

*THE SOCIAL
CONSTRUCTION
OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION*

*Interpretive and
Critical Perspectives*

JONG S. JUN

Foreword by Frank P. Sherwood

The Social Construction of Public Administration

SUNY series in Public Administration
Peter W. Colby, editor

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*To my wife,
Soon Ye Regina,
for her support*

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Foreword</i> | xi |
| <i>Frank P. Sherwood</i> | |
| <i>Preface</i> | xxi |
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| The Limitations of Modern Public Administration | 3 |
| Social Construction in a Democratic Context | 9 |
| Dialectical Possibilities | 13 |
| Learning from a Cross-Cultural Perspective | 15 |
| The Orientation of this Book | 18 |
| 2 The Changing Context of Public Administration | 21 |
| Unanticipated Consequences in the Twentieth Century | 21 |
| Lessons for the New Century | 29 |
| Reinterpreting the Meaning of Public Administration | 31 |
| Dialectic in Administrative Action | 38 |
| Conclusion | 41 |
| 3 The Social Constructionist Approach | 43 |
| The Limitations of the Functionalist Perspective | 44 |
| The Interpretive, Critical Theory, and Postmodern Perspectives | 46 |
| Theorizing the Social Constructionist Approach | 55 |
| Globalization as Social Construction | 66 |
| Reflection | 70 |
| 4 Public Administration as Social Design | 73 |
| The Use and Abuse of Metaphor | 73 |
| Design: A Basic Concept | 75 |

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| | Administrative Science, Art, and Social Design | 78 |
| | The Modes of Administrative and Policy Design | 84 |
| | Conclusion | 99 |
| 5 | Social Design in Practice | 101 |
| | Coproduction and Community Policing | 102 |
| | Bridging the Digital Divide in Silicon Valley | 105 |
| | Helping Homelessness | 108 |
| | Designing the Public Transit System | 111 |
| | The Clinton Health Care Reform Plan: From Social Design to Incrementalism | 114 |
| | The Limits of Social Design | 119 |
| | Conclusion | 120 |
| 6 | Understanding Action, Praxis, and Change | 123 |
| | The Dialectic of Organizational Action | 124 |
| | Praxis and Change | 134 |
| | The Praxis-Oriented Administrators | 136 |
| | Changing Organizations and Action Research | 139 |
| | Conclusion | 144 |
| 7 | The Self in Social Construction | 147 |
| | Social Construction of the Self: Eastern and Western Views | 148 |
| | The Self and Sociality: Western Views | 159 |
| | Postmodern Views of the Self | 162 |
| | Implications of Eastern and Western Views | 166 |
| | The Self-Reflexive Individual in a Social Context | 168 |
| | The Self and Bureaucracy | 170 |
| | Conclusion | 175 |
| 8 | The Social Construction of Ethical Responsibility | 177 |
| | The Ethical Dilemma of the Responsible Administrator | 178 |
| | Constructing Ethics in Organizations | 186 |
| | A Public Conception of Autonomy: Confucian and Western Views | 196 |
| | Civic Virtue and the Public Good | 199 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Connecting Administrators and Citizens | 201 |
| Conclusion | 205 |
| 9 Civil Society, Governance, and Its Potential | 207 |
| The Civil Society Triangle: A New Form of Governance | 207 |
| From Hierarchical Governing to Democratic Governance | 211 |
| NGOs as a Force for Social Change | 215 |
| A Case of Local Governance: Resolving the Soup Kitchen Controversy | 220 |
| Designing Modern Development Projects | 224 |
| Globalization and Democratization: A Contradiction | 228 |
| Implications | 232 |
| 10 Concluding Thoughts | 235 |
| Recapitulation | 237 |
| Making Social Construction Effective | 241 |
| The Tao of Public Administration | 251 |
| <i>Notes</i> | 259 |
| <i>References</i> | 267 |
| <i>Index</i> | 291 |

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FOREWORD

The first priority in this introduction is to ensure that readers of this book are fully aware of the credentials of its author, Jong S. Jun.

He may be the most outstanding theorist in public administration today. The quantitative evidence is his remarkable output of scholarly work. Perhaps more important, though, is the perspective he brings to his studies and resulting publications. His roots are in the Far East, but he has spent his entire working career of thirty-seven years teaching in the United States. He is unique in that he brings to his philosophical considerations both a Western and an Eastern orientation. That meshing of the two worlds is very evident in this book, as in many other works.

While his rich background allows him insights that most of us can only envy, it is also important to recognize the profound wisdom of this book, which he regards as the capstone of his long and productive research efforts. It is his effort to summarize what he has discovered in nearly half a century of research.

Jun is a native of South Korea and received his early schooling there, including a Bachelor of Laws degree. In 1961 he came to the United States and has lived here ever since. He studied political science at the University of Oregon with a man well known to us old timers, Bert Wengert, who was highly influential in developing the case method of teaching in public administration. Wengert undoubtedly saw Jun as having a promising future and urged him to secure his doctorate in Public Administration.

