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RECEIVED 14 July 2023

ACCEPTED 05 April 2024

PUBLISHED 13 May 2024

## CITATION

Singh V (2024) Role of institutions in public management: developing case studies for divergent policy systems. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 6:1258811. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2024.1258811

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# Role of institutions in public management: developing case studies for divergent policy systems

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Public policy management has an intractable nature, and the institutional complexity of governance further exacerbates its practice. Transnational learning cutting across countries and policy areas can contribute to this policy knowledge in dealing with multifarious issues in public management. Understanding the institutional mix in public management in various contexts enhances the existing comprehension of how the national pattern of public management works differently in different socio-economic, cultural, and political settings. The present research aims to study the institutional framework in the form of state structure (unitary or federal) and the nature of executive government (majoritarian or consensual) in delineating the influence of institutions on public management processes in divergent policy systems. The paper undertakes four in-depth country case studies and the public management reforms as a response to institutional pressure are examined using the 4 M strategy—Maintain (holding on to existing administrative structures and processes), Modernize (keeping service delivery and regulation up to date), Marketize (efficiency and user-responsive public management), and Minimize (reducing state-led regulation). The case studies highlight the differences in the broad direction and energy of implementation that characterize a particular policy style. The results of the study indicate that even though the institutional dimensions are not present in strict polarization, the impact of the institutional mix is evident in the dominant strategies of public management reforms adopted at the national level.

## KEYWORDS

political executive, institutionalism and institutions, public management, state structure, comparative politics

## 1 Introduction

As a conceptual device, public management continues to dominate the scholarly discussion of the organization and management of public services by the executive governments. From a rational, hierarchical Weberian model of public management to the New Public Management and Digital era Governance, the nature of public management has become more complex and variegated (Ferlie et al., 2007). As a reflection of various governmental structures, bureaucratic capacities, cultural norms, and historical experiences, public management practises can vary considerably between nations and regions (Andrews, 2010; Brans et al., 2017). Therefore, in the academic study of public management, comparative and transnational assessment is of critical importance to uncover the nuances of public management practices.

There are several studies on public management systems in the developed world (Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004; Goldfinch and Wallis, 2009; Ongaro, 2009; Bianchi and Rivenbark, 2012; Joyce et al., 2014). Peters (2000) identifies four major state traditions: Anglo-Saxon, Continental European/Germanic, Continental European/French, and Scandinavian (a mix of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic). However, the comparative literature in the developing world is limited (Huque, 2001; Newcomer and Caudle, 2011; Ghrmay, 2020; Oszlak, 2022). Developing nations have not received scholarly interest because much of the literature on public management has been predominantly Anglophone (Australia, United Kingdom, United States, and New Zealand). The Anglophone nations also seem to occupy key positions in the international agencies such as OECD and World Bank with considerable influence on other nations. Academicians and scholars have thus based their understanding of the public management in most nations on the Anglophone sources which suggest a convergence in public management reforms internationally. However, the true picture is far more varied. The trajectories of public management reforms have been significantly different in the various types of politico-administrative regimes in the developing world. There is a kind of long-term pattern that seems to follow the paradigm of new public management. But there are various domestic factors or specific mechanisms that lead to more than one path in public management. These mechanisms relate to the procedural rules, institutional structures, and cultural norms that dominate the management of public affairs in a particular nation.

While there are a host of factors that contribute towards the success or failure of new public management reforms, it is the institutional dynamics of a nation that have influenced and shaped the public management reform trajectory in a major proportion. Rather than being situation- or actor-specific, institutions are part of formal structures that are neutral organizations founded on rules. Institutions are thus essential to public management because they provide the framework, guidelines, and operating procedures required for efficient governance and the provision of public services (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

The main aim of this paper is to compare diverse countries spanning a large geographical space and opening a new scope for comparing the public management systems based on institutional diversity rather than the level of development. In addition to the diverse geographical setting, the study covers the four nations of Israel, Brazil, Nepal, and Philippines as they reflect the four combinations of unitary-federal and consensual-majoritarian regimes. In the comparative research on public management reforms, the work of Pollitt and Bouckaert is considered authoritative. The 4M (maintain, modernize, minimize, marketize) model provides a holistic framework for analyzing public sector management reforms, addressing key aspects related to management practices and outcomes that define the overall thrust of the public management system. Each “M” represents a distinct strategy or orientation that can guide decision-making and organizational behavior within the public sector. Additionally, the 4M model of the reform trajectories in the public management systems has not been applied in the developing countries context. Most studies look at countries with similar levels of development in a limited geographical range. In other words, there is a wide scope to expand the study of diverse policy systems based on the 4M model for the academic and theoretical enrichment of public management studies.

The paper is divided into five sections. The following section deals with the review of literature outlining the evolution of public

management and delineating the institutional framework as well as the public management theoretical framework given by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) that is used in the present study. The third section covers the case selection briefly describing each of the four country case studies and the data used to evaluate their public management reform strategy. The fourth section outlines the results of the comparison of the four nations based on the 4M strategy of public management reforms. The last section discusses the overall role of institutions in public management reform as well as the application of 4M strategy in institutionally diverse nations.

## 2 Literature review

A large and growing literature has focused attention on the continuing evolution of the thinking and practice of public management. Beginning from the traditional model of public administration to the new models of public governance, the field of public management has always responded to new challenges and the shortcomings of the previous approaches. In response to the significant market failures, the difficulties of urbanization and industrialization, the emergence of the modern corporation, and the trust in science and development, traditional public administration (Stoker, 2006; Waldo, 2007) emerged in the United States in the late 1900s and developed fully by the mid-1900s. Strong faith in government as an agent for the common good was established by the largely positive experiences with government responses to World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. Politics and administration were kept separate (Wilson, 1887). Through their creation and accomplishment of politically determined goals, government institutions served as the main providers of value to the public (Salamon, 2002).

