbert A. Simón	Lo que destaca de este enfoque es la perspectiva micro en la que actúa el administrador a diferencia del economista y la toma de decisiones.	El problema de este enfoque es que no distingue el aspecto de la subjetividad en la toma de decisiones.

Administración como ideología gerencial	Richard Bendix S. Lipset G. Germani	Hace explícito que la administración se centra en las relaciones obrero-patronales en las nuevas condiciones sociales, económicas y tecnológicas.	Estas “ideologías gerenciales” o “administrativas” terminan por justificar los intereses de las clases dirigentes.
<b>Enfoque</b>	<b>Autor</b>	<b>Alcances</b>	<b>Limitaciones</b>
Administración como motivación de las relaciones humanas	Douglas McGregor William Ouchi	Esta concepción busca controlar las emociones humanas y encaminar los esfuerzos en interés de fines económicos	Son modelos que fueron una respuesta a las necesidades de sus tiempos; de ellos no se desprende una teoría sólida.
La administración y la historia empresarial	Max Weber Lewis Coser	La administración desde una perspectiva histórica; señala el surgimiento de la clase empresarial.	Su grado de complejidad.
La administración y las relaciones de clase y control de los asalariados	Ralph Dahrendorf André Gorz	Corriente de carácter histórico con énfasis en la explotación y dominación. Lo distintivo de la administración es el control y se da en condiciones de antagonismo.	Es una corriente acorde a las circunstancias de explotación y dominación vigentes.
Enfoque de la teoría general de sistemas	Michel G. Morgan, G, Fremont Kast, R. Hall	El objetivo de la administración es conocer las limitaciones y los objetivos que dan lugar al sistema total para proponer soluciones a los problemas que se presentan.	Cualquier enfoque sistémico que trate de dar soluciones a los problemas sociales quedará limitado por su contexto.
La administración como objeto de conocimiento de la economía social	Bernardo Kliksberg Carlos Dávila Fernando Cruz Francisco Ballina	Lo que destaca de este enfoque es la administración cooperativa.	El problema es su falta de difusión en el medio académico.
La administración y la ciencia del caos	Benoit Mandelbrot Mitchell Feigenbaum Edward Lorenz Michel Henon	La ciencia del caos puede ser una gran contribución para que la compleja tarea de administrar se haga con perspectivas más amplias.	La turbulencia se convierte en el cementerio de las teorías.



Administración estratégica	Igor Ansoff Henry Mintzberg Michael E. Porter	La administración estratégica propone que los administradores son los elementos centrales del cambio organizacional.	Una estratégica requiere una perspectiva hacia el futuro, más que una reflexión sobre el pasado.
----------------------------	---	--	--

Fuente: Elaborado propia

Each of these orientations contains its scope and limitations. The truth is that these concepts do not solve the problem of the universality of the object of study of the administration. Hence, these definitions are arbitrary, although they intend to transcend the ambiguity existing in the academic field with regard to agreeing on what is particularly studied: administration.

The administrative technique in each case is developed in a society with a specific historical project, where the dominant interests and the direction of technical and scientific progress are dominated by group interests.

Throughout history, the great organizations of civil society and political society have adapted and developed according to different organizational paradigms that arise from different philosophical and epistemological visions or currents. Organizational and, where appropriate, corporate images vary depending on the different theoretical constructs. These constructs, which actually become different business ideologies, in turn generate different images of the administrator and the administration (Ballina, 2001, pp. 4-6).

The conventional theory of administration takes as a reference the positivist conception of history, and places the role of administration within an organized process on bureaucratic and rational principles. Different authors conceive premodernism, modernism and postmodernism depending on the emergence of the so-called scientific administration of F. Taylor (Boje y Dennehy, 1993).

The "scientific administration" coined by Taylor was based on time and movement studies. It established that the scientific method could be applied in the selection, training and training of workers to achieve a level of production efficiency. The author defines it as "science, and not empirical rule; harmony, and not discord; collaboration, and not individualism; maximum performance, rather than restricted performance; formation of each man until he reaches his greatest efficiency and prosperity "(Frederick, 1978, p. 121).

Taylor's mistake lies in thinking that, from the simple application of the scientific method in the study of times and movements in industrial processes, "scientific

administration" could arise a priori. The principles of science cannot be structured so that they can serve as conceptual instruments for a universe of productive controls.

Tolstoy, on occasion, said that "science was empty because it did not answer the question, what will we do and how will we live?" It seems that science does not answer these questions, and that it only helps to interpret the meaning that the world carries; he finds out the course of nature, but he cannot give orders to man; It responds to the what and for what, but it should not impose the how, because that goes because of man and his circumstances.

