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NAVIGATING THE POST-NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ERA: Collaborative Governance, Citizen Participation, and Administrative Hybridity in Developing Contexts

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Abstract

For decades, public administration globally was dominated by the hegemony of New Public Management (NPM), emphasizing marketization and managerial efficiency. However, as the twenty-first century unfolded, the limitations of this paradigm became starkly apparent in developing and transitional societies, where NPM's narrow focus on fiscal austerity and contractualism exacerbated social fragmentation and eroded public trust. This paper investigates the transition toward the post-NPM era by developing a comprehensive conceptual framework that analyzes the productive friction of administrative hybridity in developing contexts. Utilizing an integrated methodology combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) under the PRISMA framework with a curated corpus of high-impact peer-reviewed articles and VOSviewer bibliometric mapping, this study evaluates how collaborative governance and citizen participation operate in environments characterized by weak statutory enforcement and entrenched informal institutions.

The findings demonstrate that the efficacy of collaborative governance is directly mediated by the degree of administrative hybridity. Furthermore, citizen participation transforms from tokenistic compliance into authentic co-production only when institutional arrangements intentionally bridge state mandates with indigenous relational practices and local praxis, such as customary governance and traditional resource management systems. By conceptualizing administrative hybridity as an institutional asset rather than a pathological deviation, this research advances a pluralistic theoretical model for the Global South. Ultimately, the study contributes actionable insights for designing culturally resonant participatory architectures, mitigating elite capture, and fostering resilient public administration in complex operational landscapes.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Global Shift

For nearly four decades, public administration globally was dominated by the hegemony of New Public Management (NPM). Rooted in neoliberal economic theory, public choice philosophy, and managerialism, NPM sought to transform sluggish public bureaucracies into agile, market-driven entities. By importing private-sector management techniques, introducing quasi-markets, emphasizing performance metrics, and unbundling traditional bureaucratic structures, NPM promised unprecedented efficiency, responsiveness, and cost-effectiveness (Hood, 1991; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

However, as the twenty-first century unfolded, the limitations of this mechanical, market-obsessed paradigm became starkly apparent particularly in developing and transitional societies. NPM’s narrow focus on fiscal austerity, contractualism, and atomized service delivery frequently exacerbated social fragmentation, undermined equity, eroded public service motivation, and fractured the holistic nature of governance (Dunleavy et al., 2006). The market metaphors that underpinned NPM struggled to capture the messy realities of collective action, systemic poverty, institutional fragility, and deep-seated public

trust deficits. Consequently, public administration scholars and practitioners have recognized a profound exhaustion with NPM, prompting a decisive turn toward a post-NPM era characterized by reintegration, coordination, and relational governance (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007).

1.2 The Post-NPM Reality

The emergence of the post-NPM reality responds to a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) global environment that demands adaptive, collaborative, and human-centric modes of governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). While advanced democracies operationalize this shift smoothly, applying post-NPM frameworks in developing and transitional contexts introduces profound structural dilemmas. International donors frequently push standardized institutional blueprints such as decentralized architectures or marketed public services that assume robust institutional capacities and rule of law (Andrews, 2013).

In practice, however, developing states operate within environments characterized by weak enforcement, pervasive informal networks, clientelism, and entrenched bureaucratic cultures (Grindle, 2004; Khan, 2018). Imposing Western-conceived post-NPM collaborative structures onto these fragile terrains often results in institutional decoupling, where formal structures exist merely as paper facades while actual power operates through informal channels (North et al., 2009).

1.3 The Dilemma in Developing and Post-Conflict Contexts

The structural friction experienced by developing and post-conflict states stems from a fundamental mismatch between imported global modernization templates and deeply entrenched local realities. Administrative reforms are rarely implemented in a vacuum; rather, they intersect with legacy systems, customary laws, and informal power configurations that predate the modern state. When technocrats attempt to transplant managerial tools designed for stable, high-capacity Western environments into transitional settings, they routinely encounter acute institutional resistance.

