

Environmental policies and New Public Management: What reality and what relationship in Algeria?

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Abstract:

This contribution traces the evolution of the operationalization of the New Public Management through the prism of the environmental dimension. Our article therefore deals with the relationship between environmental policies and the New Public Management (NPM) in Algeria. Thus, the aim of this article is twofold: to provide an overview of the New Public Management and environmental policies in Algeria and to highlight the effects of the New Public Management on environmental policies. We have opted for a fundamental methodology based on documentary research and a review of the literature on the subject. Our study shows that, while the Algerian government has taken steps to protect the environment, much remains to be done to promote sustainable development in society. To achieve this, it is crucial to adopt responsible and sustainable public management, involve the population in decision-making and put in place transparent and accountable practices.

Keywords: Algeria, Environment, New Public Management (NMP), Environmental policies, Public sector.

Jel Classification Codes : H89, L38, O44, Q5

ملخص:

تتبع هذه المساهمة تطور تفعيل الإدارة العامة الجديدة من خلال منظور البعد البيئي. لذلك تتناول مقالتنا العلاقة بين السياسات البيئية والإدارة العامة الجديدة (NPM) في الجزائر. وبالتالي، فإن الهدف من هذه المقالة ذو شقين: تقديم لمحة عامة عن الإدارة العامة الجديدة والسياسات البيئية في الجزائر وتسلط الضوء على آثار الإدارة العامة الجديدة على السياسات البيئية. لقد اخترنا منهجية أساسية تعتمد على البحث الوثائقي ومراجعة الأدبيات حول هذا الموضوع. تظهر دراستنا أنه بينما اتخذت الحكومة الجزائرية خطوات لحماية البيئة، لا يزال هناك الكثير الذي يتعين القيام به لتعزيز التنمية المستدامة في المجتمع. لتحقيق ذلك، من الضروري اعتماد إدارة عامة مسؤولة ومستدامة، وإشراك السكان في صنع القرار ووضع ممارسات شفافة وخاضعة للمساءلة.

الكلمات المفتاح: الجزائر، بيئة، إدارة عامة جديدة (NMP)، سياسات بيئية، قطاع عام.

تصنيف JEL: H89، L38، O44، Q58

I. Introduction:

Neo-managerial policies, commonly referred to as New Public Management (NPM), are a relatively recent development, dating back to the early 1980s. NPM emerged as the new face of public management and as a salvation for states affected by the economic crisis of the 1970s-1980s. Governments undertook numerous reforms to modernize public organizations and to provide their services more efficiently and effectively, using tools traditionally used in private enterprises (such as retrospective, integrated and/or process-based management). Barzelay (2001).

Following the United Nations Conferences on the Environment and Sustainable Development (Stockholm in 1972, Rio in 1992, and Rio+20 in 2012) and the emergence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the 1970s, environmental issues were brought to the fore (climate change, sustainable management of natural resources, etc.). Thus, several environmental actions and policies have been implemented by governments.

It goes without saying that these two policies have emerged simultaneously and aspire to a form of transversal and unparalleled modernization. Indeed, New Public Management policies aim to transform the foundations and rules of operation of public administration. While environmental policies aim to make sectorial policies more environmentally and more ecological.

Both policies are seen as the result of a deeper understanding of socio-economic and organizational problems and a more rational and adaptable management approach to these issues. The generic nature of these two policies makes their analysis more complex. For this reason, this article aims to examine the relationship between the New Public Management and environmental policies by reviewing the New Public Management and environmental policies in Algeria and highlighting the NPM's effects on environmental policies.

Therefore, the main question of our contribution is as follows: what is the nature of the relationship between New Public Management (NPM) and environmental policies in Algeria? To answer this question, we have chosen to conduct a literature review on the subject. Therefore, our contribution is divided into four parts: A retrospective on the NPM, its relationship with environmental policies, a literature review on the NPM, and the environmental policies undertaken in Algeria. Finally, the reality of the changes brought to environmental policies by the NPM in Algeria.

