

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This article explores why some countries have benefited far more from globalization than others, how public administration systems have responded differentially to the challenge of globalization, and what kinds of limitations of public administration responding to global forces beyond public administration systems exist. Many developing countries have benefited less from globalization because they have considerable disadvantages in the global marketplace in addition to weak public administration systems. Those countries have fewer resources and less effective economic or political systems to put on the table in the global marketplace. The concern is the nature of globalization and the global market systems beyond public administration systems in addition to the limitations of public administration responding to those factors. Additionally, it is questionable whether rapidly developing countries, including the East Asian and Eastern European countries, have benefited from globalization due to transitioning public administration systems.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization with the revolution of information technology has been dramatically changing human behavior, management of corporations, and governance of states much more than the industrial revolution transformed the agricultural society. The markets and trade, in fact, are borderless, communication is much easier via the Internet and mobile instruments, and the world is getting much closer. While globalization is dramatically dividing the world into powerful and powerless countries with regards to information technology, trade, and economy, the winner and the loser inevitably happen in the global marketplace. Nonetheless, the vast majority of people in the planet still get their signals not from global financial markets, let alone cyberspace, but from the national capital, and personal access to the twenty-four-hour interconnected world still remains restricted to a minority of the world's population (Yergin and Stanislaw 2002, 396).

Meanwhile, public administration systems appear to help some countries to have far more benefits than others, even if many social scientists believe that international economic, trade, and political systems have played more significant role in helping some countries to get far more benefits than others. Public administration systems in both developed and developing countries tend to respond differently to the challenge of global forces. Why have some countries benefited far more from globalization than others? Is this due to public administration or governance? If so, why and how have developed and transitioning public administration systems responded differentially to the challenges for greater efficiency, responsiveness, and transparency while preserving

democratic values in the age of globalization? If not, what has led some countries to get far more benefits from globalization than others? These research questions are directly or indirectly responded in this article. After discussing how globalization has changed public administration, this article explores how public administration systems in more developed and less developed countries have responded differentially to global forces and what kinds of limitations of public administration responding to globalization beyond public administration systems exist.

GLOBALIZATION AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Table 1. U.S. Federal Government Contracts

Top Federal-Contractor	Employment in 2002, in millions	percentage change from 1999
Defense Manufacturers	1.72	+43%
Defense Services	1.64	+5%
Energy Services	0.43	+0.2%
NASA Services	0.23	+47%
GSA Services	0.22	+62%
NASA Manufacturers	0.15	+113%
HHS and SSA Services	0.14	+10%
Energy Manufacturers	0.04	-10%
GSA Manufacturers	0.04	+100%
HHS and SSA Manufacturers	0.03	+750%
Source: The Brookings Institution (Adjusted from The Wall Street Journal 2003).		

Global forces are penetrating at all levels of government, on the one hand, and a national or local policy in a particular country has often global effects cross national boundaries, on the other. Global pressures, in fact, have played a significant role in helping public bureaucracies in the Western European and North American countries streamline their personnel, budgets, and organizations by privatizing, outsourcing, contracting out, deregulating, downsizing, or restructuring government functions and services. Governmental functions and services are actually being outsourced at all levels of government, and the incidence of outsourcing in government agencies is continuously growing, though governmental functions and services outsourced vary substantially.¹ For instance, all levels of government have been outsourcing most human resources functions and services from staffing to compensation and benefits to HR information system operations with exception of the training and development cluster of activities (Siegel 2000, 228-229). Further, state and local governments have contracted out most of their social service programs, and the spread of horizontal relationships replaces traditional hierarchical authority and multilayered federalism with “networks-sometimes formally constructed through contracts and other legal

agreements, sometimes informally drawn through pragmatic working relationships” (Kettl 2000, 494).

Market forces and market model principles have increasingly made public administration more like “business.” Like business administration, public administration has been increasingly focusing on efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, performance, accountability, responsiveness, and flexibility by adopting techniques mainly used in corporations. The Weberian assumptions of an ideal type of bureaucracy are no longer compatible with management of modern public organizations. National and local governments are expected to be more efficient, effective, responsive, and accountable through structural and behavioral adjustments or adaptations. Meanwhile, public employees are expected to do more with less, employee rights and job security are diminished, and more importantly, social equity, justice, fairness, legitimacy, and diversity are questioned. For example, the pay-for-performance system seeks productivity, accountability, and flexibility through the compensation of workers based on their contribution to the organization. Measuring and compensating performances, contributions, and merits of public employees, however, are ambiguous. Under the productivity-based pay system, employee rights, job security, or social equity would be diminished. Additionally, budget constraints, union settlements, legal issues, political circumstances, or organizational cultures keep public agencies from maintaining the pay-for-performance system.