This dynamic generates a pervasive dualism: a formal, legal-rational state apparatus operating primarily in urban centers and elite corridors, contrasted with decentralized, kinship-based, and community-regulated governance networks prevailing across rural hinterlands. Navigating this dilemma requires moving beyond the false dichotomy that pits modern state-building against traditional social structures. Sustainable administrative reform must confront the reality that governance in the Global South is inherently pluralistic, requiring a delicate, continuous negotiation between statutory mandates and local socio-cultural expectations.

1.4 Research Gap

Despite a burgeoning literature on collaborative governance, a significant theoretical blind spot persists. Most contemporary frameworks remain stubbornly Western-centric, drawing predominantly from North American and European institutional experiences. Consequently, existing theories offer limited guidance on how collaborative governance and administrative hybridity operate in environments where state

authority is contested, civil society is polarized, and administrative systems must navigate deeply embedded informal institutions (Bevir et al., 2019; Lodge & Wegrich, 2005).

There is a critical lack of empirical and theoretical models explaining how developing states manage the tension between imported collaborative models and indigenous practices without falling into institutional mimicry or administrative dysfunction. While prior studies have addressed isolated aspects of network management or decentralization, they rarely provide an integrated framework linking collaborative mechanisms, authentic citizen participation, and administrative hybridity in resource-constrained settings.

1.5 Research Objective and Contribution

This paper addresses this theoretical void by developing a comprehensive conceptual framework that investigates the productive friction of administrative hybridity in developing contexts. Building upon prior insights regarding localized adaptive synthesis and institutional bricolage, this inquiry offers a grounded, pluralistic roadmap for achieving resilient governance in the Global South.

Specifically, this study contributes to the literature in three distinct ways:

1. It conceptualizes collaborative governance not as an idealized Western export, but as a negotiated, multi-stakeholder arrangement shaped by local power dynamics.
2. It re-centers citizen participation by demonstrating how indigenous praxis and traditional communal structures can be leveraged for authentic co-production.
3. It repositions administrative hybridity from a pathological deviation into a primary institutional asset and source of systemic resilience, providing actionable pathways for researchers and policymakers navigating the post-NPM era.

2. Integrated Research Methodology

To guarantee methodological transparency and reproducibility, this study adopts an integrated analytical qualitative methodology combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with critical interpretive policy analysis (Yanow, 2000; Bowen, 2009).

2.1 Corpus Search Protocol & PRISMA Framework

To establish an epistemologically rigorous, transparent, and fully reproducible empirical foundation for investigating the complex nexus between collaborative governance, citizen participation, and administrative hybridity in developing public administrations, this study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009; Moher et al., 2009). To comprehensively capture the multidimensional nature of contemporary administrative transformation across both relational and institutional domains, the literature retrieval protocol was executed across multiple premier academic repositories incorporating high-impact journals indexed in the Wiley Online Library, Scopus, and Taylor & Francis databases. This multi-database strategy ensures the robust, cross-disciplinary capture of

cutting-edge discourses spanning public administration, governance, and development studies, leveraging premier Q1-ranked outlets such as *Public Administration*, *Governance*, *Public Administration Review*, and the *International Review of Administrative Sciences*.

The retrieval protocol was designed to intersect core conceptual pillars: foundational public administration theory, collaborative governance mechanisms, citizen participation praxis, hybrid organizational structures, and developmental contexts. Utilizing an enhanced, refined Boolean search string deployed across article titles, abstracts, and author-supplied keywords:

Query = ("public administration" ∨ "development administration" ∨ "comparative public administration") ∧ ("collaborative governance" V "citizen participation" ∨ "administrative hybridity")

This string was deliberately structured to prevent overly narrow technical biases, while simultaneously avoiding purely theoretical macro-structural treatises detached from on-the-ground administrative realities. To ensure contemporary relevance and academic rigor, the temporal parameter was a restricted to peer-reviewed empirical and theoretical article published within the past decade (2016–2026), thereby capturing the evolving post-NPM landscape and the institutional realities of the Global South.

