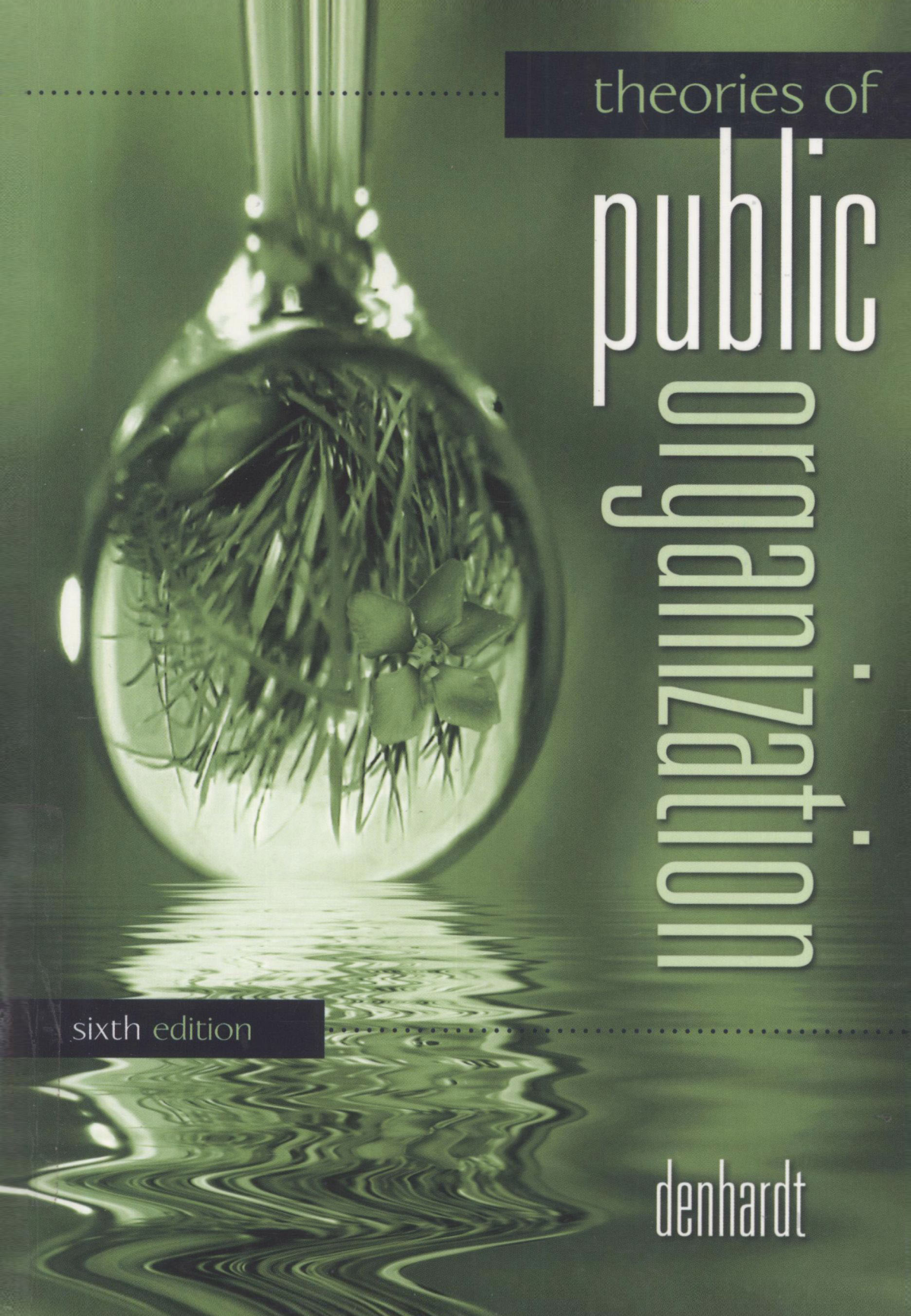
theories of
public
organization
sixth edition
denhardt

