

## An Administrative Manifesto for Survival in the Twenty-First Century

Senior–Junior  
Academic  
Exchange:  
Building  
Administrative  
Capacity

*Professor Ali Farazmand has written a manifesto for administrative action in an effort to improve public governance and administration capacity not only for today but also for tomorrow, which is highly volatile and uncertain. Farazmand's earlier works, especially his essay "Globalization and Public Administration" (PAR, November/December 1999), are familiar to many students and scholars in public administration around the world.*

With his current article, Professor Farazmand should be considered a new Fred Riggs, as well as a new Dwight Waldo of modern public administration—the former for his knowledge on comparative and development administration and politics, and the latter for his special attention to the value of the “administrative state” in modern governance, especially in the aftermath of the Great Depression and World War II. Farazmand is both because he challenges the world of governance and public administration from a broad and truly global scope of knowledge and solutions in a comparative perspective, something that Riggs tried to do for more 50 years. Farazmand is also Waldo, for he tackles, rather exceptionally well and in rarity, the current global crisis of market capitalism, which he has been predicting for more than two decades, and, in this powerful article, he has raised the imperative of a revived “administrative state,” and a revitalized public administration as a self-conscious enterprise, as well as a novel profession of practice.

Farazmand's work elevates public administration to a higher level of the “state role” conceptualization, away from trivialization of routine administrative processes. These are the realms of political philosophy and economy. His contribution ought to be commended, as he is a very influential scholar in public administration worldwide. His scholarly works are among the best and most inspirational sources of knowledge for students, scholars in political science, and public administration throughout the world. The high mark characteristic of his works lies in the originality that he always presents and in his

invocation of creative thinking, even when he makes arguments that others may have raised in book-length discussions. Farazmand has avoided the academic fads so often prevalent in the works of too many other scholars, including some leaders. In Farazmand's works, we can find the core values of mainstream public administration—that is, public interest, equity, ethics, and professionalism—but he also gets out of the box and challenges all of us—juniors and seniors alike—through his thought-provoking originality and theoretical constructs that can easily be adopted as quality scholarship.

In this manifesto, Farazmand goes beyond past works and focuses on the viability and reliability of the world. His conceptual frameworks, inspiring as they always are, put social phenomena in the dialectical context of change and continuity, a framework that makes analysis smooth and comprehensible. And in this article, he once again eloquently presents the massive changes in national and international governance and public administration in the context of globalization and global capitalist systems' relentless efforts toward continuity through change as the most dominant system of market and governance. It is beyond the scope of this short essay to explain the key points of Farazmand's manifesto for social action—they are too many and well integrated, and going through them would require a long essay like his.

In summary, Professor Farazmand first analyzes the characteristics of the contemporary world and the origin of these changes—that is, the globalization of corporate capitalism. Second, he explains the positive and negative consequences of globalization and warns not to give the keys to the “transworld train” to the private sector. Farazmand's suggestion for the survival of the world is “building new administrative capacity” by the modern state. He provides this prescription not only for the United States and other industrialized nations, but for all countries concerned, both developing and developed. Why is the administrative capacity so important?

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## Why Administrative Capacity?

There are four managerial systems in all political states: (1) a meta-policy system, (2) a public policy system, (3) a public administration system, and (4) a private management system.

The linkage between the four systems is an alignment between meta-policy (level 1), policy (level 2), strategy (level 3), and strategy (level 4). Many scholars of public administration and economics emphasize the central role of public administration in this package. Although its role has changed overtime, its philosophy is not ignored. New authors claim that the key role of public administration is governance—a new claim. The degree of this governance has changed over time. Today—as for the last 28 years—the key of administration has been given to, or held by, the private sector. For the protection of the global public interest, strengthening administrative capacities is necessary to get the key back. The domination of market theory worldwide has been based on this rhetorical strategy, which argues that government is not a good employer; it has had dangerously negative consequences for a viable world, especially in developing countries. Capitalism has constructed an artificial social reality that says, “government is bad,” “efficiency belongs to the private sector,” and “an efficient government is a privatized one,” or, as the extremist of the Old West American white settlers would say, “The only good Indian is a dead Indian.”

Failure of the socialist paradigm has accelerated the speed of the capitalist machinery. Governments have given their authority to market elites and have lost their ability and capacity for dealing with crises. The slogan “A citizen is a citizen only on voting day” has decreased government legitimacy and capacity. The dependence of government on the market is a big barrier to promoting administrative capacity. We should consider the Hurricane Katrina crisis, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the Balkan war, and then focus on the current global financial crisis, and ask ourselves, “Where is the invisible private hand?” We find it hidden everywhere. Looking carefully, and we find inefficiency attributable to a lack of, or paralyzed, global administrative capacity everywhere. These crises are not problems of a particular government, or in fact the problem of governments at all. As Farazmand rightly argues, we must deal with global crises through global administrative capacities. Does this capacity exist? Moreover, we remember the devastating earthquake that struck Iran’s ancient city of Bam and killed more than 50,000 of its 85,000 population a few years ago; it destroyed the entire city, including 75 percent of its 2,600-year-old Citadel (the world’s largest and oldest). Iranian people responded massively and helped the government in emergency management—which became a global benchmark of performance for others; the government administrative capacity was strong, effective, and managed the crisis well in an anticipatory way, which considered possible foreign military invasion in the aftermath of the crisis. Yet this was not sufficient—more was expected.