Scientific management, pragmatism, and synoptic rationality (Nelson, 1985; Schraeter, 1989; Bryson et al., 2014) formed the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of traditional public administration. The works of Henry Fayol, Frank J. Goodnow, Leonard D. White, and W. F. Willoughby also supplemented the traditional paradigm of public administration. Within the traditional model of public administration, the Weberian model of bureaucracy remained widely dominant for a longer period. Numerous scholars engaged with and expanded upon Weber's ideas over the years (Merriam, 1926; Wallace, 1941; Sayre, 1958; Van Riper, 1987). The hierarchical structure, specialization, and adherence to rules espoused by Weber influenced the efficiency and rationalization within bureaucratic structures in many nations (Gerth and Mills, 1946; Rheinstejn, 1954). The traditional public administration, therefore, prioritized distinct administrative responsibility and control lines, highlighted the public agency as the fundamental analytical unit, clearly distinguished between the public and private sectors, maintained the separation of policy and administration, and heavily stressed upon the command-and-control abilities of public agencies (Appleby, 1949; Wallace and Kaufman, 1960; Downs, 1967; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). Naturally the traditional public administration was always more intermeshed with politics than its idealized portrayal implied (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2011), and government organizations themselves were prone to failing (Wolf, 1979).

While the Weberian model of public administration continued to garner scholarly interest, a deeper intellectual analysis revealed its

shortcomings, particularly in the face of the new and emerging organizational environments (Nass, 1986; Page, 2003; Bartels, 2009). Osborne and Gaebler (1992) made the case that bureaucratic governance had been suitable for the circumstances that prevailed up to the 1960s and 1970s. However, those circumstances vanished, and new regimes of governance had started to appear, initially locally and later globally. It came to be recognized that traditional administration is deeply antidemocratic, centralized, insular, self-protective, stiff, sluggish, and rule-bound (Barzelay, 1992; Garvey, 1995). As a result, the traditional model of public administration was discredited both in theoretical and practical terms. Hierarchical arrangements were considered good only for standardization and control but not for efficiency, accountability, and innovation (Hughes, 2003).

Several studies built upon the gaps of traditional public administration dominated by Weberian bureaucracy and called for a broadening of the field from 'administration' to 'management' (Holmes and Shand, 1995; Mintzberg, 1996; Borins, 1999; Mathiasen, 1999; Terry, 1999; Lindquist, 2000; Behn, 2001). The turn of the century witnessed a boom in the field of rigorous, multidisciplinary research on public management and public governance (Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999; Heinrich and Lynn, 2000). In the narrative of public management discourse, management, marketization, and reinvention came to play significant roles. Numerous and noteworthy post-traditional intellectual advancements have occurred in public management. The 1980s and 1990s saw the New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Barberis, 1998; Kaboolian, 1998) emerge as the dominant approach to managing public affairs. Fearing that governments were failing, believing in the efficiency and effectiveness of markets, believing in economic logic, and moving away from big, centralized government agencies in the direction of devolution and privatization were the main causes of the rise of New Public Management. The new forms of public action (Felts and Jos, 2000; Salamon, 2002) necessitated the shift of focus from public agency to diverse actors and from the bureaucratic methods to the diverse tools or instruments used in public management (Linder and Peters, 1989; Meier and O'Toole, 2011; Lapenta et al., 2012).

The public management reform model that was subsequently established placed a great deal of emphasis on the features of the current administrative and political systems as determining factors in the management change processes. According to several studies in the field of public management (Savoie, 1994; Wollmann, 2003a; Lynn, 2006; Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008; Pollitt, 2013), a model or tool of management can have quite different outcomes depending on the context. While being conceptually the same, or at least comparable, management reforms take on distinct development patterns depending on the national, sectoral, or local environment in which they are implemented (Wollmann, 2003b; Schedler and Proeller, 2007). Fabbrini and Sicurelli (2008) assert that political systems have a major impact on governments' capacity to make legislation as well as how they do it.

Particularly, the institutional and structural variations in the national political systems have significant impact on the public management practices and outcomes (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; James, 2016). There has been significant diversity among approaches to the definition of the notions of institution and institutionalism (Scott, 1987). Institutions serve as a "representation of socially sanctioned, that is, collectively enforced expectations with respect to the performance of certain activities or the behavior of particular categories

of actors" (Streck and Thelen, 2005). Formal regulations, compliance protocols, and standard operating procedures that organize people's interactions with different political and economic entities are among them (Hall and Taylor, 1996). According to this notion, institutions are "regularised practices that have a rule-like quality in that the actors expect the practices to be observed; and which are sometimes reinforced by formal sanctions" (Hall and Thelen, 2008). Theories of institutions initially developed in the context of economic institutions and their impact on growth. The seminal works are Downs (1967); Black (1958); Buchanan and Tullock (1962); Arrow (1963); Olson (1965); and Niskanen (1971). Building on the foundation of economic dimension, institutional theory subsequently captured the attention of political scientists who theorized on public institutions and policy choice (McKelvey, 1976; Shepsle, 1979; Riker, 1980; Miller and Moe, 1983; Enelow and Hinich, 1984; Tsebelis, 1995 and Krehbiel, 1996).

