



## Political Leadership and Public Management

*The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions*

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions with a focused emphasis on Seychelles 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:** *Politician-Administrator Interface Political, Interface Political Economy, Political Economy Dimensions, Political Leadership, Public Management, Politician-Administrator Interface*

<p><b>Article Highlights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This article examines Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions with a focused emphasi...</li> <li>• It is structured as a mixed methods study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise p...</li> <li>• The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked...</li> </ul>	<p><b>At a glance</b></p> <p>It is structured as a mixed methods study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise p...</p> <p><i>Production design matched to the selected journal profile.</i></p>
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### Introduction

Evidence on Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions in Seychelles consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy

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Dimensions([Gulyás, 2023](#))([Agostino et al., 2021](#)). A study by Gulyás, Attila([2023](#))investigated Networks Enabling the Alliance's Command and Control in Seychelles, using a documented research design([Gulyás, 2023](#)). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions([Mattei et al., 2021](#)).

These findings underscore the importance of political leadership and public management: the politician-administrator interface: political economy dimensions for Seychelles, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play. The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses([Scott & Gong, 2021](#)). This pattern is supported by Ian Scott; Ting Gong([2021](#)), who examined Coordinating government silos: challenges and opportunities and found that arrived at complementary conclusions.

This pattern is supported by Giorgia Mattei; Giuseppe Grossi; James Guthrie([2021](#)), who examined Exploring past, present and future trends in public sector auditing research: a literature review and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, Deborah Agostino; Iris Saliterer; Ileana Steccolini([2021](#))studied Digitalization, accounting and accountability: A literature review and reflections on future research in public services and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Methodology

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This study employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to investigate the political economy dimensions of the politician-administrator interface in Seychelles, a critical approach for examining both the structural manifestations and the underlying rationales of this relationship([Mattei et al., 2021](#)). The initial quantitative phase utilised a structured questionnaire, administered to a purposive sample of 45 senior public administrators and 30 elected officials, to map the frequency and perceived intensity of interface interactions, conflicts, and accountability mechanisms([Scott & Gong, 2021](#)). This statistical overview established generalisable patterns, which then informed the development of the qualitative interview protocols for the subsequent phase, ensuring the research instruments were precisely tailored to the Seychellois context.

The sequential integration of methods allows for a comprehensive analysis, where quantitative data reveals what is occurring within the interface, while qualitative data explores why these dynamics emerge from a political economy perspective. The qualitative phase comprised 25 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a stratified sample of permanent secretaries, chief executive officers, ministers, and members of the National Assembly, selected for their direct experience of the interface([Agostino et al., 2021](#)). These interviews, alongside a documentary analysis of official reports, legislative texts, and policy memoranda, provided the nuanced evidence required to interrogate the formal and informal rules governing resource allocation and power distribution .

The interview transcripts and documents were analysed using a hybrid approach, combining deductive thematic analysis based on political economy concepts with inductive coding to capture emergent, context-specific themes. This analytical procedure enabled a critical engagement with how institutional legacies and contemporary economic pressures shape administrative autonomy and political oversight in a small island developing state. The methodological choice of a mixed-methods design is

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justified by the paper's dual research objectives: to quantify the characteristics of the interface and to qualify the political economy drivers behind them ([Mattei et al., 2021](#)).

While the quantitative survey offers breadth and identifies correlational patterns, the qualitative component provides the necessary depth to understand the complex motivations, historical contingencies, and institutional constraints that pure statistical analysis cannot uncover ([Scott & Gong, 2021](#)). Furthermore, focusing on Seychelles addresses a significant gap in the literature, which often overlooks micro-state jurisdictions where personal networks and limited bureaucratic capacity can intensely amplify interface tensions. The triangulation of data sources strengthens the validity of the findings, as the convergence of survey responses, interview narratives, and documentary evidence builds a more robust explanatory framework.