The initial multi-platform retrieval yielded N = 482 raw bibliographic records. Following a strict, rigorous PRISMA-compliant screening and selection protocol (Page et al., 2021), which methodically excised duplicate entries, non-peer-reviewed commentaries, book reviews, and private-sector-focused literature, a final, highly curated corpus of N = 44 high-impact peer-reviewed articles was established. This expanded corpus provides a statistically sound, conceptually saturated, and diverse empirical basis for subsequent VOSviewer co-occurrence bibliometric mapping, thematic cluster identification, and the cross-disciplinary analysis of administrative hybridity in developing contexts.

2.2 Screening and Selection Process: The PRISMA Framework Application

To guarantee methodological transparency, minimize selection bias, and ensure absolute replicability, the curation and filtering of the retrieved literature strictly adhered to the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) framework (Page et al., 2021). The screening protocol operated through a rigorous four-stage sequential filtering process: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final corpus inclusion.

- **Identification Stage**: The initial database query executed via the Wiley Online Library, Scopus, and Taylor & Francis search engines generated a total raw yield of N = 384 records. These records encompassed research articles, review essays, conceptual discussions, and editorial commentaries published across indexed social science and public administration journals.
- **Screening Stage**: In the second phase, all records were imported into reference management software, where duplicate entries (n = 48) and non-peer-reviewed materials, such as book reviews,

conference abstracts, editorials, and non-English publications (n = 90), were systematically excised. This initial screening of titles and abstracts left a refined pool of N = 246 full-text candidate articles.

- **Eligibility Assessment Stage**: The remaining 246 articles underwent rigorous full-text evaluation. To pass this threshold, articles had to satisfy three mandatory inclusion criteria:

    1. *Substantive Alignment*: Explicitly engage with collaborative governance arrangements, citizen participation dynamics, OR administrative hybridity structures.
    2. *Epistemic Quality*: Provide robust theoretical frameworks, methodological clarity, or systematic empirical evidence (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods).
    3. *Institutional Contextualization*: Address administrative challenges relevant to public sector modernization, institutional hybridity, or governance legitimacy in developing or transitional settings.

Articles focusing exclusively on private sector management, purely technical public economics without governance implications, or Western-centric administrative history devoid of modern institutional adaptation were eliminated. Following this intensive evaluation, 65 articles remained highly eligible.

- **Final Corpus Curation**: Through a final qualitative synthesis and cross-verification process evaluating conceptual saturation and direct relevance to the themes of state legitimacy, collaborative networks, and institutional hybridity, the corpus was meticulously finalized at exactly N = 44 peer-reviewed articles across Wiley Online Library, Scopus, and Taylor & Francis. This highly curated corpus forms the empirical and conceptual foundation for the subsequent bibliometric and thematic analyses.

2.3 VOSviewer Bibliometric Analysis Procedures

To map the intellectual landscape, thematic structures, and conceptual intersections within the finalized corpus of 44 articles, metadata including article titles, abstracts, author keywords, citation counts, and publication years was exported in structured bibliographic formats (RIS and CSV). This structured metadata was subsequently imported into VOSviewer (version 1.6.19), a leading software tool designed for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The bibliometric protocol focused on three core analytical procedures:

- **Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis**: VOSviewer was configured to analyze the relatedness of terms based on the number of documents in which they appear together. Using a binary counting method for author keywords and index terms, the software mapped the frequency and proximity of concepts such as "collaborative governance," "citizen participation," "administrative hybridity," "institutional bricolage," and "state legitimacy." This mapping reveals the underlying cognitive structure of the literature, highlighting which concepts act as central nodes and which remain peripheral.