In public management, public institutions play a dual role - as change agents and objects of change (Hammond and Knott, 1999). The policy capacity of a state is seen to be contingent on the structural arrangements of the political system (North and Weingast, 1989; Menahem and Stein, 2013; Mukherjee et al., 2021). Scholars have explored the role of institutions across a wide variety of themes, including institutional development, the interaction of formal and informal rules in organizational settings, and organizational legitimacy (Hambleton, 1983; Baez and Abolafi, 2002; Barzelay, 2003; Wanna et al., 2021). Several studies find that institutional context (both formal and informal) plays a role in the constraints and opportunities faced by public managers in devising strategies to navigate and improve public management practices (May, 2005; Scott, 2008; Jacobs and Matthews, 2017). The aspects of institutional isomorphism and the pressures to conform to institutional norms and practices have also been studied to uncover the tendency of public management within a field or sector to become similar in structure, practices, and behavior (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Larimer and Peterson, 2019).

Relying on the corpus of comparative research work in the field of politics and public administration, the two features that serve as the most illuminating basis for comparing nations are the state structure as unitary or federal (Wright, 1975; Lester, 1986; Sabatier, 1986; Imperial, 2023) and the nature of the political executive as majoritarian or consensual (Lijphart, 1985; Anderson and Guillory, 1997; Scruggs, 1999; Croissant, 2002). As noted by Linder (1989, 1994) the institutional framework of unitary-federal and majoritarian-consensual system forms an important aspect of the governance style and public management processes adopted by a nation. The unitary system with its concentration of political power in the union level institutions leads to a centralized, hierarchical, top-down style of public management (Andrews and Boyne, 2010; Ramay and Babur, 2020). On the other hand, public management in a federal state structure is characterized by a more decentralized and diverse approach and involves navigating the balance between regional and national interests (Krane, 1993; Christensen and Wise, 2009). There is interjurisdictional cooperation and competition in a federal setting which leads to participative style of governance (McGuire, 2006; Holtmann and Rademacher, 2016; Daniell and Kay, 2017). A majoritarian political executive often prioritizes policy consistency and coherence (Persson and Tabellini, 2004). It can implement its preferred policies and maintain a unified approach across different areas of public management. This consistency can result in clear

directives, streamlined procedures, and efficient implementation of policies. However, Majoritarian political executives may be more prone to centralization of power and populism (Geissel and Michels, 2018; Dussauge-Laguna, 2022). On the other hand, negotiation, compromise, and consensus-based decision making characterizes a consensual political executive (Dryzek, 2010). Scholars find that a consensual political executive often results in policy moderation and balance and extreme or polarizing policy options are more likely to be tempered or mitigated (Bogaards, 2017; Bernaerts et al., 2023). With multiple parties involved in the political executive, there is a greater potential for checks and balances in public management in a consensual style of governance (Dalton, 2008).

As the institutional and cultural differences and their impact on public management became more and more apparent, the body of knowledge in comparative public management also started to intensify (Heady, 2001; Manning and Parison, 2004; Jreisat, 2011). Several methodological and conceptual frameworks have been developed to make a comparative analysis of the public management reforms (Gerring, 2007; Farazmand, 2009). Adopting a broad comparative perspective, scholars have been looking for the national trajectories of public management reforms with a discernible pattern of similarity and differences (Pollitt, 2007). With the spread of new public management and the new methods of policy implementation, the success or failure of the 'what' and 'how' of different government regimes has been enriching our analysis by uncovering the range of implementation styles. Comparative research recognizes the complexity and challenges inherent in conducting sound research across countries (Eglene and Dawes, 2006). Rather than a common pattern in cross national comparison, the clear and pure types of public management reforms are more an exception. Still, while acknowledging the intractable and poorly specified nature of reform trajectories in comparative public management, the need to record and analyze the broad energy and direction of implementation is also regarded as worthy of academic study. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) developed the 4M model of public management reform trajectories that stands for Maintain, Modernize, Marketize, and Minimize. Variants of politico-administrative regimes can thus be analyzed using the 4M model that reflects the four ideal types of public management reform trajectories. Although the actual reforms defy pure polar types and represent a mix of different types of strategies for public management, the 4M model has a heuristic value in reflecting the underlying assumptions and values held by political leaders and policy executives.

### 3 Developing country case studies

#### 3.1 Case selection

In order to explore the scope or universality of the 4M model of public management reform trajectories across nations, the paper has selected diverse political systems along the two dimensions of state structure and nature of political executive. As a comparative research study, the aim is to study the generality of the 4M strategy as a framework of public management strategy in divergent policy systems (Table 1). The study takes into consideration two dimensions – state structure (unitary-federal) and nature of political executive (majoritarian-consensual) (Tables 2, 3). The state structure reflects

TABLE 1 Public management reform trajectories (4 M Model).

Maintain	Modernize
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incremental changes</li> <li>Conservative response</li> <li>Risk averse</li> <li>Familiar practices</li> <li>Path dependent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive approach to change</li> <li>Keeping services up to date</li> <li>Reform oriented</li> <li>Favor large scale change</li> </ul>
Marketize	Minimize
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market type Mechanisms</li> <li>Performance oriented</li> <li>Business like methods</li> <li>Encourage competition and efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Massive privatization</li> <li>Wholesale downsizing of public sector</li> <li>Nightwatchman administration</li> <li>Less regulation</li> </ul>

TABLE 2 Dimensions of majoritarian vs. consensual government.

Majoritarian	Consensual
1. One-party cabinets	1. Executive power sharing in broad multi-party coalitions
2. Executive dominance in executive-legislative relations	2. Balance of power in executive-legislative relations
3. Majoritarian and disproportional electoral systems	3. Proportional representation in electoral systems
4. Two-party system	4. Multiparty system
5. Pluralist interest group systems	5. Coordinated and "corporatist" interest group systems

TABLE 3 Dimensions of unitary vs. federal states.