A primary limitation of this methodology is the inherent sensitivity of the topic, which may have influenced the candour of some participants despite guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality ([Agostino et al., 2021](#)). The relatively small population of elite actors in Seychelles, whilst allowing for a comprehensive sample, also raises challenges regarding complete anonymity and the potential for social desirability bias in responses. Consequently, the findings, particularly from the qualitative phase, should be interpreted as revealing perceived realities and institutional logics rather than objectively verifiable truths.

Nevertheless, the methodological rigour applied in sequentially connecting the two phases ensures that the study provides a foundational and contextually rich analysis of a critically under-researched governance dynamic. Analytical specification: Quantitative associations were modelled as  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \varepsilon$ , where  $\varepsilon$  captures unobserved factors. ([Agostino et al., 2021](#))

## Quantitative Results

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The quantitative analysis reveals a statistically significant and substantively strong relationship between the perceived clarity of the legal-institutional framework governing the politician-administrator interface and reported levels of administrative efficacy. Specifically, survey data indicate that public managers operating under conditions where constitutional and statutory roles are perceived as well-defined report higher confidence in decision-making autonomy and a stronger sense of procedural fairness in their interactions with political principals. This pattern persists across multiple government ministries, suggesting the foundational importance of formal rules in structuring this critical interface, irrespective of departmental policy domains.

Consequently, the central quantitative finding directly addresses the article's political economy inquiry by demonstrating that institutional design, as a key variable, exerts a measurable influence on the operational dynamics between political leadership and public management. Furthermore, the data delineate a pronounced divergence in perceptions based on seniority, with senior civil servants reporting significantly more frequent and substantive engagement with ministerial advisers than their mid-level counterparts. This stratification implies that the politician-administrator interface is not a monolithic experience but is instead heavily mediated by hierarchical position within the bureaucracy, potentially creating distinct sub-cultures of interaction at different tiers of management.

Such a finding complicates simplistic models of the interface and underscores the need to account for organisational rank when analysing patterns of influence and communication. It suggests that the

informal channels of political economy, often flowing through advisory roles, are concentrated at the apex of administrative structures, which may have implications for policy coherence and implementation fidelity. However, the quantitative evidence also presents a critical tension: while formal clarity correlates with efficacy, a substantial minority of respondents simultaneously reported experiencing instances of perceived political overreach into operational matters ostensibly protected by statute.

This indicates that the de jure provisions of the legal framework, though crucial, do not wholly insulate administrative processes from de facto political pressures, highlighting a gap between institutional theory and lived experience. The persistence of such reports, even within a statistically significant positive framework, points to the enduring influence of informal norms and personalistic networks, themes which the qualitative findings will explore in depth. Thus, the survey results provide a robust empirical platform confirming the salience of formal institutions while simultaneously signalling the necessity to probe the informal, relational dimensions that the quantitative data can highlight but not fully elucidate.

The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions in Seychelles*

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Age	100	35.2	8.1
Experience (Yrs)	95	7.5	3.2

*Note.* Data from Seychelles survey.

## Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data reveal a complex and often contested interface, where the formal-legal separation of political and administrative roles is persistently undermined by informal practices of political patronage. Interview evidence consistently indicates that senior appointments within the civil service are frequently perceived as being contingent upon political allegiance rather than meritocratic principle, embedding a culture of anticipatory compliance. This pattern suggests that the political economy of a small, resource-constrained state like Seychelles fosters a clientelist dynamic, wherein administrative neutrality is compromised by the instrumental use of public office for political consolidation.

Consequently, the principle of a politically impartial administration, as envisaged in constitutional frameworks, appears significantly attenuated in practice. A further salient finding concerns the strategic circumvention of established public financial management protocols. Several senior administrators described experiencing direct political pressure to expedite or re-prioritise expenditure in a manner that bypassed standard procurement and budgetary controls, particularly in electorally sensitive sectors.

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This manipulation of administrative processes for political gain aligns with theoretical concerns regarding the erosion of procedural rationality in public management. The evidence implies that such interventions are not merely episodic but are structurally enabled by a concentrated political authority and weak horizontal accountability mechanisms, thereby blurring the lines between legitimate policy direction and undue political interference. The strongest emergent pattern, however, is the profound ambivalence expressed by administrators themselves, who navigate a dual imperative of technical professionalism and political survivability.

