

Received: 17 September 2024, Accepted: 20 March 2025

## **The Value System of Society and the Modernization Orientation in the Algerian Institution: What Is the Relationship? A Sociological Reading**

**Bouriche Mohammed**

University of Ain Temouchent (Algeria).

E-mail: [mohammed.bouriche@univ-temouchent.edu.dz](mailto:mohammed.bouriche@univ-temouchent.edu.dz);

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8609-2246>

### **Abstract:**

The modern institution is not a closed world that generates a completely independent culture. On the contrary, it is deeply interconnected with and influenced by its surroundings, whether economically, socially, or culturally. This is reflected in its management practices, in addition to the rational logic it follows.

The Algerian institution remains connected to the value system of the society it belongs to, as well as the customs and traditions shared by its workers and executives. Before being mere official structures, institutions form a social entity that is not separate from the society in which they exist. It can therefore be said that there is a close relationship between the economic system and the social system in the structure of Algerian society, which operates based on the principle of interaction between the two systems.

### **Keywords:**

Society, culture, institution, values, management.

### **Introduction**

The industrial institution represents a significant field for sociological research and a key arena for observing the practices and behaviors of social actors within a social system. In such a system, these actors strive to achieve their objectives and strategies, compelling the institution to continuously regulate and direct their behaviors and actions through modern managerial methods and techniques that reflect the level of organizational culture characterizing the institution.

Most of the sociological literature concerning industrial institutions—particularly in Algeria—has demonstrated that the social environment, along with its prevailing values and behavioral norms, continues to exert a strong influence on the development of management systems, despite Algerian society having undergone a phase of transition and engaged in a process of modernization.

Building upon these previous research efforts, our study approaches the subject through a methodological and scientific lens, enabling us to examine forms of management in a way that allows for a deeper understanding of the extent to which the social environment and local cultural factors influence managerial practices within industrial institutions. This is especially pertinent in the context of the social transformations currently taking place in Algerian society.

Our primary focus is to conceptualize the interaction between societal values and organizational values within the framework of human resource management practices. We aim to identify the cultural changes and transformations that have affected societal culture, and assess the extent to which these shifts have impacted the managerial cultural references of Algerian executives in industrial institutions. This analysis draws upon a sociological reading of selected studies that depict institutional realities and reflect the social and cultural facts embedded in the practices that shape the cognitive frameworks of actors within the managerial system.

The central issue we seek to address in this article is the nature of the relationship between **organizational cultural values** and **social cultural values**, and the extent to which they are interrelated. This leads us to the guiding research question: **Can the local cultural environment influence the practices of actors within the Algerian institution?**

At its core, our analysis is anchored in clarifying the problematic of **tradition versus modernity**, a dichotomy that has imposed itself on modes of human resource management. On one hand, we are dealing with a traditional society that continues to function according to conventional norms and values while attempting to adapt to modern standards. On the other hand, we aim to identify, as precisely as possible,

the relationship between these two paradigms through the interaction of organizational and societal values within the Algerian institutional context.

### **The Institution and Society**

In fact, the modern institution is not a closed world that generates a completely independent culture. On the contrary, it is deeply interconnected with and influenced by its surroundings, whether economically, socially, or culturally. This is reflected in its management practices, in addition to the rational logic it follows.

The Algerian institution remains connected to the value system of the society it belongs to, as well as the customs and traditions shared by its workers and executives. Before being mere official structures, institutions form a social entity that is not separate from the society in which they exist. It can therefore be said that there is a close relationship between the economic system and the social system in the structure of Algerian society, which operates based on the principle of interaction between the two systems.

As mentioned in some studies and field investigations in the industrial sector, Algerian society did not follow the same path as advanced countries, despite adopting the same developmental approach aimed at "transitioning from a traditional society to a rational one but in a rapid manner, 'skipping stages'."<sup>1</sup> The traditional frameworks remained in control of work organization within the institution, and their resistance to anything foreign was highly evident, which had a direct impact on the state of organizational culture in Algeria.

### **Managerial Culture**

From the past to the present day, many economic and social schools, as well as numerous economists, sociologists, and others, have placed significant emphasis on management. Management is considered a rational method of coordinating human, material, and financial resources in order to achieve the desired objectives.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ghrid Jamal, "The Common Worker: Elements for Approaching the New Face of the Algerian Industrial Worker," *Humanities*, Algerian Journal of Anthropology and Social Sciences, 1997, p. 07.

Numerous definitions of management have been provided based on the perspective of each school and each scholar. Management has undergone several stages to become what it is today, and this evolution has had a profound impact on both economic and social institutions.

