

# CHAPTER 2

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## Theories of Urban Politics

Every why hath a wherefore.

Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*

### The Inner Logic

A book is usually built around two sets of ideas: an external outline and an inner logic. The external outline organizes the book's topics and sets out the order of their presentation in the table of contents. The inner logic gives the outline its coherence and makes the order of presentation cumulative. With some effort, the inner logic can be deduced from a book's index, but it appears in nothing as handy as a table of contents.

A book's inner logic comes out of the authors' views on how the world works and why things happen. And it is no accident that an inner logic is part of the enterprise called theory, for the idea of theory has the same roots as the word *theatre*, from a Greek word that meant "to behold."

The inner logic of this book is built around theories of the city. And to better understand the idea of theory, it may be useful to examine an incident in the history of theater.

### Theory as Compressed Knowledge

For more than three hundred years, playgoers have delighted in the antics of Monsieur Jourdain, who rollicks through a play by Moliere and eventually announces in a voice overcome by astonishment that he has made an amazing discovery. Without even knowing it, he has been speaking prose all his life! The audience, of course, finds this funny. Imagine not knowing so obvious a fact of everyday life! Or funnier yet, imagine that anything has been changed merely by giving an everyday occurrence an elegant-sounding name. Yet, everyday occurrences do take on different meanings when given different names. (Think of the car dealer who calls his cars "previously owned" instead of "used," or the member of Congress

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who avoids talking about new taxes by using the words "revenue enhancements.") In preceding pages, we have already been using a special sort of language—the language of social science theory. Of course, theory is an everyday activity. Theoretical language is what we use when we try to explain the world around us. It is often the language we use when we want others to change their ways, or do as we say. Theory gives us an understanding of the whys and wherefores of behaviors and events. Theory connects and relates means to ends, antecedents to consequences, and causes to effects. Theory thus tells us how and why things happen; and in doing so, theory explains.<sup>1</sup>

A simple definition of theory is framed in terms of connections and relationships: Theory is a set of logically connected, experience-grounded observations. Sometimes these observations are of a prescriptive or normative variety (i.e., norms, standards, values). If you wish to achieve justice, we may say, then you should—you ought to—treat in like manner all persons accused of the same crime. Thus, prescriptive theory speaks to the world as we wish it to be and to the ideals and goals we wish to achieve.

At other times, these relational observations are of a descriptive variety. The larger the city, we may say, the more likely it is to contain a sizable number of economic enterprises. (In this theory, the number of economic enterprises connects to—is an outcome of—city size.) Descriptive theory is a statement about things as they are now or as they were in the past. Descriptive theory also has potential for dealing with things as they may become. It has predictive capacity when framed in an "if...then" manner: If Genoa City continues to grow (we may theorize), then it is likely to contain an increasing number of economic enterprises.

Descriptive theory deals with the world of our experience, and accordingly is also called *empirical* theory (from the Greek word for "experience"). More important, descriptive theory is an assertion of cause and effect.<sup>2</sup> Improve the schools, we may theorize, and new employers, attracted by the availability of an educated work force, will come to our city.

Fulfilling a single prediction is a common form of validation. But for the social sciences, a more reliable form of validation involves a pattern of covariance: When a change in one factor is generally associated with a change in another factor, providing that coincidence can be ruled out, then the theorist is privileged to assert the cause that lies behind the change (e.g., Popper 1959, Cook and Campbell 1979).

Causation is an everyday term, but is philosophically elusive. Philosophers agree that causation is not some mechanical force that pushes and bumps things and behaviors in and out of place. Causation is better defined as patterned, rule-following behavior, expressed as covariance across time and differing conditions and/or as a consistent set of antecedent and subsequent conditions, behaviors, and events.

Prescriptive and descriptive theory can be separated in logic, but in everyday use they tend to blur at the edges. Take, for example, a much-used theory of crime: As poverty increases, an increase in crime is likely to follow. But those who hold this theory may, in fact, have more in mind than merely explaining the connection between poverty and crime. They may also have in mind a normative and

prescriptive concern, subtly (or not so subtly) suggesting that since crime is undesirable, a useful and desirable way of combating it will be by reducing poverty.

