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Managerialism, Quality and Employment in Local Government

The Impact of Quality Management Initiatives on Work and Trade Unions

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes how the implementation of quality management methods in local government organisations have affected the inter-related issues of the public-service labour process and collective bargaining arrangements.

A series of interviews with managers and union officials, and questionnaire surveys of trade union members attitudes at four disparate local authorities pursuing quality management was conducted over two and a half years.

The findings indicate that the nature and outcomes of quality management implementation are contingent upon pre-existing employment relations within the organisation - particularly relating to trade union entrenchment and activity. The implementation of quality management, however, does have a subsequent effect on the labour process and collective bargaining.

While there are considerable differences between authorities, evidence of increased worker 'commitment' as a result of quality management is inconclusive, though workers do perceive net increases in work-rates. Workers also perceive a net decline in trade union influence over working practices.

It is concluded that unions need to address the issue of quality management in a critical manner in order to be able to adequately protect the interests of their members and to retain the long term legitimacy in the workplace.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term	Definition (where applicable)
3Es	Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness	Central government mantra for public administration reforms in the 1980s.
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor - Confederation of Industrial Organisations	US umbrella group for Trade Unions (Labor Unions) similar to the TUC in the UK
APT&C	Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical	Whitley-based classification for white collar-staff in local government
CLS	Community and Leisure Services	Corporate Department at Newcastle City Council
BUPA		Private health scheme
BS 5750		Quality system standard - now ISO 9000/2
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering	Method and practice of tendering local government services to external bids.
CoSLA	Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities	Scottish local government association
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality	
CYP	Children and Young Persons (Section)	Sub-division of Community & Leisure Services: Newcastle City Council
DoE	Department of the Environment	Government department that has direct responsibility for local government
DSO	Direct Service Organisation	Autonomous section of local authority that deals with a specific function e.g. refuse collection, leisure, cleaning, maintenance. Also referred to as <i>Direct Labour Organisation</i> (DLO)
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry	Government department that has responsibility for promoting trade
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment	Inward investment by overseas organisation(s)
FMI	Financial Management Initiative	Management system set up for UK Civil Service in 1980s.
GLC	Greater London Council	London-wide local authority. Abolished in 1986.
GMB	General and Municipal Boilermakers Union	Trade union representing mainly manual workers.

Abbreviation	Term	Definition (where applicable)
HRM	Human Resource Management	(i) Personnel function within an organisation (ii) Approach to the study of employment relations
HRU	Human Resources Unit	Devolved personnel function at Brent Council
ICTU	Irish Confederation of Trades Unions	Umbrella group for trade unions in the Republic of Ireland - similar to the TUC in the UK
liP	Investors in People	Accredited management system for training. The system aims to ensure a firm link between the activities of all employees to the objectives of the business.
ISO 9000/2	-	International quality system standard
JIT	Just-in-time	Production management method devised in Japan. Applied predominantly within the motor industry.
LA	Local Authority	Administrative body providing designated services to local population.
LBC	London Borough Council	Unitary local authority in London.
LPD	Labour Process Debate	Academic debate concerning the nature of managerial control of work (see chapter 5)
LPT	Labour Process Theory	Theory concerning the organisation and control of work
MBA	Master of Business Administration	Postgraduate/post-experience management qualification.
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council	Unitary local authority in designated English urban areas.
MINIS	Management Information System for Ministers	Management system set up for Civil Service in 1980s, associated with Michael Heseltine.
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Monetary policy of 1979 Conservative government.
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers	Trade union representing (mainly APT&C) workers in local government. Now merged with NUPE and COHSE in UNISON
NEC	National Executive Committee	Theoretically, the governing body of the Labour Party between annual conference.
NGA	National Graphical Association	Printworkers trade union
NHS	National Health Service	
NPM	New Public Management	Academic discourse on the renewal agenda for public administration in the 1990s.

Abbreviation	Term	Definition (where applicable)
NSR	New Suburban Right	New Right Conservative administration in local government (see Holliday 1991)
NUL	New Urban Left	New Left Labour administration in local government (particularly the 1980s)
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees	Trade union representing (mainly manual) workers in local government. Now merged with NALGO and COHSE in UNISON
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification	
PALS	Personal Appraisal & Learning Scheme	HRM practice adopted at Arun Council
PRP	Performance Related Pay	Method of reward management linking employee performance to pay
QDU	Quality Development Unit	Central department responsible for co-ordinating quality at Brent Council.
Q-Score	Quality Score	A quantitative index used here to rank local authorities by their use of quality management. The score is derived from the sum of selected quality management methods being used.
SOGAT82	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (1882)	Printworkers trade union
SSSC	Statement of Support Service Costs	Part of provisions within client-contractor splits in compulsory competitive tendering process
SPC	Statistical Process Control	Quantitative method for monitoring and controlling process quality
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union	General trade union representing, predominantly, manual workers
TQM	Total Quality Management	Holistic management methodology that aims to involve all personnel and functions toward the goal of improving product or service quality.
TUC	Trades Union Congress	Umbrella body representing trade unions in the UK
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)	European Legislation governing the rights of workers where jobs have been transferred directly to an external contractor. Based upon Acquired Rights Directive 1977.
UDC	Urban Development Corporation	Local economic development quango. Set up in 1980s.

Abbreviation	Term	Definition (where applicable)
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence	
UNISON		Trade union representing workers in local government. Formed from merger between NALGO, COHSE and NUPE. UK's largest trade union.
VCT	Voluntary Competitive Tendering	The practice of a local authority tendering services to private contractors voluntarily. This practice is associated with the 'new-right'.
WDC	Wycombe District Council	
WPG	Working for the Public Group	Inter-departmental team set up in Arun Council to monitor and steer the <i>Working for the Public</i> customer care strategy

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Section I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with quality management and local government employee relations. Based upon research conducted in, predominantly, four local authorities between 1995 and 1997, it addresses the issues of how quality management initiatives affect the labour process (the effort bargain, work regulation, work intensification work standardisation) and collective bargaining (management-union relations, management-worker relations and union-worker relations). In doing this, consideration is given to the competing forces of, on the one hand, the increasing standardisation of managerial decision-making in public sector organisations and, on the other hand, the inherent complexity of the local authority organisation - making the outcomes of any managerial strategy contingent upon the precedents of local historical developments in political, organisational and union-management relations.

Quality management methods pose certain short-term challenges to the legitimacy of trade union organisation within the workplace. However, the challenges posed should be viewed within the context of an overall decline in trade union bargaining power at the national level. While the attempt to individualise work by unitarist managerial strategies like total quality management (TQM) may indicate a manifestation of the general shift in management-worker relations, it does not indicate any permanent shift from collectivism to individualism in employment relations. It is therefore considered that the eventual outcomes of quality management initiatives within local government workplace will depend upon the dynamics of the interaction of managers and workers - both individually and collectively. In short, the *intended* outcomes predicted in prescriptive management texts should not be assumed to be the *actual* outcomes of managerial decision-making.

Background

The permeation of quality management into local government reflects the broader issues concerning the reformulation of the public sector (Kirkpatrick & Martinez-Lucio 1995b). In the late 1990s, public administration is dominated by an entrenched managerialist orthodoxy initially formulated around the moral and economic

assumptions of the *new right* critique of the welfare state in the 1970s and 1980s. This consensus is manifested in the reformulation of the structures and mechanisms that underpin local government, and by ideological parameters that govern what is possible and desirable in local public service provision. Firstly a number of structural 'reforms' now determine how public services operate - the use of 'quasi-markets', performance monitoring, compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) and cost-centre based accounting practices. Secondly these mechanisms have been used in conjunction with an ideological imperative that has shifted attention away from the output of public services to the processes involved - the focus is increasingly concerned with the need to improve the 'value-for-money' performance of public sector organisations. In turn, the championing of consumer choice, competition and entrepreneurship has been used to justify the 'exposure' of public service workers to the 'customers' of services. Here, managers are seen as neutral arbitrators of efficiency, equity and public accountability. Thirdly, then, this 'new consensus' in public service provision has required that workers are not insulated from 'new and innovative' ways of working by the 'vested producer interests' that constitute public service trade unions.

Enter quality management. The 'quality' issue encapsulates all of the above issues. Through the conflation of 'quality' and 'management' honorific status is ascribed to a managerialist agenda. The quality *management* agenda is ideally suited to the vertical disintegration of public sector organisations into purchaser and provider agencies; is fully compatible with consumerist ideology; and as a unitarist managerial package developed in the private sector, has a track record in the broad arena of industrial relations. As the introduction to a recent critical account of quality management in the public sector put it:

For us, quality is not a politically neutral objective to which all parties are equally committed. On the contrary, it is intensely political and has been used to promote a range of new forms of management control and restructuring of traditional working practices, as well as genuine efforts to improve service delivery. (Kirkpatrick & Martinez-Lucio 1995a p8)

There has been an increased interest in the impact of quality management methods in public sector organisations in recent years, yet most are either prescriptive in nature (Sanderson 1992; Skelcher 1992; Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994), or are concerned with the content of the agenda itself (Cochrane 1994; Warde 1994; Walsh 1995). While both of these issues are perfectly legitimate, there remain some gaps concerning the

perceptions of 'the managed'. The intention, here, is to address the outcome of implementing policies inspired by the described agendas, in terms of employees. It is recognised here that managerialism has had an important affect on how the labour process is now viewed by managers in public services. It is also recognised, however, that managers do not always achieve their objectives, that managers perceptions of what has been achieved may be different to what employees may perceive and that managers actual behaviour may be different to their stated intention. This adds complexity to a number of contingencies already present in the local government organisational setting; the non-commercial nature of public services, the strong presence of public service trade unions and the organisational complexity of local authorities (in terms of decision-making channels and the diversity of work and skills involved across the range of services).

The presence of trade unions in the local authority is not a small issue. Where quality management has been introduced in the commercial sector, it has been associated with non-union firms in the US and 'enterprise-union' firms in Japan. Where quality management has been introduced into strongly unionised sectors in the UK (the motor industry) the relationship between trade unionism and quality management has been uneasy (Starkey & McKinlay 1989). Introducing quality management into local government will not only be affected by the prior presence of trade unions, then, but the operation of quality management, through the managerialist agenda by which it is legitimised, will also affect collective bargaining arrangements in local government.

Structure of Thesis

The thesis is subdivided into thematic sections, section one being the introductory section. In Section 2, the background issues involved in introducing quality management into local government are discussed. Here, chapter 2 traces the origins of managerialism in local government from its roots in the *new right* critique - of the welfare state, trade unions and political decision-making - through to the assimilation of managerialism into *New Labour's* consumer-centred approach to citizenship in the 1990s. Chapter 3 identifies the origins of quality management in the commercial sector and traces its permeation into local government in the 1990s - both in terms of why

quality management is seen as applicable and the extent to which it has been (nominally) adopted by local authorities.

Section 3 is concerned with quality management and employment relations in local government. Here, chapter 4 discusses the background issues surrounding trade union involvement in local government and the issues raised for trade unions in introducing quality management. Chapter 5 discusses the issues raised for the organisation of work when introducing quality management into the non-commercial environment of local government.

Section 4 discusses the methodological issues involved in researching the effects of management initiatives on the workplace. Chapter 6 considers how the workplace should be considered in light of recent debates about the present nature of work in the labour process debate and describes how issues relating to the managerial re-organisation of work in the labour process debate are intrinsically linked to issues concerning collective bargaining. Chapter 7 describes the methods used and case-studies identified for the study of the research.

Section 5 outlines the findings of research conducted in four local authorities operating quality management policies. Chapter 8 is an authority-by-authority description of the findings on key themes through interviews with managers and trade union representatives. Chapter 9 and 10 describes the findings of a survey of *Unison* members conducted at the four authorities: chapter 9 providing a description of the survey population and chapter 10 describing the opinions on a range of issues relating to quality management, work and trade unions.

In section 6, the theoretical concerns raised in sections 2 and 3 are integrated with the empirical findings of section 5 and discussed. In chapter 11 the implications of introducing quality management into local government are discussed in relation to the impact on the labour process. Here, the local government labour process is re-assessed in light of what aspect of the labour process is attempted to be controlled by quality management. Differences emerge according to the strength of the policy being pursued - a factor contingent upon the political, demographic, management and industrial relations background in each case - and between different types of work in each authority. In chapter 12 the impact of quality management is assessed in relation to the

position of the trade union. This is assessed in terms of the union's collective bargaining relationship with the authority management and in terms of its legitimacy with the workers in the local authority. A number of dangers for trade unions are highlighted here and some strategic choices are offered regarding unions' possible responses to the introduction of quality management.

Section II

Managerialism and Local Government

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF MANAGERIALISM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This section provides the background to the development of quality management in local government. In this chapter, the background issues shaping the developments in local government are discussed while chapter 4 discusses the background to the 'quality' phenomenon'.

The nature and outcomes of employment changes that are the focus of this thesis have been underpinned by a more general shift in the nature of the public sector as a whole. Over the past two decades a profound shift has occurred in the way that public services are organised. Although there are wider economic factors involved in these changes, the manner in which these economic issues have been dealt with has been based upon discretionary political interests. Amid the general attack upon the legitimacy of the welfare state (Mishra 1984) a new consensus has been built, based upon the reorganisation of public services on a new 'managerialist' agenda:

...the transfer, during the last decade or two, of managerialism from private-sector corporations to welfare-state services represents the injection of an ideological 'foreign body' into a sector previously characterised by quite different traditions of thought. (Pollitt 1990a: p11)

This chapter will define the concept and characteristics of managerialism in local government and trace its political origins in the new-right and its implementation by successive Conservative governments; and in the creation of a managerialist consensus by the political convergence that has occurred by the Labour Party.

Managerialism

The term managerialism is, perhaps, a rather broad concept. Indeed, it is not being suggested that management per se has not been a concern of all governments and local authorities, particularly since the advent of the welfare state itself. The broad concept of managerialism being used here is the one defined by Pollitt:

Managerialism is a set of beliefs and practices, at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumption that better management will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills (Pollitt 1990a: p1)

Managerialism, for Pollitt, is an ideology underpinned by the belief that social progress is obtained through rising productivity; that productivity is achieved through the application of technology (including organisational techniques); that to achieve these a disciplined workforce is required; that the management of an organisation is the means by which this should be achieved and that management is a separate and distinct section of the organisation and that, therefore, the management prerogative should be unimpinged. As a process it has encompassed the restructuring of state institutions, the redefining of relations between institutions. It has involved change implemented through direct control and through more subtle means (the use of consultants, advisors and the education system as support functions).

For Pollitt managerialism is deeply flawed through its lack of *coherence* and *realism*, its impact on *power structures* and through its very *value system*. Pollitt's critique is based upon his examination of the health and civil services in the UK and the US. While this forms a useful basis for an examination of UK local government in this study, there are a number of distinctions. Pollitt's analysis is, first, a critique of a relatively uniform 'neo-Taylorist' managerialism, whereas what is attempted here is an investigation into what Pollitt would term 'culture management'. Second, because local government is relatively autonomous of central government (and often exhibiting conflicting party political interests) a more complex relationship between the motives and outcomes of managerialism is evident. While broadly adhering to Pollitt's definition, then, the concept of managerialism used here is a broader one which incorporates the broad array of ideological, political, cultural and structural relationships that have affected the organisation of public services in the 1990s (Clarke and Newman 1997).

Pollitt correctly identifies the managerialist agenda as part of the political project of the new-right from the 1970s, being put into practice by successive Conservative governments in the 1980s and 1990s. In the sphere of local government, however, managerialism's increasing legitimacy in the 1990s can also be traced to an increasing incorporation of managerialist ideology within the Labour Party. It is important, then, to identify the origins of both of these trends, as both have informed the agenda within local government.