The development or underdevelopment of society can be understood based on the nature of its management, as the success of a society's institutions depends on the effectiveness of their management. Management, or administration, is the art of accomplishing tasks through others. It refers to all the functions that must be performed at the institutional level, such as determining and selecting objectives, and establishing the means to achieve them based on the decision-making authority of the manager, in line with the management policy, using an effective organizational structure to ensure the growth and continuity of any organization.

It can be defined as: "a dynamic process that involves several continuous and integrated activities such as planning, organizing, controlling, and directing the actions of others. Responsibility involves coordinating, adjusting, and integrating these activities to achieve the goal effectively within the designated timeframe."<sup>2</sup>

What is noteworthy is that culture is linked to the management process in the sense that managerial practice generates a particular culture. It may also refer to the characteristics of management within specific limits. The level of development of a society's culture directly influences the development and clarity of culture at the institutional level within that society, as it is impossible to separate the latter from its physical and social environment and the prevailing values and behavioral norms.

Organizational culture consists of several cultural systems, one of which is managerial culture, which is primarily concerned with the methods and practices of the management process. Therefore, before defining managerial culture, it is helpful to refer to the concepts of culture and organizational culture, as these may provide insights that will aid in understanding and clarification. Organizational culture

---

<sup>2</sup> Ben Rezoug Jamal, "Organizational Communication, Managerial Culture, and Change Management within the Institution," *Journal of Research and Studies in Human Sciences*, No. 06, November 2010, p. 239.

manifests through organizational practices and associated behavioral norms, from which its principles are derived by studying organizational practices such as recruitment, training, incentives, promotions, goal-setting systems, and relationships with customers and competitors.

In his book, "Organizational Culture," "Schein" defines it as: "The basic principles that a group invents, discovers, or develops while solving its problems related to external adaptation and internal integration, which have proven effective, and thus are taught to new members as the best way to perceive, interpret, and understand problems."<sup>3</sup>

The principles referred to by "Schein" are respect for the natural environment and openness to the external world, both of which help with internal adaptation and adherence to rules.

The view of organizational culture has evolved from being simply a set of shared events and behaviors among actors within the organization to being considered a set of knowledge that guides thinking and actions within the organization.

Based on this latter understanding of organizational culture, managerial culture is primarily concerned with the practice of the management process, which includes a series of coordinated and integrated activities. It can be considered as "a set of principles or assumptions that managers adopt when practicing the management process, along with behavioral norms primarily related to perceptions of human nature, authority, time, future vision, and views on human relationships."<sup>4</sup>

- **Societal Culture and Industrial Culture: What Kind of Relationship Exists?**

The transformations that have affected the social structure of Algerian society due to the modernization process have led to changes in its cultural system, giving rise to new values that reflect rational thought. This has forced some managers to absorb these new values through their socialization within the industrial institution to which

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>4</sup>Rubat (F), "Corporate Culture and Management," *École Supérieure de Commerce*, Grenoble, pp. 8-9.

they belong, attempting to reconcile their inherited traditional culture from their families with the dominant cultural values in the institution. These values encourage individualism, liberation from familial bonds, and emphasize autonomy, personal initiative, and achievement.

In contrast, the reality of the Algerian institution proves otherwise. Managerial practices do not encourage individual initiative and tend to avoid risk, preferring quantity over quality. Employment continues to be random, subject to political and social selections rather than economic choices, which are based on selecting the best individuals for a given position. The criteria that modern industrial institutions rely on for recruitment—such as justice, equality, and equal opportunity—are not prioritized, and merit-based selection is not favored. There is little attention given to previous experience, which encompasses the information, skills, and knowledge an individual has acquired during their educational journey, enabling them to perform their role in the institution with ease and take responsibility effectively.

As for promotions, they are highly linked to the principles underlying the recruitment and selection process. Since recruitment is not based on competency, promotions are also not based on merit, seniority, or experience but rather on presence within the institution. These elements are considered fundamental criteria in the promotion process, where a balanced mix of these factors should be the proper basis for advancement.

Promotions are supposed to serve as a motivating factor that contributes to the worker's progression along the professional ladder and as an element of human resource development within the institution. They are seen as an essential step in achieving the set goals. However, we find that promotions are still largely granted according to subjective criteria, such as mediation, nepotism, and personal relationships, sidelining competency, effectiveness, and achievement, which are only mentioned in official speeches and organizational procedures.

These subjective factors also hinder the performance evaluation system, distorting its fundamental role linked to modern industrial values. As a result, the system becomes ineffective due to the old inherited mentalities that reject everything new, driven by

anxiety and discomfort with uncertainty or risk. This resistance to change stems from concerns about the potential consequences of policies like layoffs, which could lead to loss of both material and moral stability.