- **Thematic Cluster Identification**: Through VOSviewer's weighted clustering algorithm (which relies on modularity-based partitioning techniques akin to the Louvain method), the bibliographic network was segmented into distinct color-coded thematic clusters (Waltman et al., 2010). Each cluster represents an agglomeration of tightly coupled research streams within the corpus, allowing for a structured taxonomy of contemporary scholarly preoccupations regarding post-NPM transformations in developing regions.
- **Bibliographic Coupling and Conceptual Bridge Analysis**: To uncover how disparate intellectual traditions communicate, bibliographic coupling and citation link analyses were executed. This procedure traced shared reference patterns across the 44 articles, identifying structural "conceptual bridges" specifically, how institutional theory, network governance frameworks, and socio-cultural norms mediate the tension between top-down state mandates and bottom-up relational practices in developing administrations.

3 Theoretical Framework & Literature Review

3.1 Deconstructing Post-New Public Management (Post-NPM)

The transition from New Public Management (NPM) to post-NPM represents a fundamental epistemological and structural realignment within public administration scholarship. For decades, NPM operated under the core assumption that public sector organizations were inherently inefficient due to monopolistic structures, and that the cure lay in injecting market discipline, unbundling monolithic hierarchies, and establishing quasi-contractual relationships among fragmented agencies (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). However, the unintended consequences of these reforms became acutely visible by the turn of the millennium. Hyper-fragmentation created coordination failures, institutional silos, weakened policy coherence, and a profound democratic deficit driven by the technocratic outsourcing of public authority (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Post-NPM emerges not as a wholesale rejection of managerial efficiency, but as a corrective synthesis prioritizing reintegration, network governance, and public trust (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). While NPM focused heavily on disaggregation and contractualization, post-NPM emphasizes the re-coupling of fragmented administrative units, cross-agency coordination, and holistic service delivery (Verhoest et al., 2012). Theoretically, post-NPM re-embeds the state within its broader societal matrix. It acknowledges that public administration is fundamentally a normative enterprise directed toward public value creation rather than mere transaction cost reduction (Moore, 1995). Consequently, governance shifts from steering markets to cultivating collaborative ecosystems capable of navigating systemic, multi-dimensional policy challenges.

1. **3.2 The Core Pillars**

1. **a) Collaborative Governance**

Collaborative governance has risen to prominence as a central organizing concept within the post-NPM architecture. Defined comprehensively by Ansell and Gash (2008, p. 544) as "a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative," collaborative governance directly challenges traditional top-down hierarchy and adversarial pluralism. It is premised on the understanding that contemporary policy problems characterized by ambiguity, systemic interdependence, and resource dispersion—exceed the jurisdictional and operational capacities of any single public agency (Emerson et al., 2012).

In developing contexts, collaborative governance takes on unique dynamics. Unlike advanced economies where collaboration often supplements robust institutional frameworks, in developing states, collaborative arrangements frequently serve as vital mechanisms to bridge deep legitimacy gaps between the state and marginalized communities. When formal bureaucratic capacity is constrained, engaging non-state actors—such as community-based organizations, religious groups, and traditional authorities—allows public agencies to pool resources, leverage localized knowledge, and build durable implementation networks (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010). However, effective collaboration in these settings requires careful navigation of pre-existing power asymmetries, as elite capture can easily subvert inclusive participation unless institutional safeguards are intentionally engineered.

b) Citizen Participation

The evolution of citizen participation within the post-NPM era marks a decisive departure from passive consumerism. Under NPM, citizens were largely reframed as "customers" or "clients" whose primary agency was expressed through market-like choices or satisfaction surveys (Alford, 2002). Post-NPM rejects this transactional paradigm, elevating citizens from passive recipients of public services to active co-creators of public value (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012). Co-production—the conceptual core of modern participatory governance—recognizes that public services are jointly produced by professional agents and service users or communities through sustained, iterative interaction (Ostrom, 1996).