Globalization provides more freedom and discretion for the low level of government due to the revolution of information technology. To attract investment or promote trade, local governments directly work with foreign governments and big corporations, and thus create more jobs and stimulate the local economy. In addition, local programs and services are delivered and managed more efficiently via e-government, though local governments rely heavily on state transfers to maintain municipal programs, e.g., transfer payments make up 30 to 50 percent of total municipal payments in the United States. When contracting out municipal programs like social service programs with not-for-profit or for-profit agencies, local governments can manage them efficiently by using advanced information technology (see Brown and Brudney 1998; Globberman and Vining 1998; Gooden 1998; Jones and Thompson, 2007). Consequently, quality of municipal services, level of customer satisfaction, and accountability and performance of municipal employees can be improved.

RESPONSES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO GLOBAL FORCES

Global forces demand fundamental changes of the social, economic, political, and administrative systems throughout the countries. The impact of global forces on public management, however, is remarkably different among countries, especially between Western and Non-western countries, between more developed and less developed countries, and between Christian and Non-Christian countries. National bureaucracies respond differentially to global forces, while the international environment is increasingly affecting national bureaucracies. The first type of national bureaucracies tends to happen in developed countries (e.g., the Western European and North American countries) where globalization leads to strong public administration systems

which in turn respond positively to globalization. In the second type of national bureaucracies where religious or authoritarian elites or single parties are most likely to control the flows of information, however, these positive interactive effects between globalization and public administration are not quite effective. Examples are developing African, Asian, and South American countries, Muslim countries (e.g., Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria), and socialist states (e.g., China, North Korea, and Cuba). Those countries open to globalization seek to keep their culture, norms, and social or political systems intact, while technical, scientific, financial, and economic activities are affected and changed by global forces. The role of public administration on globalization in those countries is limited. Public bureaucracies in many developing countries are likely to attempt to control or manipulate the distribution and circulation of government information to maintain their regime at the expense of the public interest. Utilizing information technology, citizens in Western nations are more likely to have access to government information, whereas citizens in non-Western nations are not equally accessible to government information (Welch and Wong 1998, 46). Advanced information system is usually available in only developed countries, while many developing countries are limited in the application of advanced information technology to public management.

The last type of national bureaucracies happens in rapidly developing countries, including the East Asian countries and Eastern European countries, where the economy is booming and information technology is emerging. However, it remains questionable whether those countries have benefited from globalization due to their public administration systems. The first-tier Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs), including the East Asian countries, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea, and the Eastern European countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia that have benefited from globalization appear to have done so by strong political leadership, technocrats' economic development plans, and citizens' efforts rather than transitioning public administration systems.

Table 2. Corruption Perceptions Index, 2005

Rank	country	CPI Score
1.	Iceland	9.7
2.	Finland	9.6
2.	New Zealand	9.6
4.	Demark	9.5
5.	Singapore	9.4
6.	Sweden	9.2
11.	UK	8.6
14.	Canada	8.4
15.	Hong Kong	8.3
17.	USA	7.6
21.	Japan	7.2
32.	Twain	5.9
39.	Malaysia	5.1
40.	South Korea	5.0
40.	Hungary	5.0
45.	Kuwait	4.7
47.	Czechoslovakia	4.3
55.	Bulgaria Hungary	4.0
70.	Poland	3.4
70.	Saudi Arabia	3.4
70.	Egypt	3.4
83.	Lebanon	3.1
88.	Iran	2.9
117.	Uganda	2.5
137.	Ethiopia	2.2
144.	Kenya	2.1
152.	Nigeria	1.9
Source: Adjusted from Transparency International. 2005. pp. 5-6.		

Table 3. Government Effectiveness Index, 2005

country	Percentile Rank
Iceland	100
Singapore	99.5
Demark	99
Canada	95.7
UK	94.3
Hong Kong	92.8
USA	91.9
Japan	84.7
Twain	83.7
Malaysia	80.4
South Korea	78.9
Czechoslovakia	76.6
Hungary	75.1
Poland	71.3
Kuwait	65.6
Bulgaria	62.2
Lebanon	46.4
Egypt	43.1
Saudi Arabia	41.6
Uganda	36.8
Iran	26.3
Kenya	25.4
Nigeria	20.1
Ethiopia	15.8
Source: Adjusted from Kaufman et al. 2006.	

