

# Relationship between citizenship and public administration: a reconfiguration

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## **Introduction**

In general, the essence of public administration lies in the principles of citizenship, because its intellectual foundation is based on the concept of a 'public' representing the citizens, its material or financial existence depends on citizens as taxpayers and its practical obligation remains to be the realization of the needs and expectations of citizens (see Frederickson, 1991). In advanced democratic societies, it is the unique relationship of public administration with citizens that maintains its public identity, reinforces its legitimacy, sets its ethical standards, determines its roles and duties and distinguishes it from business management in the private sector (see Haque, 1996c, 1998a). However, in recent years, the nature of such an administration–citizen relationship has undergone considerable transformation within the current global context characterized by the dominance of market ideology, demonization of the welfare state, emergence of neoliberal regimes, proliferation of promarket policies and the erosion of public service in terms of its scope, role, capacity and commitment.

Based on the growing alliance between the state and the market, there has emerged a more collaborative relationship between public bureaucracy and private firms while the administration's relationship with the ordinary citizen has weakened. In almost all countries, this changing relationship between citizens and public administration is quite evident in the expanding public–private partnership on the one hand and the diminishing welfare-based services for the ordinary citizen on the other. It is also apparent in the fact that in both developed and developing nations, the market-driven neoliberal regimes have adopted a variety of administrative reforms in the name of creating an 'entrepreneurial government', establishing 'new public management' and reinforcing a 'businessman's outlook' (Gore, 1993: 44; Haque, 1998a), which has changed the mission of public bureaucracy, affected the nature and composition of its services to citizens and thus transformed its relationship with them.

This article attempts to examine critically various dimensions of this newly emerging business-like relationship between citizens and public administration.

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However, the primary focus of the article is not on the strengths and limitations of the past state-centered public administration extensively discussed in the existing literature (see Haque, 1996b). Its main emphasis is on the current market-centered public administration — especially on how the current market-driven reforms in the public service have adversely affected its relationship with the general public. In this regard, the article includes the following aspects: an overview of the nature of the relationship between public administration and citizenship in general; a critical analysis of contemporary changes in the citizen–administration relationship; and a brief discussion on various adverse implications of this recent reconfiguration of the citizen–administration relationship for public administration.

### **Citizenship versus public administration: a general overview**

#### *Citizenship: formations, dimensions and variations*

There are varying philosophical and theoretical traditions of citizenship and diverse state policies related to the status and rights associated with citizenship, which have considerable implications for the nature and scope of relationship between citizens and government bureaucracy. However, there are significant differences among various philosophical–theoretical traditions. First, the *classical* conservative view interprets citizenship in terms of ‘civic virtues’ such as loyalty, property ownership and sacrifice of inhabitants in the city-states (although there were variations among the Greek, Roman and Renaissance perspectives).<sup>1</sup> Second, the *liberal* tradition emphasizes a sort of legal contract between citizens and the state to the effect that citizens would be obedient to government and the government would ensure them certain basic rights (e.g. individual rights, equal access to law and voting rights).<sup>2</sup> Third, the *communitarian* and *republican* perspectives highlight a citizen’s identity with the community and the primacy of the community concern over individual autonomy (Van Gunsteren, 1994: 42). Fourth, the *radical* tradition (especially Marxism) is critical of citizenship based on property ownership causing inequality, and it considers the bourgeois citizenship as a temporary phenomenon to be replaced through social revolution by a genuine ‘comradeship’ after the withering away of the state (Barbalet, 1988: 3; Oliver and Heater, 1994: 19–20). Last, the *post-modern* perspective is in opposition to the universalistic, ‘hegemonic’ view of citizenship that tends to suppress the ‘particularistic’ identities created by the local, plural and episodic nature of human society (Beiner, 1995: 9).

