

American Public Administration: A Foundation for Praxis and Praxiology

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ABSTRACT

American Public Administration (PA) theory and practices have lacked adequately articulated or formalized normative foundations since the formal founding of the American State. Discussions regarding how PA theory derives from individual and collective critical reflection on practices (praxiology) and how that knowledge can inform future actions (praxis) virtually have been absent in all organizations. The recognition of the political legitimacy of PA has been lacking. The placing of a viable and critical social theory that posits conscious, responsible, and committed human practices within the context of the administration of the American Constitutional State, a politically narrow context, has been lacking as well. This dissertation establishes the works of social theorists Orion White, Jr., Michael Harmon, Robert Denhardt and Bayard Catron as the foundation for understanding how individuals do and can contribute to the collective administration of the complex state, including how they operate daily in organizations they join, critique and are capable of changing. These scholars understand the dynamics of human being and present discussions of human actions and practices that are capable of tackling the challenges associated with administering the American State. The work of John Rohr has established the other missing links—the constitutional legitimacy of PA and the clarification of constitutional values to which American administrative actions and knowledge must adhere. This dissertation asserts that it is the placing of human theory and action within the distinctly American theory and practices of the State that constitutes the solid normative foundations for American PA Praxis and Praxiology that constitutes a viable and formal founding of American Public Administration in word and deed.

This dissertation is dedicated to Eugene Peter Groppetti.

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