II. The New Public Management:

Born in the 1970s and 1980s in several Anglo-Saxon countries (Australia, New Zealand, the USA and the United Kingdom) and arising from a crisis context, the New Public Management (NPM) or New Public Governance (NPG) emerged as awareness on the part of states concerned about themselves and the effectiveness and efficiency of their actions.

NPM/NPG is conventionally identified as a concept aimed to continuously improve the public sector by introducing concepts, techniques, and values borrowed from the private business world (Pollit & Bouchaert, 2011; Barone & al, 2018; Pesqueux, 2020). However, the multiplicity of forms it can take and the heterogeneous elements that make it up make this concept somewhat ambiguous and difficult to define or grasp. Some authors describe it as a "doctrinal puzzle" (Bezes, 2009).

Behind this ambiguity, standard principles build this managerial ideology (Hood, 1995) which is characterized, among other things, by: the promotion of management techniques from the private sector to replace those traditionally used in public administration; a central government that should focus on its regulatory functions and entrust its operational implementation missions of public policies to subcontractors or outsourcing; an efficiency of public spending sought through performance incentive and control mechanism; or the putting into the competition of individuals, services or organizations just to improve their performance evaluated by quantitative indicators. (Hood, 2011)

The common thread of the NPM is thus to establish a process of economizing on bureaucracy and rationalizing public spending, reflecting the state's preoccupation with itself (Bezes, 2012).

Nevertheless, taking the definition proposed by Pesqueux (2020): "talking about NPG is to indicate a shift away from public management (...) to emphasize programming, coordination, contracting and the evaluation of decisions (ex-ante and ex-post). More concretely, it is characterized by the implementation of activity indicators, budgetary and accounting management tools, and cost measurement tools in order to respond to three logics: socio-economic effectiveness/efficiency, service quality and management effectiveness and efficiency.

The NPM is therefore seen as a political and economic framework serving as a torch for the modernization of public services and implementation plan of a managerial approach over a

regulatory approach in order to streamline and loosen administrative procedures, to break with rigidity and centralization of decisions and set up control mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability of public services.

Although, there is no consensus on the definition of NPM, it can be identified as a new approach that overturns traditional and bureaucratic modes of public management and aimed to make it efficient and effective, dynamic and innovative, accountable, transparent and participative. Its deployment requires deep changes, ranging from improved planning and budgeting to managing human resources and providing public services. Bryson & al (2018)

Concerning the Algerian case, the NPM is still in its embryonic stage. The Algerian public sector has been accused a morose adaptation to the new realities. Indeed, it has long been considered inert, which contrasts with the bustle of new experiences internationally and political and economic reforms nationally. Transforming this procrastination into an opportunity to shake up the classic process of public management is a major challenge that Algeria should rise just to relaunch its sustainable development (Bekhechi-chouikhi & Benmansour, 2021).

Algerian public management is criticized for its weakness of efficiency, rigidity, and difficulty involving citizens in the decision-making processes, hindering its imperative modernization. The current situation, with weak growth, strong competition, an increasing high rate of unemployment, and a precarious labor market, strengthens the need to innovate and adaption to political, economic and especially social and societal requirements.

The NPM, therefore seems to be a salvation for public management in Algeria. Nevertheless, its success depends on awareness of the delay, integration of citizens in the decision-making process and increased willingness to change, which remains at the discretion of political actors. For a successful administrative reform, according to Cannac & Trosa (2007), it is essential to have a strong commitment from those in charge, effective steering, a clear choice for dialogue and sharing, effective management of time and reform, full integration of reform into actions and sufficient means. (World Bank. 2019)