Underlying this diversity in understanding and practicing citizenship, the common reality has been an increasing expansion of the scope of people’s entitlements or rights — especially the incorporation of individuals’ social rights to welfare and security ensured by government agencies related to education, health, housing and transportation — associated with citizenship. The global significance of citizen’s social rights is evident in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which prescribes that each individual ‘has

the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment' (United Nations, 1993: 8). In most societies, the increasing strength of democratic forces has led to the expansion of citizens' social rights beyond their civil and political entitlements. Even in developing countries, the post-independence period saw the expansion of both the political and social dimensions of citizenship to the extent that the state became the main actor in the overall socioeconomic development, leading to its characterization as a 'developmental state' (Haque, 1998c).

In short, in almost all societies, the concept of citizenship became increasingly more complex and multidimensional, especially by incorporating its social dimension stressing the state's obligations to citizens to ensure their rights to basic services such as education, health and housing through various social programs. However, there have been worldwide changes in the connotation and composition of citizenship since the late 1970s — especially in terms of the growing priority of people's civil rights (their rights to private property) and the diminishing significance of their social rights (their rights to basic social services)<sup>3</sup> — which has considerable implications for the theory and practice of public administration.

*Citizenship versus administration: toward regressive linkages*

Corresponding to the varying and changing connotations of citizenship discussed earlier, the nature and role of public administration and its relationship with citizens have also changed in most countries.<sup>4</sup> In advanced capitalist nations, the scope of public service expanded in the past to address citizens' political rights through various means of public accountability, principles of equal employment opportunity, provisions of ethnic or racial representation based on affirmative action, institutional mechanisms for citizens' participation and so on. The public service also changed in terms of undertaking a direct role to produce and deliver goods and services, resolve unemployment and ensure better living standards for low-income citizens through services such as subsidized education, housing, health care and social security. In developing societies, despite serious resource constraints in the public sector, it became the primary agent to eradicate poverty, generate employment, enhance nation-building, provide education and health services, redistribute income, implement development policies and thereby, ensure the overall well-being of citizens. In other words, the relationship between citizens and public bureaucracy became increasingly people-centered, although in many instances, there were examples of bureaucratic waste, inefficiency, corruption, discrimination, underrepresentation, irresponsiveness and other maladies.

However, during the past two decades, the mode of the citizen–bureaucracy relationship has changed in almost a regressive direction (especially in terms of the eroding significance of social rights associated with citizenship) due to the global fetish for market ideology, the disenchantment of policy-makers with the welfare state and the growing popularity of market-driven reforms (see

Bashevkin, 1994; Massey, 1993). Since the early 1980s, under the emerging neoliberal regimes — characterized by neoclassical policy prescriptions (e.g. privatization, deregulation, liberalization), market-friendly governance, marginalization of public-sector role, reduction in subsidized government services, withdrawal of welfare programs and indifference towards citizens' social rights (Haque, 1998c) — there has been a reversal in the progress made with regard to the scope of citizenship and its relationship with the state and bureaucracy. The major features of this current transition in the nature of the relationship between citizens and public administration are now critically examined in greater detail.

### **New trends in the administration–citizen relationship: a critical viewpoint**

The contemporary changes in the mode of citizen–administration relationship are increasingly evident in ways the neoliberal regimes are reinterpreting citizenship in the public service, resetting its ethical standards that affect citizens, restructuring its role as the facilitator of market forces, reinforcing its business-like motives and attitudes towards the public and discouraging its welfare services often needed by low-income citizens. In the name of the so-called New Public Management based on reinventing or revitalizing government, these reform efforts have recently been adopted in advanced capitalist nations, developing countries and transitional economies. Such a business-like transformation of the public service has a considerable impact on its relationship with various groups and classes of citizens in each society. In this section, this article attempts to explain this reconfiguration of the administration–citizen relationship in terms of the current redefinition of citizenship, shift in administrative ethics, transition in employee attitudes, changes in public service role and capacity and the erosion of a citizen's entitlement to basic services.

#### *Redefinition of citizenship in the public service*

Under a democratic mode of governance, the relationship between the public and public administration is supposed to reflect certain basic principles of citizenship related to both the obligations of citizens to the state and the state's responsibilities to protect citizens and address their needs and demands. As Oliver and Heater (1994: 20) suggest: 'the state owes certain services to the citizen as a right in return for the loyalty and services rendered by the citizen. It is part of the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the state which is central to the concept of citizenship.' This principle of citizenship represents the basic framework of public administration as an institution that is accountable, impartial, open, accessible and responsive to all sections of citizens irrespective of class, race and gender. Public service is supposed to serve all classes and groups of citizens, especially the underclass or the underprivileged who are usually left out by the private sector in the marketplace.

