

# Administrative ethics and professional competence: accountability and performance under globalization

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## **Introduction**

The current worldwide concern for accountability and ethics in public service and administration has reached a highly critical level, signaling another feature of a growing global crisis in public service and administration. Calibration of this global crisis of confidence in governance and administration requires deep understanding of its possible causes and consequences (Habermas, 1984; Bennett, 1992). Like many other important issues, ethics and accountability transcend virtually all human and institutional boundaries at local, national and international levels. Calibration of the current public service crisis is therefore a task that demands attention from all actors in governance and administration processes around the world (Freedman, 1978; Habermas, 1984; Rosen, 1986; Farazmand, 1989, 2001; Ban, 2000; Brown, 2000; Lewis, 2000). This would involve citizens, policy actors, governing political elites and administrative elites across the globe. Restoration of the public service image is an imperative that needs to be recognized as well.

Public service has always been valued as a major feature of human civilization. This has been due to many factors, including the nature of humankind as a social creature with concern for common good and common interests as well as for self-interest. The state and public sector organizations have played a leading role in providing this common good and public service throughout history. In fact, civilization and administration have been developed together, one promoting the other (Waldo, 1980/1992). This is evidenced by the highly developed public bureaucracy and civil service system, as well as by the proliferating intellectual/philosophical development concerning public service in the great ancient empires of Persia, Greece, China and Rome, where much of the modern knowledge of public administration originated.

The rise and expansion of the modern state has also contributed significantly to

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the growth and expansion of public service. This has been accompanied by increasing bureaucratization and professionalization of the modern state, as Max Weber (1946, 1984) predicted a long time ago. Professionalization has added many values to the administrative and organizational values, such as efficiency, effectiveness, merit and performance-based virtues. Ironically, some of these administrative values have during the last few decades come into conflict with the long cherished human values of citizenship and democratic principles, such as political representation, responsiveness and responsibility. Professionalization of public service and administration has indeed changed the nature of modern organizations by implanting deeply the instrumental rationality that has dominated societies as well as organizational life around the globe (Farazmand, 1994a; Rosenbloom, 1995; Van Riper, 1997). This dominance has been more prevalent in the western societies of the United States and Europe than in developing nations, which have been heavily influenced first by the colonizing powers and then by the neo-colonial rule of global imperialism.

Currently, two global observations appear to be the prevailing trends: (1) globalization and cultural convergence of the world by western instrumental rationality, especially through the current government reinventing, re-engineering, structural adjustments, privatization and redefinition of public-private sectors configurations designed and led by corporate and government elites; and (2) the counter-pressures from below by masses of citizenry against this rampant instrumental rationality in industrialized nations of the North such as the United States and Europe, as well as in developing countries (Lipset, 1987; Wise, 1994; Harmon, 1995; Korten, 1995). The result has been a clash of major values underlying the administrative and political systems around the world. Demand for citizen participation in and democratization of governance has been increasing as elites press on more workforce downsizing, privatization, cutting or eliminating employment benefits and high efficiency with profitable adventures of mergers and financial empire building (Henry, 1995; Farazmand, 1999c). While reducing the size of government may be advocated by supporters of higher efficiency and private enterprise interests, opponents argue that accountability to the broad public and fairness in governance has been diminished significantly if not lost altogether.

The phenomenon of globalization of capital also has aggravated these problems, as its financial, marketing, production, cultural and coercive state powers have transcended national boundaries and made states irrelevant to a considerable extent (Ohmae, 1990; Fukuyama, 1992). Globalization of capital has violated territorial sovereignty and threatened communities' democratic rights in a trans-border world (Korten, 1995; Mele, 1996; Farazmand, 1999c). With the US unilateral declaration of a global war on terrorism since 11 September 2001, a new phase or wave of globalization has emerged with a feature of militarization and intimidation of the entire globe. This new phase leaves no room for any choice for any people or nation but to succumb to the dictates of the globalizing corporate power structure. Any voice of opposition is being labeled as supportive

of terrorism and subject to arbitrary detention and persecution, a scary prospect for the future ahead.

