

The Limits of Public Policy Evaluation Conducted by the Algerian General Inspection of Finance (GIF)



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Abstract

This article examines the public policy evaluation practices of the Algerian General Inspection of Finance (GIF) under Executive Decree No. 08-272 of 2008, focusing on the central question: What obstacles limit the GIF's institutional and technical performance in evaluating public policies? The study argues that although the GIF benefits from formal institutional authority, its effectiveness is constrained by the absence of standardized procedures and adequate methodological frameworks.

Using a descriptive and analytical approach, the research reviews regulatory texts, official reports, and relevant literature, noting that the lack of individual data and quantitative analysis is due to confidentiality requirements governing inspectors and their reports. The findings show that evaluation within the GIF remains weakly institutionalized and only marginally integrated into public decision-making. They confirm that shortcomings arise mainly from systemic non-standardization rather than technical limitations. The study concludes that the GIF should move beyond its traditional auditing role by diversifying its expertise, adopting a multidisciplinary approach, strengthening internal capacities, and ensuring a clear separation between evaluations and auditing functions to improve public policy evaluation in Algeria.

Keywords

Public Policies Evaluations;
Audit;
Public Governance;
Institutionalization;
General inspection of Finance.

الكلمات المفتاحية

تقييم السياسات العمومية ؛
التدقيق ؛
الحوكمة العمومية ؛
المأسسة ؛
المفتشية العامة للمالية.

حدود تقييم السياسات العمومية الذي تجريه المفتشية العامة للمالية في الجزائر ملخص

يحلل المقال ممارسات تقييم السياسات العمومية التي تجريها المفتشية العامة للمالية الجزائرية (GIF) بموجب المرسوم التنفيذي رقم 272-08 لسنة 2008، في إطار التساؤل التالي: ما هي العوائق التي تحد من الأداء المؤسسي والتقني للمفتشية العامة للمالية في مجال تقييم السياسات العمومية؟ تستند الدراسة إلى فرضية مفادها أنه رغم امتلاك المفتشية العامة للمالية لمزايا مؤسسية نظرية، فإنها تواجه فجوات جوهرية بسبب غياب التوحيد والأطر المنهجية الكافية. تم استخدام منهج وصفي تحليلي يفحص الأطر التنظيمية والتقارير والأدبيات، وقد تم تبرير غياب البيانات الفردية والمناهج الكمية بالتزامات السرية المفروضة على المفتشين وعلى تقاريرهم. توصلت الدراسة إلى أن التقييم يبقى ضعيفاً مؤسسياً وغير مدمج بشكل كافٍ في عمليات صنع القرار العمومي. كما تؤكد النتائج الفرضية الموضوعة، مما يدل على أن النقصات تتبع من نقص منهجي في التوحيد بدلا من أن تكون إخفاقات تقنية بحتة. ينبغي للمفتشية العامة للمالية تجاوز دورها التقليدي في التدقيق، بتنويع كفاءاتها، وتبني نهج شامل متعدد التخصصات. يعتبر الفصل الواضح بين أنشطة التقييم ووظائف التدقيق، وتعزيز القدرات الداخلية، وتطوير الوعي المؤسسي من الأسس التي على المفتشية العامة للمالية في الجزائر أن تستنير بها.

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I- Introduction :

In recent years, Algeria has experienced a growing awareness of the need to institutionalize the evaluation of public policies as a tool for governance and performance enhancement. Within this context, the General inspection of Finance (GIF), the supreme oversight body responsible for ensuring the regularity and efficiency of public fund management, was entrusted by Executive Decree No. 08-272 of 2008 with the mission of assessing the conditions under which public policies are implemented.

This mandate theoretically positions the GIF as a strategic and central actor within the national evaluation framework. However, despite this explicit legal framework and institutional responsibility, the practice of evaluation remains embryonic, constrained by significant technical and organizational limitations. This situation highlights a gap between stated ambitions and operational reality, leading to the following central question:

What are the obstacles that limit the institutional and technical performance of the GIF in the field of public policy evaluation?

This question invites an examination not only of the methodological quality of the evaluations conducted by the GIF but also of its institutional environment, internal capacities, and the degree of standardization of its evaluative approach.

The research is based on the hypothesis that, although the GIF benefits from institutional assets and a clearly defined legal framework, its evaluation practices suffer from structural weaknesses resulting from a lack of standardization, appropriate methodologies, and limited institutionalization of the evaluative process.

Adopting a descriptive and analytical approach, the study relies on:

- A critical examination of the normative and regulatory frameworks governing the GIF's evaluative role;
- An analysis of institutional reports and syntheses related to control and evaluation practices;
- An in-depth review of the scientific literature dedicated to public policy evaluation and public sector performance.

The absence of individual data and the deliberate exclusion of quantitative approaches or case studies are justified by the legal and professional confidentiality obligations imposed on inspectors under the current regulations. The reports produced by the IGF, often linked to state decisions or sensitive cases, largely remain non-public.