However, in the current atmosphere of market-centered, neoliberal policies and reforms, there has emerged in public administration a redefinition of citizens as 'customers' or 'clients', which has critical implications for the administration–

citizen relationship. The idea of a 'customer-driven' public service based on the principle of 'citizens as customers' was introduced by Osborne and Gaebler (1992), reinforced by Barzelay and Armanjani (1992) and utilized by top policy-makers such as the US Vice President Al Gore (1993). Similar emphasis on customer or consumer orientation can be found in the recent administrative reforms adopted by countries such as Canada, Norway, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and the UK (Christensen, 1997; Kaul, 1996; OECD, 1993). Following these examples of administrative reforms in advanced capitalist nations, many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe have adopted a similar customer-centered approach to administrative modernization in recent years (see Haque, 1998a, b; Kaul, 1996; Vanagunas, 1997).

One main problem of interpreting citizens as customers in the public service is that the term customer implies an exchange relationship involving a monetary transaction. This business-oriented principle of exchange inherent in the notion of customer or client may adversely affect the public service culture that is supposed to emphasize the provision of services to all deserving citizens, including those who do not have the financial capacity to pay for such services. The implications of the new pattern of citizen-bureaucracy relations could be quite adverse for the poorer sections of the population, especially in less developed countries. For example, due to the introduction of a user's fee — which presupposes the idea that citizens are basically customers — the education and health services have become much less affordable to the poor in African countries such as Zaire, Swaziland, Lesotho and Uganda (see Tevera, 1995: 128, 182–3). In many developing countries, while the quality of health and education for the rich has improved, school and health care are becoming unreachable for the poor (see Martin, 1993: 77, 128). In other words, the relationship between the public service and the public based on the principle of customer has unequal impacts on different social classes — it is favorable to the rich but quite adverse for the poor. Although some countries have adopted certain forms of citizen's charter (e.g., the Public Services User's Charter in Belgium, the Public Service Charter in France, the Public Service Quality Charter in Portugal and the Citizen's Charter in the UK) in order to improve the service standards for the consumers and provide them with choices and information channels, the fact remains that such a charter is relevant mainly to those citizens who have the financial capacity as the consumers or users of services (Toonen and Raadschelders, 1997).

In line with the use of this idea of 'citizens as customers' is the expanding partnership of the public service with private firms holding the status of most cherished customers. This partnership between the public service and the private sector, often practiced in advanced capitalist nations, has also expanded in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan. Similar public-private partnerships have been established in different African and Latin American countries (Hamilton, 1989: 1525; Haque, 1998b). Many Third World regimes have also strengthened partnerships with large multinational banks and foreign companies.<sup>5</sup> However, the experiences of advanced

capitalist nations demonstrate that such a public–private partnership usually serves the interests of big business firms by financing their further expansion through subsidies, tax credits and guaranteed loans (Bullock et al., 1983; Petras, 1990; Rein, 1982). Thus, the recent expansion of public–private partnerships implies that the main customers of the market-friendly public service are increasingly the corporate élites associated with local and foreign firms rather than the underprivileged citizens whose subsidized social services have been diminished. In other words, under the ethos of customer-oriented or client-centered public service, the scope of its relationship with citizens is likely to be narrowed down to the affluent sections of the citizenry.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, for a proper understanding of the current mode of the citizen–administration relationship based on a redefinition of citizens as ‘customers’, it is necessary to examine the class identity of such customers and pinpoint the gainers and losers from this customer-centered transition in the public service.

