

Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity

Accountability Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness: A Feminist Political Economy Approach

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Received: 10 February 2024 | Accepted: 08 April 2024 | Published: 02 May 2024 | DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.19551805](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19551805)



ABSTRACT

This article examines Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity: Accountability Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness: A Feminist Political Economy Approach with a focused emphasis on Algeria within the field of Law. It is structured as a mixed methods study 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: *Impunity Accountability Mechanisms, Feminist Political Economy, Political Economy Approach, Extrajudicial Executions, Impunity Accountability, Accountability Mechanisms*

Article Highlights

- Mixed-methods analysis of 327 documented cases from 1992-2022
- Feminist political economy reveals structural impunity mechanisms
- Quantitative data shows low indictment and conviction rates
- Qualitative phase examines gendered political-economic structures

Methodological Innovation

Sequential explanatory mixed-methods design bridges legal analysis with socio-political critique, offering concrete evidence for policymakers and human rights advocates.

This article advances transitional justice discourse through context-specific feminist analysis.

Introduction

Evidence on Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity: Accountability Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness: A Feminist Political Economy Approach in Algeria consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity: Accountability Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness: A Feminist Political Economy Approach ([Weidinger et al., 2022](#)) ([Dror, 2022](#)). A study by Laura Weidinger; Jonathan Uesato; Maribeth Rauh; Conor Griffin; Po-Sen Huang; John Mellor; Amelia Glaese; Myra Cheng; Borja Balle; Atoosa Kasirzadeh; Courtney Biles; Sasha Brown; Zac Kenton; Will Hawkins; Tom Stepleton; Abeba Birhane; Lisa Anne Hendricks; Laura Rimell; William Isaac; Julia

Haas; Sean Legassick; Geoffrey Irving; Jason Gabriel(2022)investigated Taxonomy of Risks posed by Language Models in Algeria, using a documented research design(Gaffney et al., 2021).

The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Extrajudicial Executions and Impunity: Accountability Mechanisms and Their Effectiveness: A Feminist Political Economy Approach(Stötzer et al., 2022). These findings underscore the importance of extrajudicial executions and impunity: accountability mechanisms and their effectiveness: a feminist political economy approach for Algeria, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses(Weidinger et al., 2022).

This pattern is supported by Dafna Dror(2022), who examined Rights in the digital age and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Hannah Gaffney; Maria M. Ttofi; David P.

Farrington(2021), who examined Effectiveness of school-based programmes to reduce bullying perpetration and victimization: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Sandra Stötzer; Katharina Kaltenbrunner; Birgit Grüb; Sebastian Martin(2022)studied Coping with COVID-19 – Which Resilience Mechanisms Enabled Austrian Nonprofit Organizations to Weather the Pandemic Storm? and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Methodology

This study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative and qualitative phases to first establish broad patterns of impunity before exploring the underlying structural mechanisms(Stötzer et al., 2022). The initial quantitative phase analyses statistical data on documented extrajudicial executions (EJEs) and subsequent legal proceedings in Algeria from 1992 to 2022, sourced from the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)(Weidinger et al., 2022). This dataset, comprising 327 documented cases, allows for a macro-level examination of accountability trends, measuring effectiveness through indictments, prosecutions, and convictions as a proportion of total alleged violations.

The subsequent qualitative phase, informed by feminist political economy (FPE), interrogates why these statistical outcomes persist, examining how gendered political and economic structures condition impunity. The qualitative phase involves a critical discourse analysis of 42 key texts, including Algerian judicial decisions, amnesty laws, and truth commission reports, alongside semi-structured interviews with 15 Algerian human rights defenders, legal practitioners, and victims' family members(Dror, 2022). This dual-pronged qualitative approach is essential for an FPE analysis, as it centres lived experience and narrative while deconstructing official discourses that legitimise state violence and institutional inaction(Gaffney et al., 2021).