Managerialism and the New Right

The stated agenda of post 1979 government policy on local government has been inspired by a number of, often inconsistent, New Right beliefs about the nature of the public sector, the 'problem' of organised labour and of their relationship with each other. Despite these inconsistencies, there has remained a coherent ideological hostility towards organised labour and the (welfare oriented) public sector: the rhetoric being '*giving managers the right to manage*' and '*rolling back the frontiers of the state*'.

a) The New Right

The New Right consists of elements of conservatism and neo-liberalism leading to some of the tensions of its coherence (Gamble 1994). Conservatism, in its own terms, is not hostile to the notion of 'the state' - indeed it is in favour of a strong state. It is through the state's authority the prevailing social order may be preserved. Conservatism is in favour of free market capitalism and of (moral and fiscal) restraint. Change, for the conservative, should be incremental rather than rationalist. Neo-liberalism, in contrast, is in favour of a minimalist state, and of individual freedom determined by unfettered free market rationality. It is anti-pluralist, and anti-equality. The ambiguity that this leaves the new-right in, particularly with regard to the nature and role of the state, can be seen in the following passage from Hayek with regard to the problem of how to redeploy labour (after WWII):

There will still be many people who, if they are paid according to what their services will then be worth to society, would under any system have to be content with a lowering of their material position relative to that of others.

If, then, the trade unions successfully resist any lowering of the wages of the particular groups in question, there will be only two alternatives open: either coercion will have to be used, i.e. certain individuals will have to be selected for compulsory transfer to other and relatively less well paid positions, or those who can no longer be employed at the relatively high wages they have earned during the war must be allowed to remain unemployed till they are willing to accept work at a relatively lower wage. (Hayek 1944 pp153-4)

The New Right gained credibility during the economic crises of the 1970s and became the 'unofficial' ideology of the Conservative Party from 1979 onwards. The politics of the New Right were developed around two main themes. First, by the perceived failures and humiliation of the 1970-74 Heath government - back-tracking on the Industrial Relations Bill, 'U-turning' on the nationalisation of Rolls-Royce, and the humiliating defeat in the 1973 miners strike. Second, by the perceived crisis being faced by the

1974-9 Labour government - the breakdown of prices and incomes policies, the 'winter of discontent' and the IMF loan. Political priorities for the incoming Conservative administration were, then, 'taming the unions', curbing inflation, and 'de-nationalising' some of the most recently nationalised industries. The Conservatives' economics were basically anti-Keynesian; its constituent parts traceable to monetarism, the 'Bacon and Eltis thesis', public choice theory and supply-side economics. These will be described below.

The first major influence on Conservative policy was that of monetarism. Monetarism was not 'new', but began to find new adherents following the publication of Milton Friedman's 'The role of monetary policy' (1968) which, when viewed retrospectively, seemed to offer an explanation to the stagflation of the mid 1970s. Monetarism argued that the artificial stimulation of the economy through government deficit financing was ultimately doomed to failure. This was due to wage expectations of workers, aided by 'monopolistic' trade unions, continually forcing the price of labour above the rate of productivity: this creating a continuous cycle of inflationary pressure within the economy.

The solution, for monetarists, was for the cycle to be broken. Government was to focus exclusively (in terms of economic policy) on ensuring that monetary supply matched (and did not exceed) economic growth. Within this zero-sum scenario, people would be expected to behave according to 'rational expectations': employers would be curtailed from being able to pay the demanded wage increases and inflation would fall; falling inflation would then further curtail the demand for wage increases.

It is clear from the above, that monetarism directly challenged the position of organised labour in the economy. In 1979 the new Conservative government aimed to put monetarism to the test and The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was launched. While the MTFS did not achieve its stated aims (it failed to achieve any of its monetary targets and its central role in controlling inflation was doubtful), it did achieve an upward shift in the 'long run Phillips curve' (Friedman *ibid.*) creating significantly higher levels of structural unemployment in the UK economy. Monetarism's biggest role in taming organised labour's wage demands through 'rational expectations', then, was through more through fear of unemployment than

through confidence in price stability. Significantly, however, the MTFS re-introduced the balanced budget as a central tenet of economic policy - in practice meaning the fiscal constraint of the public sector.

Allied to monetarism, at this time, was 'supply-side' economics - meaning the emphasis on the problems of labour supply in the economy, to the exclusion of demand. A reason given for the monetarist experiment causing, rather than curing, unemployment was the rigidity of the labour market. Unions and employment regulations created over-employment in some sectors of the economy and kept the price of labour artificially high. Unemployment benefits were deemed as being too high, proving to be dis-incentives for the unemployed to work. Supply-side economics, then, provided the 'economic theory' by which trade unions could be attacked directly. It also, in some of its guises, argued for a reduction in the general tax burden. While some of this could be considered compatible with monetarist thinking, it often contradicted it. 'Laffer-curve' predictions of optimising government expenditure by reducing direct tax rates was bizarrely reminiscent of Keynesian deficit financing but found favour in the New Right experiment, being closely associated with 'Reaganomics' and the 'Lawson boom'.

The Bacon and Eltis thesis (1976), as it became known, was an early economic rationale for 'rolling back the frontiers of the state' in the 1980s. Bacon and Eltis, beginning with a series of articles in the Times in the early 1970s, developed the theory that Britain's economic problem was that the state sector of the economy was 'crowding out' the more efficient organisations in the private sector, raising the overall price of capital and thus lowering levels of investment. The problem, for Bacon and Eltis, centred on the 'non-marketable' sector of the state - in practice the various institutions of the welfare state.

Perhaps the most important influence on New Right thinking on the public sector has been public choice theory. Public choice suggests that the state acts as an inefficient allocator of resources because its decision-making is driven by 'bureau-maximising' tendencies within the state who broker political interests competing for resources. This is often exacerbated by the electoral cycle whereby macroeconomic policy is geared to produce short term reductions in unemployment and taxation, only to manifest

themselves later, in reversal and in increased inflation. For public choice, such discretionary decision-making powers should be removed from public bureaucracy and political interests and placed within the sphere of consumer sovereignty where competition tempers such wasteful behaviour. Public Choice, then, provides the New Right with its central rationale for privatisation and deregulation.

b) Government policy and managerialism 1979-1996

Seen retrospectively, post 1979 government policy was managerialist in two important and intertwined directions. Government policy aimed to shift the *scale* and *scope* of the state's role in the economy and to change the *nature* and *internal culture* of the organisations of the state. Managerialism has also been inexorably tied-up with government's industrial relations policy as a whole, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

In the case of the role of government policy in shifting the *scale* the state activity, key policies included direct privatisation - in local government this including tenants' right-to-buy of local authority housing and bus privatisation; 'opt-outs' - including *Housing Action Trusts*, grant-maintained status for schools and higher education opt-outs through incorporation. The government also displaced local government through the setting-up of 'quangos' such as the *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs) and *Training and Enterprise Councils* - and *Local Enterprise Councils* in Scotland. Finally the government used compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) as a means by which local authority services, would be subject to bids from the private sector. The degree of intervention into the affairs of local government by central government over this period was almost unprecedented. Table 2:1 shows the extent of Conservative legislation associated with major local government changes.

Table 2:1: Local Government Legislation 1979 - 1995¹

Act	Significance
Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set Rate Support Grant as central government determined amount. Creation of DSOs and introduction of CCT for DSO's
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions - Scotland) Act 1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed Secretary of State to cap local authority expenditure
Local Government...Act 1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legitimised grant penalties Prohibited authorities from levying additional rates
Local Government Finance Act 1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Part III) Set up the Audit Commission Compelled LAs to monitor specified performance targets
Local Government (Interim Provisions) Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up abolition of metropolitan counties
Rates Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced rate capping
Local Government Act 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolished metropolitan counties
Local Government Act 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curtailed the use of 'political' publicity by councils
Local Government Act 1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made changes to education finance
Local Government Finance Act 1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made changes to the rate support grant
Local Government Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering
Local Government Finance Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced the Community Charge (Poll Tax)
Local Government & Housing Act 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Part I) Changes to staff recruitment
Local Government Finance...Act 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial reporting
Local Government Act 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced Citizen's Charter
Local Government Finance Act 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced the Council Tax
Local Government (Wales) Act 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up new Unitary Authorities to replace County/Districts in Wales
Local Government etc. Act (Scotland) 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up new Unitary Authorities to replace Regional/Districts

In the case of altering the culture of public sector institutions into more 'commercial' operations, this has been a more consistent project of the government over the period. It was this and denationalisation (*not* privatisation), which was the stated agenda in the Conservative Party manifesto in 1979:

¹ This list covers major legislation affecting local government autonomy and is not exhaustive. Between 1979 and 1994 210 Acts of Parliament affecting local government were passed (Source: Labour Party: Renewing Democracy, Rebuilding Communities WWW source)

We will offer to sell back to private ownership the recently nationalized aerospace and shipbuilding concerns, giving their employees the opportunity to purchase shares...

We want to see those industries that remain nationalized running more successfully and we will therefore interfere less with their management and set them a clearer financial discipline in which to work. (Conservative Party Manifesto 1979)

Civil Service practice had been identified as ripe for reform since the Fulton Report in 1968. The New Right agenda that underpinned the 1979 Thatcher government, however, aimed more specifically to introduce a more commercial ethos into Civil Service working practice to replace the generalist, committee oriented decision-making processes that existed.

The first formal initiative to achieve this was the setting up of the Rayner Scrutinies. This ongoing series of investigations aimed to identify the means by which a more 'business-like' approach could be introduced - Rayner was seconded from Marks and Spencer. It resulted in 100,000 Civil Service jobs being lost by 1984 (Elcock 1991). This initiative was complemented by the Financial Management Initiative (FMI) for all Civil Service departments in 1982, being developed from Michael Heseltine's MINIS system. The FMI was designed to restructure departments into a series of cost centres from where 'inefficient' practices could be readily identified and eliminated.

In 1988 the cost centre ethos expanded through the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit ('The Ibbs Report'). The outcome of Ibbs was the 'Next Steps' initiatives which were aimed at splitting each government department into executive/policy roles, and functional roles. From this, the principle of allowing core government functions to be administered by arms-length agencies, through a formal contract relationship, came into being and it became possible for core functions of the state to be offered for private sector involvement through 'market-testing'.

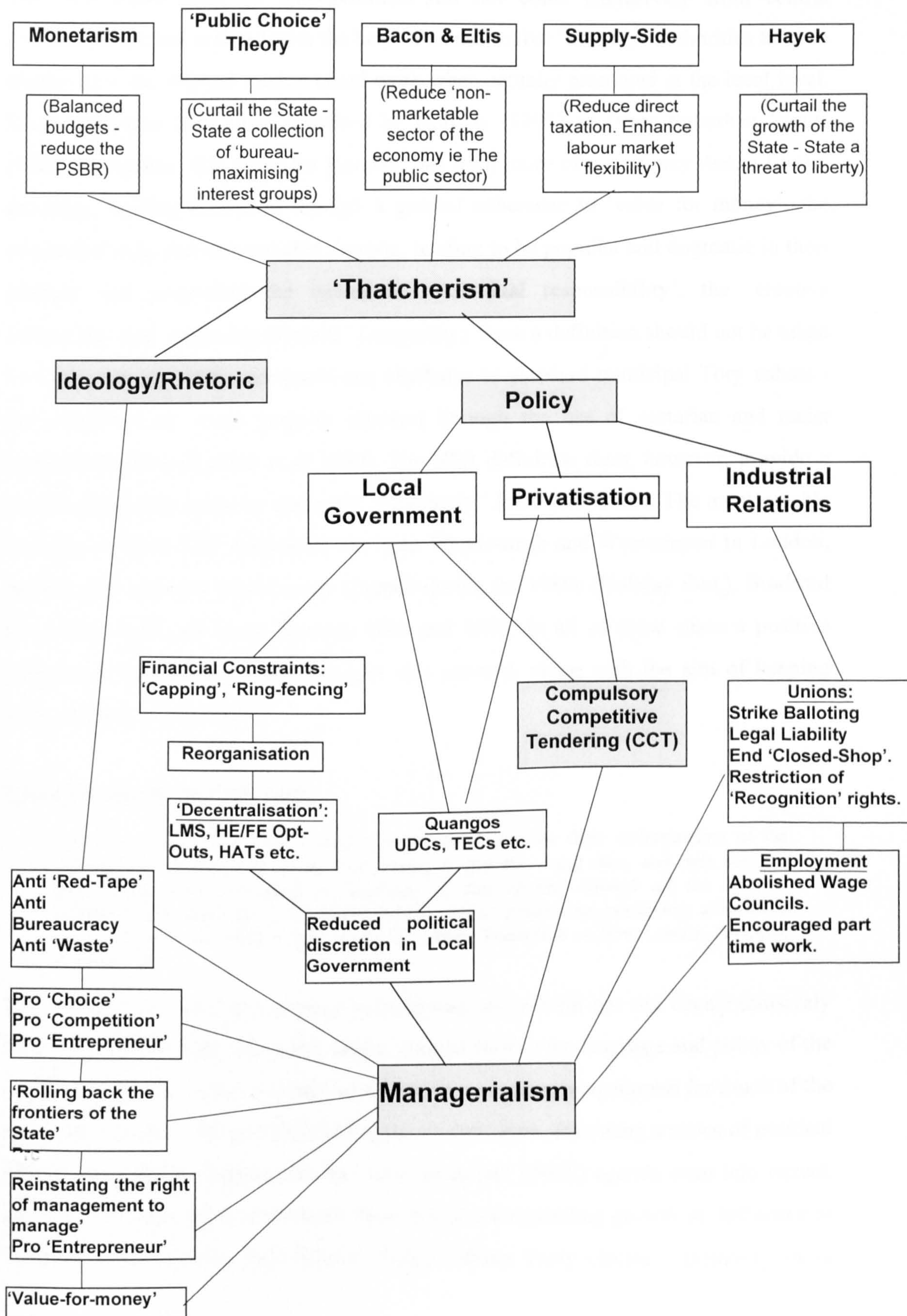
While these initiatives did not pass through the Civil Service without internal resistance, it was not faced with party political opposition from the controlling hierarchy of the organisations being 'reformed' - as was often the case with local authorities. The means by which the government attempted to force its 'cultural changes' onto the operation of local government were often tied up with its general state restructuring programme. This was often crude and opportunist - as was the case with the abolition of the GLC and Metropolitan Councils in 1986. The other means it used, however, was through the use of proxy measures whose effects were incremental.

They included the setting up of arms-length institutions such as the Audit Commission (and the Accounts Commission in Scotland) in 1983 with a remit of monitoring the financial performance of local authorities and health authorities. Other financial constraints imposed by central government included ratecapping - whereby local government spending was given a ceiling regardless of local preferences; the re-allocation of rate support grants; and by the imposition of financial ring-fencing in areas where responsibilities were transferred from central government to local government (e.g. Care in the Community). All of these measures had the effect of removing the scope for policy discretion from local authorities, which in itself is a managerialist objective: to re-focus the agenda of the organisation away from *what* the organisation does in favour of *how* it does it.

This agenda was to have been completed with the Community Charge (Poll Tax) in 1988. The Poll Tax aimed to replace the property based local taxation that funded local government with a flat rate taxation levied on all residents in the borough. It would thus, it was assumed, focus local voters' minds as to the spending activities of local authorities. It was, of course withdrawn in 1992 after great unpopularity, organised opposition and non-payment made the whole system untenable.

In terms of changing the 'culture' of local government, probably the most significant influence throughout the 1980s and 1990s has been CCT. Initially touted in the 1980 Local Government Planning and Land Act, CCT forced local authorities to re-organise the various intermeshed functions into distinct purchaser and provider units in order that the provider functions could be tendered for private bids. The principle was partly based on orthodox New Right economics of the inherent efficiency savings that could be gained by competition, but also on some newer economic theory based on hybrid organisational forms of 'quasi-markets' (LeGrand 1990). It also had private sector precedent in the 1980s, however, in the form of large organisations opting to out-source previously in-house functions to lower paying sub-contractors - often greatly eased where they held monopsony power over contractors. In CCT, purchaser discretion was substituted with guidelines (ultimately to the Secretary of State's own definition) prohibiting contract selection on any basis other than cost.