Displaying the corruption perceptions index in 2005, Table 2 indicates that public officials and politicians in a majority of the first-tier Newly Industrialized Economies except Singapore and Hong Kong are perceived to be corrupt. The corruption perceptions index (CPI) is a composite index, drawing on a corruption-related data in expert surveys carried out by a variety of reputable institutions and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt) (Transparency International 2005, 8). Additionally, displaying the government effectiveness index in 2005, Table 3 indicates that public officials in Singapore and Hong Kong among the first-tier Newly Industrialized Economies are most effective. A Kaufmann index of government effectiveness was based on responses on the quality of public service provision, the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence of civil servants, the independence of the civil service from political pressures, and the credibility of the government's commitment to policies (Kaufman et al. 2006).

Further, whereas business administration systems in emerging countries have significantly allowed global forces to change the ways corporations are managed, public administration systems have not been remarkably penetrated and changed by global forces. Compared to business management, public management in those countries is less likely to be responsive and accountable to public interests, public opinions, and clients' needs due to red tape, rigidity, resistance to changes, or corruption. Since professionalism and rationality are not behaviorally, culturally, and institutionally established in those public bureaucracies, public management is less likely to be efficient, effective, productive, transparent, and fair. Personal, organizational, or political interests can replace public interests, as long as public administration is not separable from politics. Global pressures, market forces, and information technology need to keep public administration separate from politics and more like "public" and "professional" in emerging countries, although public administration is expected to be more proactive.

Table 4. Access to Information and Communications (per 1,000 people, 2004)

	Internet users	Telephone subscribers	Cellular subscribers
Sub-Saharan Africa			
Uganda	7	3	42
Ethiopia	2	n/a	3
Nigeria	14	8	71
Zambia	20	8	26
Kenya	45	9	76
Arab States			
Egypt	54	130	105
Iran	82	n/a	64
Lebanon	169	178	251
Saudi Arabia	66	154	383
Kuwait	244	202	813
First-tier NIEs			
Hong Kong	506	549	1,184
Singapore	571	440	910
Korea, Rep. of	657	542	761
Malaysia	397	179	587
High-Income OECD			
USA	630	606	617
Canada	626	n/a	469
UK	628	563	1,021
Denmark	696	643	956
Japan	587	460	716
All developing countries	64	122	175
Arab States	55	91	169
Sub-Saharan Africa	19	n/a	77
OECD	484	491	714
High-income OECD	563	551	770
Source: Adjusted from United Nations Development Programme. 2006. pp. 327-330.			

The Western European and North American countries have benefited most from globalization, whereas a large number of countries, especially the Islamic countries and the Third World, have kept away from globalization and the impact of globalization on public bureaucracies and political systems in those countries is minimal. An alternative explanation would be that all countries have been affected by global economic pressures, developing countries far less than others because they have fewer resources and less effective economic and political systems to put on the table in the global marketplace.³ Table 4 indicates that with regard to access to information and communications measured by internet users or telephone/cellular phone subscribers there are huge gaps between developing and developed countries, especially between African and Muslim countries and industrialized Western countries.

Table 5. Share of Commodity World Trade by Economic Areas (percent)

	1970	1980	1990	1995
Developed countries	72.0	66.8	72.0	67.8
Developing countries	17.2	25.4	22.7	29.1
Africa	3.4	3.7	2.1	1.7
America	5.7	5.9	3.6	4.8
Asia	8.5	13.4	15.8	22.0
Only First-tier NIEs	2.7	4.3	7.5	10.8
Source: Adjusted from Hoogvelt. 2001. pp. 72-73.				

Table 6. Production of Sub-Saharan Africa

	1965-73	1973-84	1980-90	1990-98
GDP	5.4	1.8	1.8	2.2
Agriculture	2.7	0.9	2.5	2.6
Industry	9.7	1.3	0.9	1.2
Service	5.0	2.1	2.4	2.1
Source: Adjusted from Hoogvelt. 2001. p. 174.				

Table 5 displays that with respect to share of commodity world trade by economic areas there are huge disparities between developing and developed countries. While these disparities definitely come from economic and trade structure of nations, i.e., agricultural-based economy in developing countries vs. industrial and high tech-based economy in developed countries, globalization may accelerate these disparities because developing countries have both fewer skillful labor and technical resources and inefficient economic and political systems to compete with developed countries in the global marketplace. Table 6 also indicates that compared to agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa industry in this region has been stagnant since 1973.