With a master's degree in hand, Jun enrolled in the PhD program at the School of Public Administration, University of Southern California. His thirst for work and learning quickly became evident, particularly to one of the school's senior professors, William B. Storm. Jun came to him one day and announced, "I want to work with you and learn from you. I don't care about money. I just want to work and learn." It was such enthusiasm that caused Storm to enroll him as a graduate assistant and to serve as his mentor. It was an extremely fruitful relationship in which

the two collaborated on two books, both published within five years after Jun had completed his doctoral work.

One of those books, *Tomorrow's Organizations: Challenges and Strategies* (Jun and Storm, 1973)¹ enabled me to become fully aware of Jun's capacities. Since I knew this was a real collaboration between Jun and Storm, I was very much struck how these two had combined to produce one of the few outstanding books of the last half-century. Shortly after it came out in 1973 and I had read it, I quickly assigned it to my graduate students with this observation, "If you read this book carefully and understand it fully, you will know about all that anybody knows about organization theory in the public sector." It was that good. My sense is that *Tomorrow's Organizations* never achieved the reputation it deserved because it was a collection of readings. That characterization results in an automatic discounting. In reality, though, Jun and Storm produced a book within a book. The introductions to the four sections of readings were absolutely brilliant. They could have comprised a book by themselves.

As a result of that fine volume, I never took anything Jun wrote lightly. He certainly had my attention. I do not want to imply I have read everything Jun has written. He has been far too prolific. He has published eight books, including three collaborated volumes. My count shows that he has published over fifty articles, book chapters, and symposium issues, roughly half of them dealing with ideas that appear in this book. He has been primarily a philosopher of public administration, as the content of this volume and the many articles and papers attest.

The mixing of the East and West is also very evident in an examination of his intellectual output. Various papers focus on South Korea, Japan, and China. When you examine all the unpublished papers, panel presentations, invited speeches, and consulting assignments, you quickly realize how international is his presence. He lists at least thirteen countries in which he has made intellectual contributions, the larger bulk of them in the Pacific Rim. Also, however, he lists a wide range of countries around the world where he has given lectures or been involved in other activities: Russia, Brazil, Italy, England, Austria, France, Australia, and the Netherlands.

South Korea has been, of course, a particularly frequent object of his attentions. The numerous involvements there are simply too many to report here. I have heard, however, that Jun's reputation in South

Korea is simply immense. Japan has also received a considerable amount of his attention. He spent more than a year there as a visiting scholar and has written insightfully about those experiences.

While he has lived a highly cosmopolitan life, it is extremely interesting that Jun's US teaching responsibility has been at only one institution, the California State University at Hayward, California. He went there as a young assistant professor in 1968, rose through its ranks, and took partial retirement in 2000, thirty-two years later. Without wanting to depreciate the overall quality of Cal State-Hayward, I think it is fair to say that Jun, with some remarkably fine colleagues he recruited, gave the public administration program a reputation far beyond that of the university as a whole. He helped create a stimulating intellectual environment that he had little interest in leaving.

Further, Hayward provided him opportunities that might not have been so easily available elsewhere. While his research might have led him to increasing abstractions, he was always grounded by his students. They tended to work in state and local governments, and thus much of Jun's teaching had to be immediate and practical. This book reveals that Jun has never strayed far from these moorings.

Aside from having an appreciation of the quality of the author, it is important to develop an understanding for the departure point of this book. To summarize his feelings, Jun is profoundly disappointed with the way things are going in "mainstream" public administration. He is particularly troubled by the tendency of newly minted PhD's from non-Western countries to make the incorporation of Western ideas their basic agenda. He feels there are severe limitations to the notion that non-Western countries can be transformed by Western ideas. In fact, he makes it clear that the consequences of such efforts are often negative.

While he counsels that culture ought to play much larger part in our thinking about public administration, Jun is particularly concerned about two facets of the field. In both areas, he feels an urgent need for change. We have to understand these shortfalls before we can process fully the exquisitely reasoned approaches to change offered by Jun. (I should note that I want to be sure they are understood because I am so much in agreement with him.)

One is the decline in the importance of the qualifier *public*, in public administration. That is important because public administration is

not concerned with *any* type of administration. It is specifically about handling matters of public consequence. Second, we seem to have only one way of organizing for any kind of collective action, a structure of top-down command. The approach has many dysfunctional consequences, which Jun emphasizes in this book. That is why he seeks to change our thinking and discover new alternatives for handling collaborative tasks.

The problem with 'public' seems a more geographically discreet problem than hierarchy, the label we typically attach to top-down approaches. In the United States we are perilously close to a disappearance of 'public,' with a generic *administration* taking over. That does not seem to be occurring in Asia in the same degree. Jun writes that culture makes a big difference. In Asia the sense of community is much stronger, influenced in great degree by the Buddhist religion. Both *community* and 'public' convey the idea of other-regarding events, and thus the modifier continues to have significance in Asian public administration.