This analytical approach is structured around three complementary dimensions:

- The context and institutional environment of the evaluative function within the GIF;
- The methodological, technical, and structural limitations of its current practices;
- Recommendations aimed at improving the institutionalization and professionalization of evaluation within the GIF.

The analysis thus seeks to characterize existing practices, identify the main obstacles hindering their effectiveness, assess the degree of alignment of these practices with international scientific standards, and propose structural improvements likely to strengthen the culture of performance and accountability within the Algerian public sector.

This research stands out for its critical and contextualized approach to the evaluative function within the GIF. Unlike previous works that have focused primarily on audit or control missions, it highlights the structural and methodological challenges that hinder the consolidation of a genuine evaluation culture in the public sector. By relying on a systemic analysis of regulatory texts and institutional practices, it helps fill an empirical and conceptual gap in Algerian literature on financial governance and public evaluation. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the reflection on the modernization of public action and the integration of evaluation as a strategic tool for steering and institutional performance.

II- Public policies' evaluation: some reflections and controversies:

The emergence of institutions, governance and especially the audit and the public policies evaluation, as a major development issue has led to the multiplication of evaluation methods. Evaluations of public policies are essential for the political power, to be able to make choices and evaluate the public systems effectiveness. According to Brunetière (2003: 967-976), this is a process that consists of comparing the results with the objectives and explaining the differences. The findings are meant to fuel reforms and regulate political beliefs. According to Perret (2014: 128), the public policies' evaluation is in the bottom of any State reform reasoning. He adds that evaluation must go beyond the simple measurement of policies costs and effects, aiming to illuminate the issues through an iterative and permanent apprehension between the politico-institutional analysis, the methodological reflection and even the epistemological one.

Michel Rocard, former French Prime Minister, based on a report by Patrick Viveret, mentioned in his circular of February 23, 1989 relating to the renewal of public service, a duty of evaluation. Indeed, no one could claim that he can manage public activities without implementing an evaluation methodology, by which the subsequent management actions are sanctioned, and the future management actions are supported. However, the question of the evaluation tools choice, undoubtedly, remains inextricable because of the disastrous ambiguity that floats around public products. Admitting France's backwardness in the public policies' evaluation, Chauvière (2003: 953-966) considers that this matter is inevitable and almost to be religious, and that almost everything must be evaluated. The Evaluation practices are not set in stone, and research is exploring new avenues to improve the evaluations quality and their processes. But these practices, which belong to a discipline that seeks itself, are scattered, not very visible and thankless. The knowledge produced by these evaluations is poorly capitalized, in the absence of a recognized academic discipline.

We are entitled, to wonder if there is no a lack of thought in the public policies evaluation. Indeed, for about two decades, the concepts have been blurred, and the words, the standards and even the paradigms have a meaning for the one and for the other. The responses that exist in Algeria are abundant; but likely, no systemic and substantive reflection calling for coordination to identify a project, a meaning for the evaluation of today and tomorrow. The number of academics specializing in the subject is embryonic; these are few or even non-existent. Researchers, working on the evaluation, are scattered across several disciplines. The inevitably transdisciplinary nature of the knowledge, required by the evaluations, substantially alters the long-term commitment of researchers. Moreover, it seems essential that take shape in Algeria a discipline that, in itself, deals with this branch in wandering, which is everywhere and ultimately nowhere.

The systemic and complex multidimensional nature of the public policies evaluation requires theorists to spread the discipline in order to have it accepted by public decision-makers, to create a repository and standardization. Previously ignored by public managers, it has had to travel a long road to establish itself as a discipline, in its own right, in certain developed countries.

Evaluation is closely linked to budgetary operations. This is the reason why it has become a by-product of the budgetary choices rationalization, which mainly concerns the cost of public programs, with an extension, aimed to measure public spending results and effects. Moreover, evaluation is becoming a citizen and parliamentary concern, in addition to a natural administrative concern. Even, the control bodies empowered to play the cop are being oriented towards the inexorable evaluation. Nevertheless, judging a public policy is an extremely complicated undertaking, because standards and mechanical approaches alone are, in no way, sufficient to establish the complex reality made by multidimensional and multidisciplinary aspects.

