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### ► To cite this version:

David Carassus, Christophe Favoreu, Damien Gardey, Christophe Maurel. Performance management in the local public sector in France: an administrative rather than a political model. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 2015, 81 (4), 10.1177/0020852314554541 . hal-02152510

**HAL Id: hal-02152510**

**<https://univ-pau.hal.science/hal-02152510v1>**

Submitted on 9 Dec 2020

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# **Performance management in the local public sector in France: an administrative rather than a political model**

**Christophe Favoreu, David Carassus, Damien Gardey and Christophe Maurel**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to analyse and characterise the practices of French local authorities in the field of performance management. It sets out to do so, as a first step, by putting forward a theoretical analytical framework of the different models of local performance management. It then goes on to draw on this framework and test it empirically in order to understand the nature of the French model of local performance management. The results of our research demonstrate the existence of a French, “performance administration” type model evident in the trends common to French local authorities with regard to the instrumental and methodological content and the methods of steering public performance.

## **Notes for practitioners**

The managerial and practical contributions of this research on local performance initiatives are twofold. First of all, it will provide an analytical and evaluative framework for this type of initiative, not only structured around planning, accountability and evaluation tools but also around steering methods. Secondly, this study makes it possible to take stock of and characterise French practices in the field and their limitations compared to more mature international practices. Thus, a local authority adopting this path can therefore draw on this study to determine the scope and structure of the tools to be rolled out, depending on the purpose followed, be it administrative and/or political.

**Keywords:** performance management, public performance, local authorities.

Since the 1990s, public performance and, more generally, performance management, have been a major challenge for central and local governments (Newcomer, 2007), generating a great deal of academic research, both empirical and theoretical. The influence of certain movements such as New Public Management (NPM) and the reforms undertaken by countries such as England, Canada and New Zealand, often presented as benchmarks for public sector regeneration, tend to reflect the picture of a homogeneous and universal performance management model within the public sector. The reforms undertaken are depicted as being organised around similar principles, objectives, goals and methodological frameworks. However, some studies (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008; Curristine, 2005; Pollitt 2006, OECD, 2007) tend to underline national differences not only in terms of the objectives and goals, but also as regards the steering methods, methodological devices and instrumental components mobilised<sup>1</sup>. Despite their interest, they seem to suffer from several limitations. Firstly, they are relatively rare and almost never address the French case (Ongaro, 2008), and the local public sector. Secondly, this research, based mostly on documentary studies consisting of speeches, reports and programmes, are more likely to highlight discursive or decisional convergences than convergences of practices (Guenoun and Salery, 2009; De Bruijn, 2009).

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to use descriptive research to define and test an interpretative and analytical framework making it possible to characterise local public performance initiatives in France. This framework is intended to be more comprehensive than those generally used, taking into account all aspects of performance initiatives, namely the technical aspects related to the tools and methodologies used, as well as managerial aspects related to the steering method and the allocation of responsibilities.

To this end, this paper will start with a conceptual and empirical literature review of practices identified in the field of public performance management to provide an interpretative framework of the typical features of a local performance initiative (part 1). We will then test the realism of our theoretical framework by means of quantitative analyses conducted on the features of the performance initiatives of French local

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<sup>1</sup> Research conducted in the field of comparative public administration (Kuhlmann, 2010a; Wollmann, 2004 and 2008) tend to confirm this idea by asserting the influence of administrative systems and cultures in the rollout of the reforms to modernise public administration and in the implementation of NPM principles. The discrepancies observed in the results, practices and degrees of advancement could be explained by specific administrative systems (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).

authorities (part 2). Drawing on these findings, we highlight the significant management methods and tools of local performance management in the French local public sector and discuss, in the light of the literature, the features of the French model (part 3).

## **I) Presentation of the theoretical and conceptual framework for analysing local public performance management practices**

We start off by outlining the limitations of previous studies in relation to our research objective (I.A). We then go on to propose an analytical framework in response to the existing limitations (I.B).

### I.A) The methodological and geographical limitations of previous research

For a long time confined to performance measurement and evaluation activities, public performance management has evolved into a more systematic and holistic conception and definition (Moynihan, 2008). Defined as a management system or model, it first and foremost manifests itself through the definition of performance indicators and targets, and the collection of information about them. It goes on to induce the use of this information for strategic and budgetary decision-making (Moynihan, 2006), as well as for resource management, particularly human resources (Den Hartog et al., 2004), or public programmes and policies (Bouckaert and Van Dooren, 2002)<sup>2</sup>. These approaches aim to improve the internal and external performance (Yang and Pandey, 2009; Moynihan, 2005) and claim implicitly or explicitly, a relationship of subordination and causality between these two levels of performance (Boyne, 2009; Walker et al., 2012). According to Heinrich (2003), improving organisational efficiency thus only makes sense if it is accompanied by and contributes to an improvement in the external performance of public actions and policies and, more generally, the ability of public organisations to create public value within populations and social groups. Along the same lines, Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) and Halligan et al. (2012) illustrate, for their part, that the impacts and effects of public action are the key concepts of the current performance management