Unitary	Federal
1. Centralized government	1. Decentralized government
2. Unicameral legislature or asymmetric bicameral	2. Bicameral legislature with balanced powers
3. Flexible constitutions	3. Rigid constitutions
4. Legislature as final judge of constitutionality	4. Judicial review to assess constitutionality
5. Central banks dependent on executive	5. Independent central banks

how authority is shared at different levels of government as well as the diffusion or concentration of political power in terms of either the vertical dispersion/concentration of authority or the horizontal coordination/fragmentation of authority. The second dimension of the nature of executive government refers to the working habits and entrenched conventions of the government. Comparative political scientists (Steiner, 1971; Powell, 1982, 2000; Lijphart, 1984) have developed the typology to capture the speed, scope, and intensity of public management reforms. The categories are not to be seen as water-tight compartments. The broadly majoritarian governments tend to behave in consensual manner and the broadly consensual governments tend to behave in majoritarian fashion (Table 4).

Comparing similar countries or countries from the same geographical region may obscure the more significant nature of transnational disparities. Therefore, the study has selected countries with a wider geographical range. Brazil is situated in Latin America; Nepal in South Asia; Israel in the Middle East region; and Philippines

TABLE 4 The mix of state structure and the nature of executive government in the four nations.

	State structure	Executive government	Minister-civil servant relations	Diversity of policy advice
Israel	Unitary and centralized	Consensual with remnants of majoritarianism	Fairly politicized	Mainly political appointees (increasing role of judiciary)
Philippines	Unitary (Quasi-federal and decentralized in operation)	Consensual	Politicized	Diverse including political advisors, consultants, and civil society organizations
Nepal	Federal and decentralized	A mix of majoritarian and consensual	Power tussle between politicians and civil servants	Broad mix of civil servants, government and non-government think tanks and political consultants
Brazil	Federal	A mix of majoritarian and consensual	Politicized and patrimonial	Very diverse; civil society, think tanks, business interests, political consultants



in the Southeast Asia (Figure 1). Apart from variations in the state structure and nature of political executive, these countries also differ vastly in their socio-economic and cultural dynamics.

### 3.1.1 Israel

The state of Israel was founded on a very unitary and centralized political structure that was devoid of any regional component (Elazar, 1977). The central government, which is composed of a coalition of parties, chooses how much authority to assign to different local organizations. Central authorities exercise strong budgetary control and make policy choices, which are then carried out by local authorities with limited discretionary power (Yonah, 2000). The legislative power resides in a unicameral parliament (Knesset) and the constitution is largely flexible (Weill, 2023). Based on proportional representation, Israel's political structure permits several parties. Over the years, the requirement to forge coalitions and reach consensus in the Israeli political system tempers the majority-rule impact but not fully. As the leader of the coalition in power, the prime minister has a big say in determining the government's goals and defining the policy agenda. The politicization of civil service has prevented the latter

from acting as a catalyst for change (Cohen, 2016). There is a lack of institutional autonomy, public endorsement, and consistency within the Israeli civil service (Beeri, 2021). The judiciary has been increasing its oversight and involvement in policy advice to compensate for the influence of partisan politics in policy making.

### 3.1.2 Philippines

The Philippine government had been a democratic unitary presidential constitutional republic till the call for federalism arose amidst the political and economic dominance of Manila over other regions (Lasco, 2015). The nature of political system is best described as an operative quasi-federal system that has moved away from a strictly unitary political system (Tigno, 2017). The country is governed by a rigid constitution that is equally applicable throughout. The electoral system is a mix of plurality and proportional representation. The multi-party system is weak and incoherent as it is dominated by patronage and personality orientation (Quimpo, 2007). The civil service is politicized and is afflicted with graft, red tape, and inefficiencies in public service delivery (Brillantes and Fernandez, 2010). Despite being a unitary state, the Philippines has a decentralized policy style known as "local autonomy" or "a kind of maximum

decentralization, short of federalization.” The Senate and the House of Representatives make up the Philippines’ bicameral legislature. Through citizen participation in decision-making, public consultations, and participatory budgeting throughout time, the Philippines has adopted the concepts of consultative government.

### 3.1.3 Nepal

According to the country’s 2015-adopted constitution, Nepal is formally a federal democratic republic. The provincial assemblies in each province are elected, while the National Assembly and House of Representatives make up the bicameral federal parliament. Like many other parliamentary systems, Nepal’s political executive dominates in several different ways. The Prime Minister and the cabinet play crucial responsibilities in recommending and carrying out laws and public policy, and the executive branch has significant policymaking authority. In the multi-party competition through a mix of plurality and proportional representation, the party with a majority in the House of Representatives forms the government and has relatively easy access to making decisions and developing policies. The civil service in Nepal is unable to function efficiently due to lack of support from the political leaders and the struggle for power over policy management (Paudel and Gupta, 2019). Nepal has a strong civil society with organized interest groups, non-governmental associations, the commercial sector, and unions (Pasanen et al., 2019). Nepal’s system aims to bring together the inclusiveness of a consensual system with the decision-making effectiveness of a majoritarian system (Bajpai, 2014).

### 3.1.4 Brazil

Brazil is a federal state with a bicameral legislature. The electoral system is a mix of proportional elections, plurality with single-member districts, and absolute majority with single-member districts (Mainwaring, 1991). The federal form of state and the electoral system has been leading to a weak multi-party system and proliferation of multiple interests and actors in policy making (Desposato, 2004). A diverse range of actors, including ministers, academics, staff members of NGOs and international organizations, are involved in the promotion, legitimation, mediation, and implementation of policies. By including a variety of stakeholders in the governance process, this participatory method promotes the development of consensus. However, the Brazilian state and the politico-administrative system is also described as patrimonial and extractive (Pereira, 2016). The provincial decrees have been used by the political executive branch to exert extraordinary power and influence over the legislature (Arberry, 2013).