*Transformation of administrative ethics affecting citizens*

In the history of public administration as a profession and an academic field, there has always been a serious concern to identify appropriate ethical or normative standards that should guide the behavior of public servants towards citizens and the citizens’ expectations from public servants. In the context of advanced democratic societies, the debate on administrative ethics that began with Herman Finer, David Levitan, Wayne Leys, L.K. Caldwell, Donald Kingsley and Paul Appleby (Nigro and Richardson, 1990: 624–7), continued with contemporary scholars or intellectual communities. In line with this academic discourse, the practical ethical standards — largely followed by the public service in advanced capitalist nations such as Canada, France, the UK and the USA — include accountability, representation, neutrality, responsiveness, integrity, equity, responsibility, impartiality, benevolence and justice (Denhardt, 1991; Haque, 1996c). In developing countries, at least officially, similar standards of ethics emerged during the post-colonial period. This democratic tradition of ethical standards requires that the public service must ensure its accountability to citizens, maintain the representation of various sections of the citizenry (including the underclass, minorities and women), ascertain impartiality in providing goods and services to citizens and respond to citizens’ needs and demands. In other words, the established ethics of public administration did express various democratic features of citizenship.

However, in the current age of business-like transformation of the public service, these established ethical standards are increasingly being marginalized, if not replaced, by market values such as efficiency, productivity, cost-effectiveness, competition and profitability (Haque, 1996c; Massey, 1993). More specifically, in the UK, under such recent administrative reform measures as the Financial Management Initiative and New Public Management, the normative priorities have shifted toward managerialism, economy and efficiency and value-for-money (Dunsire, 1991; Massey, 1993). Similar changes in public service

ethics have taken place in the USA, which are well reflected in the Report of the National Performance Review that emphasizes 'entrepreneurial government' based on the 'dynamics of the marketplace' (see Gore, 1993: 43–4). In the 1980s and 1990s, the market values of managerialism, efficiency and productivity were also adopted in Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden (Christensen, 1997; Halligan, 1997; Toonen and Raadschelders, 1997). Following the examples of these advanced industrial nations, many developing countries are adopting similar market norms, especially under the influence and auspices of international institutions such as the World Bank (see Haque, 1996a; World Bank, 1994). For instance, among Asian countries, this normative transition in the public service towards productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, economy, partnership and competition is taking place in Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand (Halligan and Turner, 1995; Lim, 1996; Kristiadi, 1992; Salleh, 1992).

This scenario of displacing or marginalizing established public service ethics (e.g. accountability, representation, equality, justice) with market values (e.g. productivity, efficiency, competition, profitability) may have considerable implications for the overall administrative culture in relation to citizens. More specifically, public servants are likely to be more concerned for the organizational standards of efficiency, productivity and value-for-money while being relatively indifferent towards citizens' demands for representation, equality, impartiality, fairness and justice. In addition, the normative criteria or rationales for public policies and administrative decisions are likely to be based on market-driven principles rather than the opinions and expectations of citizens.

#### *Transition in bureaucratic motives and attitudes towards citizens*

An important dimension of the relationship between citizens and public administration is the commitment, dedication and motivation of public servants to respond to the needs of various sections of the public. While in the private sector the dominant motivational incentives are mostly monetary in nature, in the case of public service, it has been found from the experiences of the USA, the UK and Canada that there are non-monetary incentives such as the desire to serve the public interest, the feeling of patriotism, the sense of participation in major public policies and the urge for doing something for the greater public good (see Handley, 1989–90; Jabes and Zussman, 1988; Perry and Wise, 1990). Despite relatively low salaries in the public sector, there are many public employees who remain committed due to these non-monetary sources of satisfaction associated with the public service — these intrinsic incentives are essential to maintain the positive outlook and caring attitude of a public servant providing services to the citizens.