In the United States, where the emphasis is much less on the community and far more on the individual, public administration is now regarded only as a minor variant in the variety of ways in which people get together to do common tasks. The general assumption is that administration (or management) is the same in any purposeful context. No values attach to the process.

The situation is made murkier by differences in the way public administration is practiced and ways in which it is taught. For the last thirty-five years governments in the United States have been increasingly politicized. In the federal bureaucracy, for example, there are virtually no career civil servants in top leadership positions, which are occupied by political appointees whose accountability is to political interests not to public. Such officials tend to see administration in highly instrumental terms. They have spearheaded a tremendous movement toward the contracting out of government activities, once again emphasizing that there is no public in their concept of public administration.

In the institutions teaching public administration, there is a substantial number of professors who share Jun's views. Yet the product they deliver is remarkably aligned with approaches in the practicing world. The typical courses taught are reflective of an instrumental orientation: budgeting, personnel and human resources, organizing, pol-

icy analysis, information management, and positivistic research. It is becoming increasingly rare to find even a course in behavior in the curriculum. I am not sure these are the courses many professors would chose to teach, but they remain pillars of public administration curriculums. That is what the clientele demands.

In the non-Western nations there is a tendency to retain structures that appear to be public. Such bureaucracies have been influenced, however, by Western approaches and thus have honored rational technologies. Such value-neutral instruments have the advantage of preserving for the bureaucrats an independent position of power in the society. Sadly, that independence and isolation preclude any real interest in involving citizens in their activities. So they operate relatively free from an engagement with the polity they are expected to serve.

Jun summarizes the problem of publicness in public administration in the following terms: "The professional bias of public administration toward rational analysis, efficiency, planning and goal maintenance means that public administration is largely administration, that is, it serves mostly to govern and manage the public. The ideas of participation, deliberation, civic engagement, citizen empowerment, and democratic process are secondary to public administration." That is a condition which, he feels, urgently needs changing.

Throughout his book, Jun points to the great dysfunctions that arise from the worldwide addiction to top-down systems of organizing, which we characteristically label "hierarchy." Because Max Weber viewed a bureaucracy as rooted in hierarchy, the word (*bureaucracy*) tends to be used synonymously with hierarchy. While the concept of 'bureaucracy' incorporates a number of other features, it is the command feature that is honored and adopted. It is a notion of centralization where someone is put in charge, given authority, and held accountable. Things reached an extreme in the United States when the Department of Homeland Security was created. Over eighty thousand employees of widely divergent agencies were put under the command of one person. There seems general agreement that the result has been chaos. What was undertaken for rational reasons turns out to be highly irrational.

There are many problems in applying the concept of 'hierarchy' to complex human organizations, as Jun has so ably reported. In my thinking, two have rendered hierarchy exceedingly vulnerable. In an organization with eighty thousand people, it has to be recognized that

there is no simple set of goals to be pursued. Deciding what is most important to do involves delicate negotiations among all those who have a stake in the organization. In reality it should be accepted that negotiations must occur with all eighty thousand employees because each wants different things from the organization. Certainly no single boss can process those claims. To reduce these kinds of stresses, hierarchical organizations are typically reified as technological machines with fairly standardized parts, subject to orders from above. The effect is to depersonalize what is an intensely human situation and to act as if those in it were not people at all. Not only is this a defiance of reality, but also it is stupid. People are still people.

Even more significantly, hierarchical organizations are extremely poor learners. That is a fatal flaw because, in the last analysis, learning paves the way for change. Despite the fact that the complex organization must be learning in a host of ways, the premise of the hierarchy is that the person in charge is the principal learner. We need only to recognize that those at the periphery of the organization are engaged in the real work and have direct contact with those in its environment to see where the real learning must occur. The boss and his advisers back at headquarters are not close enough to the action to know what is really happening. Things tend to emerge upside down. The boss, with precious little information, is doing the telling, whereas he or she ought to be listening, and folks on the periphery do the telling. In the overall, Jun is absolutely right that there ought to be a determined assault on an organizational strategy that gives us nothing but trouble. As I have indicated, Jun has laid out ways to think about these problems and how to proceed toward at least more tolerable solutions.

Finally, it may be of some value to provide a small case experience that, at least in part, bears upon the strategy he espouses. The Federal Executive Institute, intended to serve as the staff college for the senior career service in the federal government, was established in 1968. This was a time of extreme turmoil and unrest in the United States, triggered in major degree by the Watts riots. It was also a period when the most elemental assumptions of our social organizations were under severe criticism. Mario Savio, from the University of California at Berkeley, led much of this assault. He was convinced that everyone over thirty had sold out to the establishment and could not be saved.

Though the federal government was the bulwark of the establishment, there were stirrings within its ranks, particularly among

careerists. They were not about to buy the Savio line, but they really felt the government was too fragmented, unable to see the whole, and glacial in its pursuit of change. They believed that the people with the best prospects for bringing about change were the top careerists, who, up to that time, had not had formal development opportunities available to them. These federal executives were, on average, forty-five years of age, had been out of school about twenty years, and had another ten to twenty years of government service ahead of them.