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<sup>2</sup> From a more technical and methodological perspective, and based on the authors cited above, public performance management can be defined as a systematic, structured and continuous approach that sets out to improve the results of public organisations and their ability to achieve the objectives they set for themselves by combining interdependently three key activities: strategic planning, performance evaluation and analysis, the use of this information in decision making.

systems and therefore represent a fundamental criterion for evaluating public performance. In France, this type of management is prompted, in part, for the local authorities who voluntarily decided to adopt it in the mid-2000s, by a local and operational transcription of the general principles of Public Finance Legislation (LOLF)<sup>3</sup> (Rouban 2008; Kuhlmann, 2010), reflecting the top-down influence from the central to the local.

Research addressing, directly and indirectly, the theme of national performance management models or systems can be classified into two categories. The first group includes national studies or studies on so-called homogeneous regional areas. The cases studied in the United States (Folz et al, 2009; Chan, 2004), New Zealand (Northcott and Taulapapa, 2012), Canada (Chan, 2004), England (Sanderson, 2001) and the Nordic countries (Johnsen and Vakkuri, 2006) in particular have been the subject of quantitative analyses identifying the practices in this area. However, compared to our research focus, these studies have several limitations. First of all, they concern mainly Anglo-Saxon or Nordic countries (Ongaro, 2008), none addressing the French case. Secondly, the characterisation of practices is carried out on the basis of aspects that are either relatively restricted<sup>4</sup>, or, to the contrary, abstract or general, revolving mainly around the dissemination of the general principles and pillars of NPM. Finally, these studies more often than not aim to assess the degree of penetration and effective use of this type of management by organisations and therefore do not go into the detail and characterisation of the actual practices. However, and in view of our research question, several lessons can be drawn from this research. Anglo-Saxon countries thus seem to tend towards more complex and formal models, and a greater focus on external evaluation, in terms of the impacts of public policies and the measurement of service quality. It is also interesting to note an increasing integration of evaluation in the strategic, operational but also and especially budgetary decision-making processes. The Nordic countries for their part also

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<sup>3</sup> The organic law on finance laws, passed in 2001 and implemented within the French Ministries in 2006, helped define a new budgetary architecture paving the way for a true performance and results management within central government. This budgetary reform effectively requires public policy to be structured in terms of missions, programmes and actions and assigns them performance objectives and indicators. Accountability, autonomy and multiannuality accompany this reform.

<sup>4</sup> In relation to the definition of performance management given above, they are usually limited to the evaluation and performance measurement phase or specific techniques: dashboards, certain types of indicators, cost accounting, etc.

deserve a mention for the importance awarded to the principles of transparency and "accountability"<sup>5</sup>.

The second group of studies is comprised of international comparative studies (Boyle, 2009; OECD, 2007; Council of Europe, 2005; Pollitt, 2006; Sterck and Scheers, 2006). This body of research, predominantly prescriptive or normative, generally compares the issues, challenges and key factors associated with the implementation of performance management in public sectors. They, too, avoid entering into the details of the practices and do not make it possible to determine the strong national dominants or trends in this area. In addition, the French context is not addressed by most of them (Boyle, 2009; Curristine 2007; Sterck and Scheers, 2006) or only very briefly (Curristine, 2005). Within this category, the research covering comparative public administration (Kuhlmann, 2010 a and b; Wollmann, 2004, 2008) differs not only by characterising national or regional models, but also by studying the influence of the political-administrative structures and legacies on the dynamics of the managerial modernisation of public organisations. However, these focus more on the reform programmes of the central government than on the actual practices of public organisations. In addition, performance management is often discussed only indirectly and is only one aspect of the more general study of the dissemination of the managerial reforms and principles of NPM within public governments. For the French case, this research is nevertheless of interest to us by showing that while the key factors of NPM have taken root within French government, they have not entirely supplanted reflexes and mechanisms that make up the legalistic and hierarchical type bureaucratic model, leading to a mixed or hybrid system (Ongaro, 2008).

In this context, the study by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) deserves further analysis as it is the only one to propose a formalised analytical framework making it possible to characterise and compare public performance management practices. To do so, the authors determine standard models or ideals, which they compare with the experiences and initiatives taken in the field of performance management in a number of OECD countries. They build their analytical framework by breaking down the performance management process into three generic steps or activities: (1) performance measurement, with respect

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<sup>5</sup> Principles that take practical form by the involvement of civil society at different stages of the initiative and by a very broad external communication of the results of the evaluation to civil society.