The public policy effects question arouses a major interest. Because of the relevant information lack or the detectable misinformation, their exhaustive combing considered as an impossible mission. In addition, the maximum effect identification would risk drowning out the main effects and culminating the harmless effects. Public policies are often poorly targeted, due to the prior analysis and sufficient reflection lack. As well as, the effects can also overwhelm the objectives. In this context, it would be interesting to understand the windfall effects, which enjoy a certain tolerance, and bias the final beneficiaries, because the public interventions often generate them. A significant evaluation work must be carried out to ensure that the devices reach their target and they are alone. (Migaud: 849-858)

At the technical level, the public policies evaluation is a difficult exercise. According to the economic analysis council (2013:1-12), this difficulty is linked to the pitfalls that threaten the evaluator, as the question of the correlation between a policy and its results, coming up against the external factors interference, and as the effects multiplicity, in the same field of public action or in different fields. It is also interesting to know that the obtained result is not the result of an external event or of any fate, while it is the exclusive public policy fruit. This last situation would risk complications if there were an interference of the public policy in the public policy under evaluation. Public policy must be evaluated in a systemic and global way, in a relational context that takes into consideration the actors networks, interdependencies and coordination. Through this network approach, the evaluation of public policies would find certain legitimacy, because it will be an evaluation, produced for all the actors to approximate opinions and track down bottlenecks. The proposals, resulting from the evaluation reports arouse sometimes violent and virulent reactions, and substantially alter their implementation. According to Brunetière (2003: 967-976), In the light of the public policies success, all the actors are supposed to construct the sense of the action have to be taken, taking into account the diversity of the value scales that incorporate the actors.

Some guesswork remains, because evaluation makes logical and natural use of techniques and tools that are widely used in research generally and in monitoring and auditing in particular. However, it should be noted that evaluation is separate from control and audit, which refer to internal standards. The researcher credibility is based on his autonomy from the policy that presupposes freedom in the process, freedom in the information resources choice and the files should be consulted, as well as the indices have to be calculated and the resulting interpretations.

In another context, it is strongly recommended to make an inventory of the texts to decide on the objectives and the contexts according to which the policy was chosen. Moreover, the age of a public policy imposes the evaluators to expose its evolution, in relation to the decision-making process.

Fouquet (2003: 835-847) offers critical perspectives on the issue of measurement and evaluation criteria, as well as the subtle link between individual and collective evaluation. He further emphasizes the importance of critical perspectives and the need to broaden the scope of evaluation criteria. According to him, this broadening does not represent a dictate.

Migaud (2003: 849-858) emphasizes the need for and usefulness of evaluation, drawing on evaluations carried out by the French Court of Auditors. In this context, he highlights the urgent need for a cultural shift and major challenges such as the question of standards and the definition of evaluation, the positioning of evaluators and their independence and expertise, the question of the resources and time required, and the link between evaluation, appropriation by public policy actors, and political decision-making. According to Baslé (2003: 1017-1027) evaluations are carried out with reference

to quality standards. However, in the evaluative practices reality, evaluators adapt themselves according to contextual difficulties. For this is the reason, the evaluation reports must be taken with a greatest circumspection in questioning them and subjecting them to meta-evaluations, likely to ensure their quality. These meta-evaluations must lead to the evaluative knowledge capitalization. Offredi and Laffut (2003: 1003-1016) examine, in their article, the necessary conditions for well-being, to be an evaluation criterion; and they indirectly question for the political, technical and methodological issues, related to the adoption of such a prospect. Milet and Warin (2003: 991-1002) consider that taking of the public into account in the public policies evaluation is a determining factor in their evaluation. According to the two authors, knowledge of the public characteristics, of their logic in relation to the offer emanating from public policy, their logic of appropriation of the public offer and the consequences, which result for them, is an element of the essential analysis.

In the higher education sector, a study carried out on the university programs and the research organizations by Houssin (2013: 02). Where, he offers an analysis of the difficulties and the ways to address the procedures associated to the evaluation co-production, aiming to increase its quality and legitimacy. But the fact remains that this method does not make it possible to resist the radical criticisms of the evaluation, nor even less to face the expectations related to the demonstration of the evaluation impact on the quality of the activities results. Mottier Lopez (2003: 939-952) dealt with the relationship maintained between the evaluation and the measurement in the educational field, emphasizing the necessary distinction, to be established, between evaluation and measurement. It was highlighted the need of a theoretical framework for thinking about school evaluation with the measurement model as a reference frame, at first, to think about evaluation in cultural and collaborative approach. The contribution of Matyjasik (2003: 907-921) was based on interviews to analyze the genesis of the professionalization process in the evaluation of public policies, affecting the different actors who specialize, formalize practices or create a specific knowledge. A study, carried out by Gwendoline (2003: 895-598), presents the progressive implementation of an evaluation strategy, based on the dissemination of an internal culture at the operational and decision-making levels, and the implementation of a multi-year evaluation plan, established according to departmental issues.

According to Chanut and Cousquer (2003: 20) taken up by Chanut and Bournois (2012: 119-13) the evaluative activity presents itself as a departure from the Weberian tradition. Since its project is justified by the claim to be both useful and generating of scholarly ambiguities, singularities and tensions. Starting from the controversy born at the American Evaluation Society between Patton and Weiss (1988: 5-19) on the evaluative knowledge evaluation. Lynn (1978: 21-81), taken up by Chanut and Bournois, believed that the evaluative approach is dominated by polemics at the expense of exposition and cold analysis. It remains soft and its usefulness remains uncertain. Power (2005: 306p), taken up by Chanut and Bournois, observed that the virtual consent has taken place to go beyond the evaluation instrumental conception, and accept that the learning drawn from the process by the actors are just as important as the results' mobilization of the decision making. In this precise context Guba and Lincoln (1994: 631-649) taken up by Chanut and Bournois believed that the evolution towards more participative forms could attest to a certain maturity in the discipline.