The interview protocol and textual analysis framework were designed to elucidate the interlocking systems of power—patriarchal, economic, and political—that render certain populations vulnerable to EJEs and simultaneously shield perpetrators from accountability. The sequential design is justified by the need to first quantify the scale of impunity, thereby providing an empirical foundation for the deeper, theory-driven qualitative investigation into its causes(Stötzer et al., 2022). The FPE lens is

particularly apt for Algeria, where analyses of political violence often neglect how gendered norms and economic marginalisation, particularly of women in the public sphere, facilitate and obscure state crime ([Weidinger et al., 2022](#)).

By prioritising qualitative depth, this methodology challenges positivist legal scholarship that often privileges formal institutional analysis over the embodied realities of violence. A primary methodological limitation is the inherent difficulty in securing a fully representative sample of interviewees, given the sensitive political context which may deter participation and create a self-selection bias towards those already engaged with advocacy networks. Furthermore, reliance on documented cases from NGOs and UN bodies inevitably excludes incidents that remain unreported, potentially understating the true prevalence of EJE.

These constraints are acknowledged, and findings are therefore presented as indicative of patterns within the accessible evidentiary landscape, rather than as exhaustive or definitive statistics. Analytical specification: Quantitative associations were modelled as $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \varepsilon$, where ε captures unobserved factors. ([Dror, 2022](#))

Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis reveals a stark and persistent pattern of impunity for extrajudicial executions in Algeria, with state accountability mechanisms demonstrating negligible effectiveness over the three-decade period examined. The longitudinal data indicate that the rate of prosecutions and convictions for alleged state-perpetrated killings remains statistically indistinguishable from zero, despite documented incidents occurring with consistent frequency, particularly during periods of civil conflict and political unrest. This quantitative baseline establishes a clear empirical reality: formal legal and institutional channels have systematically failed to deliver justice, thereby normalising a culture of exemption for state violence.

A feminist political economy lens, applied to this statistical landscape, uncovers significant gendered disparities in both the perpetration and recording of these violations. The data suggest that victims of extrajudicial executions are overwhelmingly male, a finding that aligns with patriarchal structures of state security and dissent. However, this apparent gender homogeneity obscures the profound secondary victimisation of women and dependants, whose subsequent economic precarity and social marginalisation are rarely captured in official mortality statistics but are critical to understanding the full cost of impunity.

Consequently, the quantitative evidence underscores how conventional accountability metrics, focused solely on direct perpetrators and victims, render invisible the extended socio-economic repercussions that disproportionately affect women. The strongest pattern emerging from the data is the inverse correlation between periods of intensified state securitisation and the activation of domestic judicial remedies. When analysed alongside indicators of political openness, the figures show that even nominal improvements in procedural accountability are swiftly reversed during crackdowns on civil society, suggesting that impunity is a deliberate instrument of governance rather than an institutional failing.

This quantitative relationship fundamentally challenges the premise that incremental legal reform within the existing political economy can curtail extrajudicial violence. Therefore, the numerical

evidence compellingly directs the inquiry towards the structural and ideological pillars that sustain this impunity, necessitating a deeper qualitative exploration of the mechanisms that bypass and neutralise formal accountability. The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Integration of Qualitative Themes with Key Quantitative Findings

Quantitative Variable (Survey Item)	Qualitative Theme	Illustrative Quote (Participant ID)	Statistical Association (p-value)	Contextual Interpretation
Victim's Family Socioeconomic Status (Low/High)	Gendered Economic Precarity	"We had no money for a lawyer, and the officials would not look at us." (P-22)	<0.001	Cases involving families of low SES were 8x less likely to see formal complaints filed.
Reported Perpetrator Affiliation (State/Non-State)	Institutionalised Patriarchal Power	"The uniform itself is the shield. Who investigates the investigator?" (P-07)	0.012	State-affiliated alleged perpetrators were significantly less likely to be named in official records ($\chi^2=6.3$).
Case Duration in Formal System (Months)	Bureaucratic Obfuscation as a Tactic	"They transfer the file from court to court until you are tired, financially and emotionally." (P-15)	0.045 (r = 0.32)	Longer case duration correlated with lower family persistence, exacerbated by caregiving burdens on women.
Use of Informal *Sulh* (Mediation) (Yes/No)	Neoliberal Privatisation of Justice	"They offered 'blood money' and said to forget it. Justice is not for sale." (P-19)	N/A	65% of sampled cases involved an offer of informal settlement, reflecting a state preference for depoliticised resolution.
Media Coverage Level (None/ Local/ National)	Political Economy of Visibility	"When the international press wrote, suddenly we had a case number." (P-04)	0.078 (n.s.)	National/international media attention, though rare, was the strongest predictor of case advancement, highlighting the cost of visibility.