III. The New Public Management and environmental policies: what a relationship?

Studies have been conducted to examine the links between NPM and environmental policies. In recent years, political ecology has become a key field in environmental studies, particularly in Anglo-American geography and anthropology. It is primarily focuses on power relations in environmental management and how environmental damage, as well as environmental policies, have specific effects on the distribution of costs and benefits between different social groups. Political ecology takes a critical stance towards dominant discourses and actors, as well as the overall effects of neoliberalism. In this perspective, the notion of green neoliberalism has been developed to describe the neoliberal redefinition of natural resource management patterns, characterized by privatization, liberalization, commodification and outsourcing, as well as the re-regulation of the public sector. This calls into question the assumption of state withdrawal in the neoliberal era. (Barone & al, 2018)

In contrast to political ecology, political science has been interested in how environmental policies have been influenced by ecological modernization, which developed in public action in the 1980s. This modernization is based on rational construction that considers environmental preservation to be compatible with economic growth, or even an economic opportunity. This technical and economic approach to environmental issues has had the effect of depoliticizing them, in line with the neo-managerial logic. Dryzek (1997) has identified an “administrative rationalism” that gave experts a leading role in solving environmental problems. Luke T (1999) proposed the concept of “green governmentality” to describe the use of environmental knowledge in the service of new power over people. Ecological modernization would require a consensual and interventionist style of intervention, which explains why some countries, such as Britain (1980), have been reluctant to adopt this public policy discourse (Carter, 2007).

Since the Rio conference in 1992, the concept of sustainable development has become widespread, becoming a common concept in management. Nevertheless, this multi-faceted emphasis is interpreted differently by each actor, leading to a dilution of the environmental dimension in the economic one.

Environmental standards are often seen as too protectionist, and sustainable development has become a showcase for, or even a synonym of, ecological modernization in its strong reflexive version. In this perspective, the weak version is merely a rescue operation for a capitalist economy disrupted by ecological crises. Although this discourse has led to an acculturation of the administrative elites responsible for environmental issues, it has not really changed the domination relations between the environmental and economic administration.

Dealing with the relationship between NPM and environmental policies comes back to analyzing the perspectives of political ecology and political science. Political ecology analyzes power relations in environmental management, questioning the effects of neoliberalism on natural resource management. Political science focuses on the effects of neoliberalism and NPM on environmental policies.

IV. Retrospective on environmental policies in Algeria:

After Algeria's independence, the focus was on asserting national sovereignty and growing the public sector through the Algerianization of its administration. Algeria had looked at the role, functioning and relationship between society and the public sector economy. Indeed, the Algerian economic model, inspired by the work of De Bernis (1971), promoted an independent and prosperous economy based on state capitalism. This model advocated economic independence based on the development of industrial sectors that impact on other sectors (services, agriculture, etc.) and the creation of development poles, supervised by the state, based on heavy industries producing inputs for upstream and downstream production processes. It aimed to spread the effects of industrialization throughout the economy. This process should lead to economic and social restructuring through increased labor productivity with new machinery, leading to economic change (Bekhechi-chouikhi & Benmansour, 2021; Ouchene & Moroncini, 2018; Benachenhou 1980-2005).

The model promoted an independent and prosperous economy base on state capitalism, with industries tightly controlled by the state. It aimed to spur industrialization and spread its benefits throughout the economy, enabling economic and social restructuring. The goal was greater efficiency, productivity and prosperity through mechanization and technological change led by state-supervised industrial development.

It promoted an unbalanced growth aimed at building a diversified productive system by mobilizing most of the financial resources generated by the excessive exploitation of natural resources. The choice of this model led to a focus on creating an industrial apparatus with two growth poles, steel industry and hydrocarbons, at the expense of other sectors such as agriculture, services and tourism.

However, this strategy has had the opposite effects to those expected in terms of annual results and has neglected other economic sectors with growth potential. In addition, the establishment of industrial complexes resulted in high capital concentration and strong technological dependence on foreign countries, reduced interest in processing industries and agriculture, and negative environmental impacts.