According to Knoepfel (1989: 81-102) taken up by Chanut and Bournois, the Weiss/Patton controversy contains a potential risk of evaluation exploitation from technocrats, for particular interests. According to Leca (1993: 197-208), the current debate is about the possibility of being useful without making any concessions to science, with a symbiosis between the utility logic and the truth logic.

III- The evaluation institutionalization at the face of the political will:

According to Monnier (1992:168), taken up by Varone and Jacob (2004:271-292), the institutionalization of evaluation corresponds to a "routinization" of the use of evaluation within political and administrative bodies and, more broadly, public action networks.

Although, it is a wishes matter which knows a real development, the evaluation according to Perret (2014:103-108) endures a multiple and contested identity, because it has not yet found a stable and recognized place in the scientific and administrative landscape. According to Perret, this question conditions the strategies for institutionalizing evaluation activities. The evaluation is difficult to implement institutionally, because only a drastic standard makes it possible to obtain a plausible and indisputable evaluation. This standard must ensure the independence of evaluators and their access to data, and guarantee time for contradictory discussions in an interdisciplinary framework.

By studying the national and regional histories of the public policies' evaluation institutionalization development, it appears obvious according to Varone and Jacob (2004:271-292) that the evaluation follows various routes, according to the countries by reflecting the institutional weight and cultural specificities.

The institutional progress of the public policies evaluation cannot be traced and understood, without analyzing in depth, the interplay of the actors concerned. According to Varone and Jacob (2004:271-292), the explanation of the different paths of institutionalization is based on the reformers weight and conviction. Bezes (2000:307-332) taken up by Varone and Jacob wonders if the senior civil servants and technocrats, who really hold the expertise power and who substantially

embody a certain political will, believe in the myth of evaluation, in the meaning that they consider its implementation and sustainability possible in a context of political feasibility.

But, in fact the good evaluation is within reach of a government, determined to sort out its policies. The most successful institutionalization initiatives are those that are supported by a clear and determined political will to evaluate public policies. Nevertheless, there is an excessive tendency to blame political will on failures, as if it were a transcendent and paralyzed power, which acts on wills and creates inclinations. Despite this excessive use of political will, there is no doubt that it holds responsibility for poor results. However, it remains, at least, a poorly framed concept, poorly defined and poorly understood in terms of meaning and purposes. By using a political will model, that defines a series of observable and measurable action items; it is possible to clarify the different political will degrees. According to Brinkerhoff (2011: 03-04), developing a political will requires, setting up a change process, spaced out over several stages, allowing the objectives achievement. It is quite clear that there is a strong link between will and ability. Morrissey and Verschoor (2006: 276-291) taken up by Brinkerhoff (2011: 2) observe that the evaluation of decision-makers' ability to implement reforms influence their willingness to make commitments in advance. Thus, which might look like a lack of political will may, in reality, be due to a lack of means. Programs that call for new skills, new mechanisms and procedures, and new resources could hinder the emergence of political will, when potential reformers believe that they do not have sufficient capacity to implement them. According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 30-31) taken up by Brinkerhoff as well as Collins and Higgins (2000: 13) taken up by Brinkerhoff, these reforms require a range of strategic management capacities beyond those which are necessary for a regular program implementation.

For Johnston and Kpundeh (2002: 1-38) taken up by Brinkerhoff, to carry out lasting reforms, it is particularly important, to build alliances of multi-sector support and coordination in order to reach a composite critical mass, made up of public agents, civil society groups, and private companies.

In France, several forms of institutionalization coexist. The evaluation institutionalization is linked to its political nature and to its issues public nature. Also, the OECD points out, it is generally recognized that a certain degree of institutionalization is necessary for evaluations to play their role in public management. An institutional framework is needed to support the good quality evaluations' production and their use. From a more political perspective, the institutionalization of the public policies evaluation must be an opportunity for greater democratic development. If we want to prevent the evaluation from becoming a mere tool of propaganda, it must be subject to mechanisms that guarantee its credibility.

In the development process, Algeria, as a beneficiary from a relative financial settlement of the oil rent, has embarked since 2000, in development programs. Evaluation has become absolutely necessary to distinguish between good and bad spending. The recent constraints on public finances should encourage Algeria to make an unprecedented effort to evaluate its expenditure. Many institutions have been tasked to evaluate their public policies. If we look back to the number of institutions responsible of carrying out the evaluation (CNES, CENEAP, MAEP, DGPP, Court of Auditors, etc.), the question of institutionalization would be trivial. Yet, the evaluation practice has not gone beyond the stage of magic. Several attempts to institute the public policies evaluation have indeed existed, but without having as their purpose, a creation of a permanent mechanism imbued for the State governance. Algeria is not confined to the global wave sidelines of the administrative reform, but it is clear that its reaction is not up to the expected objectives.