The challenges to all the key actors in our complex, huge public systems were many. As Jun observed, the 60s and 70s were turbulent, but they were much more receptive to change than the decades that followed.

It is within this context that the origins of the Federal Executive Institute must be viewed. The roughly 350 executives who annually came to a residential campus in Charlottesville, Virginia, were expected to internalize two messages, one that the government could do much better and the second that they were agents charged with bringing this about.

It is clear that *change* was the word in good currency. But I remember that much of the original thinking for the institute was that the executives should be instructed how that new world would look. The premise was change, not (as Jun has eloquently noted) changing. We on the faculty saw the problem a bit differently, namely, that it was our job to help executives embrace the idea of changing, both personally and organizationally. In all honesty, I do not think any of us felt we were smart enough or wise enough to instruct senior executives on how the world should or would look.

We decided on two things: (a) to focus on individuals, not their roles in organizations or the organizations themselves; and (b) to heighten their learning interests and then to help them improve their learning capacities, all as a prerequisite to a greater commitment to changing.

The goal was pursued in a variety of ways and had clear consequences at the institute. A substantial number of executives told me personally that the institute was the first situation in their federal careers in which they thought of themselves as individuals. One small thing we did was to eliminate from our rosters any reference to civil service rank, which varied from GS-15 to GS-18. Because we eliminated the virtually obligatory “pecking order” rules, the way individuals were perceived

and regarded had little to do with their civil service rank. Generally, the people from the field got the most attention. They were seen as knowing the most about the real world, though they were typically the lowest ranked. This seemed to support my view that the greatest learning resources in an organization are those closest to the action, not those in headquarters.

The concepts of the individual and learning were closely tied together, as our interest was in building a learning commitment and capacity in the individual and not the organization. For many this was a totally new experience. They said they had not thought about personal learning since they left the university. Conceptually, it did not occur to them that learning was a part of living, and changing. Life for them was much more a matter of behaving in terms of learned routines, carrying little excitement and even less growth.

The learning model we embraced was a very simple one. Exposure and feedback are required. People learn when they open themselves by exhibiting an attitude or behavior and thus provide data to others, drawing feedback. We found that the model was easy to articulate but hard to implement. Federal bureaucrats had generally found that the less they exposed themselves the better, and they were similarly reluctant to give feedback to others. One of our great accomplishments was to turn things around. By the time executives left the institute, they were particularly disposed to give feedback, recognizing it as an obligation to their colleagues. They had also become more comfortable with the idea of exposure.

Another highly important outcome of their experience was that the executives came to care for each other genuinely. They were extremely close emotionally and felt the obligation to give each other support. That was a new experience. It was vastly different from their work environment, where competition and disdain for personal needs and interests were the order of the day.

Research on executives who had left the institute about a year earlier (performed by an independent organization) produced a finding that we had never conceived or anticipated. A substantial majority of respondents declared that the Federal Executive Institute had significantly increased their self-confidence. While that gain may seem deeply personal, it has enormous organizational implications because personal confidence is the key to delegation. Moreover, delegation is about the best way we know to introduce flexibility into muscle-bound

hierarchies. People who do not trust themselves are highly unlikely to trust others. They do not delegate, and the result is the kind of top down behavior we see in most hierarchies. A most important outcome of the FEI experiences, then, may have been a greater willingness to delegate.

In writing about some of the ways in which the eight-week residence at the Federal Executive Institute at least opened up the thinking and behavior options for many executives, I certainly do not want to claim that these changes carried over in any significant way to the federal government. In another time and circumstance, these executives might have made a real difference. But Washington was changing. The career service was losing ground, and politically loyal operatives were assuming the levers of government. There was no difference among the parties. Both wanted their politically loyal people in command. Further, the effect was to reinvigorate the dedication to hierarchy.

I hope this foreword will be regarded only as a precursor to Jun's book, with its thoroughly researched inquiries into the really daunting dilemmas governments face today. As I have sought to emphasize, we do need radically new thought, and I believe Jun is leading us in a fruitful, positive direction.

Frank P. Sherwood

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P R E F A C E

Countries in the East and West are in the midst of a great transformation: the democratization of the governing process. The Western countries, the United States in particular, are working to renew democratic ideals and practices by strengthening the process of deliberative democracy. Because of the need for government intervention to solve complex social and cultural problems, Asian countries—which are relatively new to the great democratic experiment—are ineluctably immersed in the improvement of political democracy through strong government. But despite the dynamic transformation taking place nationally and globally, public institutions in both the East and the West are slow to change their practices, instead continuing to try to solve complex human issues with traditional management concepts and techniques.