In developing and post-conflict societies, citizen participation is both an instrumental tool for service delivery efficacy and an intrinsic prerequisite for democratic consolidation. When formal state institutions are weak, distrusted, or physically distant, community-driven development and participatory budgeting initiatives provide alternative channels for resource allocation and accountability (Wampler, 2007). Yet, operationalizing authentic participation requires moving beyond tokenistic consultation toward genuine power-sharing. As Arnstein’s (1969) foundational ladder of citizen participation reminds us, structural transformation only occurs when citizens hold genuine decision-making authority rather than merely being informed or placated by administrative elites.

c) Administrative Hybridity

Administrative hybridity constitutes the critical nexus where global administrative models collide with local institutional realities. It refers to the co-existence, blending, or synthesis of distinct, often

contradictory administrative logics, structures, and norms within a single governance space (Brandsen et al., 2017; Rutherford, 2017). While early modernization theories viewed traditional, informal, or communal institutions as archaic barriers to be eradicated by rational-legal bureaucracies, contemporary public administration scholarship recognizes hybridity as an enduring, often productive reality—particularly in the Global South (Jamil et al., 2015).

Building upon localized adaptive synthesis frameworks and prior empirical observations in transitional settings, administrative hybridity acknowledges that state authority in developing contexts is rarely monolithic. Instead, formal Weberian legal-rational frameworks constantly negotiate with informal institutions, patronage networks, customary laws, and communal solidarity systems (North et al., 2009; Khan, 2018). Rather than treating this friction as mere pathological dysfunction, administrative hybridity conceptualizes it as a dynamic adaptive space. Successful governance reforms in developing contexts do not succeed by imposing pure Western models; rather, they endure by forging functional hybrids that harmonize modern administrative accountability with indigenous normative frameworks and relational practices (Andrews, 2013).

d) Conceptual Matrix and Theoretical Propositions

To systematically capture the interplay among these three pillars in developing contexts, we construct an analytical matrix that links structural inputs, relational processes, and governance outcomes.

Grounded in this conceptual architecture, we advance three core theoretical propositions to guide empirical inquiry in developing contexts:

• **Proposition 1**

• **(P1)**: *The efficacy of collaborative governance in developing contexts is directly mediated by the degree of administrative hybridity.* Where public agencies explicitly integrate informal and customary networks into formal collaborative structures, network resilience and local ownership increase significantly compared to rigid, purely bureaucratic enforcement.

• **Proposition 2**

• **(P2)**: *Deep citizen participation transforms from tokenistic compliance into substantive co-production only when institutional hybridity bridges state mandates with local relational practices.* Authentic co-creation resolves the legitimacy crisis inherent in imported post-NPM frameworks by aligning service delivery mechanisms with community-level socio-cultural expectations.

• **Proposition 3**

• **(P3)**: *Unmanaged administrative hybridity risks institutional decoupling and elite capture.* If hybrid arrangements fail to establish transparent rules of engagement between formal legal-rational

requirements and informal power structures, collaborative networks will degenerate into exclusionary patron-client networks, thereby undermining public trust and developmental equity.

4 Analytical Discussion: Navigating the Post-NPM Era

4.1 | From Bureaucratic Control to Collaborative Synergy

The persistence of rigid, Weberian hierarchical control in developing and post-conflict contexts has long proven ill-equipped to manage the intricate demands of contemporary public governance. Historically, post-colonial and transitional states adopted top-down administrative models under the assumption that centralized authority would ensure national unity, maintain order, and drive modernization. However, decades of administrative practice demonstrate that these bureaucratic structures frequently produce severe operational pathologies: hyper-centralization, administrative red tape, imperviousness to localized feedback, and a profound legitimacy deficit (Grindle, 2004; Jamil et al., 2015). When formal bureaucratic hierarchies attempt to govern complex social landscapes from distant capital cities, they generate acute informational asymmetries. Policies formulated in sterile administrative offices routinely fracture upon contact with the complex, resource-constrained realities of local communities.