An allegation, tirelessly declared by a number of scientists and politico-administrative actors, maintains that in Algeria, the evaluation of public policies remains rare and not very methodical and dispersed, undoubtedly due to an insufficient awareness of its utility. The initial observation is that the institutionalization of evaluation is weak, due to a lack of convergence of actors and the compromise of an evaluation universal definition and the lack of capitalization of these experiences. The Algerian association for the Evaluation of public policies EvalDZ considers that there can be no sustainable development without the evaluation institutionalization by a law that put it at the heart of public policies, and in such a way that the evaluation itself becomes public policy. Accredited in 2017, and issued by the EvalMena Network, it included in the program of its first Assembly a series of actions to promote the evaluation practice. This is, particularly, the launch of a website and the training of service providers to ensure this mission, which requires expertise, supervision, certification and the ethical rules implementation. According to its president Mohamed Bouchakour, the results of the previously published reports are also scheduled to be published, such as the anti-cancer plan and the measures to combat unemployment. According to Bouchakour, the poor work of the public policies evaluation in Algeria is shaped rapidly and often diagonally, with scattered initiatives and random quality. The practice of evaluation is restricted to quantitative evaluation of physical and financial achievements.

In fact, even if evaluation appears to be an unavoidable phase of public policy, this undertaking still incapable to find a resonance with those who govern. Compared to other countries, the role of evaluation in Algeria remains weak in the allocation of public resources, and in directing political decisions to support decision-makers to see clearly and to consider things from a new angle, and to acquire discernment. This is for the aim of making evaluation a supreme element of government decision-making and democratic debate.

In his article, Perret (2014:71-88) demonstrated the difficulty of institutionalizing evaluation within the French state. The question of the institutionalization of the evaluation practice is a global problem concerning a task that has had serious obstacles to be as a management culture. Practice development depends on the institutional context and the quality of governance. For Perret (2008: 142-159), institutionalization remains the key to a wider use of evaluation results. Rigorous, pluralistic and transparent scrutiny of high public stakes' policies will only become possible when evaluation is fully recognized as a permanent cog in the democratic game.

The Algerian state is keen to adopt reforms. But these reforms, that are without agenda and which do not manage to see the end of the road, form an unfavorable legal basis which would sink the evaluation practice that remains orphan and without adage, because the institutional environment remains inappropriate in the absence of a management culture based results and of an organization issuing standards and benchmarks.

When comparing the Algerian situation to that of the reference countries, one observation is disambiguated: Evaluation is struggling to find its place into the State function. To understand the Algerian situation, it is necessary to question the politico-administrative culture specificities, particularly, the way in which the relationship between political power and expertise has been thought out. An evaluation report carried out by a technocrat buried in the administration maze will always have more weight than scientific work.

The countries that recognize the evaluation are those whose political culture gives a great weight to taxpayers' interests. However, it is not the case in Algeria. Public spending still raises relatively little controversy in public opinion, unlike what happens in developed countries. Undoubtedly, this state of mind can be explained through the annuitant character, budget-eater and through the painless ricochet nature of the Algerian economy which gives citizens the enjoyment feeling of benefiting from public expenditure, without bearing the cost. Whatever the validity of this explanation, in fact, Algerians hardly ask accountability from their rulers for the proper use of public money, would explain the decision-making's low use of evaluation.

The evaluation development presupposes a change in practices and mentalities. In Algeria, the functioning of public administrations is marked by too much emphasis on means and less interest in results. New devices are added to the old ones without the latter being deleted. This operation also does not leave little room for freedom of management, innovation and experimentation. Therefore, it does not encourage managers to take responsibility. The still insufficient place of evaluations in Algeria is largely due to the mistrust that it is still aroused among many political decision-makers.

During the opening general assembly of EvalDZ, which took place at the ISGP in Algiers; in January 18. 2018, Mohamed Bouchakour (The president of EvalDZ) stated that it is common to see that Algeria, for a given public policy, devotes equivalent or even greater resources to its neighbors, without obtaining results that commensurate to the resources invested. This is particularly the case for housing, vocational training and national education. Everyone must be aware of the challenges that are still posed for the progress evaluation in Algeria. Therefore, we must put an end to the principled controversies on evaluations, and we commit to multiplying, quantitatively and qualitatively, evaluations in our country. But the question is not here, because the most necessary is to ensure the overall coherence of public policies with the involvement of all real and potential economic and social actors. Gadget organizations, which represent certain actors concretizing predation and systemic corruption, have largely demonstrated their inefficiency and their nuisance vis-à-vis the objectives of growth and sustainable development.