Often, prescriptive theory (which is the bedrock of most political argument) is expressed as a simple set of means-to-desired-ends relationships: If we want our city to grow (we may theorize), then we must improve our schools. But to prescribe improving the schools may require that we use some component of descriptive theory. City growth (it has been previously observed) may take place under certain specified conditions—for example, as an outcome of having schools of sufficiently high quality to attract settlers with young children. Thus, when we say, “If we want our city to grow, we must improve the schools,” we have built our prescriptive theory on foundations of descriptive theory.

Theory can be as short as a single sentence: For example, the older the urban neighborhood, the higher its insurance rates are likely to be. And theory can also consist of an elaborate arrangement of logically connected theories, as do those that connect poverty to such factors as racism, level of education, job opportunities, and general economic prosperity, and then further connect the resulting poverty to illness and loss of self-esteem.

These more complex theories usually consist of a number of fairly short, concise theories that converge around a central idea or explanation. Accordingly, we shall call them *convergent* theories.<sup>3</sup> In the example of the preceding paragraph, the convergence is on the many consequences of poverty. But whether short and direct, or complex and convergent, theory speaks to the how, why, wherefore, and whence of the world around us. In short, theory tells us how the world works or how it ought to work, and in so doing, theory not only explains, it organizes knowledge and compresses it, and thus makes knowledge comprehensible.

## **Convergent Theories as Organizing Theories**

Convergent theories are often strung together, like links in a long chain. Thus, a theory of the urban place converges on still another theory: The city is a place given to specialized economic activities that (as a consequence) attract a growing population that (as a further consequence) calls forth such specialized government activities as water, sewage, and sanitation services, and building inspection.

Some theories of the city are widely understood and easily grasped. Others are not so self-evident. They are, however, sufficiently important to require spelling out. As we do so, we will lay bare the inner logic of this book and the way in which we see and explain the workings of the urban web. In the following paragraphs, we will outline a few of these theories. Later on, we will fill in the details.

## Eleven Theories of Urban Politics

### *1. Grass Roots Democracy: A Prescriptive and Descriptive Theory*

The American political culture places great emphasis on the importance of local self-government. We value that government and often make elaborate claims for its supposed sensitivity to citizens' wants and needs, and for its usefulness as a training school for citizenship. The average person, the argument usually asserts, may know little of such matters as nuclear defense, monetary policy, and so on, but does know if garbage gets picked up and whether or not the fire department responds quickly. Hence, citizens are sufficiently knowledgeable to participate effectively in city affairs. And by participating in city affairs, they get educated to take part in the affairs of higher level, more complex government.<sup>4</sup>

It may be that our attachment to local government is also rooted in our experience as a frontier society, when local government was the most meaningful and effective government. And it may also be that attachment to local government is rooted even further back in U.S. history, for the United States was first settled as a thinly stretched string of small villages. But whatever the source of the attachment, U.S. society is strongly imprinted with the idea that local government is virtuous government. As previously noted, the consequences for urban politics are significant.

States have traditionally made it easy for any settled place to obtain a charter of incorporation. And once incorporated, that place, without its voters' express consent, may not be annexed to any neighboring city. Here, then, is explanation for the mosaic of towns, cities, and villages that make up the metropolitan area. And here, too, is explanation for many of the problems that beset the metropolitan area as a dozen (even a thousand) local governments struggle to co-exist in the same area. Where the problems of the area might be better solved by one single, overall government or by local government cooperation, the usual pattern is that of multiple local governments and sharp competition and rivalry among them. For example, much of the politics of affluent suburbs may be dedicated to a strategy of exclusivity—devising ways (through zoning laws, building codes, and the like) to discourage lower-income people from settling there. And central cities, though they may provide jobs and offer cultural enrichment for those who live in suburbs, as a general rule cannot require that the suburbs help pay the costs of central-city government.

### *2. The Unwalled City: A Theory of Permeable Boundaries*

Suburbs may seek strategies for excluding those whom they view as undesirable, but central cities have no such tradition of exclusivity. They accept whoever chooses to settle there. They are cities without walls—either physical or legal (Long 1972). Their boundaries are permeable. Following the great migration that began in the 1950s (as southern blacks and Puerto Rican people moved northward to seek a better

life), central cities in the Northeast increasingly became home to a social and economic disadvantaged class (Lemann 1991). (In an earlier time those same cities were host to newly arrived immigrants from Europe.) And with the arrival of this disadvantaged class (paralleled by the outward flight of an affluent middle class) came an increase in (and an increased awareness of) problems that have been regarded as urban problems: crime, poverty, racial tensions, slums, drugs, disease, and homelessness.