to the collection and processing of data into information, (2) the integration of the information with the procedures, documents and discourses of the different actors, and (3) use, i.e. the effective inclusion of this information in the decision-making process (whether budgetary, operational or strategic). The differences observed with respect to these methods give rise to the establishment of four standard models of management, which correspond roughly to four stages of development and sophistication of performance management. These models are characterised by increasing complexity (measured by the number of steps and methodological components mobilised) and the degree of organisational integration of performance management in the internal decision-making and operational processes. **The four models are successively "performance administration" limited to a performance measurement that is not followed by a real performance management, "performance management" that applies to specific functions within the organisation, "performance management" that reflects a comprehensive, integrated and systematic approach, and finally "performance governance" which is characterised by a strong integration of external stakeholders in the initiative. According to the authors, France is at the level of performance administration, which would reflect, in the light of what is observed by a part of the literature cited above, a change in the administrative system towards a neo-Weberian type model.**

However, despite its many contributions (Rhodes et al., 2012)<sup>6</sup>, this classification grid, as well as the resulting typology of performance management models, have a number of limitations with regard to our research. On the one hand, only the instrumental and procedural dimensions are actually taken into account. Yet, the managerial aspects related to the management methods and styles associated with the implementation of these initiatives strike us as equally important to characterise the practices of public organisations. On the other hand, while this classification grid appears particularly adapted to national agencies and central governments, it is much less operational for local authorities, failing as it does to take into account the different categories of actors behind the implementation and steering of managerial innovations. However, according to the

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<sup>6</sup> The work of Rhodes et al. (2012) relating to seven countries not studied by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) countries, confirms the relevance of this grid in the case of international comparative studies of public sector reform projects and the factors influencing their dynamics of implementation and dissemination.

local authorities, significant differences may occur between a predominantly political steering of innovation processes and a purely administrative management (Demir, 2009)<sup>7</sup>. A final limitation of Bouckaert and Halligan's model (2008) relates to its empirical validation, or at least its application in the field. As they currently stand, the analytical dimensions are not empirically tested and validated among a sample of public organisations. In addition, and this is one of the limits outlined by the authors themselves, the object of the analysis does not relate so much to the actual practices, as to the change programmes and the reforms officially announced.

The limitations of previous research in this area thus lead us to propose a specific analytical framework of the performance management models in the local public context.

#### I.B) The proposal of a specific analytical framework of the performance management models of local authorities

To overcome these limitations, we propose here a specific framework for analysing the public performance management models linking the four standard ideals put forward by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) with the instrumental and managerial characteristics of local performance initiatives. The objectives of this analytical framework are numerous. First of all, conceptually, the aim is to adapt and complete Bouckaert and Halligan's model (2008) by looking at the four standard ideals according to the steering practices of local performance initiatives. Secondly, on a theoretical level, the interest of this analytical framework is to approach the components and dimensions of public performance, by integrating its multidimensional (Scott, 1987), antinomian (Quinn, 1988) and hierarchical (Morin et al. 1994) characters. To meet these objectives, we draw on the work of Bouckaert and Halligan (2008), as well as on case studies (Favoreu et al., 2011) characterising performance initiatives in the French local public context<sup>8</sup> around tools and methods of implementation.

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<sup>7</sup> The duality, and sometimes the opposition between the political and administrative level in local management, confusion of roles and powers and responsibilities (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), rivalries and differences of objectives, interests and standards (Hood and Lodge, 2006) are all factors that can influence and lead to differences in the dynamics of change within local authorities.

<sup>8</sup> This study is based on an exploratory qualitative analysis conducted in cities and general councils that were precursors in the implementation of new management practices, through interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010 with elected officials, general directors, executive directors and financial directors and directors and heads of operational services. The interviews, the analysis of methodological documents and, in some cases, participant observation set out to bring out the different dimensions (methodological, instrumental and steering) that make up local performance management practices.



*I.B.1) A framework making it possible to first analyse the mobilised tools*

As far as this first point is concerned, Favoreu et al. (2011) highlight three instrumental components of the performance management initiatives, namely the planning, accountability and evaluation tools. Planning is first guided by strategic and operational aspects. The strategic formulation may also be associated with an adaptation of the allocation of resources, for example by the reorganisation of the budgetary architecture around the authority's public policies (Carassus and Gardey, 2009). Operational planning consists, for its part, of the definition or declension of strategic pathways into service projects leading to the implementation of public policies (Beauchemin et al., 2009).

Then, the tools of accountability, whether collective or individual, allow, according to Toulouse (2007), the exercise of good governance by actors who are accountable for their choices, their decisions, their resources, and their results. At a more operational level, service projects can thus be seen to emerge in local authorities, making it possible to drive more global strategic orientations, at structural or individual levels. Finally, evaluation tools are the third instrumental component and can be characterised by their objects, their dimensions and their criteria. Thus, on the first point, the evaluation may look at the public policies to drive the organisation towards achieving its strategic objectives, or can also focus, in an approach more internal to the authority, on the performance of the departments and agents (Carassus and Gardey, 2009). In turn, the evaluation tools can rely on several dimensions, not only endogenous and specific, mainly concerning resources and modes of operation of the authority, but also exogenous, relating, for their part, to the public service produced or the solution to the needs of the territory concerned (Huteau et al., 2008). Finally, evaluation tools are also characterised by their criteria, whether they are related to the relevance, quality, effectiveness or efficiency of public action. These different criteria, resulting from many theoretical models of public performance management (Hood, 1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Demeestere, 2005), can also be mobilised by the authorities involved in managerial innovation initiatives, for example, through Annual Steering Plans and Annual Steering Reports that put into perspective the performance measurements of their public policies and actions.