Science is linked to production and administration. The application of this in the form of research techniques became the permanent substance of the world of industrial work where Taylor lived. In the same way, it has become the substance of the modern and postmodern world of the producing countries of science and technology. Only the United States, Europe and some Asian countries are producers of science and technology, others are consumers. Due to the above, neither can have the same value in Africa, Germany or Mexico. Science and technology are in each case a historical project in which a society and its dominant interests are projected. Technology, meanwhile, is a certain type of production and strategic development that is intended to be achieved.

Taylor's theoretical-methodological proposal never prospered at the level of scientificity due to its extralogical and ideological character of conceiving that "scientific administration" could be "universalizable." However, it generated new points of view, promoted a research environment, a new era of cooperation, of rude individualism and colonizing spirit, and marked the conventional milestones of administrative modernism.

As a counterpart to this proposal, the model of human relations emerged as a reaction to the reification of the employee, and emphasis was placed on specialization and the group and its effect within the organization, by pointing out aspects such as enabling conditions of the environment. social and material environment that meet the needs of workers.

The meaning of the administration has experienced countless interpretations since the beginning of the 20th century. Nowadays it has been conceptualized as the process through which human, material and financial resources are directed towards the achievement of certain objectives, but especially to keep the client pleased, who is the one that allows to continue living and developing the company.

The theory of structuralist bureaucracy continues in the line of activity specialization, both in formal and informal organization. Other more recent approaches

emphasize the direction or management of interrelated individuals, or refer to the administrative process, classifying it as science or art (Cruz, 1988).

In the case of manager training, the business administration graduate thinks that management is an end in itself, a skill relatively independent of the content of what is managed; think that the technique is more important than the object to which it is applied.

In administrative theory, management approaches from Europe, the United States and Japan prevail, as already mentioned at the beginning of this text. This has happened because the structure of scientific production is determined by the inertia of the institutionalized structure of the capitalist mode of production; The functioning of abstract science acts as a means for predetermined, external, alienated purposes.

In the United States, the academic community as a whole is normally open to opportunities, so to speak, that offer to be an expert in the interiority of administrative machines and put their recommendations on sale. Another problem of administrative disciplines is fetishism by concept, and statistical formalism, of precision and accuracy. Abstract empiricism attempts to standardize and rationalize each phase of research, especially in marketing, both in the public and private sectors, for its bureaucratic purposes.

In summary, it is concluded that the problem of administrative theory is on two levels: on the one hand, in the epistemological one, due to the fact that different theories attribute different meanings to the same concept; on the other, at the sociological level it is verified that these theories are registered in different social circuits of production and consumption, which derives in their false generalization in different geographical areas.

The epistemological problem of administrative theory lies in its lack of consistency and internal coherence. The theoretical insufficiency of its conceptual apparatus acquires an ideological character due to its extra-theoretical motivations: aspirations, purposes and projections of different interests: economic, political, class, racial, and so on. That is, ideological interests are served in favor of dominant groups.

The so-called management theory arising from the Anglo-Saxon liberal context and organization theory (Jo Hatch, 1997) consider companies (companies) and organizations (organizations) as similar entities; they are conceived as communities or societies, relatively permanent, oriented towards the same objective, focused on organizational action, as a set of organs and functions (Merton, 2002).

The Mexican authors who have ventured into the analysis of management theory, based on the reading of Parsons (The social system, 1951), and a bad translation and distortion that was made of Weber's work (Montaño, 2004; Cruz, 2013; Ríos, 1990), have

made the same mistake that takes companies and organizations as a synonym, which creates confusion and ambiguity in the terms power and domination.

In this regard, conventional administrative theory confuses the organization with what the company is. In general, the authors who follow this theory what they do is ignore the power relations at the macro-micro level, implicit in organizations and companies.

Thus, there is ambiguity in the concept of organization; sometimes it is used as a function, consisting of grouping activities necessary for the fulfillment of objectives; in others, as structure-design: strategic decision; or as a specific activity to design and structure the tasks aimed at achieving organizational goals (Dessler, 1996).

All post-Berber literature on bureaucracy suffers from that ambiguity. On the one hand, most authors believe that the development of bureaucratic organizations responds to the advent of rationality in the modern world; and on the other, they believe that the bureaucracy is, by that fact, intrinsically superior to all possible forms of organization.

Mills (1961, pp. 44-47) questioned Parsons' work based on his claim that there is no "neutral" social science, distracting the basic issues of society such as power and domination. This author and the sequel of authors based on his work hide the structural realities of society itself.

Some authors, such as M. Reed (1992), point out that, in general, in the study of organizations there has been a loss of confidence in positivist and functionalist approaches, since these currents have not shown results that respond to the problem of power, of domination and exploitation.

