



## Exercising Control Through Institutional Policies

Public Management

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Over the last thirty years, Western public administrations have been undergoing reforms to modernize their structures, considered outdated, too heavy and not adapted to the reality of the modern environment. Inspired by the private sector management practices, these reforms have led to a transformation of the management tools implemented in the public sector. But the quest for greater flexibility also led to a quest for new ways of controlling the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. Based on previous research that demonstrated that new management tools have instead led to greater control within organizations, this paper focuses more specifically on the content of institutional policies to understand how control is exercised over time through the instruments of the government. Drawing upon Lascoumes and Le Galès' literature on the policy instruments approach, according to which policy instruments are not neutral and can be used by governments to achieve specific objectives, results show that these policies are in fact ever more restrictive and that the responsibilities lie with higher-ranking civil servants and even politicians in some cases. In fact, this analysis indicates that these policies provide effective mechanisms for the government allowing for a greater control over public organizations. Results also show that the narrowing of the frontier between the administrative and political spheres do not only refer to a politicization of the Administration, but also to a process of *administratization* of the political sphere.