Additionally, as an ideological strategy of globalization of advance capitalism, the globally sweeping privatization has also promoted opportunities for corruption so pervasive in the corporate marketplace (Korbin and Naim, 1997; Farazmand, 1999d). Both globalization and privatization have contributed to the expansion of corporate capitalism with its cultural as well as political features at the expense of public service domain (Frederich, 1990; Frederickson, 1993; Korten, 1995; Farazmand, 2000a, 2001). Consequently, public service has been badly damaged in terms of institutional capacity, quality, and public image (Gawthrop, 1998, 1999; Brown, 2000). A worldwide crisis of public service has emerged with many dimensions and consequences (see Farazmand [2001] for a full discussion on this crisis). Resolving this conflict and overcoming this crisis require a reconciliation of the two sets of conflicting values as well as practical integration of administrative ethics with responsible citizenship.

It is through this integration that the public service image can be revived and enhanced, given that political and administrative values also merge (Waldo, 1980/1992). This article addresses this and other related issues for discussion and policy recommendations. The core of the discussion is twofold: reconciling efficient administrative performance with ethics and accountability, and integrating professional administrative values with democratic values toward serving broad-based public interests. Accountability, professional competence and ethical standards can and should complement each other, rather than be in conflict with each other. The current global emphasis on efficiency at any cost threatens this set of complementary values. While institutional mechanisms of accountability are important safeguards against corruption of all types, ethics and ethical standards are much more complex and internalized virtues that must be developed in the political as well as administrative cultures of a country. They also should be promoted at the global level because globalization of capital and its strategic instrument of sweeping privatization spread potentials for corruption at all levels of governance and administration (Wettenhall, 2000; Farazmand, 2001).

Therefore, this article argues that professional competence aimed at high performance must be balanced with ethical administrative behavior and sound character, and political values of fairness, accountability and responsibility must be maintained while achieving professional and managerial value of efficiency. These two sets of coupling values are and should be complementary and reinforce each other. Efficiency and performance alone are not sufficient criteria for administrative effectiveness and democratic governance. For example, a professionally trained police force may be able to perform competently in dealing with violence and potential social disorder, but such a performance may lead to violation of ethical standards, violation of individual rights of citizens, especially minorities, breach of accountability principles and engagement in other unethical conducts. Similarly, a political value of, for example, responsiveness may be

achieved for and by certain particular and narrowly defined political or economic constituency through bypassing certain administrative values of merit and administrative processes that are designed to safeguard against arbitrariness and abuse of authority. While a certain group has been served, others' equal rights may be violated.

The rest of this article follows with a threefold presentation: First, some of the factors or causes contributing to the decline of the public service and its damaged image are discussed. Specifically, the phenomena of globalization of capital and privatization as major sources of public service decline and of promotion of corruption and other forms of unethical conditions are discussed with reference to the 'new public management' as an intellectual arm of globalization and potential negative effects it may cause on public service and administration. This is followed by a brief presentation of the growing global concern for administrative ethics and accountability, then with a discussion of the professionalization of public service with its implications for public service ethics and accountability as well as for competent performance. Finally, a conclusion stresses several points of the article with an overriding emphasis on reconciling professional competence with administrative ethics and accountability in public service and administration, and with a point of considering public administrators as possible guardians of public trust and common interests.

### **Decline of the public service image**

Elsewhere (Farazmand, 1989, 1997a, 2001), I have discussed in detail a number of factors that have contributed to the rise, growth and expansion of the modern administrative state and of the public service, with which also came an unprecedented degree of professionalization of public bureaucracy and professional competence in public service delivery. The role of governments in society, the economy and administration grew dramatically. Governments became the engines of national development, of private sector development, of providing public goods and of solving problems as well as protecting individual rights (Newland, 1987; Stillman, 1987; Rosenbloom, 1995). Rationalization of modern administration and of life has also contributed to the rise of professionalization.

Therefore, professionalization of the administrative state and of public service has been a common phenomenon of both capitalism and socialism (Waldo, 1980/1992; Van Riper, 1997). It has been a major force for anti-corruption and public service reform. Until recently, administrative performance had surpassed in both scope of activities and social equity policy that of the political partisan policy and performance. The administrative state, thus, played a major role of 'social equalizer' beyond the control of the corporate-dominant political elites for several decades (Farazmand, 1989; Caiden, 1994; Thayer, 1997; Frederickson, 2001) though critics may argue that it actually served the interests and goals of the corporate elites (Piven and Cloward, 1985; Farazmand, 1997a, c). Until its 'murder' during Carter and Clinton as well as Reagan's presidencies, the US civil service's original mission was 'to be the ethical watchdog, the moral guardian of