*I.B.2) An analytical framework then taking into account the terms of implementation of the local performance initiative*

Beyond tools, Favoreu et al. (2011) also characterise the local performance initiatives by their methods of implementation, through an analysis of the level of integration of local stakeholders in the steering of the authority. In this context, the system of integration of the actors can first be of a political and administrative nature, a process where political support is associated with the involvement of directorates general and administrative officials, determining the commitment of the intermediate levels and operational staff levels (Yang and Hsieh, 2007). The integration can also be exclusively administrative, a situation where the leadership, exercised only by officials, concerns in particular the management of the interactions and relationships between different hierarchical levels, and the reduction of resistances to change (Fernandez and Rayney, 2006). Finally, integration can also be broader by opening the public policy formation process and, more generally, the decision allocation system to all civil society to mobilise its components (Le Gales, 2006). Integration then follows a democratic logic, with a wide stakeholder involvement in the initiative, including citizens.

*I.B.3) An analytical framework defining a total of four performance management models adapted to the local context*

Based on the analytical framework developed by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008), we can thus propose a renewed analytical framework of the different local public performance management models (Table 1). This framework shows, in the row, the instrumental and methodological characteristics identified by the study described above by Favoreu et al. (2011). These first elements are linked with the four performance management models pinpointed by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008), in the column, to complement and adapt their analyses to the local context:

- the first model of "Performance administration" can be defined by the absence of tools (planning and/or evaluation) and by management methods limited only to administrative actors.
- The second model of "Performance Management", by complementing the features of the first, broadens the scope of the tools and methods mobilised, but remains an internal logic with managerial implications. The level of integration of the initiative is both administrative and political, but with a partitioned management of steering methods: only administrative actors appear accountable for the operational steering of their actions and activities.

- Then, the third model of "Performance Management" is characterised by a governance that is co-produced by political and administrative actors. Thus, this model highlights a political and operational steering of the public action and structures by all the players of the organisation, from elected representatives to officials, empowered and evaluated on the basis of their activities in an inclusive sense.
  
- Finally, the last model of "Performance governance" includes all the features of the previous model, opening it further to the territory and the environment of the authority. The level of integration of the actors in the performance initiative is therefore democratic, by co-building and sharing the strategy of the authority, by involving and empowering all actors of the organisation, internal and external.

Table n° 1: Proposed framework for the characterisation of the different local public performance management models

Features of the local performance initiatives			Models				
			Perf. Admin.	Perf. Manag.	Perf. Manag.	Perf. Gov.	
Steering tools	Planning	Strategic and budgetary			x	X	
		Operational		x	x	X	
	Accountability	Individual			x	X	
		Political-administrative		x	x	X	
		Administrative	x				
	Evaluation	Objects	Public policies			x	X
			Departments, officials		x	x	X
		Dimens.	Territorial				x
			Public services			x	x
			Organisational		x	x	x
			Human		x	x	x
			Financial	x	x	x	x
		Criteria	Relevance				x
			Quality			x	x
			Effectiveness		x	x	x
			Efficiency	x	x	x	x
Steering methods	Level of integration of the local actors in the steering	Democratic				x	
		Political-administrative		x	x	x	
		Administrative	x				

The first two models, "Performance administration" and "Performance management", thus appear limited to the administrative actors of the authority. In contrast, the other two models of "Performance management" and "Performance governance", differentiated by openness to wider stakeholders, including users/citizens/taxpayers, move beyond the involvement of the administrative actors alone. Thus, for the sake of simplification, to avoid categorisation at four levels, we will be able to refer to only a categorisation at two levels, depending on the model, either administrative or political.

Having proposed this renewed framework, our study goes on to test its relevance based on a quantitative analysis conducted among French local authorities.

## **II) Analysis of the French public performance management model in local authorities**

We start by presenting the research methodology used (II.A) before moving on to the results obtained (II.B). Finally, these results are discussed in the light of our original theoretical framework (II.C).

### **II.A) An exploratory and quantitative research methodology**

Thanks to the support of the AFIGESE-CT (Association Finance, Gestion et Evaluation des collectivités territoriales –Financial, management and evaluation association of local authorities), a questionnaire was sent in 2009 to the executive teams of the member authorities of this network of around 400 authorities<sup>9</sup>. We obtained 60 usable responses from authorities who had already initiated a local public performance initiative. This sample, broken down into 4.6% regional councils, 29.5% general councils, 21% EPCI (intercommunal bodies) and 45% municipalities, has few authorities but it is relatively close to the reference population, that is to say nearly 70 performance initiatives launched at the time of the submission of the questionnaire<sup>10</sup>. The study questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first, descriptive part uses dichotomous yes/no answers on the methods and tools of the performance initiatives implemented in the authority concerned (see Annex 1 for excerpts from the questionnaire items). The second, more analytical part, with responses from 1 to 7 on a Likert scale, addresses the actual and perceived impacts of the implementation of these new managerial principles and tools.