Figure 2:1: New-Right Influences on Managerialism



c) Managerialism and the new suburban right

The *New Right* push for managerialism did not come exclusively from central government. It was assisted with the help of Conservative 'flagship' authorities keen to display how the implied models could work when actually promoted at the local level. Such authorities have been described by Holiday (1991) as 'New Suburban Right' (NSR) authorities. The NSR, for Holiday, has been more of a tendency than a formal grouping, holding coherence through a general adherence to 'value for money', the minimalist state and anti-socialist rhetoric; tending to be populist and dogmatic in their politics; and promoting the values of 'individual responsibility', the 'creative competitor' and 'necessary diversity' (inequality). Such a definition should not be taken to imply that the NSR represented any challenge to standard municipal Tory values - the protection of vested property interests through the use of sectarian and racist symbolic politics (Butcher et al 1990). The NSR definition does, however, provide a useful distinction made by explicitly 'Thatcherite' local authorities. The most notable example of these NSR authorities has been Wandsworth and Westminster in London, but has also included Kent County Council during the 1980s (Holiday *ibid.*), Bradford for a brief spell and Brent between 1990 and 1996. In all of these cases a positive attitude to out-sourcing public services was pursued, along with the aim of keeping local taxation to a minimum.

Managerialism and the Left

It has been the job of New Labour's architects to translate their understanding of the customer into offerings he or she was willing to pay for. *"And then, and only then, to convey to potential customers the attributes of that offering through all the different components that make up a successful brand - product positioning, packaging, advertising and communications. Politics is no different."* (Peter Mandelson on New Labour. Guardian 30 April 1998)

The rationale for local government restructuring and reform has not been exclusively from the political right. There has been a marked shift in the language and policy of the left throughout the 1980s towards what could be viewed as tacit support for much of the new-right agenda. This is manifested in three ways. First, following a series of political defeats, municipal socialism and the 'new urban left' (NUL) agenda went into retreat, creating a vacuum of ideas. Second, there was a corresponding growth in influence of 'post-left' type politics and debates within Labour Party circles - primarily those

associated with 'post-Fordism'. Third, from the Labour Party at the national level, there was an increasing desire to distance the Party from the NUL for electoral reasons.

a) Managerialism and the New Urban Left

The first factor, the retreat from (and of) the NUL should be seen in the context of its own ascendancy. The NUL grew in the mid to late 1970s out of frustration with the complacency of the local Labour Party. Invigorated by many of the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, activists aimed to challenge local fiefdoms and open up local government (Livingstone 1987; Lansley, et al 1989). The NUL comprised of an array of left activists; communitarians, women's groups, black activists and gay activists, to Trotskyists - particularly Militant, Socialist Organiser, and umbrella groups such as London Labour Briefing. Initial activities of the NUL were in inner London - and particularly Lambeth - but this spread after the success of the late 1970s to a large number of councils, including the GLC itself; most of the urban county councils; urban districts such as Liverpool, Sheffield, Lothian, Manchester, Bradford, St. Helens; and district councils such as Bristol, Basildon, Leicester, Norwich, Brighton and Southampton (Lansley et al *ibid.*). The NUL, as a coalition of factions and interests, did not have a coherent programme per se although there was broad agreement on core issues. Along with mainstream socialist concerns about poverty, class, worker and trade union issues, the NUL put more emphasis on issues such as anti-racism, anti-sexism, gay rights, attacking bureaucracy and of single-issue themes such as environmentalism and the anti-nuclear movement.

The retreat of the NUL occurred partly as a result of the inevitable conflict with central government - and in particular, of how the NUL responded, and partly as a result of the ambiguous nature of the reforms that were being attempted. The conflict between the NUL and the Thatcher government has been well documented resulting, variously, in ratecapping, surcharging and abolition.

During this period, NUL councils were often faced with resistance from council trade unions and this, to some extent, highlighted some of the ambiguous nature of the reforms being implemented. Conflict occurred here for three main reasons (Heery 1987). First, the unions were likely to be strong in the areas where the NUL were also strong. Second, financial pressure forced by government was forcing NUL councils to

cut staff, and/or wages. Ironically, because NUL councils tended to have promoted more favourable conditions, the effects tended to be worse - causing conflict. Third, many of the organisational innovations pursued by NUL councils challenged existing working practices.

Inevitably the uneasy coalitions that made up the NUL began to subside once their initial objectives were achieved. Facing direct confrontation with the Government often tested these alliances, as did tactics and priorities when faced with budgetary decisions of their own. The rump of the NUL ceased to be a coherent entity by the 1990s. The key protagonists had either moved into national politics (e.g. Livingstone, Corbyn, Blunkett), single issue politics, or left the scene. Some remained, with newer 'post-left' activists and retained only a small element of the NUL agenda - and often only its rhetoric. Anti-racism and anti-sexism - at the time vilified by national press - became equal opportunities (in the workplace) and was seen as good management practice even in the private sector. Anti-racism and anti-sexism in housing and education became issues of equity and easily became a management issue when tied-up with the use of performance evaluation. Management, then, has come to be seen as more of an ally to the post-NUL agenda than have the trade unions.

b) The Post Fordist agenda

The Post-Fordist agenda was popularised through the journal *Marxism Today* from the mid to late 1980s up to its final demise in 1991². *Marxism Today* had long been seen as part of the wider influences on left Labour Party thinking. Post-Fordism basically asserts that, through the total transformation of the global production regime, the nature of organisations, economics and politics have also been transformed. While there remain, sometimes fiercely contested, distinctions between specific models of regulationism, and Post Fordism (Hirst & Zietlin 1991) the post-Fordist analysis is derived from merging the regulationism associated with Michel Aglietta and Piore and Sabel's flexible specialisation.

Drawing from regulationist analyses of capitalist development (Aglietta 1979), the Post Fordist assertion is that the present socio-economic condition has been arrived at

² Key figures within *Marxism Today* have since formed Demos, an 'independent', 'post-left' think-tank advising, among others, the Labour Party on social policy matters.

through a paradigmatic shift to the structure of the regime of accumulation. Rooted in Marxism, regulationism defines the socio-economic structure as being based in the regime of accumulation which is tied directly to a mode of regulation which evolves as a means by which to contain structural contradictions inherent in capitalist development. The Fordist mode of regulation emerged as the response to crises at the early part of the twentieth century and developed into its '*golden age of intensive accumulation*' (DeVroey 1987) following world war two. Fordism required mass production, a Taylorised labour process for the organisation of work, managed mass consumption to accommodate growth, and managed international macroeconomic regulation - with the US economy as its vanguard. The regulationists, assert that during the 1970s this entire structure had reached a terminal crisis through the internal contradictions upon which it was founded. The point of departure with Post Fordism from regulationism, however, is that the regulationists defined the response to the crisis of Fordism as remaining based upon an antagonistic class relationship:

Capitalism can escape from its contemporary organic crisis only by generating a new cohesion, a Neo-Fordism. This cohesion must be compatible with the wage relation, the principle of invariance of the capitalist mode of production. (Aglietta 1979 pp385)

Post Fordism, in contrast, assimilates the regulationist interpretation of the crisis of Fordism, yet removes the underlying basis for the crisis. It is strongly implied, then, that a Post Fordist condition has been arrived at, that the condition is stable and developing and that the condition has certain characteristics that mitigate against the adoption of Fordist strategies of regulation, politics and economic management.

The nature of Post Fordism is defined by the incorporation of *flexible specialisation* (Piore and Sabel 1984) as the core model of regulation. Piore and Sabel found 'exceptional success' in the "*re-emergence of the craft paradigm amidst the crisis* [of mass production]" (ibid. p205) Evidence for this was found in the 'Third Italy', the Salzburg area of Austria and the Baden-Wurtemberg area of Germany. Piore and Sabel argued that whilst satisfying luxury niche markets was an historically familiar pattern in unstable economic times the present shift represented, through chance, a more successful industrial paradigm than mass production:

This model stands the regnant paradigm of production on its head. Dominant sectors of the established system were subordinated, subordinate ones dominated. As in any revolution, it

was the reversal of roles - and the revelation of surprises in familiar structures - that disconcerted participants and observers. (ibid. p206)

The emergence of this new paradigm is not, it is claimed, temporary; it is the emerging dominant paradigm. The information technology revolution has facilitated the creation of flexible manufacturing systems which favour short-run production. Here, job shops will be automatic, design will be integrated with manufacturing systems and product life cycles will be shorter. Furthermore, technology is seen as being able to revolutionise work itself:

The advent of the computer restores human control over the production process; machinery again is subordinated to the operator. (ibid. p261)

There are four core 'faces' to what Piore and Sabel admit to be a hazily mapped-out flexible specialisation future. Its first guise is in the form of regional conglomeration whereby regions are bound as a combine of similar sized firms working in competition and co-operation with each other using binding local institutions such as guilds, affiliations, unions and co-operatives. Evidence from Tuscany is cited where the locally strong Communist controlled unions were aligning with local entrepreneurs. The second 'face' of flexible specialisation is in the creation of 'federated enterprises' on the interlocking directorship model not dissimilar to the Japanese *keiretsu*. The third and fourth 'faces' are concerned with the vertical structure of firms. Piore and Sabel propose 'solar' firms and 'workshop factories' whereby a network of workshop specialist suppliers operate as partners or collaborators in ventures with core businesses and are able to share the benefits of welfare services offered to core workers of the main business.

Piore and Sabel's flexible future is characterised by new forms of regulation: firstly, as its name implies, it is about flexibility *and* specialisation - the flexibility in production allows specialism in the product; secondly it is characterised by limited entry so as to ensure cohesion; thirdly it is characterised by a consensus encouraging competition and innovation; and fourthly it also needs to place limits on competition so as wage and price competition do not break the consensus down.

Regulationism remains an influential model in its own right and some care needs to be made not to confuse some regulationist definitions of Neo-Fordism and Post-Fordism with the Marxism Today variety. However, The broad Post-Fordist synthesis of

regulationism and flexible specialisation uses a determinist logic to assert what was intended to be a heuristic model for what is essentially, a pluralist model of industrial democracy. In doing this, all forms of economic and political organisation associated as being 'Fordist' become inappropriate. Murray makes the distinction between the two 'epochs' clear. Fordism was marked by

...its commitment to scale and the standard product (whether it is a Mars bar or an episode of Dallas); by authoritarian relations, centralised planning, and a rigid organisation built round exclusive job descriptions.(Murray 1988 p9)

Fordism was consistently challenged, Murray asserts, through the mass party and on the shop floor. Post-Fordism, however, is different:

In Post-Fordism, the worker is designed to act as a computer as well as a machine.(ibid. p11)

In line with the *logic* of regulationism Post-Fordism asserts the need to react to the change in production appropriately. An interpretation of Gramscian strategy is used here; what is needed is a 'war of position' not a 'war of manoeuvre'. Because Fordist forms of political participation are anachronistic in Post-Fordist 'new times' what is needed is adaptation:

What is needed is for the labour movement to shift the whole focus of policy, from money and markets to production...it is the way in which the labour movement addresses restructuring which should be at the centre of economic debate.(Murray 1989 p57)

Post-Fordist production is marked by flexible specialisation in the work-place which manifests itself in new consumption patterns, it is alleged. The market is now deemed to be determined by product diversity, style and quality and people's identity is shaped now by fragmented group allegiances and not by class or other work-based group allegiances. Because Fordism determined the political strategies for both right and left (Taylorism, the mass political party, class politics, the large bureaucratic state), Post-Fordism determines the nature of political strategies in the present (the politics of identity, consumerism, niche markets, flexibility). It is this rationale which allows the protagonists of Post-Fordism to assert that 'Thatcherism' was a new-right response to the Post-Fordist condition. The 'old left' in the Labour Party and trade unions were seen as inappropriately clinging to a strategy based upon an extinct battleground.

The empirical validity of the Fordist/Post-Fordist dichotomy (including the Piore and Sabel mass production/flexible specialisation variant) has been subject to lengthy

criticism (Williams et al 1987; Clarke 1990; Sayer 1989) and this is again endorsed here.

The critique of Post-Fordism is based upon its credibility both theoretically and empirically. Regulationism, has a strong tendency to be teleological. Because capitalist development is packaged into rigid regimes of accumulation/modes of regulation, historical events are retrospectively fitted into these periods as factors *of* that regime. In this scenario all events which may be reactions against such a regime are seen to be part of the regime (Bonefield 1987). Here, then, mass collective action is seen as 'part of the problem' rather than a reaction to it. The model is also technologically determinist (ibid). Technology is seen as independent, objective and inevitable rather than being shaped by the social relations in which the particular technology is developed and how it is applied. This is particularly the case with flexible specialisation (Williams et al 1987). Here, while the human aspects of resistance are seen as being captured by the system, technology is seen as somehow being able to develop outside these constraints and, further, be partly responsible for the 'crisis'.

Apart from these methodological problems Post Fordism is problematic empirically as well. Part of the accusation of tautology stems from the unclear empirical distinctions between Fordism and Post-Fordism. Even in the 'golden years' of Fordism flow-line production employed a *minority* of the work-force (Sayer op cit). Conversely, 1990s the just-in-time production line is arguably hyper-Fordist, rather than 'post' Fordist. Henry Ford's vision of Fordism was certainly not its outcome. If Ford's model of production was a very crude model of mass production then it was superseded by the innovations involved in 'Sloanism' associated with General Motors (Clarke op cit.) whereby variety was added to the mass production paradigm. Even here, however, the caricature of Fordism underestimates the 'flexibility' that Ford placed within his production regime (Williams et al 1992). This further highlights the teleological nature of Post Fordism: no empirical criteria are used to discern between Fordist and Post Fordist production regimes, as Williams et al (1987) note

Piore and Sabel provide no criteria for discriminating between fundamental difference and trivial styling variation which they admit is commonplace in both flexible specialisation and mass-production. (Williams et al 1987 p416)

In terms of industrial relations the Fordist regulation systems were also not uniform over time and place. Perhaps Aglietta may be excused on the time factor, as the period of Henry Ford's staunch opposition to unions could be placed in his transitional phase of extensive accumulation. This is not the case for location, though: industrial relations systems, internationally, were as different as state responses to trade unions; as different as the patterns of development in different countries were; and as different as the political outlooks and strategies of the differing labour movement were in different countries (Hyman 1989). Definitions of Fordist/Post-Fordist production regimes, then, are based upon retrospectively fitting the empirical reality of a particular workplace within the historically predetermined mode of regulation. No matter that ownership and control patterns of automotive producers - not to mention product range - seems to be ever diminishing in the 1990s; or that the increasing dominance of global brands (*McDonalds, Nike, Coca Cola*) seems to contradict the notion of flexible specialisation. As Clarke notes:

The model of Post-Fordism merely concatenates a number of superficial observations of contemporary society without specifying the theoretical relation between the various elements of the supposed Post-Fordist regime, let alone subjecting them to any critical examination. (Clarke op cit p75)

The important point here, then, is that there seems to be no conclusive evidence that we are currently in a transition phase to the end of mass-production. The distinction being made between Fordist and Post-Fordist production and consumption patterns, is largely a matter of definition. More importantly than this however is that, as a political project, how desirable is Post-Fordism? As Clarke notes, such a strategy

...retains the worst elements of the old industrial strategy in providing indiscriminate subsidies to capitalist enterprises, while abandoning any commitment to the social-democratic principles of central coordination and political accountability. (Clarke op cit p79)

The relevant issue here is the prevailing influence of the post-Fordist models on contemporary mainstream Labour Party thinking and the likely effect of this influence. In its final issue, Marxism Today published its *Manifesto for the Public Sector* in 1991. In it, through the logic the Post-Fordist guiding principles, it argued for the restructuring of the welfare state. This included more private/public partnerships, more out-sourcing of non-standard services and, in tones reminiscent of the 1979 Conservative Manifesto, it argued for more effective management:

Strategic management, to develop a service, needs to be distinguished from operation management of the day-to-day service. Decisions about policy goals and the regulatory framework for a service should be separated from detailed decisions about its provision (Marxism Today May 1991 p20)

It further called for increased monitoring of public service provision - aided by more performance indicators; for the enhancement of internal markets accompanied with a 'disaggregation of the state' - on the grounds that it would be in line with current successful private sector out-sourcing trends. Many of these recommendations have been subsequently adopted, in principle, by *New Labour*.

c) New Labour

South London's best established example of the competitive spirit in local government is in [Labour controlled] Lewisham' (FT 8/1/96)