However, in most countries, these unique non-material sources of employee motivation and commitment have come under challenge due to the aforementioned normative shift from public sector ethics (e.g. equality, representation, justice) to market values (e.g. efficiency, competition, profit) (Haque, 1996c;

Perry and Wise, 1990). The increasing emphasis on such market values in the public service might have marginalized its mainstream ethical standards and thus, weakened its unique non-monetary sources of motivation in countries such as Australia and the USA (see Campbell and Halligan 1992: 183–6). In addition, the emerging negative image of the public service — often created through the recent ‘bureaucrat bashing’ by political leaders (especially in the USA and the UK) — has weakened the sense of pride, affected the morale and commitment and intensified dissatisfaction among public employees, which is quite evident in their high turnover rates and their skeptical views on the public service itself (see Haque, 1996c; Volcker Commission 1990). In countries such as Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, Norway and the UK, the public service commitment is also being eroded due to the diminishing job security caused by the recent transition towards employment based on fixed-term contracts and by uncertainty about the terms and conditions of jobs under the newly created autonomous agencies (Kaul, 1996: 139; OECD, 1990: 13). A similar situation of worsening morale and motivation among public employees is emerging in many developing countries that have recently adopted market-driven administrative reforms.<sup>7</sup> Such a trend towards declining morale and motivation in the public service may adversely affect the citizens as service recipients, because it is unrealistic to expect the delivery of goods and services with care and commitment from a public service that itself suffers from motivational deficiencies.

On the other hand, there is a potential tendency towards more business-oriented attitudinal changes among public servants due to the recent reforms in performance criteria, training in business-style management, and employee exchange between the public and private sectors. For instance, most OECD countries are now emphasizing result-oriented management in the public service based on contracts, targets and results (OECD, 1993), which may shift the attention of public employees from citizens’ concerns to organizational objectives such as productivity and efficiency. In many Asian and African countries, recent governments have introduced administrative reforms emphasizing contract-based appointments, result-oriented performance, business management techniques and employee exchange between public and private organizations (see Dia, 1993; Halligan and Turner, 1995). These reforms are likely to create business-like attitudinal changes among public employees, which may have considerable implications for the nature of the relationship between the public service and the public. Similar to the behavioural pattern found among business managers in the private sector, the business-minded public servants are likely to be more responsive to the affluent citizens (customers) while being relatively apathetic towards the needs of low-income citizens.

#### *Changes in role and capacity of public service to serve citizens*

The intensity and effectiveness of the relationship between public administration and citizens are often determined by an ‘active role’ of public service in delivering goods and services to citizens and its ‘adequate capacity’ to carry out this

public duty. But since the late 1970s, in most countries, the role of public service has become more 'passive' and its capacity to play such a role has weakened due to its diminishing command over material and human resources caused by the recent public sector reforms discussed later. These changes may have significant effects on the relationship between citizens and public administration.

First, the emerging passive role of public administration has been described as that of 'facilitating' rather than 'leading', of 'steering' rather than 'rowing'. Such a facilitative rather than active role of public service is implied in various reform initiatives pursued in different countries — including the Financial Management Initiative and Next Steps in the UK, Financial Management Improvement Programme in Australia, Public Service 2000 in Canada, Renewal of the Public Service in France and Fundamental Policy of Administrative Reform in Japan (OECD, 1993). Similarly, in many developing countries (e.g., Malaysia, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Jamaica, Uganda and Zimbabwe), a new set of supportive or facilitating roles is being assigned to the public service, which largely include activities such as the analysis and maintenance of market conditions, management and coordination of contracts, regulation of contractors and monopolies, supply of information to consumers, arrangement of finance for the investors, and so on (Bately, 1994: 501; Haque, 1998b; Kaul, 1996: 137).

This emerging role of public administration to facilitate the market forces instead of undertaking a more active role in producing and distributing goods and services has certain adverse implications for the nature of the administration–citizen relationship. On the one hand, such an indirect, passive mode of public governance is likely to have minimal direct interaction with the people and thus, may gradually become detached from and indifferent toward general public concerns. It means that although the emerging role of public administration as a facilitator of market forces may be conducive to the interests of local and foreign business firms, it could be less appropriate for the realization of common public interests. In addition, the general public may become more skeptical towards this relatively 'inactive' public administration that assists, facilitates and collaborates with the private sector while withdrawing its active role to enhance socio-economic progress and deliver goods and services.