IV- The Algerian GIF and the evaluation of public policies: observation and limits:

The General inspection of Finance (GIF), a control body responsible for controlling the management regularity of public funds, has been entrusted since 2008, by the article 4 of the executive decree n° 08-272 of September 6, 2008 setting the attributions of the GIF, to fulfill the resistible obligation and the recent challenge of evaluating the implementation conditions of public policies. Due to its positioning, the GIF has strong assets to take on the role of a key player in the evaluation of public policies. This analysis is based on the various analyses, recommendations, discussions and exchanges formulated by certain inspectors who have interested in the evaluation during their annual open meetings. It is also supported by the summary study, established by Kocella (2012).

The GIF defines an intervention framework in its evaluation of the responsible administration for the public policy implementation. In this context, the evaluation's aims are the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of resources management, the regulatory and organizational systems' coherence and their adaptation to the objectives set, and the identification and the causes of management shortcomings and constraints analysis. Kocella (2012: 50).

The evaluation methodology study, adopted by the GIF, makes it possible to understand the terms and conditions of these allocations implementation. The attributions and purposes of the missions assigned to the GIF by the public authorities are essentially to ensure the proper application of the mechanisms constituting the policy without being able to question the policy itself. This evaluation presents particularities in terms of used method and tools. According to Kocella (2012:

51), the type of evaluation carried out by the GIF invokes two questions, which are: how are the policy plans carried out and what are the results reached in relation to the objectives set?

On a practical level, in the absence of a reference system that define the intervention's different forms, the limits between evaluation and management control are not yet clear. To answer this questioning, although the evaluation procedures are not transcribed in the procedures manuals and they are scattered in organizational notes which often take the frescoes of their authors and the natures of the public policies targeted through the evaluation, according to Kocella, the GIF has adopted an approach of recognizing public policy through its systems and instruments. In this context, the evaluation becomes muddled and complex because it is a question of determining the specific contribution of each device and instrument and the contribution resulting from the effects of synergy. The example of public employment policy in Algeria is a subtle one to confirm this state of affairs, because according to Kocella, it brings together several job creation assistance schemes, managed by different public agencies. By referring to the texts governing these systems, the evaluators determine the sources of their financing and the bodies responsible for their execution. An accounting and financial procedural verification is initiated to determine the financial situation based on direct and indirect circulations for crosschecking purposes to confirm the reliability of the figures. The desired goal is to identify the application constraints and engage the responsibilities.

The GIF enjoys broad powers of access to information. Article 17 of the aforementioned decree obliges the auditors and the other bodies concerned by the cross-checks to send it the information requested without the command chain pretext, or the confidentiality of the documents (except for files affected by defense secrecy).

According to Kocella (2012: 55), the GIF carried out an evaluation for the implementation of certain public policies. Given to the confidentiality that affects the reports of these missions, it is preferable, for reasons of circumspection and precaution, to refrain from disclosing them. But, in general, the evaluation of public policies established by the GIF focuses, according to him, on their implementation conditions and on the determined objectives' achievement level. This approach has limits in relation to the evaluation fundamentals and its interference in the disciplinary fields such as auditing and management control. These limits are also related to the institutional framework and the complexity of public policies, particularly, those attached to special allocation accounts (SAA).

According to Kocella, always, the evaluation carried out by the GIF can be assimilated to the management control or the audit, because its fundamental principle is a quantitative and qualitative judgment of the policy effectiveness and efficiency. Its outcome is to take a decision aimed at reframing or abandoning the policy. The GIF is also responsible for carrying out comparative studies, aiming to compare the achievement level of one administration to another, within the same public policy framework, that allows judging the progress of state X in relation to state Y. Nevertheless, sometimes these hasty comparisons, which do not take into account the context and the spatial environment of the policy, can lead to dangerous interpretations with serious repercussions on the decisions nature, in particular those related to the resources demobilization and inappropriate mobility of civil servants, as a disciplinary measure. The GIF may also be interested, according to Kocella, in determining the difficulties of the device application. These difficulties may be linked to the ambiguities of the regulatory dispositions.

Currently, the GIF inspectors do not have an evaluation reference system, which would serve as a guide and which would allow these agents to better understand the evaluation process and make a good use of the standards to which they can refer. However, the fact remains that the procedures manual drawn up by the GIF (2012 version) tries to circumscribe the different types of public policies, which the GIF is required to include in its action program, namely:

- The evaluation of the budgetary systems' performance.
- The economic and financial evaluation of a global, sectional or branch activity or of an economic entity.
- The evaluation of the management or operation conditions of public services by concessionary companies, regardless their status (public or private, individual or in the form of a company).
- The evaluation of the implementation conditions of the public policies as well as the related results.

The said evaluation consists in particular of ensuring the consistency and adequacy of the legal framework in place and compliance with its stipulations by one party, and by the other party, collecting the relevant numerical data, ensuring its reliability and relevance in order to assess the level of effectiveness, economy and efficiency of the activities deployed within its scope.