Concerted efforts have been made to lose the 'loony-left' image associated with the New-Urban-Left agenda of the 1980s. As early as 1987 the national party was making strenuous efforts to dissociate itself from, and condemn, the activities of the 'loony left' for fear of the electoral backlash against the party in a general election (Goodwin 1992). Following the ascendancy of Blair to the Party leadership, however, the shift in the agenda switched from reactive to pro-active. 'New Labour' now wishes to be seen as *the* financially responsible party and has embraced the concept of consumer rights as a key focus of local governance. Issues such as equity, consumer rights - remnants of number of policies pursued in 1980s

It is widely accepted that it was Labour which provided the idea of 'Charterism' that the Conservatives based the Citizen's Charter on³. In Labour's discussion document on the setting up of a 'Quality Commission' it is recommended that:

[R]esidents will receive customer contracts setting out the standard of service to expect; when and how the service will be delivered; meaningful figures on how much the service costs; what to do and who to contact if things go wrong; a firm timetable and procedure for dealing with complaints and, where appropriate, paying compensation. (Labour Party 1991: p3)

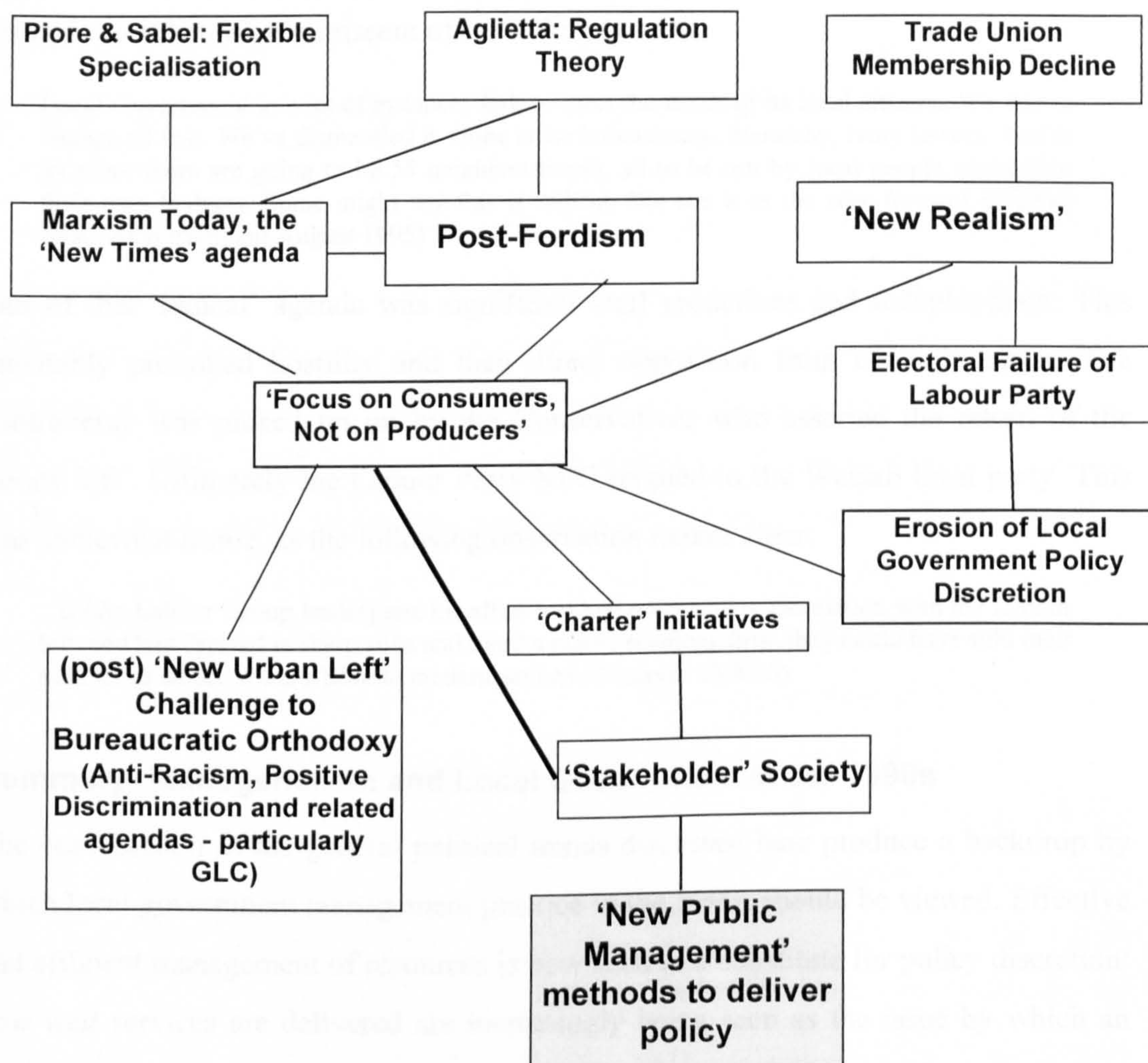
As will be seen, this 'new public management' is wholly compatible with the content of trends in 'culture management' in the private sector - particularly TQM. Labour also supports the use of certain proxy measures to maintain some forms of external control over local authorities. While Labour remains opposed to CCT, it does favour the tendering process and market testing in some areas of public service provision. It also

³ For example York City Council's 'Quality Street' initiative

now favours broadening the remit of the Audit Commission (and Accounts Commission in Scotland) to areas beyond mere financial accountability:

...we believe that the Commission's duties should extend beyond ensuring value for money. We envisage a new, more dynamic role in promoting quality and levering up the standards in Scottish local government, with greater emphasis on promoting best practice. (Scottish Labour Party 1996, p14)

Fig. 2:2: Managerialism and the Labour Party



d) Managerialism and the 'post New Urban Left'

Three of the "loony left" councils so often castigated by the Conservatives are to be awarded John Major's highest accolade for efficiency and outstanding public service, the charter mark (Guardian 27/11/95)

'Post New Urban Left' refers, here, to those Labour authorities running the former NUL councils of the 1980s. It is not being asserted that there is a 'ideas vacuum' here, rather that the agenda being pursued, with some variations in style, is managerialist. For the most part the service outputs of such policies remain uncontentious (the above press cutting probably best exemplifies this). In at least one case, however, the post-NUL agenda *has* provoked controversy: Walsall. Walsall provoked attention through the intention of the incumbent Labour administration to restructure the entire council with the style and rhetoric reminiscent of NSR Wandsworth:

Local Government in a lot of instances fails to meet the needs of its local citizens. We aim to change all that. We've dismantled it. Gone is the bureaucracy, hierarchy, ivory towers. And in its place there are going to be 55 neighbourhoods, all to be run by local people controlling their own budgets. Some might say this is radical. We see it as the way forward (Walsall MBC Advertisement August 1995)

Part of this 'radical' agenda was significant staff reductions and redeployment. This inevitably provoked hostility and then direct opposition from council unions. The controversy was picked up on by the Conservatives who asserted the return of the 'loony left'. Ultimately the Labour Party NEC reigned-in the Walsall local party. This was somewhat ironic, as the following observation makes clear:

...if [the Labour Group leader] and his allies had had no previous association with the Labour left, and had dressed in sharp suits and hired a public relations firm, they could have sold their policies as an act of ultra-Blairite modernisations (Observer 15/8/95)

Summary: Managerialism and Local Government in the 1990s

The combination of the general political trends discussed here produce a backdrop by which local government management practice in the 1990s should be viewed. Effective and efficient management of resources is now seen as a substitute for policy discretion: *how well* services are delivered are increasingly being seen as the issue by which an administration can be judged, rather than *what level* (or the *quantity*) of services are to be delivered (Gray & Jenkins 1993). Local authorities have been seeking-out better means of achieving these limited goals under a financial regime of shrinking budgets.

While the rhetorical justifications for this broad shift has varied from giving local taxpayers more value for money, to empowering consumers, to 'living within our means'. the consistent element throughout has been the taming of labour. The assumption within the managerialist conception of the public sector is that public sector workers

cannot be trusted because of their monopoly power. Public service professionals are viewed suspiciously as seeking to maximise status and preserving sectional interests at the expense of the public good and unionised blue and white collar workers are seen as protecting vested interests in the form of labour market rigidities, again, against the common interest.

The managerialist solution to these problems has been based upon two assumptions. First, it is assumed that the public sector can be remodelled to simulate market conditions. A consistent policy trend here has been a continuous agenda of introducing increasing levels of labour market insecurity into public sector employment. CCT has been crucial here. In labour-intensive areas of public service dealing with merit goods, this has enabled private-sector contractors to use wages and conditions of employment as the easiest input variable to bid against local authority Direct Service Organisations (DSO's) as Crabbe (1992) has demonstrated. While employment protection through the European *Acquired Right Directive*, in the form of *Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)* (TUPE) has provided some protection on this, the general effect of CCT has been to legitimise the downward pressure on wages and conditions in effected services - even where contracts have remained in-house. These issues will be discussed further in chapters 4 and 5. A second major assumption in the managerialist agenda has been that while it is apparently impossible to entrust the organisation of public services to the influence of public sector trade unions and the vested interests of public service professionals, the newly empowered managerial class are apparently to be seen as being neutral and rational. It also implies that this new cadre of managers will necessarily wish to develop different types of management practice into place into the public sector. Given the origins and agenda of managerialism, such new methods are increasingly likely to be those which have gained credibility in their use in the private sector. This is where the interest in quality and in quality management has come in and this is the subject of chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUALITY PHENOMENON AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The previous chapter examined the background political issues that have underpinned changes to local government in the 1980s and 1990s. This chapter will describe the quality management phenomenon. It will examine its origins in private sector management and highlight the influences of Taylorism, 'Japanisation', the quality gurus and TQM. It will then outline the managerialist drive for importing quality management into local government and examine the effect to which this adoption has taken place. The content of quality management and the workplace implications arising from this will be more fully examined in chapter 5. The purpose here is to examine the rationale, from a management point of view, for importing quality management into local government.

The Origins and Development of Quality Management

The term quality management is being used here to encompass a number of disparate management methodologies dealing with the broad issue of quality. While these methodologies vary by their origins, approaches and methods, style and dependent prerequisites, they are unified, however, by a number of key factors. Firstly, they are all rooted in unitarist conceptions of management control of the organisation. Second, and rather obviously, they are all concerned with the issue of quality. Third, they have all been developed around the private-sector organisation, and primarily the private sector manufacturing organisation.

While quality became a particularly prominent theme for management in the 1980s, quality has always been a concern for management in one form or another. The recent growth in the prominence of quality could partly be attributed to the superficial value of its marketing potential within a commercial environment where corporate image has become increasingly important. This may be underestimating the nature of quality management but, even if this is an important motivator in its take-up, as a consequence has been an attempt to re-define quality within the language and ideology of consumer sovereignty (Tuckman 1995). In the name of quality, major re-definitions of

organisational structure, working methods and employee relationships have been justified (this issue will be discussed further in chapter 5).

The development of quality management has been, if not linear, then through a series of progressive stages (Legge 1995; Dale et al 1990): from quality being based upon reactive inspection-based methods, to the use of process control methods based upon in-process monitoring, to the use of statistical process control (SPC) methods to predict and prevent non-conformance, to holistic TQM approaches, with its focus on 'culture'.

a) Taylorism and quality

While quality *per se* was not a specific concern for Taylor, it was an issue in that quality affected output and it was an issue of control. Quality control really became an organisational concern with the *application* of Taylorist scientific management in flowline production. Taylor's approach to work organisation centred around the subdivision of labour into discrete tasks and, as such, its application on the mass production assembly-line was through the departmentalisation of the quality control function. Inspection departments were delegated responsibility for verifying in-process product quality through patrol inspection personnel and through the use of statistical sampling plans.

The advent of market saturation in an increasing number of industries led, however, to an increased focus by organisations on product differentiation and of brand loyalty. In addition, the issue of quality was also increasingly seen to have productivity implications: quality problems at one stage of a manufacturing process cause delays in production in downstream manufacturing operations. Improving quality could therefore be seen as a means by which to increase revenues and reduce costs. In this climate, crude departmentalist solutions to the issue of quality and productivity were increasingly being seen as ineffective and alternative approaches were being sought. While Taylorism is often used to symbolise the way in which management *used* to operate, in opposition to the best practices of newer forms of management, Taylorist logic still forms the basis of most quality management now (this will be further discussed in chapter 5). An example of this can be found in the popularity of the BS 5750/ISO 9000 quality system standard approach to quality in the 1980s and 1990s.

b) The Influence of Japan

In the 1970s and 1980s, the way in which the above issues needed to be addressed were increasingly being influenced by 'the Japanese economic miracle'. From the 1970s Western industry was facing increasing pressure from macro-economic crises, falling demand through market saturation and an undermining of market share in domestic and foreign markets to non-UK based competition. Although the causes of this were often complex, one solution was seen to be for Western management to search for the formula used by successful competitors. The most spectacular success, at this time, was to be seen in Japan. Interest was related to the comparative superior performance of Japanese industry in general, and the Japanese motor industry in particular. This success was, to a greater or lesser extent, attributed to the development of just-in-time (JIT) in Japan. Through the impact of its apparent success, interest in Japanese methods had initially seen JIT as an inventory policy: as a move to achieve the performance of the Japanese, JIT was heralded as a *tactical operational* tool to improve stock-turns. This had followed interest in other elements such as *quality circles* in the 1970s. This emphasis shifted into one of seeing JIT as part of a more holistic management system.

In this holistic form, Japanese management has been seen as capable of integrating operational issues such as inventory control, quality assurance and work design with strategic issues such as product development, supplier co-ordination and demand management through the use of heightened interdependency created by the removal of buffers throughout the production system. The aim here, then, is creating customer-supplier chains *within* as well as *between* organisations. This factor is important as it highlights an important structural difference between Japanese industry and their western counterparts: the Japanese management model utilises net dependency more effectively (Oliver 1991; Oliver & Wilkinson 1992). This has meant an enhanced ability of Japanese companies to maintain control over external suppliers in a manner that was at least as effective as controlling its internal operations. So JIT seemed to offer the possibility of being able to outsource certain operations while guaranteeing quality and maintaining a greater degree of pressure on prices. Here, then, quality is tied to the inter-organisational relationships. In turn quality and cost do not trade off directly because quality can be maintained through contract arrangements with

suppliers, yet these suppliers are also removed from the higher wages (including the 'social wage') paid to workers at core manufacturer (Kaplinski 1988).

Interest in wishing to emulate Japanese methods into UK companies was boosted by the increasing penetration of Japanese transplants into the UK economy in the 1980s, coupled with the associated impact that this had on UK supplier companies and domestic competitors (Ackroyd 1988; Garrahan & Stewart 1992; Oliver & Wilkinson op cit.). Having a model to control suppliers (in terms of quality and prices) has led to great increases in outsourcing in the European and North American motor industries (EIU 1990). Although the phenomenon of 'Japanisation' (Oliver & Wilkinson op cit.; Ackroyd op.cit.) is largely confined to the motor industry, and even here it has been uneven, the scale and size of this industry remains an important influence on management trends as a whole. Outsourcing, on the same basic model as this, became the basic managerialist justification for compulsory competitive tendering in the public sector in the 1980s.

c) The Quality Gurus

Another important influence on the increasing importance played by quality as a management issue was through the prescriptive remedies to industrial decline offered by the so called 'quality gurus'. Though, in the main, these gurus are consultants, each with their somewhat sycophantic 'disciples' and adherents, they have also been very influential within management circles. Arguably the influence of the quality gurus was due to the work conducted in Japan in the immediate post war period, although viewed retrospectively during the period of Japanese industrial pre-eminence in the 1970s and 1980s.

The quality gurus made significant redefinitions of quality. The stated intention of their endeavour was to demystify the concept so as to provide a rational definition that could be used by management. The basic redefinition was that the quality of a good or service was the totality of features that a paying customer considers to be appropriate for their needs - at the price offered. Quality, itself, is defined as 'fitness for purpose' as defined by the customer. It comprises of positive and negative features (Juran 1988); the positive being the features that a customer likes about a product and the negative being the features with which the customer has been disappointed. The function of

management is to, first, eliminate all the negative quality features, and then strive to enhance positive quality. Negative quality, or defects, could be seen as waste and, as such, improving quality becomes a cost-saving exercise (Deming 1986; Crosby 1979). Similarly, achieving higher positive quality could be seen as adding value to a product. The enhancement of quality within a product or service can be seen, thus, as an enhancement of value for money - which is fully in line with the 3Es philosophy being pursued in the public sector as a whole.