Therefore it is important to review some basic concepts of power, which derive from different angles. For Weber (1922,1969), power and domination are fully distinguishable, since there is no domination without an administrative apparatus; that is, institution, organization, cadres that administer the specific form of domination.

In the organization, domination is understood as the probability of finding obedience to a mandate of certain content among given persons. In other words, it is the probability that a mandate will be obeyed by a party or by a group of people (not forgetting the functions of norms and values), such as, for example, the domination exercised by ecclesiastical organizations in their respective geographical areas .

Society develops under the influence of different organizations, such as family, church, army, political parties, unions, government offices, prisons, etc., responding to specific needs and contexts, taking many different forms and representing different value systems within the complex. Social.

According to Max Weber (1969), the organization has a regulatory function, limiting outwards, and through it a relationship of supremacy and subordination is characterized. A circle of people interested in the mandate and its advantages participates in every organization, thus collaborating in the exercise of the imperative and coercive powers aimed at the preservation of domination.

The organization is related to the expansion of power, that is, the organization has to do with outward control, its actions permeate other instances. On the other hand, the concept of power in the company is closely related to actions that are poured inwards.

All forms of domination are vital for the maintenance of the existence of organizations and their action is directed to the realization of the imposition of ordinances. Domination is a relationship and, as such, if it is not exercised, it does not exist: at one time determining an individual may be conditioning their behavior according to certain precepts, mutable in time, which is what Weber calls "forms of influence". Domination includes specificity in the content of the mandate (obedience). The one who obeys transforms the mandate into the reason for his conduct and, when that happens, there is a concrete mandate and obedience is governed by taking as a rule the will of the dominator.

The communal organization is the relationship of a group or a community of people who pursue the same ends, ethnic traits, values, and so on. Its regulation depends on its size and the characteristics of the members. If the group is small, the organization may be of a primary nature; in this case, in the regulation of actions all the members participate in conditions of equality (which is not the same as equality). In large organizations the nature of integration is secondary; that is, it is characterized by interests that do not intimately affect its members, but their economic, political or cultural interests.

The domain is a quality of the organization that, based on coercive, cognitive, technological or financial resources, is able to impose behavioral premises to other organizations.

The American elite found in modern history a bourgeoisie virtually without opposition. The secession war put an end to the colonial claims of the nobility, and many large estates were distributed. Between 1865-1900, a powerful minority concentrated the economic and financial power of the great trust and corporations, which gave rise to the great dynasties that continue to dominate to this day: Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford, J.P. Morgan managed to subordinate military and social power under their interests (Mills, 1957).

The articulations of companies and organizations in the United States arise from economic liberalism in the equilibrium mechanism, with which economic and political freedom is guaranteed by the system of weights and balances.

We could affirm that there is a correlation of purposes between companies and organizations; Sometimes the company uses the organization to achieve its goals and vice versa.

The organization represents the institutionalized power, and must have legitimacy and legality. Legitimacy should be understood as the acceptance by the subordinates of the processes and results of the organization, and by legality being in accordance with the rules of constitution and operation of the organization. Through the administrative framework, domination can be achieved in a plural way, by the representative power conferred upon it; that is, the probability that there will be an activity aimed at the execution of general orders and concrete mandates by men whose obedience is expected.

Every company necessarily implies a form of organization, but an organization does not necessarily imply a company. Every domain implies the exercise of a power, but not all power implies the exercise of a domain, since one can be in the peer relationship; that is, an organization can enter into an equitable relationship with another organization, in which there is no domain of one over the other. But the power is present.

The administrative cadre is linked to the obedience of these reasons that largely determines the type of administration: tribal, patrimonial or bureaucratic-rational.

Domination is a relationship between dominated and dominant and, as such, if it is not exercised, it does not exist. The domination of some regulatory order may be a transitory relationship: at any given time the behavior of an individual may be conditioned according to the precepts of the Catholic religion, but can change their behavior by choosing another religion. Others, at some social gathering, may opt for some type of clothing, and may or may not get others to copy, so to speak, their ways of behaving or dressing.

To try to be more precise, we could say that both a company or organization needs to rely on an "organization" to achieve its goals, in that specific case the company and the organization identify. We can also affirm that the domination of governments and foreign peoples requires the business environment to achieve their profit and domination, and that in turn the companies require the political-military organizations to open their markets.

It is important to mention another aspect that distinguishes companies from organizations: the organization is related to the "expansion" of power; that is, the organization has to do with control out, its actions permeate other instances. On the other

hand, the concept of power in the company is closely related to actions that are poured inwards.