FACTORS BEYOND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Developed countries, including the Western European and North American countries, have definitely benefited far more from globalization than others because of the nature of globalization as well as strong public administration systems. By contrast, many developing countries have benefited less from globalization because they have considerable disadvantages in the global marketplace in addition to weak public administration systems. The issue is the nature of globalization and the global market systems which are beyond public administration systems; and the limitations of public administration responding to those factors beyond public administration systems. Those factors are directly related to the reason public administration systems in developing countries have not effectively respond to globalization and the reason developing countries have benefited far less from globalization than developed countries.

Globalization has been primarily caused and accelerated by capitalism and the markets rather than democracy, politics, and public administration. When shifted from national capitalism to global capitalism, the logic of capital and markets tends to dominate the democratic principles. Capitalism, however, seeks a strong state with a stable environment for its prosperity (Offe 1985). Global markets would not function efficiently without an appropriate national or global intervention for market failures which substantially keep domestic and international markets from working efficiently or fairly. In the global market place, for instance, unfair competition, unfair trade, price control, and manipulation of financial flows have remarkably affected cross national boundaries. Some Asian countries from South Korea to Taiwan were financially devastated in the late 1990s due to the unregulated financial and currency flows from the major international financial agents. Millions of private and public employees in those countries lost their jobs, and their human and social interests were sacrificed. Public administration in those countries could not effectively respond to financial devastation because the global financial attacks were beyond public administrative systems or governance. Hence, states are required to be interdependent in handling domestic and international issues. The emerging contemporary issues, including environmental and ecological protection and war on terror, which can not be controlled within national boundaries, are universal and have common global roots (Caiden 1994, 50).

As a matter of fact, one of the crucial factors causing and contributing to globalization is global capitalism in which profit or surplus accumulation crosses territorial borders and transcends national boundaries (Farazmand 1999, 512). Total world trade grew in the 1980s at an annual rate of 4.5 percent and in the 1990s at an annual rate of 6.8 percent (Yergin and Stanislaw 2002, 393). Meanwhile, international production measured by annual sales of multinational corporations had already surpassed international trade as the main vehicle of international economic exchange in 1971 (Hoogvelt 2001, 77). As long as the markets are favorable to those who have the economy of scale, the global markets are inherently biased in favor of multinational or transnational corporations with enormous economic and political resources. Multinational or transnational corporations, including GE, Nike, Coca-Cola, and IBM, make profit by utilizing not only cheap labor and materials but also production sites with reduced costs in less developed countries. Most multinational corporations have been indeed hiring and utilizing influential domestic and international politicians as their executive board members to lobby the executive and legislative branches for making and implementing favorable policies to their corporate interests. Consequently, governments of more developed countries have continuously executed favorable policies, regulations, and laws reflecting the interests of multinational corporations from agricultural to manufacturing products to screens. In addition, to accomplish the interests of multinational corporations, their governments have been using diplomacy, unilateralism, supranational global organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. As a result, goods and services of multinational corporations whose chief executives and stock holders are mainly Western people have dominated the market shares in not only Western nations but also non-Western nations.

Globalization has been transforming the traditional nation-state governance by utilizing more supranational, subnational, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations, that is, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The total number of NGOs around the world, from neighborhood-based groups to large international organizations, surely numbers in the millions (Mathews 1991). National sovereignty has shrunk along with government's capacity to understand and shape the emerging issues and the conflicts, including economic, financial, environmental, ecological, cultural, labor, and human rights issues (Kettl 2000, 492). Concerning environmental protection, "governments are already knowingly and unwittingly delegating power, both upward to international institutions and downward to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the corporate sector" (Mathews 1991, 34). Likewise, governments have come to depend heavily on for-profit and nonprofit organizations for delivering goods and services. Suprastate governing agencies and nongovernmental organizations have been gaining more importance in collaborating with global efforts.⁴

Citizens in a large number of Asian, African, and South American countries, however, believe that those global supranational organizations tend to unilaterally represent the interests of the superpowers at the expense of the interests of millions of people in developing countries. For example, poor countries have been made worse off under the WTO due to the pressure of the opening of the markets from the advanced industrial countries. Also, the contractionary fiscal policies of the IMF exacerbated the downturn during the East Asia crisis, and the strategy for restructuring the financial system in Indonesia led to a bank run, which only made matters worse (Stiglitz 2003, 230).⁵ Further, a variety of policies of global supranational organizations whose key members

are usually comprised of more developed countries have deepened the political, economic, financial, political, military, technological, and informational dependence on more developed countries. Developing countries lack significantly information technology, science, and mobile resources, whereas some developing countries have extensive natural resources. Those factors beyond public administration systems constrain public administration in developing countries in the age of globalization.