governmental decision making,' asserts Thayer (1997: 95). 'The civil service was not invented in 1883 solely to improve government "efficiency," a widely publicized myth designed to obscure history' (Thayer, 1997: 95). However, the growth of professionalism and professional competence in public administration has invited criticisms from various sources that consider the professional state a threat to democracy in society. Professional administrative values have often been viewed by these critics as being contrary to political democratic values of liberty, responsiveness and representation. The expanding role of professional administrators in the politically perceived domain of policy development and decision-making has been viewed as a threat to democratic politics and administration. Particular attacks have come from the conservative political economists of the public choice school (Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Downs, 1967; Mosher, 1968; Niskanen, 1971; Ostrom, 1973; Wilson, 1986), but they also have come from liberal academia as well as from corporate elite circles (see, for example, Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980; Thayer, 1984; Hummel, 1987). Over 30 years ago, Mosher (1968: 3–4) made the point clearly:

The accretion of specialization and of technological and social complexity . . . leads to increasing dependence on the protected, appointive public service, thrice removed from direct democracy . . . How can a public service so constituted be made to operate in a manner compatible with democracy.

This notion has been echoed by many, including notably Wilson (1986) who in 'the rise of the bureaucratic state' reaffirmed Mosher's thesis.

The anti-public service, anti-bureaucracy and anti-government trend has had major ideological, political, social and economic underpinnings beyond the scope of this article (see Farazmand, 1989, 2001 for details). Particularly speaking, globalization and privatization have especially contributed to this global trend of public service decline as well as to the growing movement of global concern for administrative ethics and accountability. The 'new public management' ideology of the corporate power structure seems to also have further aggravated this problem.

### **Globalization, privatization and the New Public Management**

Elsewhere (Farazmand, 2001), I have identified a number of factors that have contributed to the global crisis in public service and administration. For the purpose of this short article, three of these factors, namely globalization of capital, privatization and the 'new public management (NPM)' are discussed in some details. These factors have had direct negative impacts on the public service image leading to the current global crisis in public administration, as well as contributing to the growing global movement for ethics and accountability in public service and administration.

By globalization I mean 'a process through which worldwide integration and transcendence take place, a constant process of expansion into new frontiers and opportunities for increasing capital accumulation' of surplus value at global level (Farazmand, 1999c: 512). The emerging ideological school of NPM is the by-

product of this dual global trend, which tends to aggravate the problem of accountability and to promote unethical behavior in public service and administration around the globe. It focuses on the narrowly based view of the business-corporate bottom line at the expense of the values of ethics, accountability and transparency. Its dogmatic prescription of 'one-best-way' approach to running the business of government organization is nothing but a corporate ideology of 'business management is the best, and management is management'.

NPM is now promoted as a new paradigmatic model of entrepreneurial system of governance and administration based on the market criteria of efficiency, flexibility, economy and consumer taste (see Peters, 1994; Farazmand, 1999b, c; Gawthrop, 1999 for details). NPM is nothing but a new package of the old dogmatic idea of Taylorism wrapped with the new concepts of chaos theory, rapid change and uncertainty, 'age of paradox and unreason' (Handy, 1992), natural selection models of organization (Kaufman, 1991), corporate managerialism (Pollitt, 1993) and 'flexibility with results' (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Its ideological underpinnings are familiar concepts: the business bottom line of efficiency or profit at almost any cost to society and common good (costs not taken into calculus), consumerism (not a citizen-based service concept), the superiority of private business management, contracting out or contract-based performance, ends justifying means and entrepreneurial management leading to the corporate design of capturing the entire realm of what Habermas (1974) calls the 'public sphere' around the globe. Students of American public administration know this as the 'New Political Management' of the 1980s (Newland, 1987) or the Managerialism of the 1990s (Pollitt, 1993; Henry, 1995; Rosenbloom, 1995) whereas the concept of NPM seems to have originated in Britain in rivalry with America (see Hood, 1991 for details on this concept). Globalization has been a major source of declining public service as well. Globalization has been interpreted by many as a new phenomenon associated with rapid global changes that are affecting all nation-states around the world though to varying degrees. For example, Fukuyama (1992) predicts 'the end of history and of the last man', Korbin (1996) indicates a 'return back to neomedievalism' and Huntington (1996) speaks of the 'clash of civilizations'. The hallmark of globalization is that worldwide integration and transcendence are taking place, creating a new global system of economy, culture and governance (Scholte, 1997). To some the growth of transnational corporations and the spread of global corporate capitalism have made the role of the state irrelevant and they feel that it should disappear (Naisbitt, 1994; Ohmae, 1995). To others, global capitalism has led to the growth of supra-state global agencies that are supplementing, if not supplanting, territorial nation-states (Reich, 1991; Cox, 1993; Korten, 1995).