## 3.2 Data collection

Case study research involves a combination of several data collection methods (Symonds and Ellis, 1945; Small, 2011). Owing to the different national level data collection methodologies, data from national level databases was not considered suitable for transnational comparison. The nations in the present study differ in their research and statistical data compilation capacity which leads to a lack of harmonized standards for the various categories of official statistics (Franchet, 1991). Therefore, the author has relied on data from international

organizations such as the World Bank Group, Heritage Foundation, World Economic Forum, and World Intellectual Property Organization. The study also utilizes secondary data sourced from annual reports, archival databases, and national statistical accounts for analyzing the impact of institutional framework on public management in the respective nations. The country specific data on public management reforms is derived from the national level newspapers, government reports and official accounts.

## 4 Results

The study has endeavored to develop case study analysis for divergent policy systems in the four selected nations of Brazil, Israel, Nepal, and Philippines. Comparative assessment of the public management systems and the public management reform trajectories of these nations reveals a mix of the 4M strategies given by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017).

### 4.1 Maintain

Maintain is a conservative reaction that seeks to adhere as closely as possible to the current modes of operation. Of course, these “existing ways” vary greatly between nations. The public management approach is characterized by an aversion to disruptive changes and placing stability and security ahead of prospective benefits or innovations. Public managers prioritize prudence and reduce exposure to potential dangers resulting in a risk-averse management style. Due to worries about possible negative outcomes, risk-averse public managers may be reluctant to implement new policies, programmes, or technology. Instead of adopting novel and unproven techniques, they would rather stay with conventional strategies and approaches—tightening up rather than fundamental restructuring. In determining the path dependency and the tendency of governments to maintain the status quo in public management with only incremental changes, three main aspects are investigated. Firstly, whether the nation has followed a top-down or a bottom-up public management. Secondly, if the nation has created new structures or institutions to reform the public management. And lastly, if the nation has pursued changes or reforms in public management through a majoritarian or consensual approach.

Although there are some elements of both top-down and bottom-up approaches to public governance, Israel has a predominantly top-down government style. The unitary institutional framework of Israel is widely seen as an important factor for its top-down nature of policy formulation and implementation. The middle eastern nation has undertaken several efforts, created new organizations and structures, and improved administrative effectiveness to change public management such as the Government Companies Authority (GCA); the Efficiency and Innovation Authority; the National Economic Council; and the Digital Government Initiative. However, the extreme centralization, secrecy, territorial protection, and tradition of improvisation in Israel’s political-administrative culture have an impact on decision-making and management. Most reforms in Israel are carried out in majoritarian manner. Brazil’s long tradition of social movements and social justice advocacy has encouraged bottom-up efforts and citizen

involvement in crafting governmental policy. A decentralized government is possible because of the nation's federal framework. The Ministry of Economy was created in Brazil in 2019 with the merger of numerous ministries. Through this consolidation, the government hoped to improve cooperation and efficiency in the creation of economic policies and public administration while also streamlining government operations and reducing bureaucracy. Additionally, the Brazilian Investment Partnerships Programme (PPI), the Federal Secretariat of Digital Government, and the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) are new organizations for public management. Brazil's multi-party coalition system constrains a predominantly majoritarian approach to public management reforms. However, in the interaction between the legislature and the executive, the type of management style that dominates (leadership, cooperation, or impasse) is seen to be dependent on a particular reforms' content. Nepal is a unique case of public management reform. While the shift towards federalism has reduced regional inequalities, advanced inclusiveness, and strengthened local authority, the top-down mode of policy implementation still exists to a large extent. While new structures have been created for public management in Nepal (National Planning Commission; Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority; Good Governance Committees; and Digital Governance Initiatives), the political instability and the path dependent bureaucratic culture has constrained the development of citizen-centric approach to public management. Nepal's fledgling democracy is yet to adopt a fully consensual reform approach. Philippines again has a top-down model of public management with extreme centralization of formal decision-making processes. The Philippines has started reforms in the areas of public procurement, bottom-up budgeting, the seal of good (local) governance, reducing red tape, and the citizen satisfaction index system in recent decades. But in the Philippines, the issue of public sector performance is still a persistent and long-standing worry. Government operations are hampered by corrupt practises, and nepotism harms the nation. The nation fits well with Riggs prismatic model as the gap between legal norms and actual functioning is quite large. While Philippines political executive is characterized as consensual, in practice, it is marked by covert majoritarianism driven by nepotism and oligarchic patrimonialism.

The budget practices of a nation can also reveal the extent of conservative management technique. Accounting techniques that are used to record and present financial transactions include the cash basis and accrual basis. Even though they are generally employed for financial reporting within businesses, when used in government accounting, they may provide light on a country's financial situation and management style. Table 5 provides the prevalence of cash-based or accrual-based accounting systems in

the four nations. While Brazil and Israel have adopted accrual systems in national accounting, Nepal and Philippines use the cash-based system. The move towards the accrual system reflects a break from the traditional cash-based system.