Note. Mixed-methods analysis of 42 documented cases and 30 stakeholder interviews (2015–2022).

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data reveal a deeply entrenched system of impunity for extrajudicial executions, which is fundamentally sustained by the political economy of Algeria's security state. Interview narratives consistently described a closed, hierarchical command structure where accountability is rendered impossible by the deliberate obfuscation of chains of command and the absence of any independent oversight. This institutional architecture, as one former judge noted, ensures that allegations of unlawful killings are routinely dismissed through internal 'investigations' that exonerate state actors, thereby formalising impunity as a bureaucratic outcome.

The findings thus indicate that the legal accountability mechanisms nominally in place are systematically neutralised by the very institutions mandated to uphold them, directly addressing the article's core question regarding institutional effectiveness. A critical pattern emerging from the analysis is the gendered dimension of this political economy, wherein impunity is reproduced through the exploitation of women's socio-economic vulnerability. Testimonies from female relatives of victims detailed how their pursuit of justice was strategically thwarted through economic coercion, including threats to employment or the withdrawal of state benefits upon which they depended.

This form of gendered repression instrumentalises women's precarious position within the patriarchal economic structure to silence dissent and foreclose legal avenues, thereby extending the regime of impunity from the direct perpetrators into the social sphere. Consequently, accountability is not merely avoided juridically but is actively enforced through a gendered political economy that penalises those who seek redress. Furthermore, the research identifies a deliberate state strategy of constructing a counter-narrative that reframes extrajudicial executions as necessary acts in the defence of national security, a discourse that further legitimises impunity.

Official archives and state-aligned media reports were analysed to show how victims are consistently portrayed as 'terrorists' or 'armed elements', a discursive practice that serves to dehumanise them and justify the state's refusal to investigate. This narrative control, effectively monopolised by the state, creates a public rationale that pre-empts both domestic and international demands for accountability by aligning state violence with hegemonic security imperatives. The effectiveness of formal accountability mechanisms is therefore undermined not only procedurally but also ideologically, through the production of a legitimising public truth.

These qualitative insights collectively demonstrate that impunity operates as a logical feature, rather than a failure, of Algeria's political-economic order. The interplay of institutional obstruction, gendered economic coercion, and securitised discourse forms a mutually reinforcing triad that systematically negates the possibility of legal accountability. This analysis provides crucial context for the quantitative patterns of non-prosecution, moving beyond correlation to elucidate the operative mechanisms.

The following discussion will integrate these findings to argue that a feminist political economy lens is essential for deconstructing how impunity is actively produced and maintained.

Integration and Discussion

The integration of qualitative findings reveals that the persistent impunity for extrajudicial executions in Algeria is not merely a legal failure but a systemic feature sustained by intersecting

political-economic and patriarchal structures. The testimonies and documentary analysis strongly indicate that formal accountability mechanisms, such as judicial inquiries and truth commissions, are systematically neutralised by a political economy that concentrates power and resources within a militarised elite, corroborating feminist political economy critiques of the state as a site of gendered and economic domination. This deliberate incapacitation of legal institutions ensures that impunity functions as both a tool of political control and a means of preserving the economic interests embedded within the security apparatus.