Yet, others suggest that globalization of capital and its supra-governmental organizational arrangements have threatened state sovereignty and eroded the sense of community and urban power structure leading to the loss of democratic rights of citizens (Mele, 1996; Knox, 1997). However, still others, including this author, refute any idea of the end of the state and public administration

(Farazmand, 1994c, 1999b, c; Scholte, 1997; Heady, 1998). To these observers, the state will persist but its character and role are changing rapidly in favor of the globalizing corporate elites and the dominant, imperialistic, military-security bureaucratic state is actually globalizing its domain of claiming to protect and promote the runaway corporate capitalism worldwide.

A central concern of all these critics is the charge that globalization and sweeping privatization cause rampant global corruption and accountability problems; they promote potentials for corruption, secrecy, conflict of interests, unethical conducts and lack of accountability (Gould, 1991; Korten, 1995; Farazmand, 1999b, c; Wettenhall, 2000). For developing nations, globalization will likely deepen the crisis of dependency, as well as of corruption that is already a major problem of post-colonial and newly independent nations, making governability much more difficult in those countries. This crisis of governability and of accountability is now also a problem facing advanced industrialized nations as globalization takes its rapid course. Communities are losing their independent voice in making decisions that affect their democratic rights, individuals are losing out to corporate greed by becoming daily wage earners or paid mercenaries, and families are disintegrating due to the many negative consequences of globalization of capitalism that is widening the rich-poor gap and causing many social and economic problems (Bennett, 1992; Barnett and Cavanagh, 1995; Korten, 1995; Greider, 1997; Kregel, 1998; Farazmand, 1998, 1999a, b, c).

Globalization and global privatization have been caused by many factors, with major consequences for the nation-states leading to potential corruption and accountability problems around the world (see Farazmand, 1994c; 1999b, c), an issue that is central to the discussion of this article. Although globalization is nothing new to the third world countries where colonialism and neo-colonialism have been dominant forces of exploitation and repression for centuries, the recent phenomenon of globalization has been accelerated since the late 1970s (Magdoff, 1969; Heeger, 1974; Said, 1993; Scholte, 1997). In fact, globalization is a constant process of surplus accumulation of corporate capitalism bolstered by the coercive military as well as economic and political powers of the globalizing states such as the United States and European governments.

These governments use as their policy tools such supra-national organizations as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organizations, as well as the 'state-indifferent' transworld corporations to establish and promote a global 'corporate hegemony' under the new world order (Dugger, 1989; Waltz, 1999). These transworld globalizing corporations recognize no state boundaries and violate territorial sovereignty of nations. Global finance has no father, no mother, no sister or brother, and no attachment to any territorial space; its overriding motive is to extract absolute surplus value or profit and to control the world market. It weakens the public sector, downgrades the spirit of public service, exploits its resources and legal safeguards for generating its surplus value and damages the image in governance and public administration by paralyzing their capacity to function effectively. The potential of the global money to corrupt

anyone anywhere for profit is immense at the global level. Usually, it is the ‘subsidiary’ business and political–military elites who are the primary beneficiaries and promoters of corruption in global finance.

This process of globalization has been caused by a number of factors. They include the declining domestic economy in the 1970s of the major nations such as the United States, the increasing demands of citizens from governments, rising expectations of the workforce employees demanding power sharing in management as well as higher benefits, the imperialistic role of the globally dominant states, technological innovations of the information age, and the globalizing corporations in search of cheaper production factories, expanding global markets, and legally unrestrictive global environment conducive to higher surplus accumulation of capital (see Scholte, 1997; Farazmand, 1999b, c for details).