## 4.2 Modernize

In line with the new public management and subsequent developments in the field of public management, nations have made fundamental changes in modernizing the public service delivery system. In an endeavor to maintain the state apparatus completely professional and up to date, modernizers have an upbeat perspective towards change and see potential for greater services and better regulation if significant changes are undertaken. Such a strategy is predicated on the premise that the state machinery can be relied upon to produce strong policies and high-quality services if it is continuously modernized. The modernizing strategy recognizes the necessity for some pretty substantial reorganizations of the administrative structure. These modifications typically included budget changes that moved towards some form of results- or performance-based budgeting, a loosening of personnel restrictions (though not necessarily a giving up of the idea of a distinct career in public service), extensive decentralization and delegation of authority from central ministries and agencies, and a reinforced devotion to improving the quality and adaptability of public services to citizens. There are various modernization strategies employed by this group of modernizers, such as managerial modernization (which focuses on management structures, instruments, and strategies) and participatory modernization (which emphasizes developing user-responsive, high-quality services and avenues for public participation). Some of the reforms and initiatives undertaken by Israel, Brazil, Nepal and Philippines to modernize public management and governance are mentioned in Table 6.

To make a comparative assessment of the modernizing tendencies in public management, global indices of innovation and competitiveness have been used. Figure 2 highlights the Global Competitiveness Index from 2007 to 2017. The World Economic Forum (WEF) releases a study every year called the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). It gauges a nation's competitiveness using a set of metrics that evaluate various facets of its institutional structure and economic performance. The GCI seeks to shed light on the elements that influence a nation's productivity and long-term economic growth. Higher-ranked nations are regarded as being more competitive and modern in terms of their capacity to provide long-term economic growth. While it is no surprise to find Israel ranked the highest in GCI among the four nations, Brazil and Philippines have followed a very close trajectory in terms of global competitiveness. Nepal ranks lower consistently. Interestingly, Brazil and Philippines have their consensual political executive in common.

Table 7 showcases the Global Innovation Index from 2013 to 2022 for Israel, Brazil, Nepal, and Philippines. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in collaboration with other partner organizations, publishes the Global Innovation Index (GII) as a yearly report. The GII assesses elements such institutional support, political and regulatory frameworks, the business climate, access to financing, education and research systems, infrastructure, and market circumstances in order to determine the enabling

TABLE 5 Accounting method used by government.

	Cash basis accounting	Accrual basis accounting
Brazil		X
Israel		X
Nepal	X	
Philippines	X	

Source: National Reports.

TABLE 6 Modernizing reforms in public management.

Israel	Government Digital Services (GDS)
	Open Data Policy
	Regulatory Simplification
	Performance-Based Budgeting
	Innovation Labs and Incubators
	GovTech Programs
	State Comptroller's Office and the Police Anti-Fraud Unit
Brazil	Bureaucracy Reduction Program
	Digital Citizenship initiative
	The Fiscal Responsibility Law
	The National School of Public Administration (ENAP)
	Bolsa Família
	Brasil Sem Miséria
Nepal	Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS)
	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)
	Performance-Based Budgeting (PBB)
	Online Application System (OAS)
	Nepal National Single Window (NSW)
	Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA)
Philippines	Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS)
	Electronic New Government Accounting System (eNGAS)
	Performance-Informed Budgeting System (PIBS).
	Sandiganbayan (a specialized anti-graft court),
	Electronic Business Permits and Licensing System (eBPLS)
	Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS),
	Enhanced Justice on Wheels (EJOW) program
	Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS)
	Organizational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF)
	Strategic Performance Management System (SPMS)
	Enhanced Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human
	Resource Management (PRIME-HRM)

environment for innovation. These elements work together to affect a nation's capacity to foster and maintain an environment that is favorable for innovation. Israel ranks in top 25 innovative nations as it offers a robust ecosystem that encourages innovation, which includes esteemed academic institutions, an active startup scene, and a welcoming entrepreneurial climate. Starting at low level, Philippines could rise rapidly in its innovation capacity to match the ranking of Brazil with the 55–61 range. GII ranking in Nepal has fluctuated between 95 and 136.

### 4.3 Marketize

Market-oriented reforms in public management have been the mainstay of New Public Management (NPM). In a reaction to

traditional bureaucracy, business like management, market instruments, performance targets and incentives have been the dominant model of public management in most nations in the 1990s and the early twenty-first century. According to marketizers, market-type mechanisms (MTMs) hold the key to a public administration that is more effective and user-friendly. The introduction of private sector practises (which are thought to stimulate higher performance) into the public sector includes performance management, competitive tendering, contracting out, and “internal markets.” This reform-oriented mindset essentially involves a broad lowering of the public sector's distinction from the private sector.

In all four nations, public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been used in infrastructure projects to use the resources and skills of the private sector in in Transportation; Water and Sanitation; Energy; Healthcare; Education; and Tourism sectors. To ensure accountability and motivate service providers to provide desired results, performance-based contracts have been implemented in public management. User fees and cost recovery methods have been adopted in several industries, especially the healthcare sector to lessen the need for government subsidies. Market-like procedures have been created via regulatory changes in industries including telecommunications, energy, and finance. Government organizations frequently hire private companies to carry out tasks like facilities management, IT support, or maintenance. A comparable global dataset pertaining to the marketizing extent in public management is not available. However, considering the fact that marketization of public management lead to better delivery of services, the author utilizes the government effectiveness index as a measure of market like efficiency in public sector. Figure 3 shows the percentile rank of government effectiveness as a measure of quality of governance in the four nations. While Israel and Philippines have been able to improve government effectiveness, albeit marginally from 1996 to 2021, the nations of Brazil and Nepal have been on the downward trajectory.

### 4.4 Minimize

Minimizers in public management want to reduce the state machine because they are essentially dubious about it. The primary method for doing this is through large-scale privatization, together with persistent attacks on “red tape” and innovative practises to discourage authorities from enacting more rules than are strictly required. The style of governance opposes big government and supports a minimal nightwatchman public administration in the laissez faire manner. Downsizing and deregulation of the public sector is the main strategy to reduce the role of the state in the economy.