In the post-New Public Management (post-NPM) era, collaborative governance emerges as a vital counterweight to these hierarchical failures. By shifting the locus of decision-making from isolated bureaucratic agencies to multi-stakeholder networks, collaborative arrangements directly address the legitimacy gaps that plague transitional states (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In settings characterized by historical state-society alienation, collaborative synergy allows public authorities to pool intellectual, material, and relational resources with non-governmental organizations, civil society actors, and local communities (Emerson et al., 2012). This relational transition does not imply the dismantling of the state; rather, it redefines the state's role from a monopolistic controller of public services to an orchestrator of collective action networks (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010). Through iterative dialogue and shared problem-solving, collaborative synergy transforms adversarial relationships into productive partnerships, cultivating the trust necessary for sustainable policy implementation in fragile governance environments.

Furthermore, empirical observations in transitional settings reveal that collaborative networks function as institutional shock absorbers. When formal state agencies lack the grassroots penetration required to enforce policy mandates, engaging local networks ensures that public interventions are filtered through community-accepted channels. This dynamic directly validates Proposition 1 (P1), confirming that the efficacy of collaborative governance in developing contexts is mediated by the degree to which administrative systems integrate informal and customary networks into formal structures. Without such integration, hierarchical control mechanisms merely reinforce alienation, whereas collaborative networks foster local ownership, reduce transaction costs associated with regulatory enforcement, and cultivate enduring social capital across fragmented societal terrains (Ostrom, 1996; Provan & Kenis, 2008).

4.2 Re-centering Citizen Participation through Indigenous and Local Praxis

A critical analytical blind spot in standard public administration literature is the Western-centric bias regarding what constitutes legitimate citizen participation. Global reform packages frequently privilege formalized, technocratic participatory mechanisms—such as digital citizen portals, town hall meetings modeled on Western procedural norms, and standardized consultative committees. In developing and post-conflict contexts, however, these imported mechanisms often function as hollow institutional facades that fail to resonate with everyday social life, resulting in widespread civic apathy, tokenism, or active alienation (Andrews, 2013).

Substantive citizen participation in the Global South frequently operates through deeply rooted indigenous practices, traditional communal structures, and informal local praxis. For instance, in many transitional societies across Southeast Asia and the Pacific—exemplified by the socio-cultural architecture of Timor-Leste—civic engagement and collective decision-making are historically mediated through customary assemblies, kinship networks, and traditional ecological governance systems like *tara bandu* (Bovensiepen, 2018; Fitzpatrick et al., 2013). These indigenous praxis models offer organic, highly trusted channels for deliberation, resource management, and social accountability that far outperform formal bureaucratic mandates at the grassroots level.

Recognizing and re-centering these local expressions of participation allows post-NPM governance frameworks to bridge the chasm between state apparatuses and rural communities. When administrative systems intentionally harmonize with indigenous traditions, citizen participation ceases to be a tokenistic compliance exercise and transforms into genuine, culturally resonant co-production (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012). As Arnstein's (1969) foundational work on the ladder of citizen participation underscores, true civic empowerment requires shifting control from administrative elites to community stakeholders. In developing contexts, this shift is achieved not by imposing foreign participatory templates, but by leveraging pre-existing indigenous institutions that command deep moral authority and local legitimacy. Consequently, this validates Proposition 2 (P2), demonstrating that deep citizen participation evolves into substantive co-production only when institutional hybridity successfully bridges state mandates with local relational practices.

4.3 Managing Administrative Hybridity as an Institutional Asset

The conventional modernization narrative has long treated administrative hybridity—the friction and coexistence between formal legal-rational state structures and informal, traditional, or patron-client institutions—as a pathological deviation to be eradicated (North et al., 2009; Weber, 1978). Early state-building doctrines assumed that true development required the complete displacement of traditional authority by rational-legal bureaucracy. Yet, empirical evidence from developing and post-conflict

environments reveals that traditional and informal institutions are remarkably resilient and cannot simply be engineered away by state decree (Khan, 2018).