# Theories of Public Organization

SIXTH EDITION

**ROBERT B. DENHARDT**
Arizona State University

常州大学山书馆
藏书章

WADSWORTH
CENGAGE Learning

Australia • Brazil • Japan • Korea • Mexico • Singapore • Spain • United Kingdom • United States

WADSWORTH
CENGAGE Learning

**Theories of Public Organization, Sixth Edition**
**Robert B. Denhardt**

Executive Editor: Carolyn Merrill

Acquisitions Editor: Edwin Hill

Development Editor: Matthew DiGangi

Assistant Editor: Kate MacLean

Senior Marketing Manager: Amy Whitaker

Marketing Coordinator: Joshua Wade Hendrick

Marketing Communications Manager: Heather Baxley

Content Project Management: Pre-PressPMG

Art Director: Linda Helcher

Print Buyer: Karen Hunt

Senior Rights Acquisition Account Manager, Text: Katie Huha

Photo Permissions Account Manager: Jennifer Meyer Dare

Production Service: Pre-PressPMG

Cover Designer: Rokusek Design

Cover Image: ©Shutterstock

Compositor: Pre-PressPMG

© 2011, 2008, 2004 Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced, transmitted, stored, or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, scanning, digitizing, taping, Web distribution, information networks, or information storage and retrieval systems, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

For product information and technology assistance, contact us at **Cengage Learning Customer & Sales Support, 1-800-354-9706.**

For permission to use material from this text or product, submit all requests online at **www.cengage.com/permissions.** Further permissions questions can be emailed to **permissionrequest@cengage.com.**

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009943654

ISBN-13: 978-1-4390-8623-0

ISBN-10: 1-4390-8623-0

**Wadsworth**
20 Channel Center Street
Boston, MA 02210
USA

Cengage Learning is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with office locations around the globe, including Singapore, the United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico, Brazil and Japan. Locate your local office at **international.cengage.com/region.**

Cengage Learning products are represented in Canada by Nelson Education, Ltd.

For your course and learning solutions, visit **www.cengage.com.**

Purchase any of our products at your local college store or at our preferred online store **www.CengageBrain.com.**

Printed in the United Status of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 14 13 12 11 10

# Theories of Public Organization

# Preface

Since the fifth edition of *Theories of Public Organization,* a number of significant developments have occurred in the field of public administration and public administration theory. In this sixth edition, new perspectives have been added from recently published materials, especially material on democratic governance, civic engagement, and moral obligation theory. The focus, too, is directed on the current debate in public administration around the differences between the New Public Management and the New Public Service. The former grows out of the mainstream interpretation of public administration, especially as augmented by market models and public choice economics, and is concerned with reducing red tape and increasing governmental efficiency and productivity. The latter flows more clearly from the democratic humanist tradition in public administration and is concerned with issues of citizenship and community. It fits well with the emerging emphasis in our field on issues of democratic network governance, which we explore in some detail. In our view, these issues present important choices for students trying to develop a personal philosophy of public administration.

In other respects, this edition continues some important themes established in earlier ones. It is a book about theory but also about practice. It is written to introduce theories of public organization to students of public administration and to those outside the field who wish to involve themselves in organizations committed to public purposes. More important, this book is an attempt to develop a critique of the mainstream literature in public administration theory based on its inability to connect with the real experiences of those working in and with public organizations.

In recent years, the traditional separation of theory and practice in the field of public administration has become even more pronounced. Academics and practitioners, who have always viewed each other with some skepticism, now seem even more divided. This is an extremely unfortunate situation, limiting both our understanding of public organizations and our actions within them.


此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

To understand more clearly the separation of theory and practice and to begin to reconcile their differences is the primary intent of this book.

To achieve this purpose, we first review a number of past efforts in the field, not to present a comprehensive historical review of theories of public organization but to examine representative works that embody the commitments and views of various groups at various times. Based on this review, we then consider several contemporary studies of public organizations and suggest ways in which we might better understand the real world of public administration. Several more generic organization theorists, who have made sustained contributions to the field of public administration, are included as well.