Probably the most influential quality guru is Deming. Deming began his career as a statistician and moved into the area of quality control as an advisor in the US armaments industry during WWII. After the war he was sent by the US Government to advise Japanese companies involved in re-industrialisation. Deming proved influential in this and is still recognised in Japan through 'Deming Awards' awarded to companies for quality. Deming's themes, as is the case with most of the quality gurus are articulated in the form of a set of core rules, commandments, or in this case 'fourteen points'. Deming's points, in summary, focus on the need for management leadership and commitment to the quality cause, and of the key importance of measurement - and particularly of the use of Statistical Process Control (SPC) as the tools by which management should achieve quality. There are 'Deming Associations' world-wide, including a British Deming Association.

Juran is almost as well known as Deming and shares some similarities. Like Deming, Juran was also sent to Japan as an advisor after W.W.II, returning to the US to advise US Corporations. Juran's main points are the importance of management (again) and in the importance of clear proceduralised systems by which roles and responsibilities can be distinguished.

Crosby, being later to start but being the first to be widely known as a guru, stressed, as his main focus, the importance of employee awareness and management's role of transmitting the quality message in a unified fashion.

A number of other names could possibly be included in a list of quality gurus (Taguchi for example), and there are still other influential management consultants gurus (Peters, for example) whose status in this area probably blurs with those of the quality.

Some differences and disagreements between the quality 'gurus' have been summarised by Oakland (1989). The Deming style, for example, is very much a missionary approach, focusing on the 'cultural' prerequisites of leadership and commitment, but with a strong focus on monitoring and measurement. Juran's approach is more system-oriented; management's primary role is to provide the framework and procedures by which quality can be built into. Crosby's approach is a step-by-step programme, while Taguchi is concerned chiefly with methods. It also seems that there could be some differences in emphasis which seem to signal disagreement. For example, all versions emphasise the importance of employee motivation but differ in their approach: some (Juran/Crosby) favour the rewarding of quality achievements while others (Deming) feel this is divisive; some feel that a quality programme should be widely publicised through a 'zero defects day' (Crosby) while others warn against the use of 'sloganeering' (Deming). Some stress the importance of single-sourcing external supplies to achieve maximum co-operation and 'constancy of purpose' (Deming), while others stress the importance of being able to select the best sources through competition (Juran). Despite some of these apparent differences and inconsistencies, however, it is the assumptions and assertions made by the *gurus* which have been incorporated into the more generic quality management models of the 1980s and 1990s.

d) Total Quality Management (TQM)

Inspired by the quality gurus and by their perceived role in Japanese management development, TQM, despite the arrival of newer concepts such as 'best-practice benchmarking' and 'business process re-engineering', probably remains the most influential of the quality models in use at present. In some quarters it has been seen as 'faddish', yet it is the subject, now, of a number of dedicated journals and consultancies. By the 1990s, as 'quality' became the management issue to be proactively sponsored by government (DTI 1991a;b;c;d;e;f), TQM became *the* model of quality management 'best practice' for management:

...[the] DTI promotes Total Quality Management, emphasising Management Best Practice as appropriate within each British company rather than allegiance to a single guru. (DTI 1991a p1)

TQM is a holistic management methodology and has been defined as being the integration of the 'hard' performance based management approach with the 'soft'

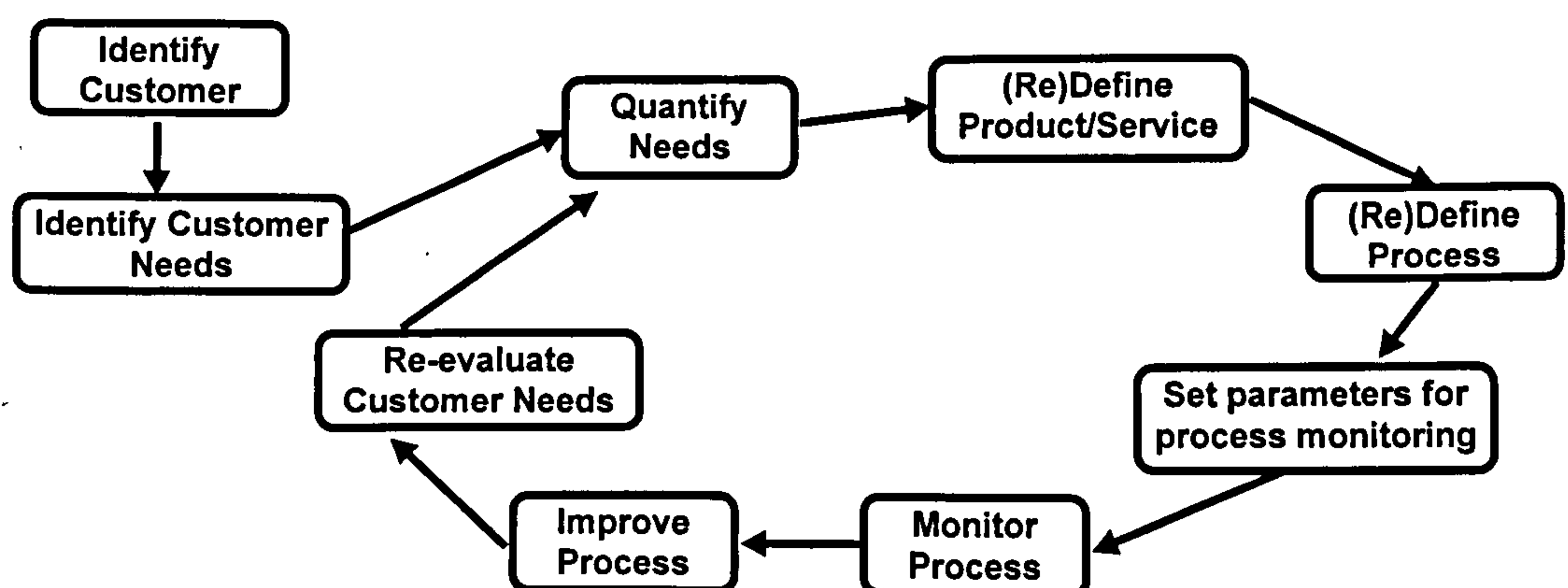
HRM-type approach (Legge 1995), or as a mechanism that can be understood in 'technical' and in 'symbolic' terms (Reed 1995 p46). TQM, then, incorporates systemic, organisational, operational and 'cultural' elements. BS 7850 reads:

Total quality management assures maximum effectiveness and efficiency within an organisation by putting in place processes and systems which will ensure that every aspect of its activity is aligned to customer needs and all other objectives without waste of effort and using the full potential of every person in the organisation. (BSI 1992)

In contrast to Taylorist conceptions, in TQM quality is seen as a company-wide concern rather than being the responsibility of a mutually exclusive inspection department. In TQM customer-need is deemed to be the chief focus of attention for the organisation. The process of harnessing quality, then, is through a series of stages relating back from the end customer of the product (see figure 3:1).

The first stage is in identifying the customer: customers are defined as being those persons who receive 'inputs' from 'suppliers' and are assessed by some form of input-process-output analysis (Juran op cit.). The next stage is determining what customer needs are and to 'translate' these needs into a quantitative language that can be acted upon within the organisation; to translate customer needs '*into our language*' as Juran op cit.) put it. The focus from here is to input these quantified needs into product or service design and into the processes used for producing that product or service. The key element from this stage on is in monitoring - principally through the use of statistical process control (SPC) methods (Deming op cit.). Monitoring is important within TQM and SPC can be seen as the tools by which TQM is applied as it provides the key to understanding processes and products, for re-designing processes and for reducing and controlling uncertainty.

Figure 3:1 Defining Quality Via TQM



Hill (1995) has defined the key organisational elements in TQM as being, first, a method driven by senior management because quality is a strategic rather than an operational issue. Second, quality is an issue dealt with horizontally, as well as vertically: cross departmental co-ordination is required to break down traditional departmental rigidities and employees are to operate in 'teams' - either as a work unit, as a 'generic team' in the case of problem-solving or project work (Oakland 1993; Aune 1992). Third, innovation is a managerial task. In TQM, managers delegate responsibilities to workers through the management system, but critically, the management system itself remains the exclusive prerogative of management. Finally Hill notes a fifth key element of 'cultural change', meaning a shift to 'high trust' management staff relationships. This is essentially a unitarist conception of the organisation where management's task is to create a '*constancy of purpose*' (Deming op cit.). In addition to the elements noted by Hill, other definitions of TQM emphasises a number of other elements including the measurement of performance - so that continuous improvement can be realised, and the importance of training - so that workers may be given appropriate methodologies where operational decision-making may be delegated. This, then, suggests that TQM places great importance on employee commitment, with the possibility that this may lead to an intensification of work or a 'management by stress'. These issues will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

Local Government: Why Quality Management?

A number of factors have influenced the pressure to import quality management into the local government. In nearly all cases these could be reduced to a managerialist rationale discussed in chapter 2, though the circumstances have varied.

a) Pressure from Government

Pressure to adopt quality management methods in local government has come principally from central government. Based upon the new-right assumptions of the government during the 1980s and early 1990s, quality management could be seen as appropriate on the basis that it is founded upon the principles of 'sound management' developed in the private sector. It is also founded upon an assumption of 'consumer choice' which also provided the ideological basis to the then Government's 'enabling' model for local government (Walsh 1995b). The Labour Government too has, as a

matter of party policy from the early 1990s onwards, accepted the principle of borrowing from the private sector. At present, the actual pressures to adopt quality management from central government have come from the legacy of the preceding Conservative administrations.

In terms of direct government advocacy for quality management, there is the official sanctioning of TQM as DTI 'management best practice', mentioned previously. Government has also sponsored the use of the ISO 9000 quality system standard, the Investors in People (IiP) standard and its own Charter Mark customer service standard. These will be further discussed in the next section.

Indirectly, and probably more effectively, has been the underlying pressures built into other measures imposed on local government. Most significantly among these have been the imposition of CCT, which will be discussed separately below. Other indirect influences from central government, however, have been Audit Commission and more recently the *Citizen's Charter* performance indicators set for local government. These have required local authorities to monitor performance in a number of service areas. Quality management provides the most comprehensive set of tools in which to achieve these as quality management is wholly compatible with the 3Es mentality of public service delivery.

b) Structural changes - internal re-organisation of local government

The advent of CCT has probably provided the most significant single incentive to adopt quality management methods, and warrant more detailed discussion in chapter 4. Briefly, however, there are two reasons why this issue relates to an increased incentive for local authorities to adopt quality management methods. The first reason is that CCT has heralded major structural re-organisations within local authorities, making them more comparable to private sector organisations than had ever been the case previously (Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994). The significant aspect of the CCT legislation, here, has been the requirement of local authorities to introduce 'client-contractor splits' within services. This essentially split the administrative, policy oriented aspect of a service from the operational, contractor element. With this split made - and with the additional requirement of the authority having to publish a *Statement of Support Service Costs* (SSSC) - private sector competitors are considered to be more able to compare costs

without the concern that the local authority may be able to use transfer-pricing to 'hide' costs and thus compete unfairly. Although there have been variations in the implementation of the purchaser-provider split (Shaw et al 1994; Rao & Young 1995), the change involved has made a permanent difference to the accounting structure of local authorities as a whole and has further enabled the pursuit of a 3Es philosophy within local government through the increased transparency of its cost-structures. Because of the above changes, the structure of local authorities more closely resembles the structures of organisations for which quality methods such as TQM were designed.

c) Commercial pressure - 'Competing for Quality'

The second factor relating to CCT is through the effects of competition. Local authorities hostile to the principle of tendering out services have tried a number of means by which to retain contracts. Because of this, government tightened legislation in order to prohibit what it considered to be 'anti-competitive behaviour':

...too many authorities have sought to bend the rules laid down by the legislation, to cushion their workforces against the full force of competition - and thus to deny their own charge-payers the financial and performance benefits that competition can deliver...The Government wishes therefore to ensure that in future there is greater clarity about what constitutes anti-competitive behaviour. (DoE 1991 p4)

Due to stricter regulations introduced on anti-competitive behaviour, one of the few areas in which to enhance in-house bids was seen to be through setting tight specifications for a contract.

Although legislation prohibits local authorities' demanding specific quality standards such as ISO 9000, there is scope in the legislation to write high quality standards within a contract specification. For authorities hostile to outsourcing, then, having a tight contract specification combined with the introduction of quality management within the DSO or service contractor could itself be seen as a means by which to retain a contract.

This has further implications. Introducing quality management in this context is also likely to be eased if it can be seen as legitimately contributing to maintaining the in-house contract. The 'external threat' factor could be used to temper residual employee or trade union hostility towards the introduction of such methods.

d) Electoral pressure from political leaders

Another rationale by which quality management may be introduced into local authorities is through the compliance of political leadership. This pressure may come from political leadership following a new-suburban-right (NSR) agenda (Holiday 1991), compatible with managerialism (see chapter 2). Even at a superficial level, quality management would be likely to appeal here, purely on the basis that it is private-sector oriented.

Where an agenda for quality management is not inspired by ideological, political interests, though, quality management is still likely to have, at least in part, instrumentalist appeal. Where political interests could be persuaded that improving quality of service would be good for the authority as a whole, the electoral fortunes of a ruling political group could benefit. Where management has decided to embark upon a programme of introducing quality management, then, it would seem unlikely that political leaders would wish to veto it.

Instrumentalist and ideological motives aside, however, the issue of quality itself remains political when linked to the public domain:

Quality continues to be used as though it were something we all unquestioningly favour, rather as we condemn sin. In truth, no such consensus exists; nor is quality something that floats above politics. Once it is applied to the provision of welfare services, becomes inexorably bound up with the political battles that are being fought on that terrain. (Pfeffer & Coote 1991)

e) Pressure from the new managerial class

The managerialist agenda, described in chapter 2, has been based upon the premise of empowering management within local government. By diminishing the discretion of political influences (councillors) over decision-making, a new cadre of managerial local government officers have been emerging, as is perhaps exemplified by the following:

The fundamental need for the *Local Government Management Network*, according to its head Kevin Lavery, is that "we're all managers now". (Local Government Chronicle 5 November 1993 p10)

While power within a local authority may traditionally have been located among certain professionals, in conjunction with political leaders, the managerialist agenda has shifted this. This 'empowered' managerial strata could be expected to be more susceptible to methods, techniques and agendas that suit their own sectional view of the organisation

and quality management provides this because it gives 'generalist' managers, whose legitimacy is not rooted in a profession which is being managed, can claim that quality management is a means of ensuring public accountability over professionals (Pollitt 1990b).

f) Academic support - the 'new public management'

Running in parallel with the changes that have occurred over the 1980s or 1990s has been academic interest, either in terms of scrutiny, support or prescriptive recommendations. While this is probably a factor in most areas of social life, and of management in general, academic input into the area of public administration is probably more influential upon the practitioners of local government, than is generally the case in management practitioners as a whole. Academic descriptions and prescriptions of public administration is therefore likely to be of some importance than would be the case in general management. Pollitt (1990a) notes that among the list of those receiving material benefits from public-service managerialism have been management consultants, business schools and *'other parts of the education and training world which have offered generic management training'* (p134).

The quality 'phenomenon' within the public sector has, then, been broadly encompassed within what has been termed 'new public management' (NPM) within the academic sphere. The NPM discourse has emerged in the 1990s as a form of 'renewal' in the general area of what used to be termed 'public administration'. This discourse of NPM, also follows closely, though not exclusively, the Post-Fordist approach to welfare state reforms (Cochrane 1994; 1995; Newman & Clarke 1994) - as discussed in chapter 2. While NPM claims to be an agenda that moves away from managerialist assumptions that private sector methods can be imported into the public sector, NPM nevertheless retains managerialist assumptions. For example, where decision-making models were discussed in public administration in the 1960s, they tended to follow a 'rationalist' versus 'incrementalist line of thought; rationalists claiming decision-making could be planned and incrementalists claiming decision-making was evolutionary. In many ways the management decision-making methods in quality management (particularly TQM) echo *rational decision making* models for public administration in the 1960s.