There is some overlap between the strategies adopted to marketize and minimize such as the contracting out of government services and public-private partnerships. However, the minimizing public management style is to remove the presence of government or public entities from service delivery and citizen welfare rather than making the government market-like.

The World Bank Group developed the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) index, a grading system that offers useful insights into a country's regulatory environment and business friendliness. Ease of doing business rates economies from 1 to 190, with 1 being the easiest to conduct business in. Usually, the higher rank also reflects stronger safeguards of property rights and better, typically simpler, regulations



TABLE 7 Global innovation index in Brazil, Israel, Nepal, and Philippines (2013–2022).

Global innovation index				
	Brazil	Israel	Nepal	Philippines
2013	64	14	128	90
2014	61	15	136	100
2015	70	22	135	83
2016	69	21	115	74
2017	69	17	109	73
2018	64	11	108	73
2019	66	10	109	54
2020	62	13	95	50
2021	57	15	111	51
2022	54	16	111	59

Source: World intellectual property organisation database.

for enterprises. Israel ranks high compared to Brazil, Philippines, and Nepal. While Philippines and Nepal have improved their ranks over the years, Brazil has not been able to move much higher in the ranking (Table 8).

Another measure of minimizing public management is the government size. The index of economic freedom published by the Heritage Foundation captures the pillar of government size through government spending and tax burden. For a minimizing public management approach, the government size should be less for efficient service delivery.

Government spending is financed by high taxes and involves an opportunity cost, which is the worth of the consumption or investment that would have taken place had the resources been left in the hands of private entities. Government spending in Philippines is the highest, followed by Nepal, Brazil, and Israel. The extent of government involvement is also measured by the tax burden. High tax burden

implies more government and less economic freedom. Tax burden is highest in Nepal followed by Philippines, Brazil, and Israel (Table 9).

## 5 Discussion and conclusion

From the comparative analysis of public management reform trajectories in the four selected countries, a few findings are evident. The four nations have displayed different extents of the 4M strategies of public management reforms (Table 10). The study has attempted to situate the findings within the broader context of the institutional framework. The two institutional dimensions of unitary-federal and majoritarian-consensual shape up distinct public management reform trajectories in the selected nations that underscores the link between institutions and the direction and intensity of public management reforms.

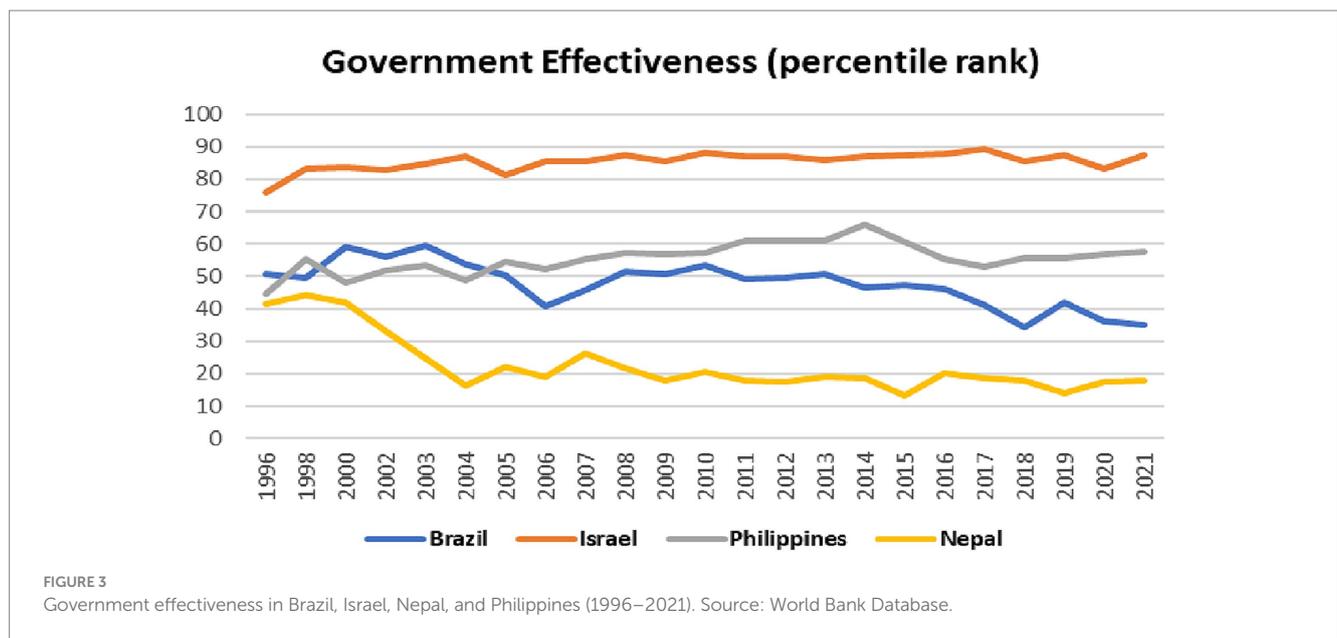


TABLE 8 Ease of doing business ranking in Brazil, Israel, Nepal, and Philippines (2008–2019).

Ease of doing business (country ranking)				
Year	Brazil	Israel	Philippines	Nepal
2008	127	29	141	123
2009	129	29	144	123
2010	120	32	134	110
2011	126	34	136	107
2012	118	33	133	103
2013	116	35	108	105
2014	111	50	97	94
2015	121	49	99	100
2016	123	52	99	107
2017	125	54	113	105
2018	109	49	124	110
2019	124	35	95	94

Source: World bank database.