It is evident that most workers are focused on carrying out the tasks set by the managers, with no room for individual action. The institution does not encourage risk-taking, experimentation, or freedom in work. It insists on completing tasks exactly as it determines, which leads to repetitive actions dominated by routine. Consequently, opportunities for training and learning diminish, and the lack of trust in workers' abilities increases. This creates fear of making mistakes, failing, and taking responsibility, resulting in a reluctance to be held accountable or face sanctions.

In Algeria, the institution views its employees as mere workers bound by a contract, meaning the relationship between them and the institution is primarily transactional, based on the exchange of services for a specific wage. They remain in the institution as long as it meets their material needs, with no connection to the institution's strategic aspects or its future. This leads us back to Taylorism's view that humans are inherently materialistic, and the only thing that motivates them is money. This reality is inconsistent with the idea of effectiveness in managerial thought, which emphasizes results and the achievement of goals—i.e., performance. From an organizational perspective, it refers to "the organization's ability to achieve its objectives (...) which reflects the power balance of the influential parties and the interests of those involved in the evaluation process, as well as the growth and development stage the organization is going through."<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the development of employees' capabilities, it remains trapped in a negative outlook and has remained outside the interests of managers due to the lack of a culture of planning and future foresight, which is absent in deterministic societies, particularly Algerian society, which is characterized by "low uncertainty avoidance."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Mohamed Qasim Al-Qaryouti, "Theory of Organization and Organization," Dar Wael for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 2000, p. 104.

<sup>6</sup>Mercure Daniel et al., "Culture and Management in Algeria," *Editions ANEP*, Algeria, 1997, p. 12.

It is also noticeable that the relationships between managers and employees are troubled and deteriorate with the intensification of conflicts and tensions between them. This is because work in its essence has been based on personal considerations and discriminatory foundations, which reflect negatively on managerial efficiency in the industrial institution.

The poor relationships between managers and workers are described as having little communication, marked by a lack of trust and workers' feeling of unimportance. This leads to weak relationships without common goals or interests, turning the relationship between managers and workers into one of exploitation.

The worker within the institution does not feel a sense of belonging. This all points to the fact that workers are not involved in any of the processes taking place in the institution, from decision-making to contributing to the institution's goal-setting. This leads to a disconnect between the worker and the institution.

Furthermore, the lack of a sense of belonging to the institution weakens the worker's loyalty, leading them to seek better opportunities elsewhere to increase their wages and regain their value by earning the respect and appreciation of their superiors. This is clearly visible, but what is hidden is the worker's sense of alienation, where they seek to fulfill the need for belonging within a community where solidarity and support compensate for what they lack in the institution.

Many sociological studies have praised the importance of professional and social relationships at the workplace, which led us to highlight the level and nature of social relationships within the institution, given their significant positive impact on harmony, the sense of responsibility, and strengthening the bonds of cooperation. This, in turn, reflects on the individual worker's performance and on the collective productivity of the employees. Thus, the more the relationship between managers and employees is based on trust and respect, the higher the morale within the institution. This has been emphasized by some sociological studies, particularly those from the Human Relations School, which advocated for creating a suitable working environment and fostering human relationships between workers, alongside improving performance conditions.

Undoubtedly, most of the strategies adopted by members of Algerian society are based on the extent of control over informal relationships, and the direction of their behaviors and practices is linked to the social capital of personal and informal relationships they possess. Our society is known for the dominance of informal relationships and personal ties in various social interaction fields, including industrial institutions.

These practices may indeed present obstacles in management due to their connection to the traditional cultural product of society, which still frames loyalty to the group in order to obtain protection and strengthen authority through its clientelist network. This is considered "a cultural and social value... that contradicts the spirit of capitalist economic rationality."<sup>7</sup> The system still deals with workers as individuals belonging to a tribe, clan, or region.

This logic, in which the culture of dependency prevails, and where the aspirations of workers are directed towards social status and position in the absence of merit-based principles, clearly clashes with the formal organizational framework adopted by industrial institutions in Algeria.

This issue can be traced back first and foremost to the closed nature of Algerian society and its persistence as a traditional society that adheres to an anti-modernization rationality. In this society, the collective culture predominates, directing practices and behaviors according to a social perspective. This is followed by a strong hierarchical dimension, characteristic of this society, where authority is directly proportional to submission.