In my review of these works, I have discovered more consistency among the various theorists exists than one might expect. This discovery has led to the following conclusions, which are implicit in all that follows:

1. Although there have been many diverse theories of public organization, the mainstream work in public administration theory has centered on elaborating a so-called "rational model of administration" and a view of democratic accountability implicitly based on the politics–administration dichotomy.
2. As a theory of learning, this approach has limited itself to a positivist understanding of knowledge acquisition, failing to acknowledge or to promote alternative ways of viewing public organizations. Specifically this approach has failed to integrate explanation, understanding, and critique in theories of public organization.
3. As a theory of organization, this approach has limited itself to instrumental concerns expressed through hierarchical structures, failing to acknowledge or to promote the search for alternative organizational designs. Specifically, this approach has failed to integrate issues of control, consensus, and communication.
4. Theories of public organization have consequently appeared to practitioners to be unrelated to their concerns, failing especially to provide a moral context for personal action in the governance process.
5. Despite the dominance of the mainstream view, there have always been significant counterpoint arguments in the field. These concerns have recently been given new focus in the debate between the *New Public Management* and the *New Public Service*—a debate that presents students and practitioners with dramatic choices about the future of public administration theory and practice.
6. These challenges become even more important as we move from an exclusive focus on government to a more embracing focus on governance, especially democratic network governance.

To fulfill the promise of public administration theory, we now require a shift in the way we view the field, a shift that will lead us to be concerned not merely with the government administration but also with the broader process of governance and managing change in pursuit of publicly defined societal values. Following such a perspective, which is elaborated in Chapter 1, we are led to a broadened concern for the nature of administrative work in public organizations

broadly defined—one that incorporates not only the requirements of efficiency and effectiveness but also the notion of democratic responsibility. This shift has implications for the field of governance and public administration and for the larger field of management as well. To the extent that various institutions of governance dominate the social and political landscape, it is appropriate to ask whether all such organizations should be governed in such a way as to seriously maintain our commitments to freedom, justice, and equality among persons. The question is not how we should view the operations of government agencies but rather how organizations of all sorts might be made more public, how they might aid in expressing the values of our society.

For nearly a century, private administration, or business administration, has stood as a model for public administration. I suggest in this book is that public organizations—and the theories and approaches that support them—may become models for reconstructing organizations of all types along more democratic lines. The tradition of public administration contains elements of organizational reform that are important for all our institutions. If democracy is to survive in our society, it must not be overridden by the false promises of hierarchy and authoritarian rule. *Democratic outcomes require democratic processes.*

The connection between theory and practice will be very important in accomplishing this goal. A theory that stands apart from practice and from the values and meanings implicit in practice will never enable us to do more than modify our practice incrementally. It will not permit the kind of broad commitment to the notion of democratic governance that our society requires. In our view, however, the connection between theory and practice can occur only through the process of personal learning. Only as individuals reflect on their experiences and generalize from them will they develop theories of action. And only in this way will they be able to incorporate their ideas into a practical and personal philosophy of public administration.

Consistent with this view, we have incorporated into this edition several significant pedagogical features, including discussion questions and brief, but pointed case studies after each chapter. Most important, however, is the appendix on keeping an Administrative Journal. The journal provides a way of connecting theory and practice by examining one's administrative experiences from four different perspectives. Careful use of the Administrative Journal will make the material in this text come to life for the reader. In a sense, the reader is asked to develop his or her own case studies through entries he or she makes in the Administrative Journal. Just reading or thinking about theories independent of practice will not substantially affect our actions. For truly significant learning to occur, we need to demonstrate to ourselves the relevance and meaning of theory in our everyday lives. Theory, we will find, is ultimately a very personal matter and the Administrative Journal helps make this connection.