For a long time, Algerian political leaders neglected the environmental dimension, considering that economic development was the priority. For them, the environmental issue was not a priority for developing countries. This attitude partly explains why polluting factors were set up on Algerian territory, considered as a means of achieving tangible production objectives. This policy is also explained by the fear of slowing down the country's prosperity, and by doubts about the legitimacy of the environmental concerns of developed countries. For Algerian officials, economic catch-up must prevail over the fight against environmental degradation. Leaders feared that environmental preservation measures would become non-tariff barriers to exports of Algerian products to developed countries. For Algerian politicians, environmental impact is not seen as an inevitable negative consequence of economic development, but rather as a neutral phenomenon (Ouchene & Moroncini, 2018).

Until the mid-1980s, environmental protection was considered a secondary issue in Algeria's economic policy. It was perceived as a set of unlimited natural resources subordinated to the needs of economic activity. However, according to the classical approach between economic and environmental issues, ecological pressures were perceived as constraints and costs that could threaten the sustainability of organizations (Boiral, 2004).

However, with the ecological crisis affecting the country and the international excitement, Algeria has shown a willing spirit in all international negotiations and decision-making related to environmental issues- the fight against desertification, climate change issues, biodiversity protection and conservation, etc. (Tedjani, 2021). Algerian decision-makers have started to give the environment a more important place in the decision-making mechanism. They have become aware of the urgency of the situation and the need to integrate environmental protection into productive activities. Thus, environmental awareness in Algeria began with the adoption of the framework law no 83-033 in 1983, the first important text governing environmental protection in the country (Ouchene & Moroncini, 2018).

From the 1990s onwards, Algeria gradually began to equip itself with more tools. Institutional, legislative and even constitutional structures put environmental and sustainable

development issues at the forefront of governance. The High Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development was created in 1994 following the recommendations of the Rio Conference (1992), constituting the first very important step towards sustainable development. (Tedjani, 2021).

The creation of a ministry specifically dedicated to environmental preservation in 2000, followed a year later by the publication of the first national report on the state and future of the environment and the first National Environmental and Sustainable Development Action Plan, were two landmark events that gave more substance and coherence to this commitment. In this way, Algeria has conclusively broken with a long political tradition that had relegated the environment to the status of marginalized sector. Henceforth, the environmental issues are no longer perceived as a fragmented political subject form and minor one in substance (Tedjani, 2021).

In 2003, Algeria adopted new environmental legislation (Law 03-10) based on the principles of sustainable development. Unfortunately, the ecological balance sheet of the country is far from satisfactory. Land resources are fragile, erosion and desertification are progressing rapidly, coastal areas are deteriorating, water resources are insufficient in quality and quantity, industrial and urban pollution is uncontrolled and the living environment of citizens is deteriorating... All these environmental indicators are in the red, the situation is critical and the environmental challenges are huge.

Since 2004, Algeria has implemented a major risk prevention policy by defining 15 natural and technological hazards as well as prevention and emergency response procedures. However, 16 years after the entry into force of this law, only 4 executive decrees have been promulgated out of a total of 30 which were to define the prevention methods for all the risks set out in this law. (APS, 2020).

The Algerian Constitution will grant an important place to respect the environment from 2016. Nevertheless, the Algerian government regularly announces environmentally sensitive projects (exploitation of shale gas, development of industrial agriculture in the Sahara and mining exploitation). These sectors are considered essential for short and medium-term development in Algeria. This situation reflects an apparent conflict between environmental protection and economic growth (Belhadj, 2020).

The political will to fight climate change and preserve biodiversity is manifested through the ratification of the Paris Agreement and the establishment of the National Climate Plan. In 2017, Algeria adopted the National Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production to ensure the sustainability of its economic model and protect its natural resources. By adopting sustainable consumption practices and more environmentally friendly production, it implicitly contributes to improving public health and the well-being of citizens. (AND, 2020).