CONCLUSIONS

Globalization keeps changing public administration in non-Western nations as well as Western nations and makes it easier to compare the similarities between non-Western nations and Western nations with regard to public administration systems and governance. The impact of globalization on public administration in non-Western and developing nations, however, is not yet remarkable as opposed to Western and developed nations. Likewise, public administration systems in many developing countries are not yet significantly either proactive or positive to globalization. Strong public administration systems seem to help their countries to have more benefits from globalization than others in spite of the fact that plural social and political systems limit a proactive role of public administration. Public administration in the Western European and North American countries has significantly streamlined numerous systems including personnel, budget, and entire organizations by privatizing, outsourcing, contracting out, deregulating, downsizing, or restructuring government functions and services and thus has become more efficient, effective, productive, responsive, and transparent. This in turn could play a significant role in helping those countries to maintain strong economic, financial, and trade systems, while developed countries have remarkable advantages with regards to multinational or transnational corporations and global supranational or nongovernmental organizations.

It, however, remains questionable whether weak public administration systems lead their countries to have far less benefits from globalization than others because public administration systems and governance in many developing countries, including the African, Asian, and South American countries, are more likely to be determined by unstable political structure and behavior, underdeveloped economic system, poor technology, weak infrastructure, and poor education. Poor nations have considerable disadvantages in the global marketplace due to fewer resources, including skilled manpower and technology, and fewer intangible information-based products beyond public administration systems. Additionally, poor nations and their citizens are unilaterally under the influence of wealthy nations whose national interests and corporate interests are favorably accomplished at the expense of the interests of economically and technologically disadvantaged nations. In this situation, the autonomy of public administration and the role of public administration responding to global forces are likely to be limited.

Interestingly, the East Asian and Eastern European countries, so-called rapidly developing countries, which have benefited from globalization, have been attempting to streamline public bureaucracies by deregulating, privatizing, or downsizing government functions and services as well as mobilize information technology in public

administration. Transitioning public administration systems in Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia have contributed to helping their countries to get benefits from globalization. For instance, the Korea government instituted “the Open Competitive Position System” in 1999 which was designed to recruit outstanding talent from the public and private sectors and around 20% of its positions were designated to open positions under this system; additionally, the Korea government introduced the performance-related pay system, the annual merit incremental program and the performance bonus program to encourage competition among civil servants (Kamarck 2004, 30). The government of Singapore established the eCitizen Portal in 1997 as a single gateway to government services and information through the integration of government services and information according to intuitive categories such as “education,” “housing,” etc. (Kamarck 2004, 34). In addition to transitioning public administration systems, those countries appear to have benefited from globalization because of strong political leadership, technocrats’ economic development plans and citizens’ efforts. Public management in the East Asian and Eastern European countries is indeed expected to be more rational, efficient, responsive, accountable, and transparent on the grounds that rationality and professionalism are not presently behaviorally and institutionally established in a wide range of public bureaucracies.

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NOTES

¹ Table 1 displays the U.S. federal government contracts in 2002. Interestingly, most contracts, especially defense contracts which are the top federal-contracts, have remarkably increased in the George W. Bush administration; for example, the number of full-time employees working on government contracts and grants has zoomed by more than one million people since 1999 (The Wall Street Journal 2003).

² Globalization through privatization derives domestic economic enterprises in developing countries out of business by turning them into trans-world globalizing corporations (Farazmand 2001, 194). A World Bank study shows that privatization has had little impact on efficiency and economic growth (Kurtz et al. 2001, 241). Contracting out in refuse collection, cleaning, and maintenance services, generally, resulted in cost savings, while no significant cost reductions were found for other services (Hodge 2000, 155). Privatization and contracting out have often resulted in corruption, fraud, low quality of service, inefficiency, and mismanagement in more developed countries as well as less developed countries.

³ “The biggest problem with today’s wave of globalization involves differences between the First and Third Worlds. Today, citizens in North America, Europe, and Japan consume, on average, 32 times more resources and (produce 32 times more waste) than the billions of citizens of the Third World” (The Los Angeles Times 2003).

⁴ Even if some global organizations do not have formal power and their decisions do not have enforcement power, crucial decisions of supranational governing agencies or global supranational organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations (UN), are more likely to represent the interests of politically, economically, or militarily strong nations as opposed to equal representation of nations. Leaders of those organizations are not elected directly, and there is no direct accountability to the public (Stiglitz 2003, 227).

⁵ Kregel (1998) pointed out that the merging of the supranational governance agencies can exacerbate fiscal crises of less-developed countries and make the problem of governability in those countries.

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