An example of an organization would be the Ministry of Public Education (SEP), an entity that dictates rules and regulations that must be followed by the different groups linked to the education activity. For its part, an example of a company is the Tecnológico de Monterrey, an institution that must follow the guidelines established by the SEP for its operation.

It is also important to point out, as part of the differences between companies and organizations, that in the organization the concept of administrative cadre is more linked to the concept of domination, legitimized by the use of both physical and psychological violence, such as the case of state and church organizations, respectively. In the meantime, this concept in the case of the company is linked more to exploitation, due to the way in which the means of production and labor are consumed to achieve the goal pursued by the mercantilist companies.

Weber (1969) defines the company as “an action that pursues purposes of a certain class, in a continuous way” (p. 42). What characterizes it is the conscious action that pursues ends in a constant way. The company is an association that aims to develop a product or provide a service, whether state, parastatal, municipal, cooperative, communal or corporate. The best known companies are those of private interest, whose operation is declaratively regulated by market laws; However, Weber (1969) includes the realization of other types of activities, namely, political, scientific or hierocratic (religious), public, private, and so on.

The current concept of a company that is managed is that of a "commercial company", which only expressly underlines the orientation for the calculation of capital, most of the time assumed as evident; But not only the profit attempt as such should be called a company. Strictly speaking, the company can be the commitment of a single individual, as long as it pursues its goals continuously over time. The company, rounding the Weber concept, can also refer to a subset of companies and associations of these taken together.

We can observe that, from its origin, the word company, effort of people, intends to undertake joint actions, something that in a solitary way would be practically impossible to achieve.

In the management of the company is the figure of power, since it has the possibility of imposing its own will within a labor relationship, even against all resistance,

imposing the authority structure within the company and attending to the systems of values that legitimize them.

However, from the scope of influence in "social action", another difference arises between power and domination. In domination this area is more diffuse and ambiguous than the concept of power in what Weber calls influence. The forms of influence, that is, the ways in which an individual, organization or company can impose its will, are very varied.

To be more precise, the company, to achieve its goals over time, often tries to establish a work program - so be the simplest. On the other hand, every organization, whose purpose is to contribute to a scheme of domination, wishes to establish its domination not in an ephemeral way, but over time, thinking that normally every organization aims to preserve a scheme of domination. The company, in turn, wishes to retain a hierarchy of power.

The study of organizations has been carried out from numerous approaches. The vacuum generated by the functionalist and positivist currents of the administration has created new research agendas as part of the search for an adequate and coherent understanding of the cultural, cognitive, linguistic, political and ideological process through which organizations are constituted. Within these new approaches, there are two great orientations.

The first is associated with the reading of the classics: Marx and Weber, and linked to theorists of the Frankfurt school. It is assumed that the division of labor and technological innovation are a consequence of the imperatives of accumulation and control, upon which the economic viability of the company depends.

With this, the traditional vision of consensus and cooperation in the study of organizations is transformed by the vision of social classes, whose conditions of existence are very different from those recognized by functionalists and positivists.

In the second orientation, another group of authors, based on the refined analyzes of the political, economic, philosophical, ethical, etc. variables, locate the study of administration as a historical totality, taking into account elements ignored by the conventional theory of administration.

The return to the classics from the perspective of Weber and Marx, the theories of psychoanalysis and social psychology of Erich Fromm, of Victor Frankl with logotherapy, and of Wilhelm Reich and his attempt to link Freud with Marx. In this case, it is about investigating how bureaucratic rules allow the introjection of forms of thought



and action that favor depersonalized and dehumanized behavior (Sprott and Johnson, 1968).

This theoretical configuration process begins with Aristotle, Machiavelli and Hobbes; Continue with Hegel, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mosca, Pareto, the Frankfurt school, and continue to this day. The different theoretical constructs, neo-Marxism, post-structuralism (Baudrillard, 2004; Lyotard, 1990; Habermas, 1993), continue with the critical tradition.

Critical theory has been distinguished by being committed to new social, political and economic conditions, as a historical and dialectical theory that attempts to capture and conceptualize historical changes and evaluate the impact of such changes (Kellner, 1998).

French postmodernism (Saussure, 1987; Levi Strauss, 1964; Barthes, 1994) and the new French theory (Lyotard, Baudrillard and others) argue against critical theory, where critical theorists recognize continuity, and there are failures: Cartesian rationalism, Hegelian self-consciousness and liberal and Marxist ethnocentrism.

Such breakdowns occurred in anthropology (cultural relativism), in linguistics (Lyotard, Baudrillard, Derrida) and in psychoanalysis (Lacan, 2008; Foucault 1970), all of them oppose the historical vision that disappears in modernity, in the "end of history", the "omega" site of history, tomorrow where man reconciles with himself, with nature and society, with its origins.