In addition, when the evaluation relates to:

- The evaluation of the budgetary systems performance. The purpose here should be the insurance of the followed approach consistency and relevance for the development of the targeted budget on the one hand and the other of the reliability and adequacy of the used data.
- Above all, any global, sectional or branch activity must focus on collecting all the figures required in such cases, and arranging them in such a way that makes these both relevant and operational figures able to be read.
- The management of an economic entity must first cover all its compartments and then aim to ensure the rational and efficient nature of the organization in place. It must also ensure the mode of operation and the exploitation or use of its resources as well as the sincerity and accuracy of the accounting by relying on the reliability of the numerical data that it has presented or communicated to the supervisory authorities.
- A public service under concession operation or management must have a priority objective to ensure the normal operation of the mentioned public service and to assess the cost, as well as the achievement of the assigned objectives, where applicable.
- The implementation conditions of a given public policy should, as a principle tend to evaluate and appreciate the results that this public policy has generated.

The intervention of the GIF in terms of evaluation is also limited by the absence of performance indicators. Ait issad and Abada (2013: 1-26) believe that the orientation of control towards the performance evaluation will certainly give the GIF a concrete stimulus. However, this method of control is not yet developed in Algeria, because, according to Ait issad and Abada, it requires the implementation of several reforms.

The GIF sees itself inflated by other prerogatives and missions, which could alter its functioning by condemning it to asphyxiation. This situation also risks paralyzing its much-anticipated role in evaluating public policies. This essentially involves the harassment associated with binding judicial expert assessments, which, due to their personal nature, could lead to even retired inspectors being summoned to court; and others could even find themselves in the custody of the security services if they inadvertently fail to respond to court summonses. It is also about the pseudo-institutionalization of the relationship of the GIF with the General inspections of Ministries (GIM). Indeed, article 12 of the aforementioned decree 08-272 provides that the GIF coordinate its action with those of the GIM, aiming for the management complementarity of their intervention programs. The GIF may ask these GIMs for any information, report or document likely to enlighten it within its intervention framework in the ministerial department concerned. However, the ambiguity surrounding this relationship could cause inconveniences to the GIF, because some ministers could assign it oversight tasks or file processing that are, in fact, not the responsibility of the GIM. This relationship should be guided by a collegial approach to accumulate serious and diverse experiences, creating a partnership framework to strengthen capacities and exchange best practices. This relationship should also focus on spreading a culture of good governance, establishing sectoral risk maps and identifying conflicts of interest, and above all, creating a portal for handling complaints and grievances. This would strengthen the relationship between oversight bodies and citizens and other organizations based on trust and complementarity.

The quality of the evaluation reports is uneven in terms of rigor and objectivity. It would depend on the evaluation's inspector author posture and quality. The vagueness of the procedures makes the specificity of the evaluation barely perceptible, the tools used are rudimentary in general and the procedures followed not very formalized. Evaluations are more descriptive than comparative or explanatory, and attempts to scientifically measure the impact of policies remain rare.

V- Avenues to explore

According to Koceila (2012: 64), the need to evaluate the entire policy finds its justification in the limits put forward, and in the needs for performance and consistency in the GIF interventions. This approach would allow inspectors to make recommendations linked to the policy objectives in order to assist public authorities in taking ownership the problems at the policies' origins. According to Kosella, it will also allow for better GIF interventions. In order to address the legal limitations noted, and in the absence of an institutional reference system, a specific text is necessary to establish the public policies' evaluation. Koceila adds that the example of expanding the scope of the GIF intervention, in controlling the public economic institutions can support the feasibility of this recommendation.

To guarantee the quality of the work, it is necessary to avoid the dispersion of efforts. A diverse range of evaluators is crucial for understanding the full consequences of a public policy. Government agencies possess information on policy implementation and must be involved. However, some extreme views may oppose this, prohibiting any form of self-evaluation due to the risks of an evaluation too beholden to the executive branch, which could lead to superficial assessments. It is also essential that those involved in evaluation equip themselves with the necessary ethical tools to

avoid conflicts of interest and ensure methodological transparency. Nevertheless, progress must be made in clarifying the institutional context in which evaluations are conducted, in order to respect the requirements of neutrality and independence. The General Inspection of Finance (GIF) could also play a role in evaluating evaluations. It would be responsible for producing the evaluations. It would make the data available to research teams and would rely on the administration. It is true that the IGF has the strongest guarantees regarding its positioning. The strength of its status naturally allows it to conduct evaluations of this kind. However, the IGF must not claim either a monopoly on evaluation or the role of an indispensable authority on this subject in Algeria.

The evaluation asks difficult methodological questions. It must defend itself against interpretation errors, reverse causalities, and interactions of the studied policy with others. Generally, the GIF has no difficulty in evaluating information, but it must train its control staff in econometrics, statistics and social sciences, or recruit experts or request for service providers to implement macroeconomics models.