Thus, a theory of permeable boundaries converges on the proposition that central cities are marked by stubborn social problems that are *in* the city but not *of* the city—which is to say, not of the city's making. Their sources and causes (whatever they may be) lie elsewhere in the larger society. This being so, the theory converges on still another proposition: City policies that try to grapple with urban social problems usually will be outmatched and overcome by the problems. Central cities, it is often said, can attempt to cope with their poverty-rooted problems. But without state or federal assistance, they are not likely ever to solve them.

### ***3. A Theory of Social Learning: How Not to Solve City Problems***

Communities, like individuals, learn from experience. When new problems appear, the rationally minded may propose that we seek new solutions for those new problems. But a theory of social learning converges on the idea that societies, like individuals, generally try to apply old solutions to new problems (Lindblom and Cohen 1979, Brewer and deLeon 1983). Perhaps this preference for the tried and familiar springs from an all-too-human yearning for continuity; or perhaps this quality springs from the fact that new solutions are hard to come by. But whatever the source, this theory converges on the proposition that urban policymakers rarely attempt policies that redistribute wealth, or disturb the economic status quo, or attempt a full-scale assault on urban poverty (P. Peterson 1981). Past experience has taught them that the size of the problem is likely to outstrip a city's financial resources. Policymakers have also learned from past experience that redistributive policies may motivate affluent residents to seek the financial safety of nearby suburbs. And some policymakers also profess to have learned that solicitous concern for the poor will bring still more poor flooding into their city, shopping for a city with the most generous welfare benefits.

This theory of social learning links to a theory of permeable boundaries: Given the fact that the city is open to all who choose or can afford to settle there, practical considerations and past experience teach a city's policy-makers that an assault on the economic status quo is a perilous policy option.

### ***4. The Commodification of Land and Buildings: A Theory of Market Externalities***

Our society is deeply committed to an economic system that in ideal form would

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leave economic transactions solely to buyers and sellers. Our philosophic commitment to freedom of the marketplace has deep historical roots, and most Americans grow up convinced of the truth of the proposition (itself a theory) that liberties of everyday life find their greatest protection in a market economy: One's freedom to work, choose an occupation, pursue an education, settle on a place to live, and even select a spouse are all bound up with the freedom to buy and sell. Indeed, what is an intuitive truth for most Americans is, in fact, historical truth: Liberal, democratic societies grew up in and around—some would say, are inseparable from—the freedom of contract that is at the center of market economies. And what is more, most Americans are also convinced that a market economy is the most efficient and best arrangement for setting wages, prices, production, and distribution schedules (Friedman and Friedman 1981, Lindblom 1977).

A pure market economy has always been more an ideal than a reality, for market economies traditionally have been burdened by severe problems: over-production, cycles of boom and bust monopolies that can drive prices skyward, harsh conditions of work, and for many workers, low or inadequate wages. As a consequence, many Americans accept the idea that a market economy requires some form of government regulation. How much? and for whose benefit? are questions that help define contemporary liberals and conservatives. Thus, a fully operative market economy has been a lesser reality in the United States since the rise of the welfare state in the 1930s, whose precepts and laws include government-set minimum wages, workplace health and safety regulations, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and a host of other market interventions (Lowi 1969a, Miles 1976, Herson 1990, Dahl and Lindblom 1953).

But whatever the gap between the ideal and the reality, the bedrock of a market economy is private ownership of property. Thus, the logical outcome of private ownership of property is that land and buildings are regarded as commodities to be freely bought and sold. With this fact of everyday life, the strands of our theory converge on a major explanation of urban politics: Policies that seek to curb the buying and selling of property are only carefully and cautiously attempted by American city governments. Much more important, a city's physical form is in very large measure the consequence of countless private-market (as distinguished from government) decisions to buy and sell land, to build buildings, and to rent, exchange, and tear them down. Of course, decisions of government do affect the physical form of cities. Road location and freeway construction, for example, contribute to urban sprawl; and tax policies, for another example, may make it profitable to build high rise office spaces downtown or restore old buildings in the city's inner core. But however much government policies may animate and affect private market decisions, it is the private market that ultimately shapes the city's physical form (Garreau 1991, Rybczynski 1995). Thus it stretches the point only slightly to say that a city's physical form *is* market decisions cast in wood, steel, and concrete. Where the buildings go, people come, roads and streets get built, and specialized economic activities follow.