In postmodernity, the changes did not allow to take root, progress lost direction, lost its ends, no technology guarantees the promising future, it is not known where we are going, there are an infinite number of possible scenarios that await us or can be created. This is the great challenge of the future.

The conceptual framework of organizational theory within administrative theory originates in the muddy waters of the foundations of Taylor's "scientific administration." The main purpose of the administration must be, according to Taylor, to ensure maximum prosperity for the employer , together with the maximum prosperity for each of the employees, an objective that has no scientific basis. In the neoclassical theory of the administration, it is maintained as a search to achieve the economic success of the organizations as an ultimate and exclusive purpose.

The main problem lies in the fact that administrative theory has built an "iron cage" for the organization's theory in the search for the utilitarian objectives of organizations. The use of administrative, classical and neoclassical theory has so far served no more than to study the issue of decisions at the managerial level, with efficient,

productive criteria. However, if we analyze the systematic body of knowledge related to the theory of the organization, product of the last decade of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we can verify the rich heritage that has developed during these years of study of organizations human and government administration, churches, armies and other complex social organizations.

The conventional theory of the organization - Mary Parker (1942), Herbert Simón (1981, 1982) - considers the organization as a complex system of decision making, or as a system of interactions of activities and feelings (Homans, 1950), and even as a closed or open or contingency system.

There is evidence that the neoclassical theory of administration has not overcome the obstacle of the classic, in terms of considering the worker as a simple gear of a machine. The interactionists (Elton Mayo et al., 1989) were exclusively interested in the world of interactions-feelings as a productivity response to the economic conditioning of wages and performance, which is a proposal of the "scientific administration" of Taylor and Fayol. If it is shown that affective behavior is conditioned by a series of controllable factors, it is difficult not to use such knowledge to try to manipulate workers, and disregard the same as the classics of the problems of power and domination.

Kurt Lewin (1968) and his collaborators (group theory) wanted to demonstrate that there was a constant and unique relationship between individual satisfaction, productivity and a permissive leadership style. In addition, they continued to ignore the relations of power and exploitation that are knotted around the hierarchical pyramid and without which it only appears in a purely formal framework.

Undoubtedly, by attracting attention to the problems of participation, the followers of Lewin (1968) introduced a vein of investigation that has proved fruitful, but they also locked themselves in a very narrow interpretation pattern, which does not allow them to understand the acting forces within organizations.

Robert Kahn, Arnold Tannenbaum and his collaborators (1971) believe that it is possible to coordinate human activities within an organization and, likewise, obtain the maximum necessary acceptance using economic or ideological stimuli. Thus, perfect productivity and a balance between the aims of the organization and the individual satisfaction of its members are sought. Using a "permissive" command system, in this theory it is also not necessary to study the problems of power; just fight because the control device does not disintegrate.

Robert Michels (1969) and K. Manheim, (1982) are the first to highlight the dilemma in which modern bureaucracies are forced to achieve profound social

transformations, whether reformist or revolutionary. Social action is not possible except through bureaucratic organizations, and their existence is incompatible with the democratic values that are the only ones that make social action legitimate.

In this regard, the opinion of Chester Barnard (1959), who conceptualizes the organization as a cooperative social system; that is, as a system of consciously coordinated social, biological and physical activities or forces, whose internal and external balance must be kept in balance.

However, any coordinated cooperative action requires that each participant can have a sufficient degree of regularity from the others. This means, in other words, that every organization, whatever its structure, its objective and its importance, requires from its members a greater or lesser conformity, but always considerable and obtained in part by compulsion, appealing to the "good Will".

The bureaucratic is not only a universe that is not corrected based on its errors, but is unable to transform itself according to the accelerated evolution of societies, as shown by nihilism led to its most extreme consequences in symbolic projections typical of Kafka .

Within a systematic vision (Michel, 1974), the organization must be conceived as an open system, that is, it has multiple relationships with the environment. It must also be conceived as a system with multiple purposes or functions necessary to integrate and coordinate. Which entails many subsystems in dynamic interaction. And since the subsystems are mutually dependent, their changes will affect the behavior of others. The multiple relationships between the organization and its environment make it difficult to clearly specify the boundaries of a given entity.

From the point of view of the systemic approach, organizations are conceived as ordered structures and this predisposition encourages the functionalism that conceptualizes reality within a highly static and mechanistic framework.

From the end of World War II until the late 1970s, the theoretical and methodological consensus of organizational studies revolved around functionalism and positivism, which provided a basis for bureaucratic power.