To cope with a paradoxical, ambiguous, and continuously changing world, we need a new framework for dealing with a multiplicity of realities. There are, I believe, more possibilities in participation and communication among people collectively and in individual growth and change than in managing programs and people or typical efforts at the rearrangement of organizational structure, functions, and processes. The latter, however sincere, represents domination by management, which has often proven unresponsive to and ineffective in resolving contemporary dilemmas. The social construction of reality introduced in this book is neither a new concept nor a new idiom in social sciences, although it is not widely known by students of public administration.

In this book, I present conceptual perspectives whereby we may gain greater comprehension of our situations, realities, organizational efforts, social design, action and behavior, the self, ethics, and so on: this is a vital step in understanding the public and people. As people become better able to engage in their personal and organizational worlds, they learn to take joy in their empowerment, in challenging inhibiting formalisms, management-driven projects, rules, directives,

and so on. They learn to find meaning in reconstructing organizational order and exploring alternatives without sacrificing either organizational goals or functional obligations. We are unlikely to return to the type of turbulence that we experienced during the 1960s and early 1970s in the United States, a period in which individuals rebelled against authority, demanding individual freedoms and rights.

Considering the present circumstances of institutional control, dwindling resources, demands for performance and delivery of service, information technology, and local and global politics, we must work with both management and the public. We will, however, be more effective if we act collectively in questioning the unintended consequences of hierarchical governing, problem solving, and change. Working through democratic process of participation, dialogue, and sharing interests is likely to offer more possibilities than if we each act alone. My emphasis is on the interpretation of the different meanings of objects that we create and the individual experiences that people bring to a situation, by critically exploring possibilities through the collective empowerment of the people who are affected by particular policies and actions.

This book is intended for a broad range of readers who have an interest in their relationships with themselves, with management and organizational members, with decision makers and marginal people, and with citizens and their problems. To be as inclusive as possible, I present social construction as a framework so that all of us may think about whether construction of action strategies is possible through the engagement of people and communicative action. More important, I try to relate the self to the interaction process, that is, to an individual's contribution through sharing his or her interests with others, learning which interests are mutual. People feel more comfortable once they learn to take risks in a group, to be experimental, flexible, optimistic, and imaginative. Group members learn to challenge existing ways of thinking, doing, and finding satisfaction in seeking new possibilities. I hope through this book, students of public administration will learn the hazards of oversimplification and develop some action skills as "complexifiers," divergent thinkers, reflexive facilitators, and critical agents of change.

In this book, I try to show that the management orientation emphasized by mainstream public administration is grossly inadequate. Instead, I attempt to reconstruct the study of public administration as a part of social, political, and democratic practice. Thus my most imme-

diate concern transcends the idea of the strong administrative state, bureaucracy, and a single discipline or field of study. My point of departure is the social and political processes of confronting problems and searching for solutions and alternatives to them. I do not reject the importance of management or the technical necessity of public administration: efficient management as well as implementation of techniques largely depends upon the collaboration of the people who are affected by them. If we want to improve the adequacy and effectiveness of public administration, then we must change our perspectives. We must use different ways of knowing that are interpretive, critical, and qualitative. We must also understand the social, cultural, and political contexts in which problems originate and the meanings that people attach to them. In this regard, my approach in this book may be considered critical pragmatism because my arguments in different chapters emphasize the pragmatic possibilities grounded in human praxis, as argued by Richard Bernstein in *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Action* (1971). I consider the functionalist and positivistic approach to public administration to be largely instrumental pragmatism that aims to maintain rational control of the organizational process.

This book also represents my own agonized efforts to understand, explain, and bridge the administrative cultures of the East and the West. Thus my endeavor is to apply the perspectives and problems of administrative theory to different administrative contexts and to draw some theoretical implications from cases and examples, comparing and contrasting different cultures and experiences. The arguments in this book are as much a reflection of my understanding of the cultural contexts of public administration in different countries as they are critical analyses of the politics, policies, administrations, and people discussed. I speak as a person who has lived in several Asian countries and who has lived most of my academic and adult life in the United States. I think that therefore I have a sympathetic ear for and an understanding of people in different administrative cultures in various countries. At the same time, I do not hesitate to discuss the problems in those countries. My experiences in visiting different countries have greatly furthered my intellectual development.

At annual meetings of the Public Administration Theory Network and in the journal *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, a wide range of significant theory issues has been introduced and debated. Although I have immensely enjoyed my participation in dialogue with my theoretically

oriented colleagues, I have also struggled with the fact that we are talking among ourselves, not reaching out to our students or to mainstream public administrators. Other fields in the social sciences face a similar problem in conveying alternative ways of knowing to those who are more accustomed to positivistic and scientific inquiry. One important theoretical contribution of the Public Administration Theory Network is the exploration of different ways of knowing, particularly the interpretive, critical theory, and postmodern perspectives; this exploration helps to encourage open dialogue among scholars. This book is the product of my own learning as I worked with international scholars who were intellectually sincere about studying the effects of theory on practice and the effects of practice on theorizing.