### 5.1 Unitary-consensual and public management

The two unitary nations of Israel and Philippines differ vastly in the dominant strategies adopted for public management reform. While Israel seems to have pursued modernizing and marketizing approaches to public management, Philippines has strived to maintain the past policy practices and minimize the involvement of state in public management. The inference that can be drawn is that the forces of marketization and modernization can grow and spread in a unitary and centralized state. The example of Israel and Philippines defies the institutional impact logic, but not fully. Israel and Philippines share the common features of a unitary state structure, a consensual political executive, and a politicized bureaucracy. However, there are remnants of majoritarianism in Israel and decentralization in Philippines. The degree of diversity in terms of the source of policy advice is narrow in Israel and wider in Philippines.

Therefore, depending on how it is designed, the environment in which it operates, and whether there are competing interests, a public management system may or may not result in improved development.

### 5.2 Federal-majoritarian and public management

The federal states of Nepal and Brazil also have a different mix of public management strategies. Nepal seems to follow the dominant strategy of maintaining past policy preferences and to some extent minimizing the role of state in service delivery. Brazil follows a dominant modernizing strategy in public management. Nepal and Brazil share the common features of a federal polity; mix of majoritarianism and consensual political executive; and a high degree of diversity in policy advice. However, in Nepal the political control of bureaucracy is not very

TABLE 9 Government spending and tax burden in selected nations (1996–2022).

Year	Government Spending				Tax Burden			
	Brazil	Israel	Philippines	Nepal	Brazil	Israel	Philippines	Nepal
1996	74.4	27.7	89.4	91.3	66.7	51.1	73.2	86.4
1998	74.4	32.3	88.9	89.6	88.6	52.2	73	83
2000	71.2	9.3	89.2	88	87.2	52.8	74.2	86.3
2002	71.2	33.7	88	89.2	86.3	54.8	77.4	84
2004	68.1	7.6	88.8	88.6	90.2	52.7	77.7	88.9
2006	71.7	28.3	88.9	92.3	83.8	55.2	75.9	86.6
2008	55.5	35.1	90.2	92	68.6	55.9	75.8	86.5
2010	49.6	35.4	91.2	92.3	68.4	58.4	78.8	86.6
2012	54.8	41	89.7	88.1	69.1	64.1	79.1	86
2014	54.1	40.3	92.3	89.6	68.8	60.1	79.2	85.8
2016	55.2	48.8	89.6	91.1	69.7	60.6	79	85.1
2018	50.7	51.8	89.3	87.6	70.6	60.9	78.9	84.2
2020	54.6	53.5	87.9	77.9	70.4	61	76.7	83.4
2022	53.8	48.4	84.2	77.2	69.9	60.4	76.8	82.6

TABLE 10 Extent of 4 M public management reform trajectories.

	Maintain	Modernize	Marketize	Minimize
Israel	xx	xxx	xxx	x
Philippines	xxx	xx	xx	xxx
Nepal	xxx	x	x	xx
Brazil	x	xxx	x	x

Based on author's analysis – x, low; xx, medium; xxx, high.

much entrenched. Additionally, Nepal is more decentralized and less majoritarian than Brazil. The comparison defies the logic that participative (in terms of diverse policy actors) style of governance aids in breaking away from traditional system of public management. Brazil has the advantage of the decisiveness of a majoritarian system. Decentralized governance, on the other hand, can constrain the modernizing tendencies in public management, as evident in Nepal.

The final observations defy a strong straightforward link between the institutional blend and the public management reform that prevails. Based on the individual country analysis, the trajectories taken by each country in its economic and political evolution since 1980 can serve as a possible explanation. Even as a unitary state, Israel has undergone a political cycle marked by a high degree of political polarization and existence of coalition governments. However, the economic modernization in Israel has been quite fast paced with a strong emphasis on technology, innovation, and integration into the world economy. Philippines has struggled to establish a stable democracy from the beginning, plagued with periodic instability, political corruption, and military dominance. Unlike Israel, the economic path of development has not been progressive in Philippines. Philippines economy has been stressed under inflation and unemployment because of natural disasters, global economic recession, and the uncertainty in the political landscape. Nepal has again had a fragile transition from monarchy to a federal democratic republic. Political turmoil

continued behind the façade of multi-party democracy. This has led to the slow pace of economic modernization. The Nepalese economy has been reeling under the dependence on foreign aid and inadequate foreign investment to build the industrial and infrastructural foundation. The political development in Brazil has been marked by the recurring dominance of political corruption and coalition governments. Brazilian economy, however, has been less susceptible to political instability than Philippines and Nepal. The adoption of neo-liberal economic policies has resulted in a steady economic growth, albeit accompanied by inequality and environmental concerns.

To conclude, while the institutional mix in a nation can be a useful analytical framework to assess the kind of public management that dominates in a nation, there are many endogenous and exogenous factors that explain the reform trajectory. The economic and political cycles of stability, contraction or expansion can dilute or accelerate the tenor of public management reforms in seemingly convergent institutional arrangements. There is no watertight compartmentalization in the strategies adopted by national governments in managing public affairs. The institutional framework within which policy implementation takes place explains to some extent the broad style of public management reform. The world of public management and policy implementation has transformed radically since the new public management movement began in the late 1970s. The implementation of public policies and the overall thrust of government in public management differs vastly across nations. The present study calls for further research in appreciating diversity, identifying patterns, and developing a nuanced understanding of public management in diverse policy systems.

### 5.3 Limitations of the study and scope for future research

The study is a preliminary secondary data based comparative analysis of four nations. Lack of comparable data at global level is a

major limitation in comparing nations. Further research is needed to compare nations following different institutional and policy mix at a wider scale.

## Author contributions

VS: Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

## Funding

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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