After checking the quality of the data collected, we used logistic regression to determine the predictors for each subject of our analytical framework. In fact, this methodological approach allows us to highlight the statistically significant variables, because logistic regression sets out to assess the contribution of different variables on the probability of occurrence of an event (the binary nature of the answers allowed the use of this method). The interpretation of

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<sup>9</sup> This association, including municipalities, départements and regions, is not representative of all the French authorities, but it includes members who are involved in topics close to our problem.

<sup>10</sup> As the parent population is reduced (less than 80 initiatives were known by the ministry in charge of authorities and professional associations such as AFIGESE), our sample of respondents is acceptable and may be the subject of statistical studies.

regression models is based on pseudo-R2 and the ability of the logistic regression model to account for reality. Thus, the percentage of correct classification is given for each regression. The results include descriptive statistics of the answers and some regressions completing the analysis.

## II.B) Results characterising the practice of French authorities through an administrative model

We describe here the results obtained for each steering characteristic included in our analytical framework: the planning, accountability and evaluation tools along with the integration methods.

### *II.B.1) Planning tools with more of an operational nature*

Of the 60 answers, 36 authorities reported actually using planning tools. We identified that this planning could be geared towards the operational or strategic dimension, or cover these two aspects.

*Table n° 2: Descriptive statistics for the planning tools*

	Yes	No	Total
Planning tools	36	24	60
- including strategic and budgetary planning	21	39	60
- including operational planning	32	28	60

*Chi-square between the 2 methods: 9.91, ddl 1, signif. 0.002*

On this point, the authorities report less use of a planning described as strategic and budgetary than of operational planning. Moreover, according to the dependence test, it appears that authorities reporting use of planning tools frequently mobilise the two identified methods. According to our analytical framework, this seems to point to a more administrative than political model, methods of planning being focused on the daily activity of the services.

### *II.B.2) Accountability tools, of a political and administrative nature*

Of the 60 responding authorities, 47 reported having implemented accountability tools. Our scale offers three possible methods taken from the literature review: accountability tools of a political-administrative nature, of an administrative nature or of an individual nature.

*Table n° 3: Descriptive statistics for accountability tools*

	Yes	No	Total
Accountability tools	47	13	60
- of which political-administrative accountability	36	24	60
- of which administrative accountability	31	29	60
- of which individual accountability	9	51	60

*Chi-square between the methods: not signif.*

The distribution of the answers thus focuses on accountability of a political-administrative nature, relatively close to administrative accountability. This result corresponds rather to a performance model combining political and administrative implications, as the elected representatives may play more or less of an instigating role and be more or less involved in the initiative. Also, this position could be analysed in addition to other results.

### *II.B.3) Evaluation methods, rather endogenous in nature*

The evaluation conducted within the framework of the public performance initiatives is characterised, in our interpretative framework, by its object, its dimensions and criteria.

*Table n° 4: Descriptive statistics on the objects pursued during the evaluations conducted*

	Yes	No	Total
Presence of evaluation tools	41	19	60
- including evaluation of the directorates and agents (3 items)	33	27	60
- including evaluation of the public policies (6 items)	24	36	60

Chi-square between the evaluation object methods; 0.181, not significant.

Based on three binary questions that make it possible to ascertain whether the objects of the evaluations concern the directorates and officials, we obtain 33 authorities concerned. The result is lower for the method relating to the evaluation of public policies (24 authorities). We can thus note that these results indicate a low level of development of the evaluations and, where available, missions concerning more the directorates and officials, which corresponds in our framework to a model of an administrative nature.

Among these assessments conducted within the authorities, we studied the dimensions favoured among the five variables in our interpretative framework: political-environmental or territorial, public service quality, managerial or organisational, human capital development and economic and legal.

Table n° 5: Statistics of the answers relating to the evaluation dimensions

	Yes	No	Total	Results of the chi-square				
Political-env. / territorial	17	43	60	-	-			
Quality of public services	33	27	60	14.66	-			
Managerial	35	25	60	8.82	32.01	-		
Development of human capital	16	44	60	12.54	13.23	16.21	-	
Economic-legal	42	18	60	10.66	31.42	36.01	9.36	-

The chi-squares between the five methods are significant at 1%

The results obtained show that dependencies appear among the five dimensions identified for evaluation. In addition, the most commonly used dimensions ("managerial" and "economic-legal") correspond to a model described as administrative, as guided by more of an internal than political logic. Logistic regression (table No. 5a) confirms the pervasiveness of these two dimensions that are statistically significant at 1%.