To carry the theory one step further requires that we define market

externalities. In short, a market externality is nothing more than the consequences for others of a market decision. To take just one obvious example: the high price that I may pay for land in the downtown business district has nothing to do with any intrinsic qualities of that land, but everything to do with the fact that people who do not own it gather nearby, in stores, offices, and traffic intersections. Land values downtown are thus a consequence of population densities and overall commercial use which, in turn, are the consequence of hundreds and hundreds of other market externalities.

In another example, I may decide that the expense of maintaining my apartment building, with taxes, repairs, and low rents, makes it unprofitable to keep it in good condition. I may even decide to let the building deteriorate to the point where it can never again be profitably restored to good condition. What takes place is a market decision between me and my accountant or between me and my tenants. But the social consequences are external to the decision. They fall on the entire community. And thus the market externality of what is essentially a private decision helps to create a slum.

Of course, one property owner's decision does not create a slum. But often, one decision feeds others until an entire neighborhood begins its downhill slide. In fact, much of urban politics has to do with responding to, heading off, or challenging the consequences of market decisions and market externalities. Land-use laws, zoning, slum clearance, building inspections, traffic routes, traffic and parking control, and street building are all issues that flow from market externalities, and they are at the center of much of urban politics and policy.

### ***5. Looking for Mr. and Ms. Big: A Theory of Influence***

Power in politics, as in everyday life, is sometimes defined as the capacity to influence the behavior of others—to get them to do what you want. The sources of political influence are numerous: wealth, status, organizational position, the gift of persuasion, and a commanding personality. In an ideally working democracy, power ought to be widely distributed and it ought to pass easily from person to person (a normative theory of power). Social scientists have worked diligently to discover the realities of power in America—to construct and validate a descriptive theory of power: Who has it? How widely is it distributed? Is it passed around? What do those who have power do with it? A fully descriptive theory of power in America has yet to be validated, but careful observers of the city are drawn to the conclusion that influence in urban politics is one of the spin-offs or consequences of the commodification of land and buildings.

This theory of influence is far from being an unvarnished Marxian postulate that political power is only economic power in disguise. But the theory does converge on the proposition that business leaders command the very respectful attention of political leaders and other governmental policymakers. "Business gets what business wants" is a common saying; and the suggested truth behind the

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aphorism is that large-scale property owners and developers, and managers of large-scale corporate enterprises not only have a disproportionate influence on what cities do—they are also able to assert a veto on programs that they think the city should not undertake.

### ***6. A Theory of Lifestyle and Territory***

Our theories of politics, power, permeable boundaries, and commodification all link to still another theory: lifestyle and territory. In a market society, most urban housing is privately owned. The house we buy and the rent we pay for space in somebody else's building represents more than cash payment for a domicile. It is cash payment for a style of life—a lifestyle that is maintained and protected as persons of like social status, like values, and comparable incomes establish themselves in neighborhoods and suburbs. A neighborhood is thus more than a fact of geography; it is lifestyle territory (Cox 1973, Smith 1993, Rybczynski 1995).

Urban politics is never far removed from lifestyle. Recall that politics is the struggle over outcomes; but outcomes are not limited to who wins an election or who gets what government job. Outcomes also include policy, and few outcomes in urban politics are as important as policy aimed at protecting a territory's lifestyle. In everyday language, this is the politics of turf.

Zoning struggles are one form of turf politics. So too are many of the debates over city services—such as the distribution of police and fire protection and the money that is to be spent on schools. And so too are occasional outbursts of violence that flare forth where residents see themselves threatened by the incursion of persons of different race, ethnicity, or social status.

### ***7. A Theory of Urban Reform***

A theory of urban reform turns on the corruption that marked big-city politics through the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The theory connects with the social and economic conditions that helped produce dishonest politics. And ultimately, a theory of urban reform converges on the lasting consequences of the reformers' attempts to clean up city politics.