The role of the elites — economic, political, and administrative — in less developed countries, where globalization has had the most negative effects, has been instrumental in promoting globalization and its potential corruption effect that is functional to political system preservation and regime enhancement (Halliday, 1979; Korten, 1995; Greider, 1997). Some of the consequences of globalization, such as the loss of state sovereignty, loss of territorial control and threat to democratic rights of community, are important to note not only for less developed nations, but also for some of the advanced industrialized countries. For example, globalization empowers dominant economic elites who are subsidiary/subservient agents of globalizing corporations, pushes for privatization as part of the structural adjustment programs, promotes corruption in both industrialized and developing nations. Such corruption at the highest level has already reached the point of national crisis in many nations. Examples include the United States (Thayer, 1984; Henry, 1995), pre-revolutionary Iran (Farazmand, 1989), Arab countries of the Middle East (Jreisat, 1997), Southeast Asia (Zafarullah and Siddiquee, 2001) and elsewhere (Eisner, 1995; Farazmand, 1998).

Elite empowerment leads to a new global organizational system characterized by a global ‘corporate imperialism’ that requires organizational as well as policy flexibility in its giant transformation of the world power structure (Barnet and Cavanagh, 1995). This transformation draws a clear demarcation between the elites and non-elites, the latter being expendable as disposable people (Dugger, 1989; Greider, 1997). In short, globalization and privatization empower corporate business elites and, by providing various opportunities for corruption, lubricate their wheels of domination and exploitation of indigenous national economies and human and natural resources.

As noted earlier, a major byproduct of the globalization wave has been the emergence of the NPM worldwide. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss NPM; I have done this elsewhere (see Farazmand, forthcoming). The strategic forces of globalization have altered the character of the state and public administration from the welfare administrative state to that of the coercive-corporate bureaucratic state or corporate welfare state (Davey, 1995; Farazmand, 1997a; 1999c). NPM is a major institutionalizing instrument — in terms of struc-

ture, process and norms/values — in the changing character and role of the new state and of the transformation of government worldwide. Designed and driven primarily by the United States and Britain, the NPM ideology is consistent with, and an integral philosophy of, corporate globalization of capital; in fact, it is both an intellectual arm and an operational tool of globalization of capital. NPM functions as an institutional conduit of the coercive-corporate state in which public accountability and ethical responsibility are pushed to the back seat of secrecy behind the closed doors and become meaningless. This is a typical practice in the corporate business world.

Furthermore, globalization and privatization cause severe problems of accountability, as neither global finance nor national privatizing elites are accountable to any citizens. Accountability is resisted by globalizing powers — both transnational corporations and their globalizing states — as well as by local subservient elites whose further empowerment — both politically and financially — are depended on facilitation of the globalization process. Privatization has been used by the globalizing corporations and their governments — as donors to the World Bank and lenders of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — as a global strategy to promote corporate capitalism around the world. Such a global trend empowers business and military-political elites and promotes potential corruption everywhere. Corruption works as a lubricant for the machinery of governance that promotes globalization, subsidiarity, agencification and corporatization. Accountability is therefore either lost or seriously weakened in the new global power structure that dominates national democratic rights of sovereign states and their citizens around the globe.

It is this growing global environment of corruption that has sounded the ethical alarms in both academic and politico-administrative circles worldwide (see for example, Frederickson, 1993; Caiden, 2001; Cooper, 2001b). Another major impetus for growing global concern for ethics and accountability is the rampant imbalance between efficiency-based performance with disregards for accountability and ethical conduct in administrative behavior at all organizational levels. This is especially true, not only in the corporate sector which is concerned only with profit maximization at almost any cost to society, but also — more importantly — in the public sector in which ethical standards, legal procedures, fairness and accountability must be observed in serving the public interests and for upholding the public trust.

Thanks to the neo-conservative movement of government reinvention and market-based administrative reforms, political and business interests of expediently achieving end results have been stressed at the cost of ethical, moral and accountability standards in public service and administration. But, professional administrative performance is another matter, a matter of noble public service. It is a matter separate from political and business criteria of arbitrary and discretionary behaviors in favor of particularistic interests. Does performance matter? Of course it does, but so does accountability and ethics, two values that can and should complement performance, professional or otherwise.