Table n° 5b: Logistic regression on the variables measuring the dimensions of the evaluation

	B	E.S.	Wald	ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Political-env. / terr.	35,112	8942,816	,000	1	,997	1.8e11
Quality of pub. serv.	3,044	2,635	12,000	1	,091	1.2e9
Managerial	6,724	1,439	21,844	1	,004	12,904
Dev. of human capital	37,162	9510,591	,000	1	,997	1.3 <sup>e</sup> 14
Economic-legal	14,904	1,911	,000	1	,008	9,273
Constant	-9,982	2,277	19,217	1	,000	,000

R2 of Nagelkerke: 0.84; correct classification: 0.91%

Regarding the last element of characterisation of the evaluation methods, we have identified four items for the scale of evaluation criteria<sup>11</sup>: effectiveness, efficiency, quality and relevance.

Table n° 6: Descriptive statistics on the evaluation criteria

	Yes	No	Total	Results of the chi-square between the methods				
Effectiveness	37	23	60	-				
Efficiency	36	24	60	34.95	-			
Quality	33	27	60	22.28	21.45	-		
Relevance	32	28	60	40.5	26.06	25.31	-	

The chi-squares between the four methods are significant at 1%

On this last point, the results highlight not only the consistency of the criteria in terms of scale, but also a degree of uniformity in the use of the criteria questioned. However, logistic

<sup>11</sup> In reference to the criteria of the Legislation on Finance Law, socio-economic efficiency, management efficiency, the quality of service provision, and a criterion in explicit reference to policy assessments, internal and external consistency of actions, here referred to as relevance.



regression (table No. 6a) shows that effectiveness and efficiency are the most explanatory variables, at the threshold of 10%, of the use of evaluation criteria. This corresponds in our framework to more of an administrative model, insofar as these criteria are focused on internal objects, namely the objectives, means and achievements of the authority.

*Table n° 6b: Logistic regression on the variables measuring the evaluation criteria*

	B	E.S.	Wald	ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Effectiveness	5,481	1,188	11,286	1	,008	,004
Efficiency	4,382	1,517	5,349	1	,011	,013
Relevance	21,327	171,473	,000	1	,997	,000
Quality	19,412	101,451	,000	1	,984	1,397 <sup>E9</sup>
Constant	3,584	1,014	12,495	1	,000	36,000

*R2 of Nagelkerke : 0.782 ; percentage classification correct: 92.3%*

#### *II.B.4) Levels of integration of the local performance initiative, of a political-administrative nature*

Finally, we identified in our interpretative framework three types of methods of steering local performance initiatives: integration of an administrative, political and administrative, and democratic nature.

*Table n° 7: answers to the three methods of integration of the local performance initiatives*

	Yes	No	Total
Political-administrative integration (8 items)	36	24	60
Democratic integration (8 items)	3	57	60
Administrative integration (9 items)	8	52	60

Of the three methods of integrating local performance initiatives, that of a political-administrative nature - combining the involvement of elected representatives and local officials - appears to be the one that is most frequently used. Integrations of a democratic nature, involving users/citizens, and of an administrative nature, where only the territorial officials are involved, are only rarely used.

#### *I.B.5) Tools and steering methods characterising the French practices through a model that is more administrative than political*

Overall, taking all the features of the performance initiatives undertaken by the French authorities, the results of our quantitative analyses show that French practices are mainly influenced by an approach and steering of a significantly administrative nature, qualified on our framework by the "Performance management" model (see table 1). Planning within this model is more operational in nature with accountability of the administrative actors. The

elected representatives are integrated into the initiative, but passively, without being at the heart of it. The main purpose remains the control of resources, particularly financial, incurred by the authority. The evaluation mechanisms, where they exist, are for their part focused on endogenous performance, revolving around the organisational and financial aspects of the authority. In order to both complement and synthesise these initial analyses, a comprehensive exploratory factor analysis includes all the variables that make up our analytical framework to position the respondent authorities. In this sense, the principal component analysis (PCA) revealed four factorial axes, or components, having an individual value greater than 1, whose factorial structure is illustrated in table 8 and represents 72% of the explained variance. The first component (denoted comp.1), where more than half of the authorities are present, is characterised by a system of administrative accountability, an evaluation of an economic-legal and organisational nature, a low level of integration of the other actors, elected representatives and users/citizens, and endogenous evaluation criteria prioritising efficiency and effectiveness of resources. This axis corresponds to the two models of an administrative nature of our framework (see Table 1). The other factorial axes are, in turn, more influenced by the other two models of a political nature, in that they embrace methods of strategic planning, political or even democratic actors, accountability tools that are also focused on the agents and exogenous evaluation methods, covering the public service and territorial dimensions.