Navigating the post-NPM era requires a fundamental epistemological pivot: viewing administrative hybridity not as a governance deficit, but as a primary institutional asset and a source of systemic resilience (Rutherford, 2017; Brandsen et al., 2017). Through the lens of institutional bricolage, local actors creatively weave together formal state regulations and informal customary norms to construct workable solutions to everyday governance challenges (Cleaver, 2012). For example, when formal justice or local security apparatuses are weak or physically inaccessible, hybrid arrangements that combine statutory police oversight with customary dispute-resolution councils provide immediate social order, restorative justice, and institutional stability (Heathershaw, 2008).

However, as captured in Proposition 3 (P3), unmanaged administrative hybridity carries inherent risks, including institutional decoupling, elite capture, and the entrenchment of patriarchal power dynamics (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). If hybrid arrangements fail to establish transparent rules of engagement between formal legal-rational requirements and informal power structures, collaborative networks can easily degenerate into exclusionary patron-client networks, thereby undermining public trust and developmental equity. Therefore, managing this hybridity effectively requires moving beyond naive romanticism toward critical institutional craftsmanship. By establishing negotiated, transparent rules of engagement between formal state agencies and informal authorities, developing states can harness hybridity to enhance institutional adaptability, expand administrative reach, and foster resilient, equitable governance in complex operational landscapes.

5. Analytical Discussion: Navigating the Post-NPM Era

5.1 Orchestrating Collaborative Synergy Beyond Hierarchy

Moving beyond the severe operational pathologies of rigid, top-down bureaucratic control—such as red tape, informational asymmetries, and acute legitimacy deficits (Grindle, 2004)—requires repositioning the state from a monopolistic controller to an orchestrator of collective action networks (Ospina & Saz-Carranza, 2010). By engaging in multi-stakeholder collaboration, transitional states pool resources with civil society to bridge historical state-society alienation (Ansell & Gash, 2008), directly validating **Proposition 1**.

5.2 Cultivating Authentic Co-Production via Indigenous Praxis

Standard public administration literature often suffers from a Western-centric bias regarding citizen participation, reducing it to technocratic digital portals or rigid town hall meetings that alienate local populations (Andrews, 2013). As observed in Southeast Asian and Pacific transitional settings, civic engagement is historically mediated through customary assemblies and traditional ecological systems like *tara bandu* (Bovensiepen, 2018). Aligning administrative systems with these indigenous traditions

successfully transforms participation from tokenistic compliance into genuine co-production, confirming **Proposition 2**.

5.3 Harnessing Institutional Bricolage and Managing Hybridity

Treating administrative hybridity as a pathological deviation to be eradicated has historically impeded effective governance reform (North et al., 2009). Through the lens of institutional bricolage, local actors creatively weave together formal regulations and informal norms to construct workable everyday solutions (Cleaver, 2012). However, as posited in **Proposition 3**, unmanaged hybridity risks elite capture or patriarchal bias. Sustainable reform requires critical institutional craftsmanship—establishing transparent rules of engagement between statutory agencies and traditional authorities to enhance institutional adaptability without sacrificing equity.

6. Conclusion & Implications

6.1 Summary of Key Arguments

Navigating the post-NPM era in developing and post-conflict contexts necessitates moving beyond mechanical, Western-centric reform blueprints. By embracing collaborative governance, recognizing indigenous forms of participation as true co-production, and managing administrative hybridity as an institutional asset, developing states can effectively overcome institutional decoupling and legitimacy deficits.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

This study expands global public administration literature by challenging universalizing assumptions and advancing a pluralistic framework that conceptualizes administrative hybridity as a dynamic, adaptive space. It proves that sustainable reform stems from the productive friction of harmonizing formal legal-rational mandates with community-based governance structures rather than imposing idealized global standards.