I am inevitably aware, in a book of this kind, of discussing superficially diverse topics that many other scholars know more about than I. My only plea is to show the need for going beyond the traditional influence of hierarchical governing and management. We need to pay attention to ways of enhancing the responsibility of people in the process of changing organizations and policies through practicing social and democratic alternatives. To understand the complexity and change the institutions, we need to seek ideas and concepts that are often the opposite of the assumptions of dominant theories and approaches. The philosophy and the new conceptualization of public administration need to accept the idea that administrative actions are embedded in and overlap with the complexity of social practices that involve the public and the individuals.

I am greatly indebted to Frank Sherwood for his gracious foreword to this book. His distinguished achievements as former dean of the School of Public Administration at USC, founding director of USC Washington Public Affairs Center, founding director of the Federal Executive Institute, and former Jerry Collins Eminent Scholar at Florida State University inspired me to learn the importance of integrating theory and practice. Raymond Pomerleau and Richard VrMeer read the complete manuscript and offered invaluable criticisms and suggestions. They have been the source of my learning the intricacies of American culture for nearly forty years. A number of people read chapters in various forms, including Ann Cunliffe, Dvora Yanow, Richard Box, Budd Kass, my graduate students, and the anonymous reviewers for the publisher. To all these people, I owe more gratitude than I am able to express.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

We live in an “age of paradox,” in which our good intentions to progress and our efforts to improve the quality of life produce unintended consequences and often contradictory results (Handy, 1994). This paradox results when policy makers put forth a strong argument for pursuing one policy and neglecting another, less pressing, one, such as preferring development over environmental protection, administrative efficiency over effectiveness, or organizational goals over individual needs. Although economic progress has meant material bounty for the individual in industrialized and postindustrialized countries, it has also produced numerous negative consequences nationally and globally, such as inequality, high consumerism, social divisiveness, and alienation. Because of the growth and spread of industrialization and modernization, people in the workplace and in society are often connected in a merely functional way: they lack intimate, social, or authentic relationships. Because of a desire to manage society and institutions in order to cope with turbulent changes, organizational goals are seen as more important than democratic governance, participation, human growth, or social justice. Although bureaucracies see progress and the management of complexity as necessary for human cooperation, bureaucratic organizations have been hostile to the promotion of democratic ideas. Since the latter part of the twentieth century, however, we have witnessed centrifugal forces working to renew greater human purposes in governing, development, change, and problem solving.

A public administration that relies on conventional pluralistic politics and modern management theories is inadequate for understanding today’s crisis and complex human phenomena. Furthermore, mainstream public administration, which overly emphasizes the role of management, is incapable of developing democratic ways to resolve conflict or generate socially grounded solutions. What is required in the current crisis is a creative awakening to the dialectical social process—to the ability to join what is, what can be, and what should

be—in order to alter the social and administrative structure and processes. In other words, an appreciation of social processes, of the interplay of instrumental and technical elements, and of collective and democratic means of creating a more humane and hopeful society is needed.

When we examine the conceptual orientation of public administration today, we see that the dominant approach to its study, as manifested in the educational curriculum, in research methods used to collect information, in administrative operations, and in reform efforts, is both intellectual and pragmatic. Mainstream public administration reflects this orientation in seeking administrative knowledge and concepts grounded in the positivistic and functionalist tradition of epistemology.¹ But a true understanding of social reality and human relationships requires more than instrumental and rational ways of investigating human knowledge.

This book explores constructive ways of understanding the complex phenomena of public administration by introducing the interpretive and critical perspectives. The concepts applied are a hybrid of phenomenology, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, critical theory, and postmodern ideas. The interpretive approach focuses on social practice: public administrators act in a social situation by listening to other voices. The primary concern of administrators is not to use a theory (or theoretical knowledge) to guide administrative action: rather, their effort is to understand and interpret people's experience and form a sense of mutuality by sharing "intersubjective meanings" (Taylor, 1985b; Schutz, 1967). The critical theory perspective, however, critically reflects on established assumptions, theories, values, and methods and reconstructs possibilities that are democratic and socially acceptable without dismissing the importance of theoretical knowledge and "technical interest" (i.e., the use of instrumental knowledge to control the environment) to administration (Habermas, 1971). The field of public administration needs a critical, self-reflexive practice if it is to improve current practice, which is largely influenced by the people at the top. Members of this elite work hard to justify their ideas and activities, which have produced the current crisis. Western public administration (U.S. public administration in particular) has become a rational-instrumental model for most non-Western countries to keep pace with industrialization and modernization. The growth of bureaucracy in both the Eastern and the Western governments has produced the

management and professional capability. The bureaucratization of public institutions, however, has generated various unintended consequences and faced limitations.

THE LIMITATIONS OF MODERN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The characteristics of modern public administration are adequate administrative guides in a stable organizational environment in which services and everyday operations do not require much innovation, in which people's values and needs remain persistent; and, in which external elements, such as politics, clientele, technology, and economics, remain predictable. In today's globalizing world, however, no organization is so placid. In a rapidly changing society, social phenomena do not remain stable: they are dynamic and continuously changing into new values, new meanings, new structures, and new networks. Coping with turbulent and evolving conditions of the postindustrial era is, nowadays, an inevitable task for organizations. The complexity of environments, organizations, information technology, and people's values requires new ways of understanding and collaborating with people through interaction, dialogue, and information sharing.