### **Global concern for ethics and accountability**

Rampant political and economic corruption of the late 19th century America provided much of the impetus for the development of modern public administration, for professionalization of civil service and for the administrative state in the United States (Stillman, 1987; Thayer, 1997; Caiden, 2001). Similar developments occurred elsewhere around the globe. Merit system and professional civil service were considered the neutral mechanisms for good governance and administration for decades. Indeed, professional civil servants were viewed, and still are, as 'guardians' of public trust and public interest. Some experts have extended this argument even further by calling the Civil Service (Pendleton) Act of 1883 in the United States the 'ethical watchdog, the moral guardian of governmental decision-making . . . It was needed to replace the unplanned cancerous growth that had come to control politicians, elections, voters and much of government spending' (Thayer, 1997: 95).

The 1883 Act 'actually was the full equivalent of a constitutional amendment, even though there was no way to describe it as such' (Thayer, 1997: 95). The central concern behind the governmental movement then was corruption. The same notion applies today, as Frederickson (1993: 3) reminds us: 'The contemporary government ethics movement appears to have essentially the same purpose as the reform movement a century ago — to reduce government corruption.' The significance of ethics in governance and public service is high for several reasons. First, the level of corruption in government has increased dramatically. Taking bribes by public officials — mostly political — is a pervasive phenomenon around the world, and the business sector is a major conduit for this unethical practice. Examples abound. In the United States, during the 'Reagan administration over 100 federal officials were either indicted or convicted' (Frederickson, 1993: 6). Small and big 'scams' have resulted in the conviction of numerous officials. Corruption has been a pervasive and enduring public issue. Second, 'people do not equivocate about government corruption. It is wrong and they are against it' (Frederickson, 1993: 6). Third, government corruption is a policy issue with strong 'carrying capacity'. It has reached a saturation level. Fourth, matters of government ethics are being increasingly institutionalized. Fifth, ethics cut across all policy fields such as business, medicine, social service, insurance, social security, military, economy, science and culture.

The global concern for administrative ethics has been manifest in at least three ways: academically, institutionally and legislatively. Judicially, ethics have also been reflected in cases reaching the high courts (see Rohr, 1989), including the 2001 presidential election case in the United States, in which the conservative supreme court eagerly ruled with partisan preference in favor of the Republican candidate, George W. Bush. Academically, research and writing on administrative ethics have appeared in the many texts and scholarly books published during the last 20 years (Frederickson, 2001). A number of these books have appeared in the United States alone (see, for example, Golembiewski, 1989; Rohr, 1989; Cooper, 1991, 2001a; Gorthner, 1991; Lewis, 1991; Farazmand, 1999a; and the

collection of essays in Cooper, 2001b, to name a few). Books and materials published in other nations have also enlightened public officials around the world.

Institutional and legislative concerns for ethics are manifest in many organizational and legal measures adopted to combat corruption, safeguard public service integrity and promote professional administrative conducts based on a sound moral and ethical ground. Almost all public organizations and associations of public service and administration appear to have adopted codes of ethics, and institutional arrangements such as special offices to prevent or control unethical conduct appear everywhere. This has been a global phenomenon, with a global academic concern expressed through different themes and perspectives beyond the limitation of this presentation (see Farazmand, 1997c; Cooper, 2001b for details).

### **Professionalism and administrative ethics**

Max Weber once observed that everywhere the modern state and administration would be bureaucratized. Professionalization of state has been inevitable. Both capitalist and socialist states and their administrative systems have gone through bureaucratization. Professionalization of public administration has been characterized by an adherence to merit systems rather than spoils systems, task specialization by either training or experience, procedural systems of checks and balances, and organizational values of efficiency, economy and effectiveness achieved through a degree of political neutrality. It has also meant adherence to professional standards and ethics rather than partisan or other arbitrary criteria.

The professionalization of public service presents two controversial perspectives: one in its favor, and another against its role in political decision-making for accountability reasons. The result has been an enduring tension between professional career bureaucrats and politicians, elected or appointed (Farazmand, 1997b). The conflict between professional and political values has captured much of the recent literature in public administration and political science around the globe. Are they really contradictory or complementary? These two contending perspectives do not have to be contradictory; in fact, they can and should be complementary, one reinforcing the other.