Table n° 8: Matrix of the components

	Comp. 1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4
Strategic planning tools	.075	.196	<b>.762</b>	.345
Operational planning tools	.402	.321	<b>.600</b>	-.048
Political-administrative accountability tool	.032	<b>.791</b>	.041	.008
Administrative accountability tool	<b>.492</b>	.311	.136	-.149
Individual accountability tool	.211	.009	<b>.911</b>	.408
Evaluation of the territorial dimension	.452	<b>.591</b>	.205	<b>.654</b>
Evaluation of the public service quality dimension	.465	<b>.554</b>	.422	<b>.687</b>
Evaluation of the managerial dimension	<b>.871</b>	.498	.072	.283
Evaluation of the human capital dimension	.119	<b>.656</b>	.337	.492
Evaluation of the economic-legal dimension	<b>.810</b>	.382	.246	.368
Political-administrative integration	.137	<b>.850</b>	.516	.221
Democratic integration	.016	.013	<b>.751</b>	.382
Administrative integration	<b>.381</b>	.204	.118	.036
Evaluation of the public service quality criterion	.280	.190	<b>.840</b>	.210
Evaluation of the relevance criterion	.370	<b>.620</b>	.440	<b>.700</b>
Evaluation of the effectiveness criterion	<b>.890</b>	<b>.610</b>	.130	.380
Evaluation of the efficiency criterion	<b>.830</b>	<b>.570</b>	.580	.290
% variance explained	44.5%	11.5%	10%	7%
Spread of the 60 authorities by classification into dynamic clusters <sup>12</sup>	31	20	5	4

With k-means clustering, the 60 respondent authorities are distributed among the four axes, and 31 authorities belong to axis 1. Given our previous observation, the majority of current practices of French local authorities can thus be characterised by a model of an administrative nature. Practices arising from a political model may exist but remain, all in all, marginal. However, they do show the willingness and ability of some authorities to initiate innovative

<sup>12</sup> The classification is performed in two steps: a hierarchical classification first to identify the number of axes and non-hierarchical (K-means clustering method) to improve the distribution of authorities in identified factorial axes.

initiatives beyond traditional models and that make it possible to respond to their new constraints, in particular financial.

### II.C) Discussion of the results

The results of our research show firstly the existence of a French performance management model resulting in trends shared by French local authorities with regard to the instrumental and methodological content, and the methods of steering public performance. It turns out in fact that the tools and methods that constitute performance initiatives, as they currently stand, continue to be guided by administrative and internal logics. Indeed, in general, we highlight the weak political dimension in the impetus, backing, implementation, monitoring of the initiatives adopted voluntarily by French local authorities. This result confirms the work of Carassus and Gardey (2009) highlighting the apolitical nature of performance initiatives rolled out in France. Nevertheless, our study shows that performance management has gained a strong foothold and can be compared to the analyses of Rouban (2008), Kuhlmann (2010a) and Ongaro (2008) on the progressive, incremental, slow and difficult dissemination of this mode of management in the French public sector. In contrast, and contrary to the view put forward by Kuhlmann (2010a), the current initiatives, because of their characteristics and their methodological and instrumental components, appear limited in their ability to improve clarity and transparency, and to promote a management geared towards the users, the impacts and the quality of public action.

In line with Carassus and Gardey (2009) or Huteau et al. (2008), and based on responses from 60 authorities<sup>13</sup>, our results show, more specifically, that these initiatives are, in a large majority, driven by territorial civil servants. The weak political dimension is also highlighted (1) by the nature of the planning, predominantly operational, (2) the disconnection between public policies and evaluation mechanisms, (3) by the budgetary and quantitative logics of the indicators implemented, but also (4) by the focus on the optimisation of resources and internal needs of the organisation. In the light of the concept of performance management and its

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<sup>13</sup> In the methodology we addressed the limited size of the sample relative to the number of authorities in France but the answers correspond to almost all authorities that have initiated a performance initiative. Furthermore, the characterisation of the performance management model is spreading among the entire population of the French authorities.

objectives, as highlighted in the literature and detailed in Part I.A, the French initiatives appear incomplete or partial in their purpose and scope.

Thus, qualified as administrative rather than political, the performance management model of the French local authorities appears marked by the predominance of endogenous and basic control practices, as shown by Batac et al. (2009) and Kuhlmann (2010.b) and Busson-Villa (1999).

In addition, the French model differs, as it currently stands, from the international practices already analysed. Thus, the initiatives launched in the Anglo-Saxon or Nordic authorities seem to be characterised not only by a strong involvement of elected representatives, but also by a desire to put the citizen at the centre of the tools and methods used (Council of Europe 2005; Hohnsen and Vakkuri, 2006). Through the emphasis on analysing the effects of public policy and on the quality indices, they seem to pay more attention to the evaluation of public policies and their impacts on their external environment (Folz et al, 2009; Ammons and Rivenbark, 2008). Our study thus confirms, at the local level, the existing implementation gap between a country with a Napoleonic type administrative model such as France and the Anglo-Saxon countries, a difference that was observed by some of the literature on comparative public administration.