Throughout this work, I have come to believe more firmly that ideas do make a difference. Human action requires human thought, and without thought, our actions are blind. However, when we realize that thought leads to action, we must also recognize the responsibility of those who theorize. The connection between thought and action, theory and practice, demands that those who think

and those who write share a moral obligation with those who act in public organizations. This responsibility, the responsibility of the theorist, has, for the most part, been underplayed in our field. A more thorough understanding of the vocation and the obligation of the theorists is very much needed in our discipline—and indeed in all the social sciences.

A word of special appreciation should go to those persons who have been most important in my own learning about public organizations and to those who have provided help and support during our work on this project, in both its original and revised versions. Foremost among them, I want to recognize my colleagues at the University of Missouri–Columbia, the University of Colorado–Denver, the University of Delaware, and Arizona State University. I have also benefited greatly from my association with a network of other public administration theorists around the country including friends such as John Nalbandian, Orion White, Cynthia McSwain, Tom Catlaw, George Frederickson, Bob Backoff, Sloane Dugan, Barry Hammond, Astrid Merget, Larry Kirkhart, Michael Harmon, Naomi Lynn, Brint Milward, Frank Marini, Bayard Catron, Guy Adams, Jim Wolf, Frank Sherwood, George Frederickson, John Forester, Cam Stivers, Cheryl King, David Farmer, and Ralph Hummel. I also want to thank the administrative practitioners who have been so helpful in focusing our work over the past years. And I want to acknowledge the work of a very talented and helpful doctoral assistant, Chase Gordon.

Finally, at a personal level, thanks should go to those who have sustained and encouraged us throughout this project, especially Janet, and always Michael and Cari.

# About the Author

**Robert B. Denhardt** is an ASU Regents Professor, Lattie and Elva Coor Presidential Chair, director of the School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University, and a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the University of Delaware. Dr. Denhardt is a past president of the American Society for Public Administration and a member of the National Academy of Public Administration. Dr. Denhardt has published twenty-one books, including *The Dance of Leadership, The New Public Service, Managing Human Behavior in Public and Non-Profit Organizations, Public Administration: An Action Orientation, In the Shadow of Organization, The Pursuit of Significance, Executive Leadership in the Public Service, The Revitalization of the Public Service,* and *Pollution and Public Policy.* He has held appointments at a number of American universities and has served in a variety of university administrative positions. Dr. Denhardt is also a consultant to state and local jurisdictions in the areas of leadership and organizational change.

*The welfare, happiness, and very lives of all of us rest in significant measure upon the performance of administrative mechanisms that surround and support us. From the central matters of food and shelter to the periphery of our intellectual activity, the quality of administration in modern society touches our daily lives. Today your life may depend upon the administration of purity controls in a pharmaceutical house, tomorrow it may depend upon the decisions of a state department of motor vehicles, next week it may rest with the administrative wisdom of an official in the Department of State. Willy-nilly, administration is everyone's concern. If we wish to survive, we had better be intelligent about it.*

—Dwight Waldo (1955, p. 70)

*Free and unfree, controlling and controlled, choosing and being chosen, inducing and unable to resist inducement, the source of authority and unable to deny it, independent and dependent, nourishing their personalities and yet depersonalized: forming purposes and being forced to change them, searching for limitations in order to make decisions, seeking the particular but concerned with the whole, finding leaders and denying their leadership, hoping to dominate the earth and being dominated by the unseen—this is the story of man and society told on these pages.*

—Chester Barnard (1948, p. 296)

# Contents

PREFACE ix
ABOUT THE AUTHOR xiii

**1 Learning about Public Organizations 1**

The Acquisition of Knowledge 2
Formal Theories of Public Organization 9
Building Theories of Public Organization 11
Focusing on Complex Organizations 14
Redefining the Field 16
Conclusion 17
Discussion Questions 18
Cases 18
References and Additional Readings 19

**2 The Intellectual Heritage: Marx, Weber, and Freud 20**

Karl Marx 21
Transition to Socialism 22
Industrial Organization and Individual Development 23
Growth of Alienation 24
Max Weber 26
Rationalization of Social Theory: The Notion of the "Ideal Type" 27
Sigmund Freud 31
What Can We Learn? 35