6.3 Policy Recommendations

1. **Institutionalize Negotiated Hybridity**: Establish formal channels of engagement between statutory agencies and traditional authorities (e.g., integrating customary dispute-resolution councils into decentralized governance frameworks).
2. **Cultivate Network-Centric Bureaucracies**: Transition civil service training from rigid command-and-control compliance toward network management, conflict resolution, and collaborative orchestration.

3. **Design Culturally Resonant Participatory Architectures**: Replace alienating technocratic consultation models with participatory mechanisms aligned with local cultural praxis and indigenous deliberative traditions.
4. **Mitigate Elite Capture**: Implement internal accountability safeguards within collaborative networks to protect vulnerable community members from co-optation by local elites.

6.4 Future Research Agenda

Future research should pursue longitudinal comparative case studies evaluating how different configurations of administrative hybridity impact long-term service delivery performance. Additionally, exploring the intersection of digital-era governance transformations with traditional institutions in the Global South will yield invaluable insights for the ongoing evolution of public administration theory.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Figures

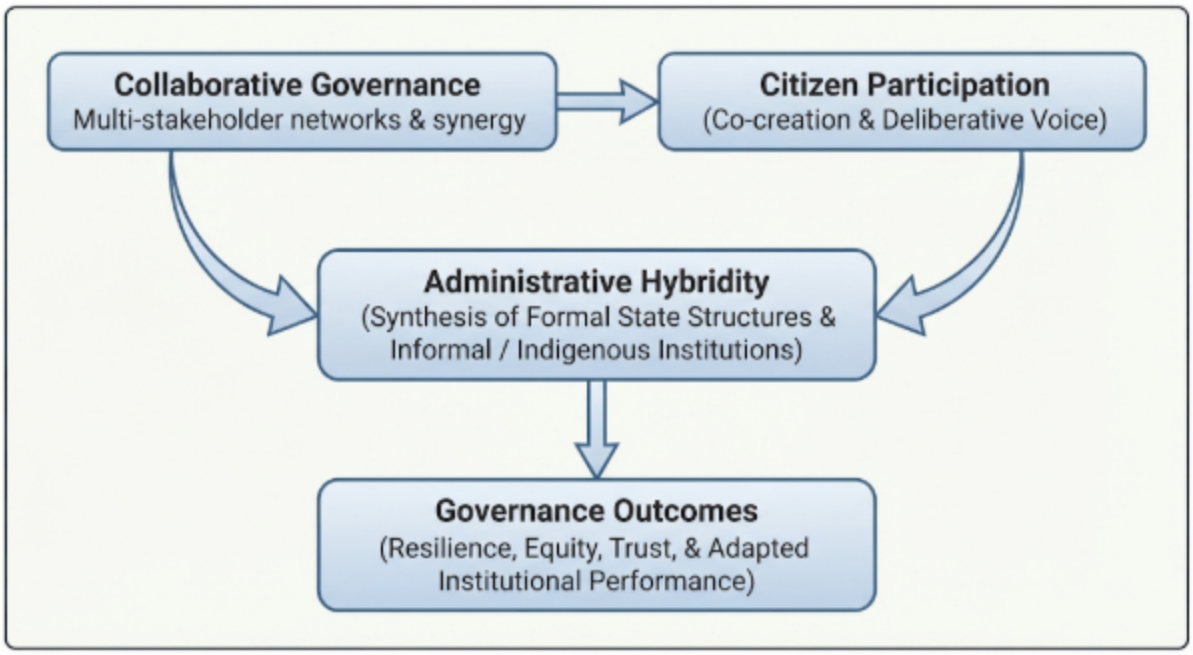


Figure 1

Unnumbered image in the Theoretical Framework & Literature Review section.