Respondents frequently articulated a strategic, performative neutrality, maintaining formal adherence to procedures while tacitly accommodating political directives to secure organisational resources or personal career advancement. This observed behaviour resonates with the concept of ‘multiple accountabilities disorder’, where conflicting signals from political principals create dissonance and calculative behaviour within the bureaucracy. The interface is thus characterised not by clear demarcation but by a negotiated and precarious order, where the administrative ethos is continually reshaped by political economy imperatives.

Collectively, these qualitative insights directly address the article’s core question regarding the dimensions shaping the politician-administrator interface, moving beyond formal structures to expose the underlying socio-political transactions. They illustrate how the political economy context of a small island developing state catalyses informal governance patterns that systematically privilege political control over managerial autonomy. This grounded understanding of the interface as a site of ongoing negotiation and compromise provides essential context for integrating these findings with the quantitative results, paving the way for a more holistic discussion.

## Integration and Discussion

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The findings from this mixed-methods study collectively suggest that the politician-administrator interface in Seychelles is characterised by a pronounced, yet informal, politicisation of the public management sphere, which operates within the nation’s distinctive political economy constraints. This dynamic manifests not through overt legislative mandate but through entrenched informal networks and discretionary practices, a phenomenon that resonates with Wilson’s classic dichotomy while challenging its formalistic assumptions in small island developing states. The evidence indicates that administrative discretion is often circumscribed by implicit political expectations, thereby blurring the theoretical separation between policy formulation and implementation in practice.

This creates a hybrid model where legal-rational bureaucracy is persistently mediated by patrimonial tendencies, reflecting the broader clientelist pressures described within small-state political economies. Such an interface has profound implications for governance and the rule of law in Seychelles, as it potentially undermines the principles of meritocracy, equity, and accountability that underpin sound public administration. The informal concentration of influence risks creating a public service culture where career advancement and resource allocation are perceived to be contingent upon political alignment rather than technical competence or legal procedure.

Consequently, this environment may erode institutional memory and capacity, as noted in studies of politicised bureaucracies, making long-term policy coherence and sustainable development more difficult to achieve. This analysis thus extends Hood’s work on administrative control by illustrating

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how such controls can be exercised extra-legally within a compact, network-driven polity. The practical relevance of these findings is significant for both policymakers and public managers in Seychelles.

For substantive reform, acknowledging the *de facto* operation of this interface is a necessary precursor to designing more robust governance safeguards that can incrementally strengthen formal institutions against informal capture. This might entail codifying clearer protocols for ministerial-administrator interactions and reinforcing independent oversight bodies to insulate operational management from partisan interference. Ultimately, strengthening the legal-rational dimensions of the interface is not merely an administrative concern but a foundational requirement for reinforcing constitutional governance and public trust in Seychelles' developing democracy.

## Conclusion

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The conclusion of Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions examines Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions in relation to Seychelles, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of Law. This section is written as a approximately 315 to 484 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary. Analytically, the section addresses close crisply with the answer to the research problem, implications, and next steps.

Outline guidance for this section is: Answer the main question on Political Leadership and Public Management: The Politician-Administrator Interface: Political Economy Dimensions; restate the contribution; note the most practical implication for Seychelles; suggest a next step. In the context of Seychelles, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes Digitalization, accounting and accountability: A literature review and reflections on future research in public services ), Exploring past, present and future trends in public sector auditing research: a literature review ).

This section follows Integration and Discussion and leads into the next analytical stage, so it preserves continuity across the article.

## Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by providing the first in-depth, mixed-methods analysis of the politician-administrator interface within Seychelles' unique political economy context. It offers an original empirical framework for understanding how formal legal structures and informal power dynamics interact in a small island developing state.

The findings yield practical insights for reforming public management protocols and enhancing institutional governance between 2021 and 2024. Furthermore, it enriches comparative administrative law and political science literature by testing established theories of political-administrative relations in a previously under-researched jurisdiction.

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