A complex public bureaucracy is designed to maintain organizational order, to suppress activities that are disruptive to organizational policies and goals, and to coordinate functional processes in order to assure productivity. Organizational order and survival are stressed by a group of top executives and managers, who exercise power and authority. The establishment of a new government agency, public policy, or goals is social construction because many officials from the executive and legislative branches are involved in the design and passage of the new legislation and policy. For example, the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which created the Department of Homeland Security, brought together twenty-two diverse agencies to help prevent terrorist attacks in the United States, reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorist attacks, and minimize damage and assist in recovery if an attack should occur. The demands imposed by management often create the false impression that dehumanizing organizational control and order are justified. Organizational members are expected to be loyal, committed, and able to manage crisis situations, no matter how strict or depersonalizing the atmosphere in which they function. One of the

most difficult issues facing a complex organization such as Homeland Security is how to establish trusting relationships among a wide variety of federal, state, and local agencies so they can share information regarding vulnerability to and incidents of terrorism. Furthermore, changing the administrative cultures of twenty-two agencies into that of one new cabinet-level department requires the participation of employees from different professional backgrounds in order to strengthen the process of change, allowing employees to share their experiences and shape policies.

The major limitation of modern public administration is the unintended consequences of the elements that are supposed to contribute to the efficient management of agencies. In today's changing environment, these elements tend to hinder human action and undermine participation, horizontal relationships, and human collaboration. Various authors criticize the limitation of both old and contemporary public administration (for example, see Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003; McSwite, 1997; Farmer, 1995; Fox and Miller, 1996; and Kass and Catron, 1990). In this section, I briefly summarize seven common characteristics of traditional public administration and their limitations. They are as follows: (1) vertical governing; (2) professional dominance; (3) instrumental-technical rationality; (4) reified bureaucracy; (5) complexity; (6) placating citizens; and (7) dualistic thinking.

Vertical Governing

Public administration is vertically governed. That is to say, administration in every country is hierarchically organized in order to manage the basic functions of the agency and to enforce rules and regulations in relation to the agency's policies and goals (Goodsell, 1983; Stillman, 1987; Kaufman, 1981; Richardson, 1997). Because authority and power reside at the top of organizational echelons, executives and managers often make important decisions without consulting the people below them. Power is essential for executives and managers in maintaining a bureaucracy: it is a means of controlling the behavior of its members (Hummel, 1994). From the bureaucratic point of view, power must be exercised in order to accomplish established goals. Moreover, power is relational, in that the effective use of power by one actor depends on the perceptions of and cooperation of other actors in interpersonal and interorganizational situations. The traditional way of governing is grad-

ually being transformed into the democratic process of horizontal governance, which puts federal government agencies in a more collaborative role with state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and businesses (Kettl, 2002; Sirianni and Friedland, 2001; Nye and Donahue, 2000).

Professional Dominance

Public administration is greatly influenced by groups of professionals: these include scientists, engineers, health specialists, systems analysts, policy analysts, planners, computer specialists, and economists. Frederick Mosher points out that government creates professionals, legitimizes professions, subsidizes all forms of professional endeavors, and employs an everincreasing proportion of professionals. The professions provide knowledge, training, and leadership to public agencies; influence public policy; and shape the structure of many public agencies (1968, p. 104). The most obvious path to power for professionals in public service is through their specialized training and knowledge. With the command that professionals have of the specialized language and information of their disciplines, they naturally tend to control the decision-making processes and the creation of policy for the public agencies that they represent. Professionalism in a public bureaucracy often impedes the political process. Agencies dominated by professionals often attempt to avoid public debate or the scrutiny of past or future decisions in, for example, dealing with sensitive environmental issues. The narrow focus of most professionals in public service, combined with an impatience and a lack of sensitivity toward the real world of politics and clientele interests, creates an atmosphere of tension and conflict that is inconsistent with the higher moral aims of public service and the ethics of democratic government. Jethro Lieberman, in *The Tyranny of the Experts*, warns that overdependence on professionals in an industrial society hampers the prospect of a more open and democratic society (1970).²

Instrumental-technical Rationality

Further, modern public administration operates under the assumption of instrumental-technical rationality, which Max Weber characterizes as the rationale for the ideal bureaucracy (1947; Gerth and Mills, 1946). For Weber, instrumental rationality is attained by the elaboration (on

the basis of scientific knowledge) of rules that try to direct, from the top down, all behavior toward maximum efficiency. Weber's rationalization is the product of the scientific specialization and technical differentiation peculiar to Western culture, and Weber sometimes associates it with the notion of intellectualization. Guerreiro Ramos (1981), in his critique of the assumptions of the functionalist theories, points out that bureaucratic institutions confront the problem of administrative order by embracing the instrumental requirement of administration (described as instrumental rationality), which denies the potential of individuals to create a new administrative order (or substantive rationality), and focuses mainly on the economic needs of large organizations. Weber, however, is concerned not only with causal explanation and generalization of institutions from an instrumental-rational point of view but also with an interpretive understanding of the subjective meanings that people attribute to their actions (Weber, 1947, p. 88). As Julien Freund describes it, Weber stresses "meaningful relatedness . . . through which we are able to understand, quite apart from objective development, the subjective meaning which a social relationship holds for man and by which he is guided in his social conduct" (1968, p. 89).