Intended as a methodology to aid decision-making and policy implementation in large organisations *rational decision making* sought to provide efficient and realistic alternatives to the reductionism of ‘rational economic behaviour’ assumptions in neo-classical economics. However *rational decision making* was found to be flawed in the following ways (Smith & May 1980): (i) it was seen to be utopian and did not allow for unanticipated consequences where ends are not clear; (ii) it unrealistically assumed that it is possible to dichotomise ends and means, values and decisions or facts and values; (iii) *rational decision making* was value biased in favour of upper hierarchy, professions and senior management and generally assumed a top-down view of decision-making; (iv) *rational decision making* ignored power and vested interests and thus the determinants of the availability of choices. Within the context of public services, these criticisms may also apply to TQM. Table 3:1 shows a comparison of *rational decision making* and TQM.

Table 3:1: Rational Decision-Making Compared to TQM

Rational Decision-Making Process (Source: Smith & May 1980)	TQM Decision Making Process Generic (Source: Roper 1994 p42)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• search process• formulation of objectives• selection of alternatives to achieve objectives• evaluation of outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify customer• identify customer needs• quantify needs• design product/service and process/delivery system• monitor performance• re-evaluate customer needs

At the operational level TQM is consistent, in its advocating of specific decision-making processes, with *rational decision making*. TQM provides the tools for making decisions, decision-making processes which are at the heart of TQM and are, again, advocated as universally applicable in any organisational setting. The point of departure, however, is that where rational decision making was essentially a management tool, it was intended as a policy-making instrument and was likely to include representatives of political interests, community group and other interested parties as well as public officials and professionals. In TQM, as is continually stressed,

strategic decisions must be taken by senior managers, whose responsibility is leadership.

In Pollitt's (1990a) definition, the management *methods* of managerialism are identified as 'neo-Taylorist'. Throughout the 1990s, however, NPM has been emulating newer private sector management methods - what Pollitt terms 'cultural' forms of management. Quality has been a prominent issue here. Quality is almost seen as the new, anti-bureaucratic antidote to the 'inappropriate' neo-Taylorist forms of managerialism forced on the public sector by Thatcherism. Indicative of this trend, Flynn (1994) contrasts the styles and values of the 'new human resource management' being pursued by progressive organisations with the bureaucratic Taylorist styles and methods in the old welfare state. Using the language and broad line of reasoning of Post Fordism, Flynn argues that 'new HRM organisations' value employees and work in harmony with contractors in a decentralised environment that enables the effective interaction between service providers and service users. In the same volume, Newman and Clarke argue that

The new wave management of Tom Peters and others provides a value base and set of techniques which has an interesting correspondence with the customer focus and quality orientation around which this [party political] consensus is constructed (Newman & Clarke 1994 p26)

Another important reason for the interest in quality management methods in the public sector has been, then, through the increased susceptibility of public sector decision-makers to prescriptive management agendas - which many of the quality management methods fit. As an example Morgan and Murgatroyd op cit) suggest that TQM, though based upon market led success criteria, is perfectly suitable for adoption in the public sector and should be pursued as such:

...given the political sponsorship or consents, the public sector can thrive equally as well on cultural change as the commercial sector (Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994 p47)

Moreover quality management methods such as TQM are now offered as universally applicable management methods, equally relevant in the public sector as they are in the private. This is emphasised by Morgan and Murgatroyd (1994) who contend that the five principal objections to the applicability of TQM in the public sector are surmountable. The five 'objections' identified are as follows: (1) that the nature of TQM inhibits its use in the public sector, (2) that the nature of the public sector inhibits

the use of TQM, (3) that professional 'work cultures' are inimical to TQM, (4) that the notion of the customer is problematic in the public sector and (5) that service provision is more complex in the public sector.

In dismissing these objections one by one, Morgan and Murgatroyd reveal some critical issues. They highlight the likely difficulty of attempting to create uniformity of outputs prevalent in manufacturing versions of TQM, but stress the need to focus on work standardisation:

The central TQM concept which both have in common is elimination of variation in process, i.e. process control, whether that process be one to achieve standardisation or one to achieve the delivery of the most desired differentiated response (Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994 p44)

Morgan and Murgatroyd further note that in order to create internal customer-supplier chains, TQM will need to tackle existing working relationships. This may require "...a *conscious commitment to undo professional demarcations if needed*" (ibid. p52)

Also seen as imperative are the need for performance evaluation and performance related pay. No mention is made of any potential resistance from trade unions. Significantly Morgan and Murgatroyd point out that many of the objections to applying TQM in the public sector are being nullified by structural changes being made (particularly in relation to contracting).

While others are not so assured about the total compatibility of quality management in a context of public service, there is still a general willingness to acknowledge the benefits of adapting the principles of such methods into the public goods domain. Gaster (1991) for example, compares the differences in the meanings of quality in public and private sectors (see table 3:2) - but contends that the methods of quality management are appropriate for the public sector.

Table 3:2: Defining Quality: Private/Public Split

Private Sector	Public Sector
Better than what's provided elsewhere	Comprehensive
As cheap as possible	Economic
Value for money	Efficient
Fitness for purpose	Accurate
Conformance to requirements	
Up to date	Reliable
Reliable (free from errors, consistent)	Acceptable to consumers and providers
Satisfies the customer	Speedy
Delivered on time	Equitable (access and distribution)
	Efficacy minus effectiveness

(source: Gaster 1991, p22)

Much of the justification from the (broadly defined) NPM advocates, above, do so through a rejection of the perceived ‘bureau-professionalism’ that a management cadre is supposed to replace. While there is a coherent argument here, the cause and effect, here, do not necessarily relate. The implications for manager/professional relationships is further discussed in chapter 5.

The Prevalence of Quality Management in Local Government

a) Local government quality methods: a crude typology

Pfeffer and Coote (op cit) assess the various approaches to quality in the public sector and discuss some of the difficulties. They identify four broad types which they define as the *traditional* approach, the *scientific* or *expert* approach, the *managerial* or *excellence* approach and the *consumerist* approach. The *traditional* approach, they contend, is the definition most people identify with quality - one of prestige - and, as such, carries influence in practical application. The ‘scientific’ approach is identified as being that associated with performance evaluation and with Taylorist divisions of labour. Pfeffer and Coote identify this approach to quality with ‘Fordism’. The ‘managerial’ approach to quality, according to Pfeffer and Coote, is broadly the one associated with ‘culture management’ and is associated with ‘employee commitment’, ‘leadership’ and ‘teamwork’. Finally the ‘consumerist’ approach to quality is associated with the use of market research surveys to guide policy choice.

Figure 3:2 shows a variety of quality methods that are currently being used in local government. Methods are shown within a crude matrix according to the complexity of the method and the style of the method. The complexity of the method is fairly straightforward and is discussed more below. The ‘style’ continuum is, though, perhaps more contentious. Although, contrary to Post-Fordist assertions, the *nature* of management has not been fundamentally altered by some of the more ‘cultural’ forms of management in the past two decades, many of these methodologies have represented a qualitative shift in *style* away from the assertions of Taylorism. This issue is discussed further in chapter 5. For the sake of simplicity, then, quality methods could be identified as being located on a continuum between ‘Taylorist’ and ‘Cultural’ management forms in the sphere of local government.

Figure 3:2: Quality Management Matrix

	Holistic	(Complexity)	Simple
Taylorist	ISO 9000		Complaints System Quality Circles
(style)		liP	Service Charter Charter Mark
‘Cultural’	TQM		Customer Involvement

Simple quality systems being used in local government range from the issuing of ‘service charters’ to local citizens; to the monitoring of government instigated performance indicators, with their associated complaints systems; to customer involvement initiatives; to the use of Quality Circles or other ‘team-based’ work methods; to the participation in the government’s Charter Mark award scheme - requiring a systematic approach to achieving ‘customer focus’:

Public services do not, usually, have the stimulus of competition. But that is where the Charter programme comes in. The Citizen’s Charter is about treating people *as if they have a choice*. Over the last four and a half years the best of public service - the Charter Mark winners - are

now setting a standard that matches the best anywhere. (Lord Blyth from Charter Mark Award Scheme Handbook: 1996. Emphasis in original)

Similar in nature is Investors in People (IiP), which requires a demonstration of employee development determined through organisational goals determined by customer needs.

Of the more holistic quality approaches, two stand out. ISO 9000 is an international quality system standard that became popular in British industry in the 1980s (in its previous guise as BS 5750) and the 1990s. The central theme of this method is based upon the principles of controlling production process through the regulation of working procedures (it is hence very ‘Taylorist’). ISO 9000 provides a standardised management control framework which an organisation applies to its own particular circumstances. The organisation applies for accreditation and is audited by external assessors and, once accredited, is registered subject to further audit at regular intervals. Incentives for organisations wishing to apply for ISO 9000 vary from the perceived benefits that the system will bring, to marketing kudos, to commercial pressures from competitors and, significantly, customer organisations.

b) Quality Methods: the extent of use in local government

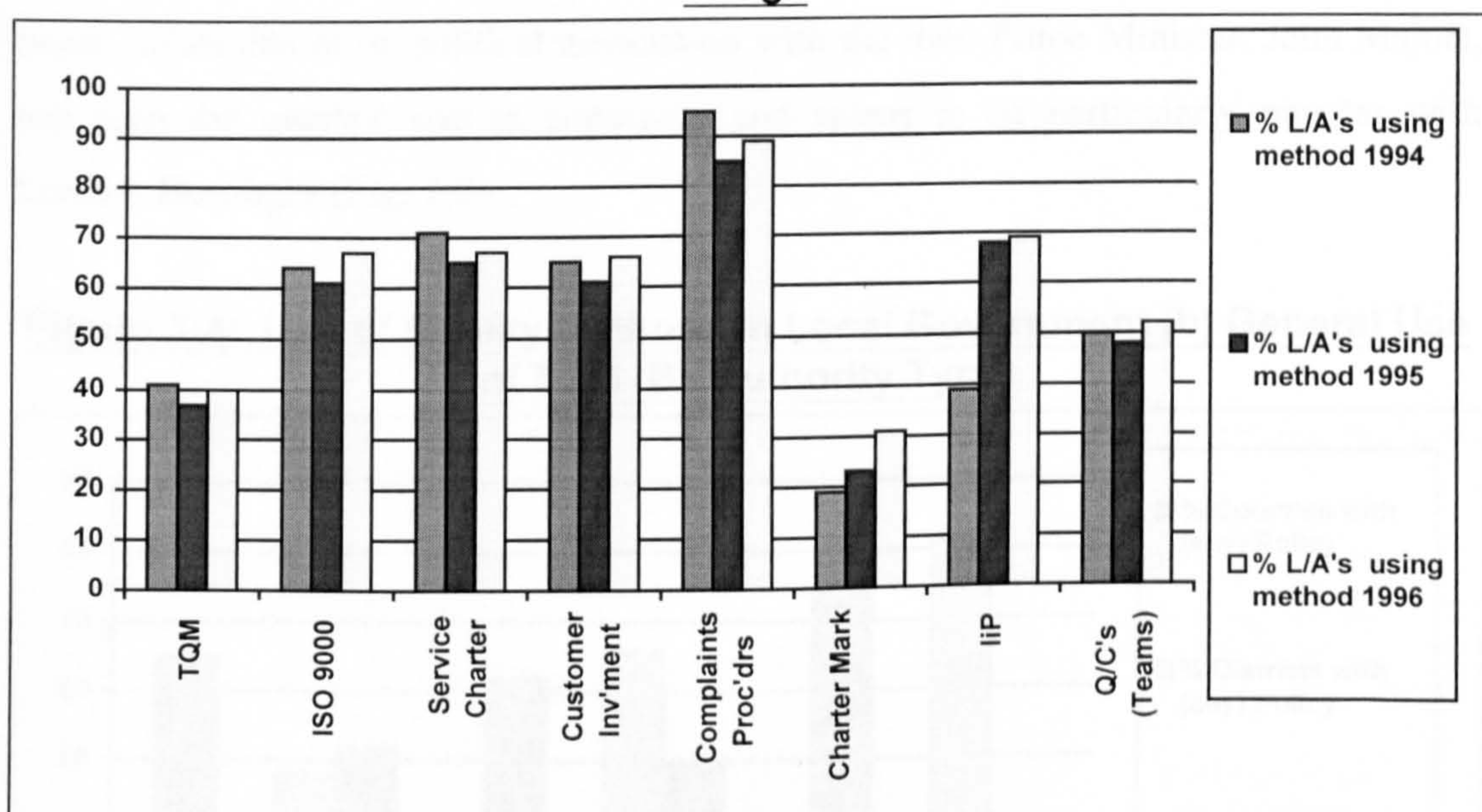
Initial understanding of the nature and extent of the use of quality management methods in local government in England and Wales was based upon data derived from the Local Government Management Board (LGMB) Quality Survey in 1994. This survey was based on a self-completion questionnaire sent to senior officers in every authority in England and Wales. It asked for the respondent to confirm whether the authority was involved in specific quality initiatives including, among others, TQM, ISO 9000, IiP, Charter Mark, team-working, customer charters, complaints procedures. The respondent indicated where a specific service was involved in such a method. The survey was repeated in 1995 and again in 1996. Overall the response was high (see Table3:3).

Table 3:3: LGMB Quality Survey Details

	1994	1995	1996
Councils Responding	299	379	384
Response Rate (%)	74	96	98

Figure 3:3 shows the extent of use of quality methods in local government between 1994 and 1996, based upon these LGMB figures. Overall, *Complaints Systems* can be seen to be the most prevalent quality method, due largely to Citizens Charter and Audit Commission monitoring in this area. *ISO 9000*, *Service Charters* and *Customer Involvement*, all being recognised and well established quality methods in their own contexts all seem to be settled at around the 60-65% uptake level. *TQM*, being the most intensive of all the methods, remains at the lower end of the uptake levels at 40 per cent - though this in itself is a relatively high figure. In contrast, *Charter Mark* and *IiP* have both risen consistently over the three years.

Figure 3:3: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (a) General Usage



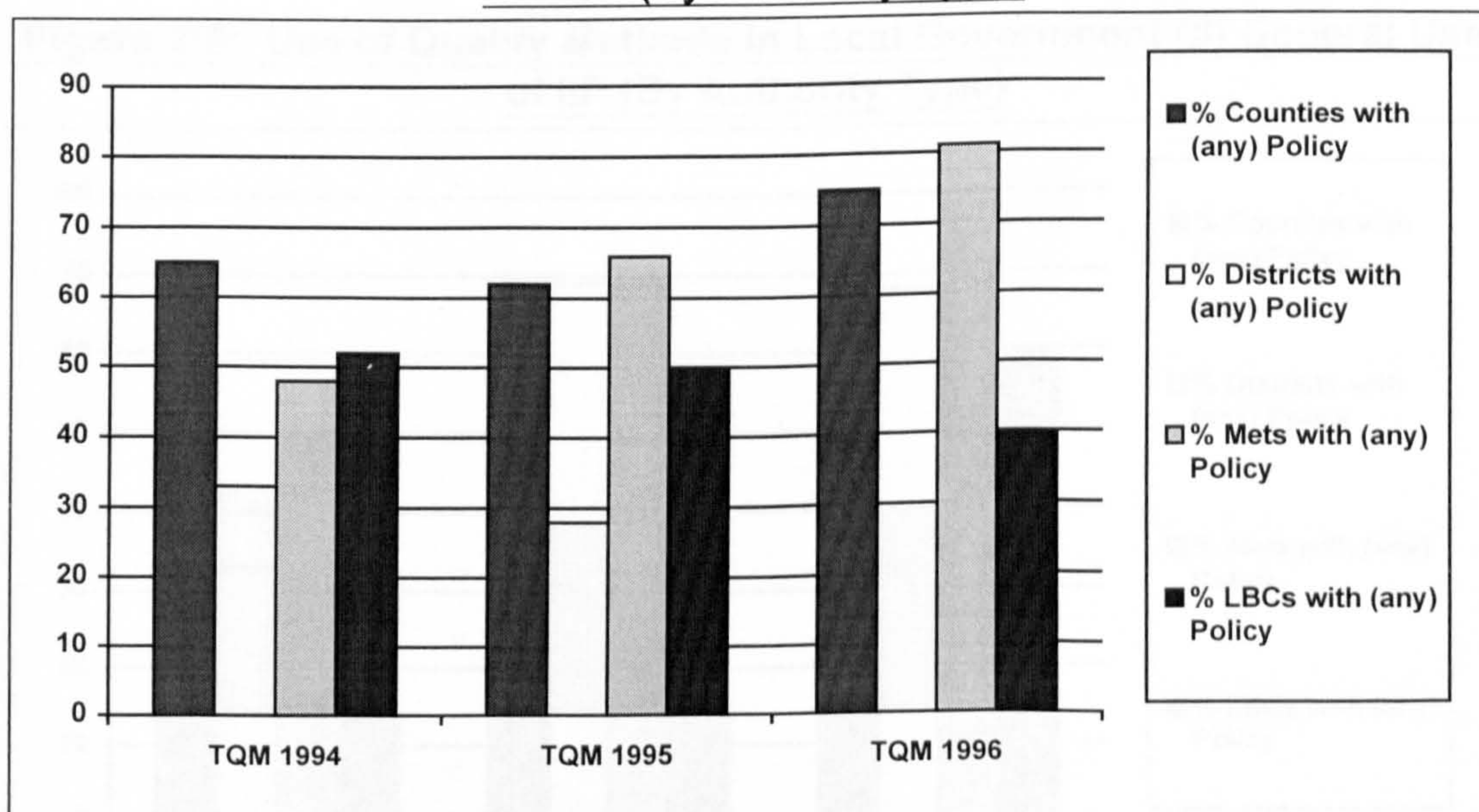
Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

Some care must be taken with the basis of the survey, however. Some of the methods being surveyed, such as TQM, are regarded as 'best practice' in management fields and as such, may suffer from over-reporting due to a halo effect. This has been seen to be the case when comparing managers perceptions of best practice implementation and actual practices implemented (Oliver & Wilkinson 1992; Roper et al 1997). In the data presented here, the reported cumulative quality rating indicates that interest dipped in 1995, only to rise again in 1996. In practice, it is likely that perceptions about what constituted an actual practice changed between 1994 and 1995. Alternatively, because the figures include those authorities who were 'planning to implement' as well as those

who actually implemented the stated policy, it is likely that some of the interest in 1994 declined by 1995. Given that 1994 was the first year of the survey, however, it is likely that the survey's accuracy improved over the three years as authorities became more familiar with the format of the survey and, possibly, with their general understanding of the methods in question.