What can be confirmed, however, is the existence of values with a controlling and dominant nature, which are still reproduced for cultural and historical reasons related to Algerian society. Additionally, there are secondary values of lesser importance, all of which guide managerial practices within Algerian institutions, blending traditional

---

<sup>7</sup> Ben Aissa Mohamed Mahdi, "A Sociological Approach to Analyzing the Crisis of Rationalization in Algerian Industrial Organization," *Journal of Social and Human Sciences Research*, No. 01, University Center of Ouargla, December 1998, p. 14.

and rational elements. This results in what is referred to as "cultural amalgamation,"<sup>8</sup> as expressed by Ahmed Hani.

However, even if these managers absorb modern industrial values, they will not be able to replace their original cultural values that shape their practices. This is because these values cannot go beyond the technical aspect, as concepts like efficiency and effectiveness remain merely popular terms and empty slogans, only used to embellish the institution's image, preserve its reputation, and reinforce a culture of façade.

This situation shows us that the Algerian mindset has still not fully accepted the new concepts related to the liberal model that it suddenly found itself confronted with. It had become accustomed to forms and methods that contributed to Algeria's economic and social construction, creating a deep gap in its conceptual system. Any disregard for cultural and social factors, in our view, led to all forms of disruption, chaos, and failure observed in the reality of management. The Canadian group, in its field study on the Algerian institution, pointed out the "strong cultural disparity,"<sup>9</sup> which shows the difference between the cultural elements forming the modern institution and the dominant culture in Algerian society.

Therefore, it can be concluded that management styles and forms, despite differing from one manager to another and despite changing over time, still bear a strong presence of a subjective logic tied to the cultural values prevailing in society. They reflect the same surrounding environment, as they could not detach themselves from the objective logic representing rationality, which was institutionalized by the modern institution to which these managers belong. Here, we are discussing a model where two cultures intersect, blending in a concept of domination rather than integration, where actual practices rely on a margin of what is organizational, based on strategies rooted in diversity.

---

<sup>8</sup>Oufriha Fatima Zohra, "Culture and Development in Algeria and the Arab Countries," *Codesria*, Dakar, 2012, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup>Mercure Daniel et al., "Culture and Management in Algeria," Op. cit., p. 17.

One of the key features of this dominance is the social logic, which is based on direct and indirect material incentives aimed at buying submission and social peace. This has come to be viewed as a right, at the expense of performance and results. This materialistic outlook has created a negative value, through which the depth of the informal logic emerges. In this context, the social environment imposes its logic on the institution, and its spirit of loyalty transcends the idea of individual strategy, linking instead to the notion of collectivism. Any social agreement is made based on gifts and rewards in exchange for submission, reinforcing and expanding the social status of those in power and broadening their clientelist networks. This contradicts the philosophy of rationality and prudence in work, reflecting what Said Chekhi pointed out: "The forms of management of labor have simply detached themselves from the requirements of capitalist rationalization."<sup>10</sup>

As a result of these sociological readings, we observe the emergence of a phenomenon of reluctance to change, with a preference to keep things as they are rather than pursuing dynamism and movement. In reality, management is based on personalizing power, clientelism, and loyalty. It is marked by a strong hierarchical dimension, which serves as an effective tool for managers to maintain their power interests rather than organizational interests, imposing the idea of inequality among workers as a principle of control and instilling a culture of submission and dependency, thus reinforcing a façade culture.

### **Management in the Algerian Institution: What Is the Effectiveness?**

Sociological literature on organization and institutions, particularly those that attempt to link the reality of institutions to the nature of the production system, suggests that productive effectiveness and rationality are characteristics of capitalist production. Therefore, within this logic, we are talking about economic efficiency, as opposed to social-symbolic efficiency. Through this debate, we ask: What is the nature of managerial effectiveness in Algerian industrial institutions? Before answering, it is important to note that effectiveness, according to our perspective, is not necessarily

---

<sup>10</sup>Chikhi Said, "The Worker, Life, and the Prince or the Elusive Modernity," in *Algeria and Modernity*, Codesria, Dakar, Senegal, 1989, p. 185.

tied only to performance and productivity, but can sometimes extend to the logic of survival, resistance, and continuity.