This discrepancy could be explained by the novelty of these holistic initiatives in French local authorities, which have been around for less than ten years, especially when compared to the Anglo-Saxon authorities. The research conducted by Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) thus suggest the existence of a life cycle of performance initiatives that evolve during their development and their degree of maturation from a relatively simple and ad hoc model, limited only to the monitoring of activity indicators and resource consumption, to a more complex model including a variety of issues, actors and evaluation dimensions and integrating all internal decision-making processes (political-strategic, budgetary, operational).

In contrast to this interpretation, which may appear normative or prescriptive, there is a more contingent or institutional analysis which highlights the influence of national political-administrative and cultural contexts on the characteristics and dynamics of development of public performance management approaches. The idea here is that there is no such thing as an ideal model or typical development pathways but approaches whose effectiveness, legitimacy and sustainability are the result of their adequacy and compliance in the face of national politico-administrative systems and traditions (Ongaro, 2008 Rhodes et al., 2012). And well

beyond this time factor, the administrative nature of the French local model is believed to reveal itself and affirm itself not only in the original planning, accountability and evaluation features, but also in the way in which these initiatives are implemented and steered. This deviation from the Anglo-Saxon practices would thus reveal dimensions that are more cultural and institutional (Rhodes et al., 2012) than temporal. This would then confirm the analyses of Wollmann (2008), Kuhlmann (2010), Rhodes et al. (2012) who argue that, especially in the case of the French public sector, the importance of institutional traditions and legacies leading to the persistence of bureaucratic behaviour and modes of operation of a legalistic and hierarchical nature, despite the effective diffusion of NPM. We are therefore seeing a coexistence of these two modes of public management and the emergence of a mixed or hybrid neo-Weberian type system (Kuhlmann, 2010a).

However, the differences observed, especially the highlighting in our sample of initiatives that are relatively open to their environment and geared towards the evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of public action, show, in our view, that national political and administrative factors, while important, do not alone explain the dynamics of managerial innovation in public organisations. More local and individual factors related to organisational and managerial characteristics and learning effects appear to explain the differences noted between public organisations in the same country. We believe, like Ongaro (2008), that a combination of macro and micro factors determines the performance management dynamics of public organisations and that, despite the importance of national political and administrative institutional determinisms, the local authorities have leeway and potential for evolution.

### Conclusion: A French model of local performance management currently guided by an administrative logic, which risks generating only weak lessons

The definition and testing of an analytical framework of local public performance initiatives as well as the quantitative characterisation of the practices of French authorities are the main empirical and methodological contributions of our research. Our observations thus make it possible to highlight, at instrumental and steering level, the gap and differing pathways observed with the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries in some of the literature. The administrative nature of the performance management model by French local authorities, highlighted by our study, could eventually, if the current model does not change, only generate very few lessons. Indeed, the weak political dimension of French local initiatives

could, first of all, have both managerial and democratic consequences. Managerial, on the one hand, due to a lack of relevance in determining public policies with environmental requirements or in the allocation of resources to the authority's goals. Democratic, on the other hand, due to the poor quality of reporting outside the authority.

It therefore strikes us as important to analyse the terms and conditions of the transition from an administrative model characterising the French practices to a more political model. The democratic and managerial challenges of these local performance initiatives could then be activated in a way that is complementary to current practices, in particular to meet the new demands and requirements of all local stakeholders. Highlighting national models is fundamental because it paves the way for the identification and analysis of local determinisms, whether historical, institutional, political or economic in nature, that affect the adoption process or innovation in the field of public performance management. This type of research makes it possible, on the other hand, to shed light on the international or inter-regional transferability of managerial methods. **Nevertheless, we believe that the analysis of local and micro determinants may be relevant for understanding the dynamics and features of local public performance management.**

One of the extensions of this research could thus consist of a study of local organisational and managerial factors influencing the degree of adoption and use of these initiatives by French local authorities. Longitudinal clinical analyses would thus be interesting to understand within the same authority the dissemination, ownership and institutionalisation mechanisms of these practices, at micro and organisational level, in particular to analyse the potential influence of time, individual and managerial factors and learning effects in the change processes.

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**Annex 1:** extracts from the questionnaire on the factors of accountability of local actors in the steering of the initiative.

Wording of the question	Answer method: Yes – no
Creation of a steering committee for this initiative	
Organisation of political and administrative study commissions around missions and programmes	
The local performance initiatives are characterised by individual accountability tools (objective contract by officials...)	
Participation of elected representatives in the quantification of the MPA	
Participation of the elected representatives in the determination of strategic objectives	
Participation of the elected representatives in the determination of the operational objectives	
Participation of the elected representatives in the definition of indicators	
Participation of the elected representatives in the production of the data necessary to measure the results	
Integration of the directorate general	
Integration of the operational directors	
Integration of the functional departments	
Integration of the officials	
The Annual Steering Plan was presented during the Budget orientation Debate	
The Annual Steering Plan was annexed to the Original Budget	
Organisation of political and administrative study commissions around missions and programmes	