It should be recalled that the evolution of environmental policies in Algeria was characterized by a progressive shift from a critical review of the economy to a rationalization of environmental issues between the 1970s and 2000. A Ministry of the Environment has been created since the early 1970s, initially as a mission organization (National Environment Committee (CNE) in 1974), before gradually becoming a classical ministerial structure in 2017 (Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energy). This evolution was marked by an intensification of the internationalization of environmental policies to the extent that Algerian environmental regulations result from international directives and regulations. Over time, public action mechanisms have been superimposed, with each layer reflecting a particular period in the history of environmental policies, with its political priorities and instrumental innovations (Lascoumes, 2008, Barone & al, 2018)

Algeria has therefore invested heavily in infrastructure to protect the environment since the 2000s, such as dams, wastewater treatment plants, technical landfill centers and controlled landfills. Human resources have also been strengthened and environmental policies have been put in place, such as ecological taxation and environmental performance contracts. However, human activities continue to negatively affect the state and quality of the environment in Algeria (MATE, 2019).

V. New Public Management (NMP) and Environmental Policies in Algeria: what reality?

In Algeria, environmental policies are not confined to a single sector of public action, but involve several sectors such as land use planning, agriculture, energy, etc. Consequently, various administrative entities are involved, in particular the Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energies, its decentralized services and the environmental departments of local authorities.

The NPM may therefore not be suitable for the complexity of environmental issues in Algeria, which are often interdependent and involve the coordination of the actions of different actors. Also, environmental policies often require multidisciplinary and participatory approaches, which prove difficult in a management framework focused on performance and cost rationalization.

The last few years have been marked by a rise in concern about climate change and environmental protection in Algeria, as well as by a dichotomy in this field. On the one hand, there is a strong political will, illustrated by a host of plans and strategies for environmental protection and energy transition: New National Strategy for the Development of Renewable Energy for Water-Connected Electricity Generation - Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2011-2030) - New National Energy Efficiency Program (2016-2030) - National Strategy for Environment and Sustainable Development (SNEDD 2019-2035) - National Strategy for Integrated Waste Management (SNEDD) - National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNEDD) National Strategy for Integrated Waste Management 2035 (SNGID-2035) - National Climate Plan (2019) - National Strategy for Ecosystemic Management of Wetlands (2016) - National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity 2016 - 2030 - National Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production 2030 (PNA-MCPD) (AND, 2020). The aim is to move from a gloomy environmental policy to an active and effective one. On the other hand, there is the observation that the proclaimed objectives are still only partially achieved.

Indeed, it is true that Algeria adopted a sustainable development strategy in 2001. However, the implementation of this strategy faces various challenges, starting with the weakness of the financial means allocated, the failure to exercise public power and the weakness of public opinion regarding environmental protection. It is important to note that Algeria's choice of a quantitative rather than sectorial development strategy since independence has contributed to increasing environmental problems in the country. (Ramade, 2007; Ouchene & Moroncini, 2018). This state of affairs may be a result of the application, even implicit, of the NPM, which leads to an excessive focus on results and quantitative objectives to the detriment of qualitative objectives. In the environmental field, this may result in insufficient consideration of long-term environmental impacts.

In 2018, Algeria is ranked 93^e out of 186 countries in the CAI with a score of 57.18. Its neighbours Tunisia and Morocco scored 62.35 and 63.47 respectively, ranking 62^e and 58^e. Algeria's ranking has dropped from 2016 (83^e place out of 180 countries), with poor environmental performance, resulting in particular from inadequate environmental governance, fragmented regulatory mechanisms, little or poorly coordinated action at the territorial level and limited means to fully exercise public power (IPE, 2018; Ouchene & Moroncini, 2018).

It is clear that the influence of the NPM on environmental policies in Algeria is still mixed. Indeed, the Algerian management of environmental issues suffers from a weakness of understanding of the challenges of sustainability and a high level state involvement, which has a key role in regulation and environmental protection, making it inert in adopting a creative and innovative approach, which should be minimized to promote the emergence of a new and fluid management of environmental issues.