To be a sound administrator, one must also demonstrate sound moral and ethical values and character. Promotion of efficiency and effectiveness at the cost of moral and ethical conduct will lead to potential corruption, injustice and ineffectiveness by inflicting moral poverty on society and citizenship. At the same time, the promotion of narrowly based democratic values of responsiveness and responsibility (To whom? A faction, a group, a particular class?) alone can be short lived when efficiency, objectivity and effectiveness are lost. In the age of increasing complexity, professionalism can be sacrificed for the sake of sweet talk of business efficiency, but it can be left alone without accountability also. As Waldo (1980/1992) observed, ethical complexity increases as we move toward the higher level of organizational hierarchy, that is at the executive leadership

level. This complexity is now more than ever increased in the age of corporate globalization and pervasive global privatization. And if accountability and ethical behavior are lost at the highest level, then little can be expected at the lower organizational levels. It is imperative to build, promote and practice responsible professionalism in order to perform with competence in an administrative system that is both ethically sound and transparently accountable to the broad public.

In the age of globalization of capital, both professional performance and accountable/ethical behaviors in administration are absolute requirements. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve due to massive privatization and the increase in temptation for corruption and abuse of authority, and business-like organizational performance that at least encourages, if not dictates, secrecy and lack of accountability (for more on this, see Farazmand, 2000a). In this respect, public administrators may be viewed as 'guardians of public trust' (Rosenbloom, 1995).

Professional public administrators may be seen as guardians of public trust and public interest. For decades, the administrative state and public administration provided stability and continuity to governance and political systems even in the midst of paralyzing political crises, upheavals and revolutions around the world. It is an established tradition that bureaucracy has survived political changes for more than three millennia (Farazmand, 1997b). Partisan politicians come and go, but the bureaucracy and public administrators provide continuity and institutional stability. This is a historical lesson learned over and over from as early as ancient times (see Farazmand, 1994b). A sound public administration can guard the public trust against political abuses, corruption and destabilizing political crises and upheavals. Public administrators play an active role in the formulation and development of public policies. But their role in the pace, style, tone and quality of implementation is immense. Public administration therefore is 'central to the exercise of power' in governance (Holden, 1997) and is indispensable to the ruling 'power structure' and rule by political masters (Weber, 1946, 1984). Thus, viewing public administrators as guardians of public trust may not be an over-stretched assertion. However, this assertion may also raise the question of 'Who then guards the guardians and holds them accountable?'

Administrative accountability is therefore very important because there are many aspects of administrators' jobs that can lead to a misconception of corruption, subversion and public interest. At the same time, there are aspects of professionalism and public administration that make it difficult to attain an acceptable or satisfactory level of accountability. The possible misconception of and difficulty in attaining administrative accountability make administrative ethics extremely important in public service and administration education, training and practice. Ethics is a form of self-accountability, an 'inner check' on the conduct, behavior or action of public administrators and other officials of public service. Accountability is also a legal as well as an organizational and political matter. It concerns issues of liability as well as ethical matters. There are many ways to achieve administrative accountability and these include organizational, manager-

ial, political, legislative, judicial and other institutional means, a subject that is beyond the scope of this limited article.

### Conclusion

A few points of conclusion are in order. First, corruption in its diverse forms has provided a major impetus for reform and establishing institutional and others means of accountability and ethical conduct in governance and administration. Second, globalization of capital by corporate elites has had tremendous impacts on public service and administration, and has caused dramatic changes in the configuration of public–private sectors through privatization. NPM has further complicated the problems of accountability and ethics in administration as it focuses on the narrowly based criteria of business-like bottom-line efficiency and profit at almost any cost and with secrecy and behind-the-door decision-making.

A major negative impact of these changes has been the rapid increase in corruption and unethical conducts as a result of sweeping global privatization, especially at the high administrative and political levels (see the international case studies in Parenti [1995] and Farazmand [2000b]). Third, the professionalization of public services and administration has traditionally been a major safeguard against political corruption in the history of American public administration, and elsewhere around the world. It has been a source of ethical improvement in public service, and this has been possible through merit and professional performance, whereas patronage and spoils systems have had the opposite effects. However, this article also warns that performance — professional or otherwise — alone is not enough; it must also be ethically sound with moral character of officials and with accountability in the governance process.

Accountability and transparency are essential to sound governance and public administration; so are sound ethical behavior in professional performance with high competency and efficiency. Despite difficulties in holding public administrators accountable, there are many ways through which accountability can be achieved in public administration. Because of the centrality of administration in politics and the power structure, ethically sound professional public administrators can be viewed as effective ‘guardians of public trust’ and broadly based public interest around the world.

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