In contemporary management theories - operational approach (McGregor and collaborators) - and in current systems theory - contingency approach - tolerance and eclecticism prevail, a situation that can be seen in business study programs American school, where confusion prevails in the theoretical field of administration.

We are living in a world that is becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated. Unfortunately, our ways of thinking, of reasoning, almost never adapt to that complexity.

Most of the time we end up convincing ourselves that everything is simpler than it really is and managing complexity as if it did not exist. The result is that our thoughts end up being often harmful simplifications; such is the case of American administrative theory, which has failed in its attempt to form a profession that can have a scientific character.

In summary, the scope of this article is to recognize from a critical point of view the categories and concepts of administrative theory, as well as the motives and meanings through which the academic discourse and the ideological meaning of the different Management meanings. As a pending and limiting research topic of this article, however, it is to review the new paradigms for companies and organizations in the Latin American context. In the current global geopolitical scenario, our conceptual instruments are necessary and even indispensable as points of arrival, but at the same time they have to be starting points towards other theoretical constructions. No doubt it is necessary to understand reality with a creative and innovative spirit, with new ecological, economic and social perspectives.

## Results

Throughout history, companies and organizations have adapted and developed; They have been subject to incessant pressures from society, among which the demand for participation in decision-making, self-management and flexibility at work stands out.

In this way, organizations and companies seek to articulate their objectives and interests; However, the divergences and convergences between public and private administration, between organizations and companies, have been very variable in history.

At present, it seems that the traditional rivalry between public and private administration tends to diminish, and there even seems to be more convergences than divergences between the two. To the extent that companies and organizations break or make their structures and relationships more flexible, they will provide us with new administrative models, new networks of change, cognitive maps with possibilities of opening economic objectives towards collective goals, and it is even possible that the limits between public and private companies. From this perspective, the private sector is not so much, insofar as it is inserted in the public space, in a space of convergence of common interests (Bozeman, 1987).

In the 21st century, new intentionally established systems of companies and organizations are being generated according to the nature of their environment, their products or services (especially bureaucratic ones), controlled and supervised by jurisdictional areas. These inter-organizational and inter-company networks will be

increasingly necessary and will force managers of companies and organizations to establish contacts with each other that lead to rebuild the most vulnerable economic and social sectors of a country.

These imposing changes must be articulated by the managers and administrators of the 21st century. This will require the formation of a new type of business and organization administrator, legitimized by the norms and values of society and by the ethical values of their professional performance.

In addition, business and organizational networks are currently revealed as hidden networks, derived naturally from the dynamics of power, the positioning of companies and the advantages they can achieve from organizations. Such is the case of contemporary transnational corporations, organized crime and the articulation of drug trafficking with government networks.

In the same way, in the positions or positions of managers and officials, the practices of the bureaucratic tradition prevail, of submission to subordinate objectives and of the absence of social values and objectives.

Once again: to the extent that companies and organizations break or make their structures and relationships more flexible, a series of collaboration agreements such as mergers, consortia, strategic alliances (joint-venture), licensing, patents and trademarks will arise, manufacturing, supply and marketing agreements.

These new networks will be formed by constellations of interlinked companies: by strategic alliances of bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic organizations; by networks of civil organizations to carry out social tasks; by conglomerates of international, governmental and non-governmental organizations with business associations, to rebuild the most ecologically, economically and socially affected areas of the world.

In the 21st century we are waiting for new paradigms for companies and organizations. We feel that an era of profound transformations is approaching. However, in the global context, and particularly in Latin America, in which we find ourselves, it is necessary to understand reality in a creative and innovative spirit with new ecological, economic and social perspectives.

To conclude this section, we can say that, despite its importance, the term administration remains vague and confusing. However, a concept must be sought for the administration whose validity is universal and that its postulates really satisfy the human being.

In classical antiquity, the Greeks called the administration with the concept of oikos, which has literally been translated as 'home or house economy', but if we take it to

the present it would correspond to the work of the paterfamilias, it is that is, to administer the household goods that at that time included not only the nuclear family, but also slaves, property, livestock, etc.

The Greeks (Jenofonte, 1999, pp. 161-210) conceived the administration as an episteme, that is, as an object of knowledge where science and philosophy have a place. For them, the administration not only consisted of finding the most appropriate techniques to conserve, maintain, increase the assets and thus guarantee the production and reproduction of the life of the members of the household, or of the members of society, since, being of the public administration, an ethical responsibility falls on it, because if the assets of the household or society are mismanaged, the consequences are serious in both cases, and the living, family and family conditions would not be reproduced. society, and therefore, would not be acting in accordance with ethics.