Today, in the unrestrained market system that dominates modern governance, market slavery has replaced traditional colonial slavery. To avoid this bad—or ugly—fate, enhancing administrative capacity is inevitable. Based on Farazmand’s manifesto, promoting administrative capacity has desirable consequences, such as (1) halting

extremist market maneuvering, (2) promoting managerial ability and capacity for dealing with global crises, (3) moderating the gaps between the rich and poor, (4) strengthening civil society and social capital, and (5) conducting the market in pursuit of global interests. Therefore, Farazmand’s perspective is macro, not micro—the latter requires a separate presentation. His concerns reflect the concerns of all saviors of the universe. I think that the promotion of administrative capacity will help the world cope with big problems that are too dangerous for the survival of the world. Additionally, I think that building new administrative capacity can affect some of the big issues surrounding our world. The following are three examples.

### **Global False Consciousness**

Today, we may see what Karl Marx called “false consciousness” (Hatch 1997), which has dominated all governments. All governments in the world unconsciously say to market elites, “Please plunder our resources.” Politicians claim that the market can promote employment and reduce the gap between the rich and poor—thus, “Let the market do its business.” Government is not an intelligent employer. Therefore, the market and politicians jointly limit the definition of public goods only to national defense, clean air, the environment, and promoting market opportunities. But the market pursues only self-interests and plunders everything in that pursuit; therefore, everything, body and soul, are bought and sold by money. I think that promoting administrative capacity may be a strong shield against market abuse and could alleviate the power of “false consciousness” and demystify market ideologies.

### **Declining Global Innovation**

There is a verse in the Qur’an that says, “We created humans in various groups to know each other, and this is good for mankind.” If we observe the universe today, we will find diversity in its core nature. Thus, the universe is diversified in nature. Today, diversity is a hot topic in organization and management studies. These studies show a strong relationship between diversity and innovation. A big danger of globalization is its conversion and integration of all aspects of the world, such as language, clothing, eating, drinking, writing, and the like. This trend will suffocate global innovation because it will choke diversity around the globe. This outcome of Americanized globalization can be awful for the universe in general and for capitalism in particular. Imagine that wherever we travel in the world, we see cities, restaurants, buildings, and landmarks modeled after American corporate symbols and icons—an Americanized world? The death of diversity and innovation will likely make even Americans bored to see themselves around the globe. The same would apply if everywhere looked Chinese.

What interests tourists the most is the very nature of diversity and uniqueness in nature, culture, creativity, and innovation. The Western corporate media is promoting the disappearance of cultural, social, political, economic, and managerial differences in the world. One must ask: Isn’t it diversity that has contributed to innovations and advancements around the world, and has this not been accomplished mostly by government administrative capacities, say, from the Great Wall of China, to the Persepolis of Persia, to the Pyramids of Egypt? Promoting administrative capacity by different states and

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governments can slow down the reduction in global innovation and human creativity.

### Shaping Global Anxiety

Integration of the world has positive consequences for many people, but it also causes the negative outcome of generating global anxiety. Class competition intensifies as the “well-to-do” positions themselves with more wealth and access to opportunities worldwide, while the poor and working class must find work with downgraded opportunities and slave-level struggles, raising social and economic anxieties and class-based stress. The globalization of corporate capitalism promotes a dialogue about global consumerism and makes visible the power of the “moneyed people” across the world, but it also tends to reduce people to workers or even wage slaves of the modern master: “the corporate elites,” to borrow Farazmand’s notion (1999), in a “race to the bottom.” Governments’ dependence on market elites has isolated them from the grassroots and from average people. Perhaps the development of government managerial capacity can make citizens hopeful in reducing the degree of global fear and anxiety—after all, it is the government that can and must alleviate inequality and poverty.

### Conclusion

Professor Farazmand’s monumental works reflect the concerns of all saviors of the world. By taking a realistic view of the dangers of globalization, Farazmand examines the benefits of and costs of globalization and suggests a modest prescription for managing its big dangers. His chief concerns are sweeping privatization, marketization, commercialization, and the “flattening” of the world, and

his prescription is “promoting administrative capacity” to curb the fallacies of those market panaceas that have plunged the world into a deep global crisis and depression.

Although his theoretical justification is very strong and inspirational, he might want to consider paying more attention to the importance of “promoting administrative capacity” in alleviating or countering the “global false consciousness,” the “depression of global innovation due to global convergence,” and the “emerging global anxiety.” Professor Farazmand is urged to continue his “grandiose manifesto for development in public administration,” and to prepare a sequel article at the micro level to focus on the details of administrative capacity building, especially focusing on a number of the “administrative capacities” he outlines at the conclusion of his article, namely, strategic human resource capacity, financial capacity, and the like—this would be greatly beneficial to practitioners as well as theory builders. He should also be encouraged to turn this article into a book-length presentation and make it available to worldwide readers. Every student, scholar, and practitioner of public administration and government must read Professor Farazmand’s manifesto.

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