Second, there has also been a significant reduction in the capacity of public service to play an active or leading role to deal with the citizens' concerns, especially due to the diminishing availability of financial and human resources for the public sector caused by the current policies of privatization, retrenchment and budget cuts. In almost all countries and socioeconomic sectors, various forms of privatization — including divestiture, management contract, production contract, sale of shares, employee buy-out, deregulation and outright liquidation — have become a common policy option.<sup>8</sup> Following the examples of advanced capitalist countries and under the pressure of international financial agencies, many developing nations have aggressively pursued this policy alternative since the early 1980s.<sup>9</sup> There is also a growing emphasis to streamline or downsize the

public sector in terms of the number of its employees in leading industrial nations such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the UK and the USA (see Gore, 1993; Gray and Jenkins, 1996; OECD, 1993, 1994). A similar policy preference to reduce the size of the public service is being followed by many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>10</sup>

This decline in the capacity of public administration — caused by the recent trend toward a reduction in its material and human resources through divestment and downsizing — implies that such a weak public administration is less capable of serving citizens' basic needs related to education, housing and health (Haque, 1998c). Such a situation is likely to be more critical in poorer developing countries where the majority of the population often depends on the public sector for these basic services.

#### *Restructuring of citizens' entitlement to government services*

In this century, the citizen's entitlement to basic public services has been recognized in almost every society. Internationally, it has been prescribed in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) that each citizen 'has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services' (United Nations, 1993: 8). In line with such a notion of entitlement, in most countries, there has emerged a pattern of citizen–bureaucracy relationship based on the principle of serving various sections of the people depending on their basic needs and demands.

However, in line with the recent transition in the context of governance dominated by market-biased neoliberal beliefs, the nature of the relationship between citizens and bureaucracy has changed, especially with regard to the entitlement of economically underprivileged citizens to basic services provided by the public sector. During the 1970s and 1980s, 'the ideologically right-wing made implied or overt attacks on the concept of entitlement to social citizenship rights' (Oliver and Heater, 1994: 38). Dahrendorf (1994: 12) observes that in the 1980s, most OECD countries experienced a significant erosion in citizens' entitlements. This trend is quite evident in the recent restructuring of the public sector with regard to its pattern of expenditures and programs. In advanced industrial nations, there have been serious attempts to reduce the budget for state-run programs related to health care, housing, education and public transport needed by low-income citizens.<sup>11</sup> Many developing countries have also introduced severe cuts in social (especially health and education) expenditures and food subsidies.<sup>12</sup> In addition, in most countries, a significant portion of public resources is being diverted from citizen-centered programs (education, housing and health) to market-related activities (licensing, banking, price control, property rights and monitoring) required to maintain and oversee the expanding market forces and private firms (see Chaudhry, 1994; Haque, 1996c; OECD, 1993).

The implications of this restructuring of public-sector programs and expendi-

tures for the citizens' rights could be quite critical. The current trends towards the reduction of social programs in the public sector and the market-driven and anti-welfare transformation of the remaining public service are less conducive to the realization of citizens' entitlements to basic social services and may lead to a decline in the living standards of ordinary citizens in many countries, especially in the developing world.<sup>13</sup> Although the use of public resources for newly expanding government activities (e.g., licensing, banking and property rights) is necessary to facilitate and steer market forces, such activities have hardly any direct relevance to the realization of citizens' rights to basic social services. Furthermore, without the substantial social rights of citizens to basic resources and services such as education and health, the realization of their civil and political rights may become difficult, especially for the working class, the unemployed, and low-income families (see Twine, 1994: 103–4). In short, while the earlier tradition of public governance used to recognize citizens' social rights by providing them with basic services — e.g., subsidized education, low-cost housing and free health care — the current mode of public management appears to be increasingly indifferent towards such citizens' rights or entitlements.

## **Implications and alternatives**

### *Implications*

The current reconfiguration of the citizen–administration relationship not only has adverse impacts on ordinary citizens as explained earlier, it also has critical implications for public administration itself. First, the emerging business-like relationship of the public service with citizens could be detrimental to its professional identity as a 'public' domain. More specifically, in carrying out its current responsibilities, the public service is increasingly using business-sector language such as customer, client and partnership; adopting market norms such as productivity, cost-effectiveness and competition; encouraging employees to behave like business managers; playing the role of a facilitator of market forces; and streamlining social services needed by underprivileged citizens. Similarly, in the academic sphere, many public administration scholars are now using the vocabulary of business management and employing market criteria to study and evaluate public-sector programs and performance. With these trends, as public administration increasingly resembles business administration, it is likely to suffer a serious identity crisis, which is allegedly one of the main shortcomings of the field already accused of borrowing too many concepts and theories from the business sector.