Regarding the socio-economic reality of industrial institutions and management policy, field evidence has shown that the "consensual policy"<sup>11</sup> characterizes management practices in general and human resource management in particular. This is achieved through a blend of traditional and modern approaches. Despite the institution being within a framework characterized by the development of technologies and rational management methods studied scientifically—thus representing a modern model—there is still an investment in everything traditional and societal, which is reproduced in symbolic practices. These practices can be described as traditional forms of control, where managers, and even executive staff, employ all their social capital—such as regional, tribal ties, and selective hiring—as a counter-strategy and resistance. This serves as a means of integrating the worker into the factory system, where the role of the worker evolves from a purely productive function to a social and political function. This was previously noted by DjilaliYabes, who stated that the industrial institution in Algeria engages in "the daily and dual investment of both economic and social-symbolic capital, as well as the social and political system."<sup>12</sup>

From the above, and as a summary of our observations regarding the theoretical legacy on the subject, it is clear that the continuity of the institution in Algerian reality is linked to the extent to which managers are able to create their clientelist networks, which are based on hiring family members, tribal ties, and regional affiliations. Therefore, the required efficiency in this case is not economic, but rather social and symbolic, as it manifests in the manager's ability to control and use symbolic capital. Consequently, even elements of conflict and competition within the institution are either outcomes or strategies of these practices. Thus, this logic is reflected in the recruitment process, which is based on traditional relational networks with charismatic references (family, region, etc.), and management is based on controlling

---

<sup>11</sup>LiabesDjilali, "Private Capital and Industrial Owners in Algeria (1962-1982)," *CREADA/ger*, 1984, p. 102.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

personal relationships and using symbolic capital through the creation of networks based on mutual interests. Moreover, the existence of the institution is linked to the active presence of "family" and "community," and thus social and symbolic capital plays a role in controlling and directing various activities within it.

What we can conclude from this analysis is that it is difficult for two contradictory models to coexist, especially as long as control is in favor of symbolic effectiveness in management. Economic effectiveness, based on everything technical, scientific, and rational, where the authority of powers plays a critical role, roles are precisely defined, and time is subject to the highest levels of rationality—these elements, if not absent, are limited in practices and even perceptions among both managers and industrial workers. Their presence in the institution is linked to effectiveness derived from social and symbolic factors. This was confirmed by Ahmed Hani, who stated that "relationships based on economic rationality, re-produced locally in traditional models, have yielded greater effectiveness than those based on symbolic capital, compared to the rational, bureaucratic, function-based efficiency."<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

It appears, as a general perception, that the issue of culture and development in Algeria remains a subject of debate, as evidenced by the outcomes and results of the ongoing interaction between projects carrying modernist culture and a reality and system that bear a hybrid culture, which has been impacted by various transformations and has resisted repeated attempts at change.

Development cannot be achieved by simply applying ready-made development prescriptions or by adopting the principle of scaling, imitation, or replication of certain development models that have, in some way, achieved a degree of progress and prosperity.

Each society has its own cultural characteristics and specific economic resources, and in development, both material and immaterial factors intersect, with economic and religious elements intermingling. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account a

---

<sup>13</sup>Henni Ahmed, "The Sheikh and the Boss: Use of Modernity in the Reproduction of Tradition," *OPU*, Algiers, 1993, pp. 28-29.

set of distinctive features of a particular society and strategically consider them when choosing development pathways and implementing their operational mechanisms. It is not possible to indiscriminately apply ready-made development theories in an automated manner to different societies, whose civilizational and cultural characteristics contradict the principles of those theories and their underlying concepts in both general and specific terms.

## References

1. Ben Aissa Mohamed Mahdi, "A Sociological Approach to Analyzing the Crisis of Rationalization in Algerian Industrial Organization," *Journal of Social and Human Sciences Research*, No. 01, University Center of Ouargla, December 1998.
2. Ben Rezoug Jamal, "Organizational Communication, Managerial Culture, and Change Management within the Institution," *Journal of Research and Studies in Human Sciences*, No. 06, November 2010.
3. Chikhi Said, "The Worker, Life, and the Prince or the Elusive Modernity," in *Algeria and Modernity*, Codesria, Dakar, Senegal, 1989.
4. Ghrid Jamal, "The Common Worker: Elements for Approaching the New Face of the Algerian Industrial Worker," *Humanities*, Algerian Journal of Anthropology and Social Sciences, 1997.
5. HENNI Ahmed, "The Sheikh and the Boss: Use of Modernity in the Reproduction of Tradition," *OPU*, Algiers, 1993, pp. 28-29.
6. LIABES Djilali, "Private Capital and Industrial Owners in Algeria (1962-1982)," *CREAD Algiers*, 1984.
7. Mercure Daniel et al., "Culture and Management in Algeria," *Editions ANEP*, Algeria, 1997.
8. Mohamed Qasim Al-Qaryouti, "Theory of Organization and Organization," *Dar Wael for Publishing and Distribution*, Amman, 2000.
9. Oufriha Fatima Zohra, "Culture and Development in Algeria and the Arab Countries," *Codesria*, Dakar, 2012.
10. Rubat (F), "Corporate Culture and Management," *École Supérieure de Commerce*, Grenoble.