In turn, the Greeks coined a philosophical thesis that establishes that between the public and private administration there is a dialectical relationship, which can be summarized as follows: Between the state administration (public administration) and the home administration (private administration ) There is a virtuous or vicious circle, so that if the administration of the house works badly, this affects the administration of the state, because it will receive less contributions or taxes, which will affect its functions, but if the administration of the state is wrong If they are squandered and public resources are misused, this will have an impact on the administration of the home (private companies), which has a greater impact on the well-being of life of the members of a country, of a society.

In this sense it is valid to ask what has been the situation that keeps this link between the two administrations in Mexico or in Latin American countries. How is a virtuous or vicious circle established in the history of nations? When there is correspondence and collaboration, are better levels of development and well-being achieved? What are the 10 countries with the highest and lowest human development index (HDI)? What position is Mexico in the HDI? What degree of articulation exists between public and private in countries with greater HDI?

It should be clarified that the HDI was created as such by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and consists, as the name implies, in determining the amount or level of human development that the countries of the world possess. Human development is characterized more by the creative and entrepreneurial potential of citizens than by their economic income.

This is mainly based on the articulation of the public with the private that fosters entrepreneurial development. The main stimulation to maximize these options is to build and strengthen the necessary human capacities, such as promoting health, education, employment, achieving basic and sustainable resources, freedom, independence, sovereignty, among others; All of them are part of the policies from which the HDI is built and a country grows.

## Conclusions

Today, administrative theory must express the concern and implicit desire to build a universe that is not only something better and more rational than the one prevailing in today's world. The power of administration and the administration of power must arise from a consensual basis. The administrative sociology of the 21st century must go to the rescue of the values of the administrative man, who manages to reproduce the patrimony of his family, of his society, of his country, of the world, of humanity.

The study of companies and organizations should not only focus on the investigation of technical, instrumental rationality, but also should enter into symbolic, cognitive and cultural aspects that allow the design and creation of new administrative models more in line with the demands of the third millennium.

A critical administration must not only function based on the performance of the ends, but must also try to develop the possibility of making production and the full development of life compatible, as well as making everyone participate in this process.

This problem represents the need to establish a new teaching practice that induces the cultivation of educational methods and pedagogical strategies for reflection and criticism for overcoming epistemological obstacles through a systematic study of the administration, whose complexity requires the participation of various disciplines. (interdisciplinary analysis).

In the critical perspective of the administration, the conformation of a systematic paradigm that questions modernism and postmodernism has not yet been achieved. There are, however, a set of small paradigms or attempts at business and organizational postparadigms through which study methodologies, learning process committed to team-fellowship, community and ecological learning models can be developed.

The concept of social capital emerges as a central one to analyze the contextual and local factors that allow the sustainability of the economy to reduce poverty, marginalization and migration from the countryside to the city.

In search of the duty, the administration must investigate, work, propose, offer alternative solutions according to the ethics parameter, to manage life in companies and organizations, and contribute to the sustainable development process, and thus ensure that generations future have the necessary resources for their full development. Administrative theory shares the same paradigm of the social sciences and, in our case, it is the search for a principle whose validity is universal, where its postulates truly satisfy man.

## References

- Argyris, C. (1964) *Personalidad y organización*. México: Centro de Formación y Perfeccionamiento de Funcionarios.
- Ballina, F. (2001). *Teoría de la administración: un enfoque alternativo*. México: McGraw-Hill.
- Barnard, C. I. (1975). *Las funciones de los elementos dirigentes*. Madrid.
- Barthes, R. (1994). *El susurro del lenguaje: más allá de las palabras y la escritura*. Barcelona, España: Paidós.
- Baudrillard, J. (1978). *A la sombra de las mayorías silenciosas*. Madrid, España: Kairos.