Second, due to the growing similarity between the public administration profession and business management in terms of objectives, roles, norms and concepts, citizens will be more skeptical in believing that the public service is a special institution representing and serving the general public. In other words, citizens may lose confidence in the expected distinction between public administration and the customer-centered and profit-driven private sector. Low-income

citizens, being worse off from the current restructuring of the public sector, are more likely to lose confidence in the current mode of public governance that is friendly to business firms but indifferent towards the needs and concerns of economically disadvantaged citizens. This diminishing confidence in public administration — which is becoming a common global trend — indicates a rising challenge to its public legitimacy (see Haque, 1998a).

Finally, the integrity of public administration is also in question due to the current restructuring of its relationship with citizens. This problem of integrity is not only due to the growing incongruity between the desired ‘public norms and objectives’ of the public service on the one hand and its recently adopted ‘business standards and priorities’ on the other. It is also because of the expanding liaison or partnership between the public service and the business sector, which might create more incentives and opportunities for corruption instigated by the profit-oriented private firms making deals with top public officials. Similarly, in the academic sphere, the problem of intellectual integrity may worsen due to the fact that under the current global atmosphere dominated by market ideology, there is an increasing tendency in the public administration field to sacrifice the basic democratic ideals, citizenship principles and public ethics while adopting business phrases, customer-oriented standards and market values.<sup>14</sup>

### *Alternatives*

In order to address these emerging challenges to public administration posed by its changing relationship with the public, first, it is necessary to re-establish its stronger identity with the ethos of citizenship based on the democratic principles of citizens’ rights or entitlements. The redefinition of citizens as customers, which tends to overlook such entitlements associated with citizenship, should be critically examined. Second, it is also essential to rethink the use of business principles and approaches — such as value-for-money and public-private partnership — in a public administration that is already loaded with theories, models and strategies borrowed from business management. Under the contemporary global atmosphere of market ideology, in fact, it is a great challenge for public administration scholars to take a stance against the wholesale importation of business ideas into the field.

Third, there is a need for understanding and preserving the citizenship-based norms of public administration such as representation, equality, accountability, impartiality, welfare and justice, which are increasingly under the threat of being replaced or marginalized by market-driven concerns like efficiency, productivity and competition. This critical endeavor, although it has become difficult due to the recent worldwide dominance of the market ethos, is quite essential to maintain the ethical foundation of public service in line with the citizenship norms. Such an endeavor to strengthen public service ethics may also revive the weakening motivation and commitment of public servants caused by the current ethical disarray discussed earlier. Finally, beyond its supportive role in facilitating market forces, the public service must play an active role in delivering goods and

services to the public, especially to the underprivileged citizens who are left out (even made worse off) by market forces and disillusioned with the market-friendly public service. Such an active role of public administration remains imperative, particularly, in developing countries where market institutions are relatively underdeveloped and where the minimal living standards of low-income citizens are under threat without adequate public programs related to basic social services.

From this discussion, it can be concluded that in the current global context dominated by the advocacy of government reforms based on the concepts, principles and standards of business management, there is an emerging challenge to public administration to revive and reinforce its public identity, public ethics, public commitment and public confidence. In order to realize these objectives, the theory and practice of public administration must be in line with the democratic framework of citizenship that not only incorporates the civil and political rights of citizens but also encompasses their social rights or entitlements to basic services. In this critical age of public administration replete with various intellectual and practical problems discussed above, it is essential to strengthen the relationship between citizens and public administration based on this comprehensive, multidimensional view of citizenship.