The GIF can go further in its collaboration with specialized actors, in particular, university institutes. The latter, from their own part, often have the scientific expertise, but do not yet have satisfactory access to the useful data for the evaluation. Algeria can make progress in making data available to researchers, under secure and confidential conditions.

In the evaluation of public policies, the qualitative dimension should not be neglected, because the firmness of figures, however judiciously established, has its limits. It is illusory according to Perret (2014:142-159) to claim the evaluation of an action effectiveness with multiple challenges by simple indicators. Certain politicians' initiatives show that we are sliding towards a politics of figures. According to Fougère, the available statistical techniques are certainly multiple, but their specificities and their hypotheses strongly determine the results. There is a risk of producing biased estimates of the public intervention effects. Brocas and von Lennep (2010: 149-160) took up the contributions of Lalonde (1986: 604-620), Heckman and Hotz (1989: 862-874), Heckman and Robb (1985: 239-267) on the results of the methods' evaluation sensitivity to support the risk which would be to propose a reductionist vision of the social complexity. Further, Salais (2010: 129-147) said that simplicity and comparability cause bad indicators to drive out good ones, and that by using statistics too much, we risk misusing them.

Public policies must be evaluable. Public authorities must clearly state their objectives, supported by an information system that provides a significant degree of detail, both quantitative and qualitative. Due to its orientations and operational methods, the General Inspection of Finance (GIF) encounters clear limitations in the evaluations it conducts in relation to these ambitions. Having long been accustomed to carrying out superfluous compliance checks, its evaluation work risks experiencing major deviations. The landscape of scientific evaluation is almost empty or ephemeral. The boundaries between the political and technical spheres of evaluation are difficult to define.

Priority projects, both politically sensitive and perilous, are arrogantly and ostentatiously provoking the General Inspection of Finance (GIF). These include the disproportionately large higher education sector, inconsistencies in hospital funding, the delicate issue of budget-draining subsidies with windfall effects for basic necessities, and poorly targeted, short-lived, pseudo-incentive tax exemptions. One could also cite the negligible results of the former National Agency for Youth Employment Support (ANSEJ), now known as (NESDA), in terms of employment creation. Furthermore, one could analyze the exclusively commercial nature of foreign direct investment (FDI) without technology transfers, which has negative effects on the balance of payments; examine the unavoidable problem of inflation; dissect the flawed import substitution policy as a mere band-aid solution; and reflect deeply on the enigmatic absence of a development strategy.

The fact remains that a fatal ambiguity floats around the GIF positioning and around its role in the public policies' evaluation. In reality, the GIF does not evaluate public policies; it only controls the conditions of their implementation, which means that it is not empowered to judge their objectives and even less to question them, whether they were totally corrupt or fake. In this context and with a biased balance, the GIF does not bitterly ensure the exact accomplishment of the mess without daring to call it by its name. This observation raises questions about the proper use of evaluation. Finally, the GIF needs trust. It needs to see its recommendations materialized, so that it can do its job better and develops better.

VI- Conclusion

The analysis reveals that the limitations of policy evaluation within the Algerian Inspection of Finance (GIF) are systemic, institutional, and methodological in nature. The findings confirm the initial hypothesis: the observed shortcomings are not merely technical, but stem from a structural lack of standardization, institutionalization, and an appropriate methodological framework.

After more than seventeen years of implementing the framework established by Executive Decree No. 08-272, it appears evident that the evaluation function remains only partially integrated into Algeria's public governance system. Despite the increasing number of evaluation missions and gradual methodological improvements, these efforts have not yet

translated into concrete political decisions or tangible policy adjustments. Evaluation remains weakly embedded in the administrative culture and decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the limited diversification of expertise and the persistent overlap between traditional audit functions and evaluation activities hinder the development of a multidisciplinary and innovative evaluative approach. This situation is exacerbated by the insufficient political and institutional awareness of the strategic importance of evaluation as a tool for steering and continuously improving government action.

In light of these findings, several structural and organizational recommendations emerge:

- Clearly institutionalize the evaluation function by formally distinguishing it from traditional financial control, with specific goals, methodologies, teams, and responsibilities.
- Strengthen internal capacities within the GIF by integrating experts from diverse fields such as public management, economics, and social sciences.
- Adopt a holistic and systemic evaluation approach focused on impact assessment, learning, and performance improvement.
- Enhance the operational and methodological autonomy of the GIF to ensure the independence, rigor, and credibility of its evaluations.
- Promote a culture of evaluation, accountability, and performance across the Algerian public administration.

For Algeria, the central challenge is no longer whether the GIF can become an evaluation actor, but rather how this transformation can be effectively and sustainably achieved. This requires establishing the political, institutional, and organizational conditions necessary to enable the GIF to become a professional and credible actor in public policy evaluation, capable of supporting policymakers in designing, implementing, and adjusting evidence-based policies.

Such a transformation represents a strategic investment for strengthening the quality of public governance, enhancing state efficiency, improving accountability, and fostering a culture of performance and transparency within Algeria's public administration.

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