One such consequence is to be found in the dispersal of governmental authority in many big cities. In an attempt to take power away from then-corrupt mayors and city councils, reformers in several cities established independent boards and commissions and gave them an independent authority to run selected units of city government. (Independently elected school boards are one example; police commissioners whose terms of office extend beyond that of the mayors who appoint them is another.) And while this dispersal of authority in some cities went a considerable distance in reducing the power of political bosses, this same dispersal has made it difficult for many present-day mayors to do the job they were elected to do: run their cities with a reasonable degree of authority and control.

Still another consequence of urban reform has been to bring to a number of

cities an alternative to the usual pattern of American government. That usual pattern is the separation of powers (along with checks and balances) enshrined in the national Constitution and replicated in the constitutions of the fifty states. Under separation of powers, each branch of government is separate and independent of the others. Each elected official has an independent tenure, and each branch of government is expected to have a will of its own, checking and balancing the other branches (Herson 1986).

Reformed cities, however, are different. There, the inspiration for government organization is not the U.S. Constitution but the business firm. The city council (likened by reformers to a corporation's board of directors) makes general policy and, in addition, chooses a city manager to administer that policy. The manager is not elected; he or she is thus not independent of the council, but serves at its pleasure.

### ***8. A Theory of Urban Administration: Street-Level Bureaucrats***

However much urban reformers long to bring efficiency and economy into city government, a city is not a business. Mayors and managers may strive to make delivery of city services efficient and economical, but it may be that city services can never be measured against what businesses do, if only because cities do things that business cannot be expected to do, such as provide police and fire protection in high-risk situations. Equally important, cities are less likely to achieve the economies of private business because city services are distinctive. For the most part, they are labor intensive, which is another way of saying that their performance requires a high ratio of human labor to that performed by machines. And human labor, by its nature, is relatively expensive. City services are performed by people interacting with other people: the teacher in the classroom, the firefighter in the burning building, the police officer on the beat, the sanitation workers bringing trash from curbside to truck.

What is more, labor-intensive service involves a process that is loaded with opportunities for service deliverers to exercise a considerable degree of personal initiative and judgment. (Should the police officer give a ticket to a driver going through an amber light, or let the driver off with a warning? If the door to a restaurant storeroom is locked, should the health inspector come back another day? Or should he or she base inspection only on what can be observed directly?) In a word, cities are administered by what Michael Lipsky (1980; also see Judge et al. 1995) calls street-level bureaucrats: persons who are involved in the day-to-day delivery of urban services, and who must interpret policy guidelines in their day-to-day decisions.

Thus, a theory of urban administration not only takes account of the costs and the style of service delivery, it also converges on the proposition that services that require a high degree of in-the-street, on-the-site human interaction will never be managed easily from some central headquarters. Nor will such services ever be uniform all across the city. Nor will these services ever be without opportunity for

bias, favoritism, and corruption (Yates 1977, Lipsky 1980).

### ***9. A Theory of Ideology and Interpretations***

The eight theories discussed above are the basic theories of urban politics, theories that help us to see and understand overall patterns. But another theory must be invoked, a theory drawn from the overlapping realms of psychology and politics; a theory of ideology and conflicting interpretations.

We can, for the present, postpone an extended definition of ideology and postpone as well an explanation of the two major ideologies of American political life, Liberalism and Conservatism. What we need to do, however, is take note of two ideas: First, ideologies consist of those important values and beliefs we carry in our minds and hearts; and second, these values and beliefs serve as a lens (or screen) that blocks from our minds facts and ideas that contradict those basic values and beliefs. Said somewhat differently: An ideology is self-reinforcing. It is a pattern of values and beliefs so strong and persistent that each of us achieves a measure of psychological peace by blocking from our minds messages that challenge those values and beliefs.

Based on this provisionally sketched theory of ideology, we can expect that much of what we are likely to observe about cities is subject to being altered and interpreted by the ideology we hold. For example, what shall we make of an economically depressed, older city, with its high unemployment, its closed and obsolescent factories, its pervasive sense of social despair? For some, ideology leads to the belief that government has an obligation to intercede in the economy, to take care that none in our society are to suffer unduly, to set things gone wrong to right. These are the persons likely to "see" that the problems common to an old and failing city are society's problems (not the city's), and that the national government should pursue a vigorous program that will restore and reinvigorate cities in trouble.