## Notes

1. The Greek perspective emphasized the ability and freedom of citizens to participate in law- and policy-making (children, women and slaves were not considered citizens); the Roman view stressed citizens' loyalty as a civic virtue; the Renaissance period (especially in Machiavelli's Italy) underscored citizens' love for freedom from foreign oppression as a civic virtue; and the 18th-century France (especially through Rousseau) emphasized the selfless contribution of citizens as a civic virtue to form the General Will (see Oliver and Heater, 1994: 10–15).

2. In England, in the 1670s, the legal (civil) rights were much improved, although the voting right was still being debated and extended through various Reform Acts during 1832–1918; and in France, the French Revolution brought about various civil and political rights under the 1791 constitution (Oliver and Heater, 1994: 16–17).

3. In this regard, Oliver and Heater (1994: 36) suggest that in recent decades, 'it is the right to property [a basic component of civil right] which has been recruited to the citizenship debate by the New Right ... The commentators of the New Right therefore hold that the citizen's right to property is of prime importance.'

4. In the case of the USA, Frederickson (1991: 406) makes the following comment: 'In early public administration conceptions, citizens *were* the public ... In the 1930s, public administration started drifting away from its interest in citizenship and moved almost entirely to administrative issues. The late 1960s saw the beginning of a drift back to concern for the public in public administration; but by then pluralism and public choice theories were the dominant notions of the public and citizenship seemed less interesting.'

5. For instance, in the 1990s, the government policy of privatization expanded the partnership of the state with foreign capital, especially the multinational banks, in Latin American countries such as Argentina and Brazil (see Pai, 1994: 175).

6. In fact, this client and consumer orientation has often been imposed upon citizens without much concern for their own reaction towards it (Toonen and Raadschelders, 1997). Thus, the utilitarian perspective of customer or consumer not only reinforces

individual self-interest and diminishes the scope of collective public interest (Frederickson, 1991: 399), the very adoption of such a perspective has been based on top-down imposition rather than the bottom-up demands from the people.

7. For example, in African countries, the reforms based on adjustment programs have not only curtailed public programs and reduced civil service positions, they have also diminished public service morale and motivation (Sharma, 1994: 208). Among Latin American countries, Brazil has experienced similar decline in public-service motivation (see Reis and Cheibub, 1994: 151).

8. For an analysis of various forms of privatization, see Daintith (1994: 43) and Ahmed (1995: 186). With regard to the extent of privatization, it was reported by the World Bank in 1992 that privatization was already launched in more than 80 countries and since 1980, thousands of public enterprises had been privatized worldwide (see Kikeri et al., 1993: 1–2; Martin, 1993: 95).

9. Between the periods 1980–87 and 1988–93, the number of privatization transactions increased from 108 to 367 in Asia, 210 to 254 in Africa and 136 to 561 in Latin America (World Bank, 1995: 27).

10. For instance, in Nicaragua, the number of public employees dropped from 284,800 in 1990 to 106,200 in 1993; and in Nigeria, the size of the federal public service declined from 273,392 in 1990 to 198,931 in 1993 (Olowu et al., 1997; Perlman, 1997).

11. For instance, in the USA, between 1980 and 1988, the education expenditure declined from 5.3 to 3.0 percent and the housing expenditure decreased from 1.7 to 1.3 percent of the total federal expenditures; and between 1980 and 1990, the federal spending on environment declined by 39 percent and on welfare and unemployment by 21 percent (see Clements, 1994; Levine et al., 1990).

12. Such a trend of diminishing social expenditures can be found in countries such as Jamaica, Lesotho, Peru, Swaziland, Uganda, Zaire and Zimbabwe (see Tanski, 1994; Tevera, 1995).

13. For instance, under market-friendly regimes, the number of people in poverty increased from 136 million to 266 million in Latin America during 1980–92 and from 270 million to 335 million in Africa during 1986–90 (Sharma, 1994: 202; Veltmeyer, 1993: 2083–4).

14. These business-oriented intellectual trends in public administration have been reinforced by authors such as Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Barzelay and Armanjani (1992) who prescribe the use of ideas such as ‘citizens as customers’ and ‘customer-driven’ services. These pro-business concepts seem to have multiplied in the current public administration literature.

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