VI. Conclusion:

Environmental degradation in Algeria is a complex problem that cannot be reduced to a conflict between economic growth and environmental preservation. This problem is linked to the country's industrialization process since independence as well as a combination of economic, political and managerial choices. To address it, a new and integrated approach to nature park management is a first necessity to maximize socio-economic benefits and be more efficient and effective.

The promotion of sustainable development is one of the main objectives of the new public management. Governments are indeed called upon to adopt sustainable and responsible practices to ensure long-term economic growth while protecting the environment. In order to establish a sustainable development approach in Algeria, it is imperative to initiate reforms integrating environmental transition with the economic one. It goes without saying that the Algerian state has taken initiatives in this area in recent years. Nevertheless, it is clear that much remains to be done

to anchor the principles of sustainable development in behavior at all levels of society. To achieve this, it is essential to resort to responsible and sustainable public management, involving the population in the decision-making process and adopting transparent and responsible practices.

Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of balancing economic development and environmental preservation. In order to achieve this balance, a strategy of harmonization between the economic, humanitarian and legislative aspects of development, requiring an intensification of human training, must be implemented. In Algeria, for the environmental issues to cease to be a theoretical concept, it is crucial that the administrative apparatus be organized; skills be correctly placed; the decision-making chain be well structured; environmental legislation be clear and concretely applied; and massive awareness-raising of the population on environmental protection be undertaken.

Ultimately, the Algerian administration should adopt an organizational scheme favoring quality over quantity and allowing better dissemination of information in the field, openness to innovation and a more fluid management of environmental issues.

It should be recalled that even though the NPM can make an excellent contribution in some areas of public management, its application to environmental policies should be considered with caution in order to take into account the specificities of environmental issues. Indeed, the implementation of the NPM implies a reduction in the involvement of the state and a focus on achieving short-term objectives and quantitative results. This can be problematic in the case of environmental policies, as the state has a crucial role in regulating and protecting the environment and the results of the policies undertaken can extend over the long term and include qualitative dimensions (public health, quality of life, social equity, etc.).

Finally, key issues regarding Algeria's environmental governance include:

- Environmental degradation resulting from unsustainable economic and political choices since independence, requiring integrated policy reforms for transition. But progress is still needed to anchor sustainable practices.
- Current management approaches still struggle to achieve a balance between economic growth priorities and environmental protection in a nuanced, responsible manner. Policies weakness coordination, means and public involvement necessary for real impact.
- The New Public Management (NPM) pursues short-term results and quantitative efficiency **but** its application to the environmental policy may undermine the state's crucial regulatory and prospective role or long-term, qualitative dimensions that environmental issues entail.
- Key improvements needed are: reorganizing administration to prioritize quality over quantity; enhancing policy coherence, means, skills and transparency; engaging the public through participation and awareness; building a legislative framework with clear standards and intensifying human training on sustainable development.
- Sustainable development requires balancing economic, social, environmental and governance priorities through integrated strategies and innovations suited to Algeria's challenges. But this level of nuance, flexibility and coordination remains limited.
- Environmental issues struggle to become high priorities, despite strategies, due to limited political will, public support, resources and capacity across systems. More is needed to drive real progress.

Algeria requires governance reforms, means and will to pursue a sustainable and responsible approach to environmental management that can achieve balanced development while protecting natural heritage. Policies must become more coherent, nuanced, participatory and impactful to advance sustainable well-being.

The results of our study are in line with those of previous studies on the subject (Barone & al, 2018; Belhadj, 2020; Tedjani, 2021...). The authors put forward two hypotheses to explain why the NPM has not had as much impact in the environmental field. The first hypothesis is that the environment is not an area where administrative bodies dominate. The second is that the long history of environmental public action does not make it as vulnerable as other sectors to the quantification principles associated with the NPM. The authors also point out that politicians find it difficult to assess the effects of the NPM on the environment itself. They therefore suggest that

political ecology could help to take account of ecological issues and the material dimension of public action, and that a more systematic dialogue between political ecology and political science could improve understanding of the environmental effects of public action processes in Algeria as in other countries.

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