The following article was written by Professor Eduardo Leite (School of Technology and Management, University of Madeira) in partnership with: Ricardo Jorge Silva (id@quociente-razao.pt), consultant, university lecturer and researcher; and also with Ana Leite, Master in Public-Private Administration from the Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra.

The term “bureaucracy” was first invoked by Vincent de Gournay (economist of the physiocratic school, 1712-59) in France, by the agglutination of “bureau” (French, “office”) + Kratos (Greek, “rule of law”), defining an organization or organizational structure characterized by explicit and regularized rules and procedures, division of responsibilities and specialization of work, hierarchy and impersonal relationships[1].

Like its creator whose first name was Jacques, but appears in many references as Jean, due to an error made by his disciple Turgot in a letter known as “In Praise of Gournay”, the word Bureaucracy turns out to be associated in our daily experience with excessively complicated administrative procedures. Two sides of the same coin.

Max Weber (1864-1920), a sociologist, jurist, philosopher, politician, and economist, considered that “the decisive reason for the advancement of a bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization.” In fact, it has broadened its scope from being restricted to the functioning of the state and public institutions to become a relevant instrument of business organization, after all. “The Ideal Bureaucracy” was an organizational system with hierarchical authority and a set of rules and procedures that, by being followed, would maximize profits. It had seven fundamental characteristics: rules and procedures; the division of labor; hierarchical authority; technical competence (employment and career advancement on merit); the separation between management and property; differentiation between rights (always associated with the organization) and property; and documentation (decision-making records, rules and regulations). The aim was to define order and predictability in the relationships between people and functions[2].

But while recognizing bureaucracy as the most efficient and even indispensable form of organization, Weber also warned that, at the state level, it could become a threat to individual freedoms as it muzzled life and individuals to the “iron cage” of the state bureaucratic control and its rules and rationality. This extremism would be the twin of the failure to comply with the collapse of the administrative system. To master the perversity of

bureaucrats, the system needs entrepreneurs and politicians[3].

In this line of action, Woodrow Wilson, who has the particularity of being an academic who held the US presidency between 1913 and 1921, advocated the clear separation between bureaucrats and politicians and their activities, leading politicians to act in the policy options field, and bureaucrats simply implement them as neutral and technical agents (Olivieri, 2011).

Wilson developed his work and conceptions of bureaucracy in the context of the discussion of the first American administrative reform, passed in 1883, giving rise to the law known as the Pendleton Act (Wilson, 1887). Since then, a compulsory public tender has been instituted for the recruitment of certain civil servants, and this has been the first step in a process that has continued to assert a meritocratic bureaucracy.

In Portugal, the CRESAP – Recruitment and Selection Commission for Public Administration (CRESAP) was created in 2011 (Law No. 64/2011 of 22nd December). Selection and appointment to senior management positions (Article 19) involves the "indication of the formal requirements for appointment, the required profile and the selection methods, which necessarily include the curriculum evaluation and, for the candidates qualified for the procedure, the conducting evaluation interviews by the Commission". The logic is aligned, albeit temporally very out of phase, but its implementation has left much to be desired, as assessed by the permanent journalistic report of "scandals" to which the application of the current legislation is associated.

So does the capture of the state by political parties (state parties) in present-day democracy, a move common to the Constitutional Monarchy and the First Republic, instead of society parties, contribute to cooling the bureaucrats' enthusiasm? And in a country where state spending is more than 50 percent of the wealth generated annually, can we expect entrepreneurs to be the second outlet for the perversity of bureaucracy, to which Weber referred to?

Our day-to-day activities and our relationship with state agencies are responsible for unveiling this. We will return to the topic of Bureaucracy to analyze its business aspect.

Leite, E., Silva, R. & Leite, A.

[1] https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burocracia.

[2] Griffin & Moorhead, Organizational Behaviour, South-Western, (2014).

[3] Richard Swedberg; *Ola Agevall (2005).*