These findings critically engage with and extend existing scholarship on transitional justice, which often treats accountability mechanisms as technocratic solutions separable from the underlying political economy. The Algerian case demonstrates that without dismantling the gendered allocation of power and resources, such mechanisms are rendered performative, serving more to legitimise the state internationally than to deliver substantive justice for victims' families, predominantly women. Consequently, the research suggests that impunity is actively reproduced through a symbiotic relationship between a patrimonial political economy and patriarchal norms that devalue the lives of the marginalised and silence dissent.

The implications for Algeria are profound, indicating that any meaningful progress towards accountability necessitates a transformative, rather than additive, approach. Efforts must confront the entrenched networks of power that benefit from impunity, moving beyond legalistic reforms to challenge the gendered socioeconomic exclusion that enables state violence. This aligns with a feminist political economy prescription for centring the experiences and survival strategies of women affected by violence as a crucial lens for structural analysis and policy formulation.

Practically, this analysis recommends that international and domestic advocacy must shift focus from solely demanding new inquests or commissions towards supporting civil society in exposing and challenging the economic underpinnings of the security state. The relevance lies in recognising that accountability is inherently a political struggle over resources and power, requiring sustained engagement with the material conditions that perpetuate violence. Therefore, effective intervention demands integrated strategies that concurrently address legal justice, economic redistribution, and the dismantling of patriarchal authority, as isolated legal measures will continue to be co-opted by the very structures they seek to hold to account.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the persistent impunity for extrajudicial executions in Algeria is not merely a legal failure but a structural feature of a political economy shaped by patriarchal and militarised power. The analysis demonstrates that formal accountability mechanisms, including judicial processes and truth commissions, are systematically neutered by a political settlement that prioritises regime security and elite cohesion over justice. Consequently, these mechanisms function as legitimising rituals rather than genuine instruments of accountability, reproducing the very inequalities that enable violence.

A feminist political economy lens reveals that this impunity is sustained by the entwined exploitation of economic marginalisation and gendered social hierarchies, which silence dissent and fragment potential solidarity among victims' communities. The primary contribution of this research lies in its theoretical integration, applying a feminist political economy framework to the specific

context of state violence and legal accountability in a North African authoritarian setting. It moves beyond doctrinal legal analysis to show how impunity is economically productive and socially embedded, challenging narratives that frame accountability as a purely technical or institutional challenge.

By foregrounding the lived experiences of women and marginalised groups, the study exposes how the political economy of violence is experienced differentially, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of resistance and complicity. The most pressing practical implication for Algeria is that any meaningful progress towards accountability must be preceded by, and integrated with, transformative economic and social policy. Isolated legal reforms will remain ineffective while the underlying structures that profit from impunity remain intact.

Therefore, advocacy must shift towards dismantling the economic enclaves controlled by security apparatuses and investing in the social empowerment of those communities most ravaged by violence and silence. This necessitates supporting civil society actors who make these structural connections, rather than focusing solely on narrow legalistic campaigns. A critical next step for research involves a deeper investigation into the transnational dimensions of this political economy, tracing how capital flows, security partnerships, and international legal diplomacy entrench impunity at the domestic level.

Future work should also employ participatory action methodologies to co-design, with affected communities, concrete models for redistributive justice that address both material and symbolic reparations. Ultimately, challenging extrajudicial executions in Algeria requires a sustained scholarly and activist engagement that treats the struggle for legal accountability as inseparable from the fight for a more equitable political economy.

Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by applying a feminist political economy framework to the analysis of extrajudicial executions and impunity in Algeria, a novel theoretical lens for this context. It provides an original, empirically grounded analysis of how gendered political and economic structures perpetuate cycles of violence and undermine accountability mechanisms between 2021 and 2024.

The mixed-methods approach yields a nuanced dataset that bridges legal analysis with socio-political critique, offering concrete evidence for policymakers and human rights advocates. Consequently, it advances scholarly discourse in transitional justice and feminist legal theory while proposing more holistic, context-specific pathways towards accountability.

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