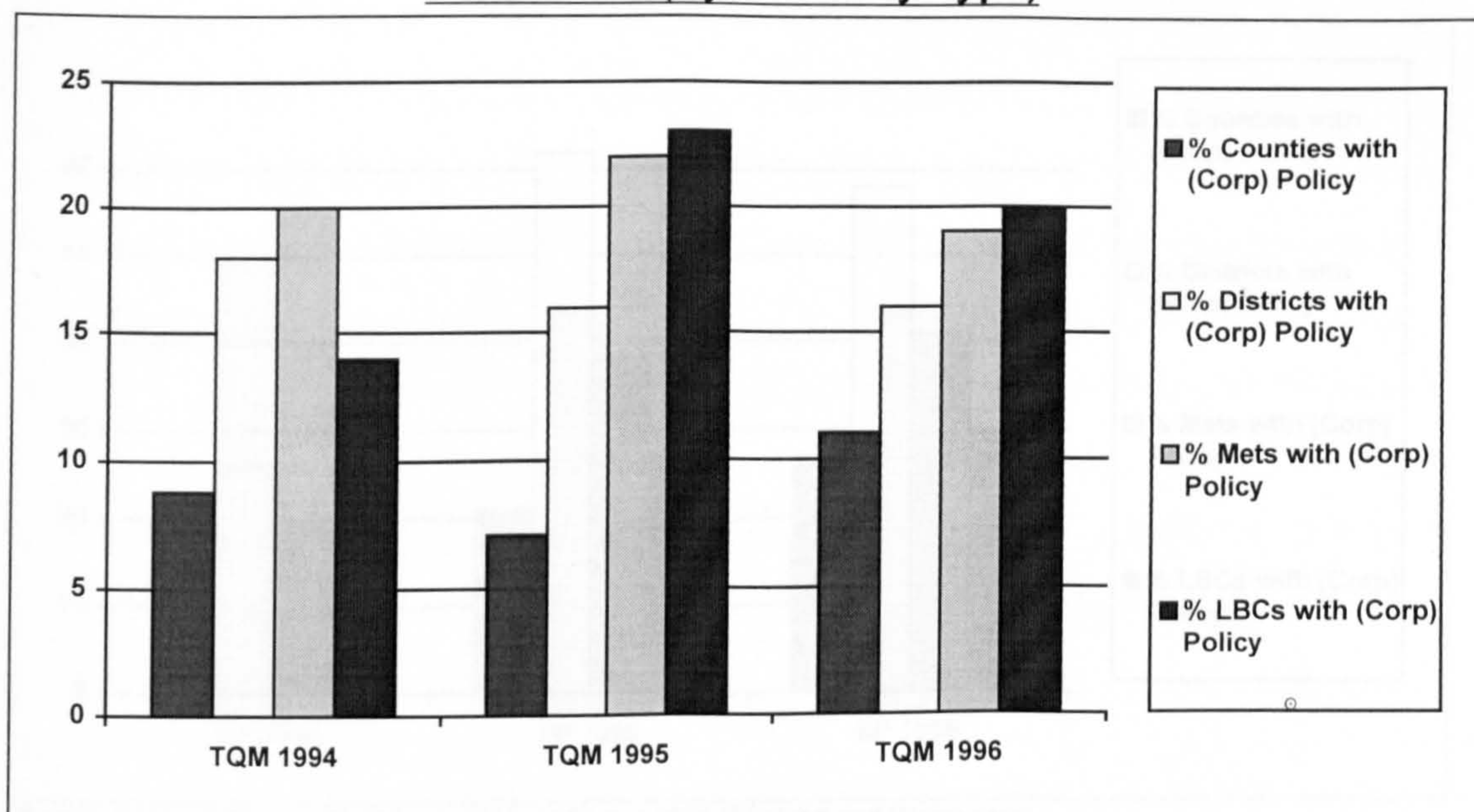
Figures 3:4 - 3:8 show how the uptake of some of these methods has varied across local authority types. TQM (non-corporate) has seen consistently increasing popularity in the Metropolitan Authorities (Fig. 3:4), although showing no clear trends in corporate (council-wide) use (Fig. 3:5). IiP has seen an across-the-board increase in popularity in general use (Fig. 3:6), but been consistently more popular in District Authorities as a corporate strategy (Fig. 3:7). Charter Mark, though the least popular method across-the-board (often due to its political association with the then Prime Minister, John Major), has seen the greatest rise in popularity and seems to be particularly popular with London Boroughs (Fig. 3:8).

Figure 3:4: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (b) General Use of TQM (By Authority Type)



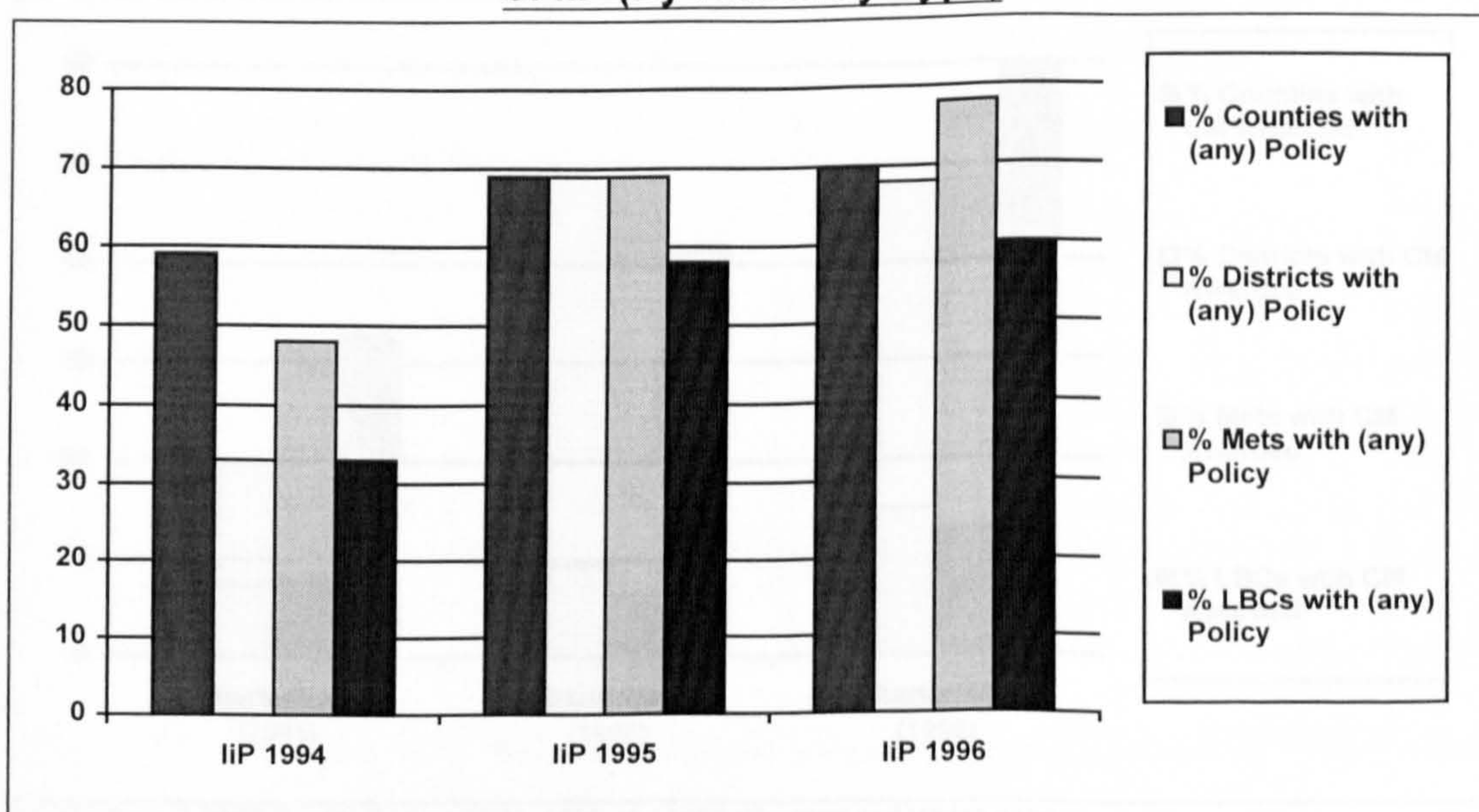
Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

Figure 3:5: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (c) Corporate Use of TQM (By Authority Type)



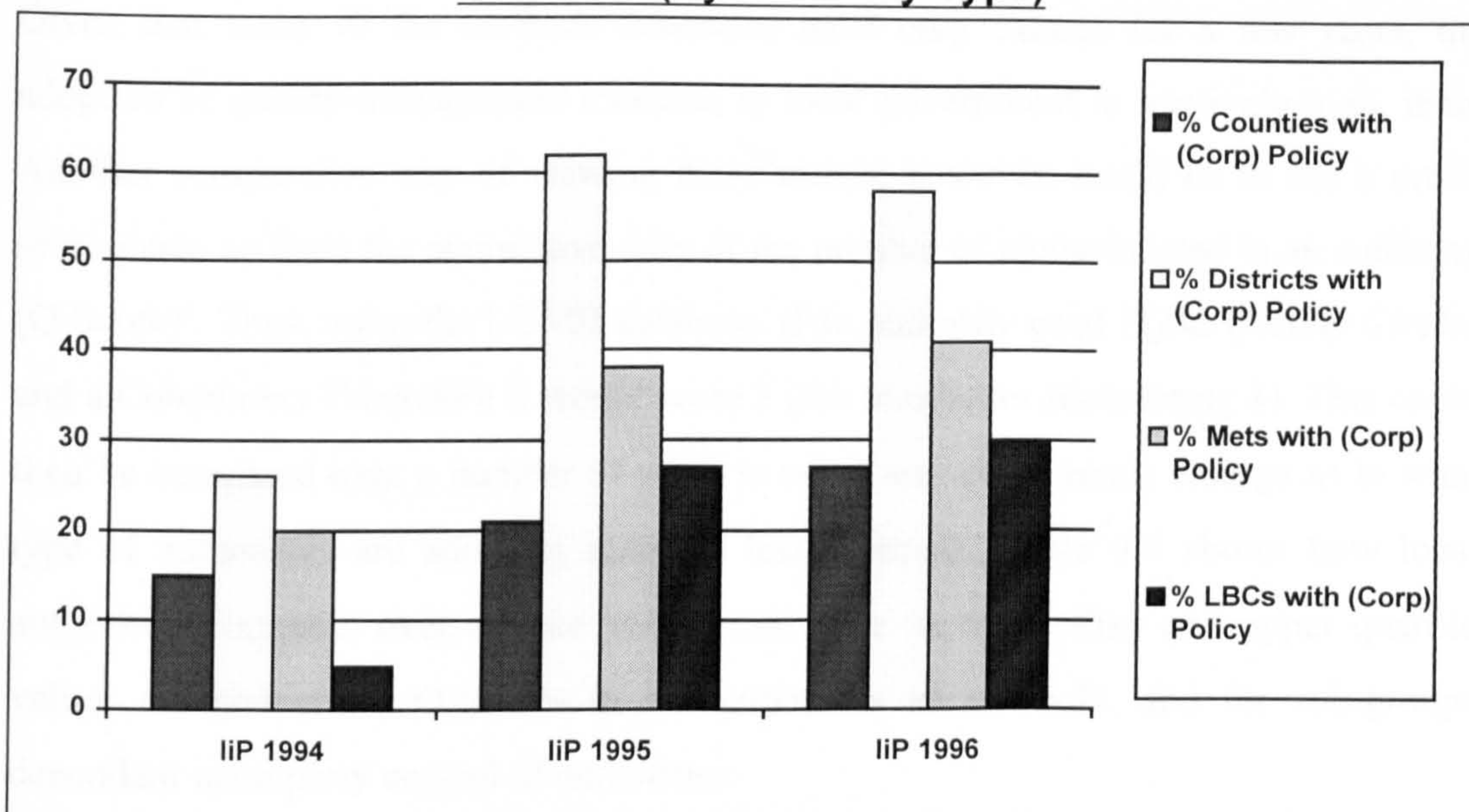
Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

Figure 3:6: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (d) General Use of liP (By Authority Type)