But an opposing ideology leads others to resist government intervention in the economy, to believe that the national government is far too big and involves itself in too many tasks, or to believe that each of us is responsible for our own successes and failures. These are the persons likely to "see" an older city as a place whose problems are best solved locally—by those who live there. In this fashion, a theory of ideology helps us understand that what we "see" is often a consequence of the ideas (the values and beliefs) we carry to our field of vision, and this theory of ideology also helps us understand that policies aimed at solving urban problems are also molded and shaped by the ideologies of those who invent and propose such policies.

### ***10. A Theory of Poverty and the Underclass***

While the poor have always been with us, they inhabit core cities in American metros in great numbers and with great density. This in itself is cause for concern, for it threatens to overwhelm municipal resources merely to provide services that

those with little or no income require (e.g., emergency health care, public transportation, low cost housing). But even more critical is the substantial drug use, violence, teen sexual activity and childbearing, disconnection from the labor force, and welfare dependency among people living in poverty. William Julius Wilson (1987, 1996) argues persuasively that this is due not only to an increase in the absolute level of poverty in cities but also to an increase in the *concentration of poverty* in cities. Simply stated, his theory holds that members of any individual family are increasingly susceptible to drug and alcohol abuse, violent behavior, chronic unemployment, and early childbearing *as their income decreases*. When a large number of low-income families live in close proximity to one another, this susceptibility increases; and as the number of nonpoverty families living in a neighborhood decreases, the risk increases even further for the low-income families that remain behind.

### ***11. A Theory of Multiple Realities***

The city is by no means a single, homogeneous place suitable for simple characterization. As noted in the previous chapter, cities come in various sizes and shapes, populated with different types of people with different needs. The suburban city may list at the top of its agenda the need to control growth through appropriate zoning or the need to promote growth by attracting new businesses or industries. The small town may have the need to maintain its traditional lifestyle in the face of an ever-changing and increasingly complicated world, or it may desire to become part of that ever-changing world. The central city is more complicated still. It may list at the top of its agenda the needs to provide safe neighborhoods for its low-income residents, maintain the property values of its more affluent neighborhoods, promote economic development through new downtown construction, and cut expenditures. Yet, all these cities are presumably governed by some common set of "urban" forces.

The neighborhood of small houses and grassy yards may be less than a mile away from high-rise public housing neighborhoods. The modern office building may be next to a park and down the road from an old factory. New buildings are interspersed with boarded-up buildings. Yet, these are all part and parcel of the same city, governed by forces common to that city. In describing cities and their politics, we face the challenge of accommodating all of these multiple realities.

## **Next Steps**

With these eleven theories of urban politics now in place, the next step as we thread our way through the urban web is to place these theories within their historical context, examining how the past has shaped the present.

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1 Given the importance of theory to all branches of knowledge, and as might be anticipated, the literature of theory is extensive. Works of importance in framing this chapter include Herson (1990), Popper (1963), and Hanson (1985).

2 In the social sciences as well as the natural and physical sciences, those who frame theories also seek to validate them. To assert that  $X$  is the cause of  $Y$  (and that  $Y$  is the consequence of  $X$ ) may give us insight into the cause of things, but theory does not truly advance knowledge until we attempt to validate it, that is, subject the theory to various tests that increase our confidence that  $X$  is indeed the cause of  $Y$ .

3 Other terms for convergent theories are *organizing* and *concatenated* theories: "A network of relations [framed] so as to constitute an identifiable configuration or pattern. Most typically, they converge on some central point. The 'big bang' theory of cosmology, the theory of evolution, and the psychoanalytic theory of neuroses, may all be regarded as of this type" (Kaplan 1964, 298). Because they deal with a broad range of phenomena, organizing theories give us a broad understanding of the world around us. In contrast, *precision theories* deal with a fairly limited range of behaviors and events. Precision theories specify *determinate relationships* (for example, 1 percent increase in the consumer price index results in a specified decrease in the number of new houses built). Thus, well-framed precision theories lend themselves fairly readily to validation or falsification. Generally speaking, such validation helps give credence and validity to the broader organizing theory of which they are part.

4 The perceptive reader will see here a blending of prescriptive and descriptive theory. A premise to the argument is the value of (preference for) citizen participation in government and knowledge of its workings. How else is democracy's self-rule to be realized? The argument (in theoretical terms) then proceeds to connect local government to democracy's success, that is, to assert that participation in local government is one of the factors in democracy's success.