此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Conclusion 38
Discussion Questions 39
Cases 39
References and Additional Readings 39

**3 The Political Heritage: From Wilson to Waldo 41**
Beginnings of Public Administration Theory 42
Politics–Administration 45
The Lingering Influence of Politics–Administration 49
Adopting Business Management Techniques 51
Scientific Approaches to Management 52
Administrative Management and Organizational Structure 57
Centralization and Integration 58
Efficiency: The Key Measure of Success 63
Democratic Administration 65
Conclusion 67
Discussion Questions 68
Cases 68
References and Additional Readings 69

**4 The Rational Model of Organization 71**
A Science of Human Behavior 71
The Generic Approach to Administration 72
The Proverbs of Administration 73
The Rational Model of Administration 76
Decision Making and Policy Formulation 81
Closed Systems versus Open Systems 86
Conclusion 90
Discussion Questions 91
Cases 91
References and Additional Readings 91

**5 Organizational Humanism and the New Public Administration 93**
Themes in Organizational Humanism 94
Personality and Organization 98
Organization Development in the Public Sector 102
The New Public Administration 106

Conclusion 113
Discussion Questions 114
Cases 114
References and Additional Readings 114

**6 The Policy Emphasis and the New Public Management 117**

Development of the Public Policy Orientation 118
Responsiveness in Public Policy 121
Effectiveness in Public Policy 130
The Discovery of Policy Implementation 133
Methods of Policy Analysis 136
The Intellectual Crisis 138
The New Public Management 141
Conclusion 149
Discussion Questions 149
Cases 150
References and Additional Readings 150

**7 Public Administration and the New Public Service 155**

A Critique of the Rational Model 157
Interpretive/Action Theory 163
Critical Social Theory 167
Discourse and Post-Traditional Public Administration 173
The New Public Service 182
Outlining the New Public Service 190
Democratic Network Governance 193
Conclusion 197
Discussion Questions 197
Cases 198
References and Additional Readings 198

**8 The Practitioner as Theorist 205**

Theories and Theory Building 206
Toward Theories of Public Organization 208
Organizational and Personal Learning 212
A New Role for Theorists 214
Conclusion 215

Discussion Questions 216
Cases 216
References and Additional Readings 216

**Appendix 218**

The Administrative Journal 218
The Journal Format 220
Working in the Administrative Journal 223
Examples of Journal Entries 224

CREDITS 227
NAME INDEX 228
SUBJECT INDEX 232

# 1

# Learning about Public Organizations

Dwight Waldo's appraisal of the importance of public organizations in our daily lives is even more relevant today than when it was written over fifty years ago (Waldo, 1955). During that time, public organizations at the federal, state, and local levels have grown tremendously, to the point that today over 22 million people are employed by government in this country. In addition, millions more are employed in businesses and nonprofit organizations that play an essential role in the governance process. More important, the range and complexity of the issues addressed by government and related agencies have been extended far beyond what we might have envisioned even a few years ago. Because of the serious impact public organizations have on our lives, when we talk about administration, as Waldo says, we had better be intelligent.

As Chester Barnard points out, however, we must also maintain a sense of the quality of organizational life. Although we often think of the public bureaucracy as an impersonal mechanism, behind each of our encounters with public organizations lies a lengthy and complex chain of human events, understandings, and behaviors developed in the everyday lives of people just like us. Organizations are indeed the products of individual human actions—actions with special meanings and significance to those who act. The allegedly impersonal organization is the backdrop for a very personal world.

For this reason, public organizations may look quite different, depending on our particular perspective. As an example, we often talk about the endless maze of confusion and red tape that seems to characterize public organizations. Certain agencies, despite their alleged interest in efficiency and service, seem "designed" to prevent satisfactory solutions to our problems. On the one hand, the

bureaucracy may respond in such a routinized way as to appear uncaring; on the other, it may seem so arbitrary as to be cruel. Consequently, we should not be surprised that many Americans have a rather low opinion of public bureaucracy.