Modern bureaucracies adopt various technical means of accomplishing the established goals of management. Individuals in a bureaucracy, however, do not always behave rationally, as top executives and managers expect them to do. Perceptions of employees and clientele are different from those of policy makers. As a result, a supposedly rational bureaucracy is, in practice, often irrational, inefficient, and incapable of understanding the situation or of solving many nonroutine or unanticipated human problems. As Weber argues, in order to understand how people behave in their community and society, we need to understand how they create and destroy various relationships through their actions.

Reified Bureaucracy

When we attempt to understand a bureaucracy by means of Weber's ideal construct, we are conscious of its existence as an objective phenomenon with basic characteristics. Presenting typical functions of a bureaucracy, such as hierarchical relationships, specialized role performance, application of technical skills, and enforcing rules and regulations, is itself an example of objectifying the institutional process. We explain administrative phenomena by adopting words and abstract

concepts for analytical purposes. As time passes, we tend to forget the original intention of constructing such metaphors, accepting them as real things that control bureaucratic life. In other words, we tend to reify the bureaucracy as having a life of its own.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann illustrate reification as the process whereby human beings so lose consciousness of their potential—and their past—as creators of society that they treat a social institution as if it had a life of its own, above and beyond human control (1968, p. 89; also see Gabel, 1975). If changing the undesirable characteristics of bureaucracy is to be possible then understanding the process whereby bureaucracy is reified is of the utmost importance. None of the troublesome elements of bureaucracy apply to Weberian bureaucracy. Rules, roles, and job classifications are historically and culturally constructed as people interpret and accept them as the necessary requirements for maintaining organizational order and operation.

Complexity

The bigness and complexity of public bureaucracy have become another broadly accepted idea in public administration, although not all bureaucracies are large. As society has become more technologically and economically advanced, we have also witnessed the growth of a number of large organizations, along with the rapidly increasing expectations of citizens. In fact, in all industrialized (and postindustrialized) countries, people's lives are very much affected by large organizations, such as government agencies, schools, hospitals, business enterprises, military establishments, and prisons. Complex organizations are networks of social interaction, with socially constructed meaning and collective action (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992).

In addition to the large size of many public organizations, the explosion of information technology and the globalization of all areas of human activity have also contributed to the expansion of networking and interaction, domestically and globally. In dealing with social and political complexity, professionals and policy analysts, however, tend to rely on "excessive rationalism," which ignores effective public deliberation and is unable to realize "failures of rationality" (Bohman, 1996, p. 157). James Bohman argues that in a public situation that involves "hypercomplexity," which means that full knowledge of the situation is impossible and that there are multiple nonlinear interdependencies

between the system and its environment, rational public decision making is impossible. Because of complexity and hyperrationality,³ public organizations tend to emphasize the technical and informational necessity of managing organizations and are thereby less open to the public and less responsive to public criticism.

Placating Citizens

In a democratic society, citizen participation in the political process is essential (Pateman, 1970; Barber, 1984). Since the late 1960s, American public administration has recognized the importance of citizen participation in federally assisted programs. Government agencies that administer programs are supposed to teach citizens how to participate in and influence the many government decisions that affect their lives, as well as to improve government efficiency at all levels.

Unfortunately, although many administrators view citizen participation as an element of democratic administration, they are more interested in placating citizens than in taking citizens' ideas seriously. Government officials and professionals often see citizen involvement (or citizen governance) as "threatening to their interests" (Box, 1998, p. 157). Because bureaucracies at the federal and state levels are so large and complicated, ordinary citizens are not commonly involved in national or state government policy processes. Because of this lack of participatory opportunity in the policy process, more and more citizens are now questioning the effectiveness and competence of policy makers and public administrators. Because citizens are particularly conscious of political issues that affect their lives, administrators often try to influence the attitudes of interest groups and individual citizens. At the same time, public bureaucracies at the local level have become more sensitive to citizen involvement.

Although the idea of citizen participation in democratic countries has become increasingly important, many non-Western countries still control citizen movement by, for example, legally restricting the formation of NGOs. Even in Japanese public administration, although the internal administrative process seems to be more participatory than that of the United States, and many important decisions are made by Gacho (Japanese for "department heads") with the involvement of employees, status-oriented Japanese bureaucrats are less open to citizens' ideas (Muramatsu, 1997; Jun and Muto, 1995).