- Baudrillard, J. (1985). *La izquierda divina*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- Baudrillard, J. (2002). *Cultura y simulacro*. Madrid, España: Kairos.
- Baudrillard, J. (2004). *Las estrategias fatales*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- Baudrillard, J. (2006a). *El otro por sí mismo*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- Baudrillard, J. (2006b). *El crimen perfecto*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- Bell, D. (1977). *Las contradicciones culturales del capitalismo*. Madrid, España: Alianza Editorial.
- Boje, D. and Dennehy, R. (1993). *Managing in the postmodern world* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Dubuque, United States: Kendall/Hunt.
- Boje, D., Gephart, R. P. and Thatchenkery, T. J. (eds.) (1996). *Postmodern Management and Organization Theory*. London, England / New Delhi, India: Thousand Oaks Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Capital cultural, escuela y espacio social*. México: Siglo XXI.
- Bozeman, B. (1987). *Todas las organizaciones son públicas. (Tendiendo un puente entre las teorías corporativas privadas y públicas)*. México: FCE.
- Cruz, F. (1988). *Teoría administrativa*. Bogotá, Colombia: McGraw-Hill.
- Cruz, L. (2013). El concepto de poder en la administración. *Contaduría y administración*, 58(4).
- Deleuze, G. y Guattari, F. (1993). *Qué es la filosofía*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- De Saussure, F. (1987). *Curso de lingüística general*. Madrid, España: Alianza editorial
- Dessler, G. (1993). *Organización y administración* (2.<sup>a</sup> ed.). México: Prentice-Hall.
- De Ventós, X. (1980). *Crítica de la modernidad*. Barcelona, España: Anagrama.
- Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), c1993, author *Post capitalist society* / New York: Harper business,
- Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), 1990, *Las nuevas realidades en el estado y la política, en la economía y los negocios, en la sociedad y en la imagen del mundo* Buenos Aires. Sudamericana; México: Hermes.
- Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), 1994. autor *La sociedad post-capitalista*, Barcelona México: Norma,
- Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), c1999. *Los desafíos de la administración en el siglo XXI* / Buenos Aires: Sudamericana,
- Drucker, Peter F. (Peter Ferdinand), 1909-2005, author *managing the non-profit Organization: Practices and principles* / New York: Harper Collins, c1990.
- Fayol, H. (1973). *Administración industrial y general*. México: Herrero.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *La arqueología del saber*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Siglo XXI editores.

- Fromm, E. (1997). *El miedo a la libertad*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós.
- Guzmán, I. (1966). *La ciencia de la administración: la dirección de los grupos humanos*. México: Limusa.
- Habermas, J. (1993). *Ciencia y técnica como "ideología"*. México: REI.
- Habermas y la modernidad*. (1993). México: REI.
- Homans, G. (1950). *The human group*. New York, United States: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- Jameson, F. (1984). Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism. *New Left Review*, 146, 53-93.
- Jenofonte. (1999). *Socrática. Economía. Ciropedia*. España: Océano.
- Jo Hatch, M. (1997). *Organization theory, modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Koontz, H. (1994). *Curso de administración moderna, un análisis de sistemas y contingencias de las funciones administrativas*. México: McGraw-Hill.
- Koontz, H., Weihrich, H. y O'Donnell, C. (1991). *Elementos de administración* (4.ª ed.). México: McGraw-Hill.
- Lacan, J. (2008). *El seminario de Jacques Lacan* (libro 2). Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field Theory of Social Science*. Nueva York, United States: Harper and Row.
- Leví-Strauss, C. (1964). *El pensamiento salvaje* (1.ª ed.). México: FCE.
- Lewin, K. (1968). *Psychologie dynamique : Les relations humaines*. Paris, France : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Lilienthal, D. (1967). *Management: A Humanist Art*. Nueva York, United States: Columbia University Press.
- Mannheim, K. (1982). *Libertad, poder y planificación democrática*. México: FCE.
- Merton, R. K. (2002). *Teoría y estructura sociales* (4.ª ed.). México: FCE.
- Michels, R. (1968). *Los partidos políticos* (tomos I y II). Buenos Aires, Argentina: Amorrortu.
- Mill, J. (2006). *Principios de economía política*. México: FCE.
- Mills, C. W. (1961). *La imaginación sociológica*. México: FCE.
- Mills, C. W. (1957). *La élite del poder* (1.ª ed.). México: FCE.
- Montaño, L. (2004). Las aproximaciones organizacionales caracterización, objeto y problemática. *Revista de Contaduría y Administración*, (213).

- Parker, M., Metcalf, H. C. and Urwick, L. (eds.) (1942). *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*. New York, United States: Harper & Brother Publishing.
- Reed, M. (1992). *The Sociology of Organizations: Themes Perspectives and Prospects*. London, England: Harvester-Wheatsheaf.
- Ríos, J. (1990). *La realidad cultural nacional y el estudio de la administración en México*. México: FCA UNAM.
- Senge, P. M. (1997). *La quinta disciplina*. Barcelona, España: Garnica.
- Simón, H. (1988). *El comportamiento administrativo. Estudio de los procesos decisorios en la organización administrativa*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ed. Aguilar.
- Sprott, W. J. H. y Johnson, H. M. (1968). *Sociología y psicología social de grupo*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Paidós.
- Taylor, F. (1978). *Principios de la administración científica*. México: Herrero.
- Weber, M. (1969). Teoría de las categorías sociológicas. En *Economía y sociedad* (tomo II) (pp. 753-755). México: FCE.
- Weber, M. (1977). *Estructuras de poder*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: La Pléyade.