This picture changes as we become more familiar with the bureaucracy and the people who inhabit it. These individuals are, for the most part, highly concerned and competent, working to make a living and seeking to deal effectively with the complex issues they face. For most, the old notion of public service is not dead. Working for the government is not just another job; it is a chance to participate in solving difficult public problems. It is the "real world," in which people experience pain and pride, joy and disappointment. It is a very personal place.

In one sense, this book is concerned with what it means to be intelligent about public organizations; but it is also concerned with how our knowledge may be used to deal compassionately with human problems. We will be concerned with a fairly basic set of questions: How can we develop a better and more systematic understanding of public organizations? What do we need to know in order to make public organizations more responsive? How can we employ the knowledge we have gained so as to improve the quality of our lives?

## THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

These questions have practical as well as theoretical importance. Any administrative practitioner must constantly (though not necessarily consciously) ask what knowledge can be generated and how it can be applied. What do I need to know about this organization, how can I find out, and how can I use this information? In all cases, the manager must make certain choices about the accumulation of knowledge, and then make decisions and take actions based on that knowledge. Indeed, one might argue that issues of knowledge acquisition lie at the heart of administration.

Of course, people gain knowledge in many ways. Our understanding of public organizations is clearly influenced by events that occur even before we regularly encounter those organizations. Our experiences in the family teach us much about power, authority, and communication, while our experiences in church and in school present us with information about more structured organizations. By the time we begin to deal with major public organizations, either as members or as clients, we have been thoroughly socialized in terms of some basic patterns of behavior and action. Nevertheless, there is still a great deal of information we must acquire and a number of different ways in which we can acquire it. We can depend on rumor or hearsay, we can investigate the organization's past practices, we can listen and learn from the advice of others in the organization, or we can let ourselves be guided by efficiency experts and organization development specialists.

## Deriving Theory from Practice

In each of these ways, we are constructing our own personal approach to or theory of public organization; we are seeking explanations or understanding that will allow us systematically to view public organizations, their members, and their clients. The body of observations and evaluations we make may be said to constitute implicit theories of public organizations, in the sense that although they may rarely be articulated or even consciously considered, they constitute a set of propositions about the way in which public organizations work. Most important, these theories do not exist apart from practice; they are integrally related to the way we act as members or clients of public agencies. Our every action occurs within the framework of the theories we hold, or, more precisely, as an expression of our theoretical positions. In the field of action, theory and practice are one. This statement seems simple enough, but exactly the opposite characterization, that theory and practice are disconnected, is in fact the one more frequently heard in contemporary discussions of public administration. Administrative practitioners often complain that theorists, from the Founding Fathers to present-day academics, live and work in ivory towers so distant from the world of practice that their principles and pronouncements hardly correspond to life in the real world. Meanwhile, academics, even those most concerned with the relevance of administrative studies, complain that practitioners in public agencies are so concerned with the nuts and bolts of administration that they fail to maintain a theoretical overview. The gulf between theory and practice seems too great to bridge.

Far more than a contest between academics and practitioners is at stake here; rather, as we will see, the theory–practice issue is central to the question of developing an intelligent and compassionate approach to public organizations. For this reason, a central aim of this book is to develop an understanding of public organizations that enables us to integrate theory and practice, reflection and action. To that end, subsequent chapters present an overview of those theories of the individual, the organization, and society that have been proposed as guidelines for explaining the actions of public organizations; a specific question will be how those theories and the arguments on which they have been built inform our own processes of theory building—processes that lead to our implicit theories of administration. In the course of reviewing these works, the relationship between theory and practice is critically examined, and this relationship is ultimately reconstructed around the concept of personal action.

*The central aim of this book is to develop an understanding of public organizations that enable us to integrate theory and practice, reflection and action.*

## Different Approaches: Case 1

We have indicated that both academics and practitioners have sought to solve the problem of knowledge acquisition in public administration. In order to

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com