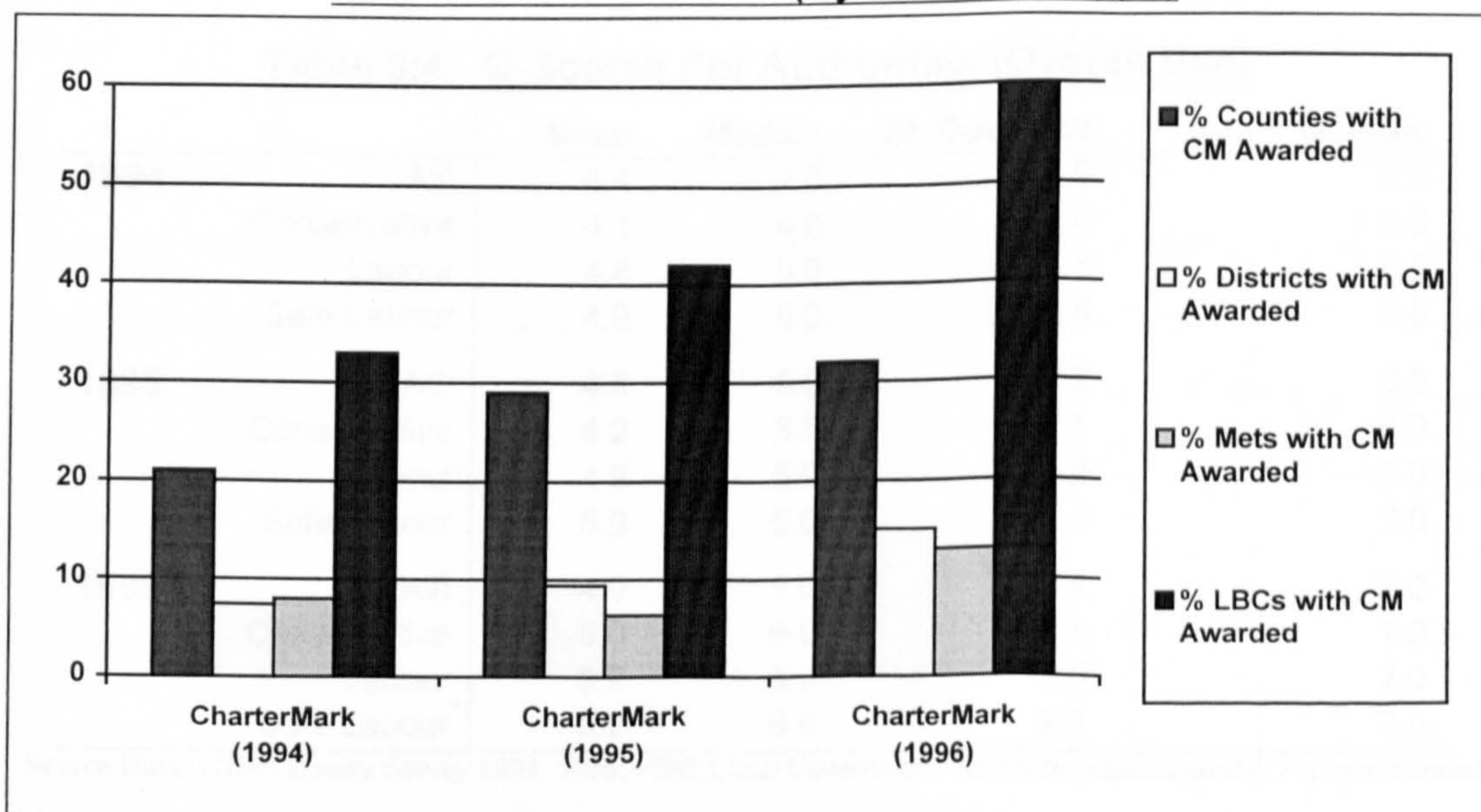
Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

Figure 3:7: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (e) Corporate Use of liP (By Authority Type)



Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

Figure 3:8: Use of Quality Methods in Local Government (f) Authorities Awarded Charter Mark (By Authority Type)



Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995 and 1996 (England and Wales only)

c) Q-Scores

Given that many of the methods described have only existed for a few years, the adoption of quality-management methods in local government is relatively high, then. Another comparative way of viewing these trends, however, could be to use a crude score made up from the cumulative tally of the number of methods used in an authority (Q-Score)¹. Thus, using the LGMB database, if an authority used *TQM*, *Quality Circles* and a *Complaints Procedure* it would score 3 (the maximum score being 8). This could then be compared over a number of years to see if any clear trends emerge as to what type of authorities are adopting more or less methods. Table 3:4 shows how local authorities compare, over a three year period. The mean, median and upper quartile values are shown for Q-Scores in all authorities as a whole, and for sub-groups dependant upon party control of authorities.

During the period being examined Labour has fared very well electorally: at the same time the Conservatives have fared disproportionately badly. For this reason 'safe' Labour councils were assessed separately - so as to minimise the distorting effect caused by attributing management policies to Labour councils that may have been inherited from outgoing Conservative or 'balanced' (hung) administrations.

Table 3:4: Q-Scores For Authorities (Overall Use)

		Mean	Median	St. Deviation	Upper Quartile
1994	(All)	4.4	4.0	1.9	6.0
	Conservative	4.1	4.0	1.9	5.0
	Labour	4.8	5.0	1.8	6.0
	Safe Labour	4.9	5.0	1.8	6.0
1995	(All)	4.5	5.0	2.2	6.0
	Conservative	4.2	3.5	2.1	6.0
	Labour	4.9	5.0	2.0	7.0
	Safe Labour	5.0	5.0	2.0	7.0
1996	(All)	4.9	5.0	2.1	7.0
	Conservative	5.0	6.0	2.4	7.0
	Labour	5.2	5.0	2.0	7.0
	Safe Labour	5.2	6.0	2.1	7.0

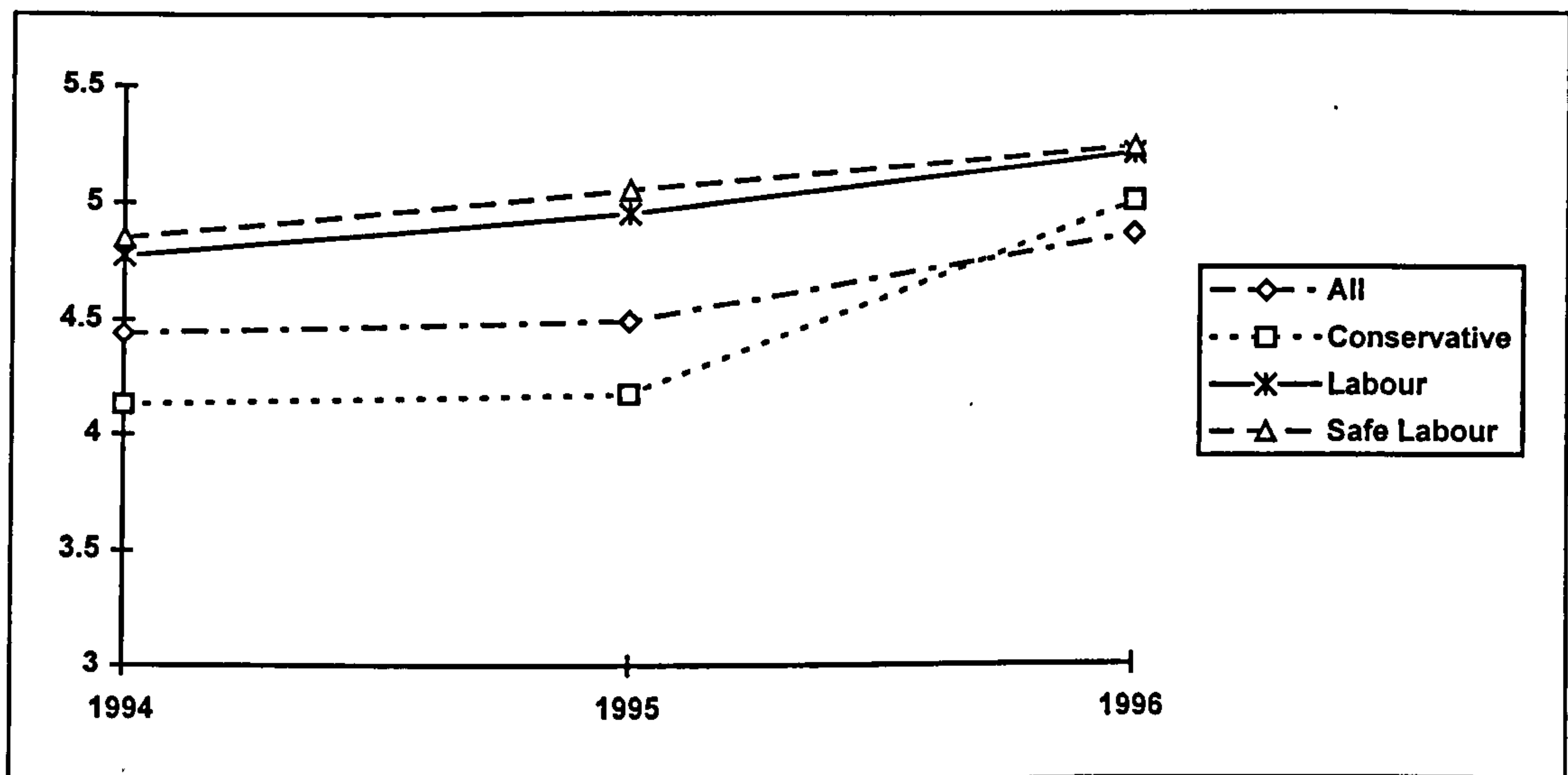
Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995, 1996; Local Government Yearbook (various years). Figures rounded.

In terms of crude Q-Score, then, Labour authorities would seem have had a greater penchant for taking up quality methods. Mean and median scores are consistently

¹ Note: Value of 1 attributed for authority with either a stated policy to use method *in place* or with *stated intent* to use method.

higher than those of the population's as a whole (all authorities). This is further illustrated in figure 3:9 which shows that safe Labour councils have the highest mean use of quality methods, over the three years, but that Conservative authorities, being below the average population Q-Score mean in the first two years, rose above the population mean in the last year. That is, for the most recent year, the two main parties were *both* keener on quality management methods than were other parties (Liberal Democrats, Independents or authorities without overall majorities).

Figure 3:9: Mean Q-Scores (Overall Use)



In some ways the crude 'attribute' measure used in the above Q-Score may over-represent authorities who make only limited use of a quality method and not fully recognise those authorities making extensive use of a quality method. For this reason a further measure of Q-Score is used in table 3:5 and figure 3:10. Here the Q-Scores for authorities where a quality policy has been adopted corporately - on authority-wide basis is shown.

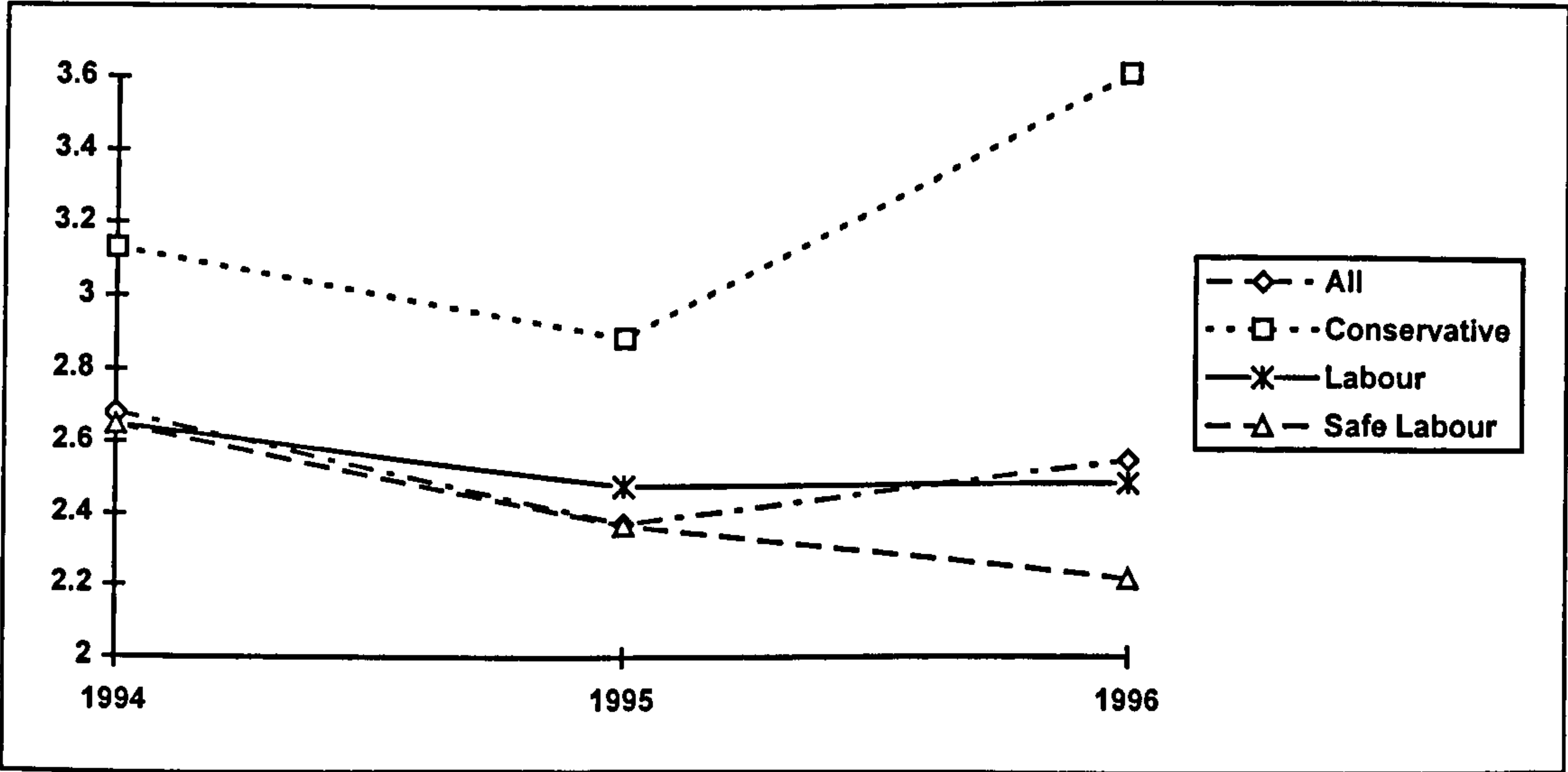
Table 3:5: Q-Scores For Authorities (Corporate Use)

		Mean	Median	St. Deviation	Upper Quartile
1994	(All)	2.7	2	1.8	4
	Conservative	3.1	3	1.9	4
	Labour	2.6	2	1.8	4
	Safe Labour	2.6	2	1.8	4
1995	(All)	2.4	2	1.6	3
	Conservative	2.9	3	1.4	4
	Labour	2.5	2	1.6	3
	Safe Labour	2.4	2	1.5	3
1996	(All)	2.5	2	1.6	4
	Conservative	3.6	4	1.6	4
	Labour	2.5	2	1.5	3
	Safe Labour	2.2	2	1.4	3

Source Data: LGMB Quality Survey 1994, 1995, 1996; Local Government Yearbook (various years). Figures rounded.

In terms of corporate use much of the previous findings are reversed. Conservative authorities are the most fervent users of corporate quality methods. Over the three year period mean Q-Scores fell and then rose slightly: in Conservative authorities they fell and rose sharply. Also, in contrast with the convergence tendencies in overall Q-Score use, safe Labour authorities' adoption of corporate quality management methods dipped consistently over the three year period.

Figure 3:10: Mean Q-Scores (Corporate Use)



Summary

Quality management has been introduced into local government over the past few years. This has largely been the outcome of an inter-related set of circumstances, but in the main has been enabled by the general managerialist trend in local government administration. Pressures from the introduction of CCT - through structural re-organisation and through the desire to outmanoeuvre private sector competitors - has been a crucial catalyst in this. Because of the various sources of influence, a variety of different quality management initiatives have been introduced into authorities of all types and all political hues.

Section III

Work and Trade Unions in Local Government

CHAPTER 4

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In section two, the political and managerial background to the local government management agenda was discussed. All of the developments discussed, of course, occurred simultaneously to parallel developments in the area of industrial relations, both in the broad national context and more specifically in the area of local government. In this context managerialism has operated both as a pro-active agenda, in that it was based upon a re-statement of management's position within local government; and in a reactive manner, in that the managerialist agenda developed specifically within the context of organised union resistance to much of the political aims of managerialism.

This section will discuss the impact and relevance of worker activity within local government, focusing on collective bargaining arrangements and on the changing nature of work organisation with the advent of new managerialist methods, particularly those associated with quality management. To the range of relationships affected by managerialism that are described by Clarke and Newman (1997) - between state and citizen, public and private, providers and recipients of social welfare and management and politics - the additional relationship of providers and managers is addressed here.

While chapter 5 will discuss the implications for conditions of employment, this chapter will examine the actions and reactions of local government trade unions to the industrial relations climate created by managerialism. It will examine the unions' approach to dealing with the managerialist re-definition of the public sector in the UK over the 1980s and 1990s and it will examine the strategy adopted by the public sector unions to the issue of quality.

The Industrial Relations Climate in the 1980s and 1990s

The imposition of managerialism in local government, described in chapter 2, occurred as part of a wider ideological project to re-assert the principle of the absolute management prerogative. However, some misconceptions exist about the nature of industrial relations before the advent of Thatcherism (MacInnes 1987). Industrial

disputes in the 1970s are often retrospectively portrayed as a period where unions enjoyed unprecedented power in the workplace and where union leaders were seen as key power brokers within government itself. Here the popular media image of trade unions was of the 1973/4 miners strike with its associated flying pickets, the Heath Government's capitulation to 'union power' following the imposition of the three-day week and of inefficient nationalised industries being closed by wildcat strikes (Glasgow University Media Group 1976). In reality, however, the 1970s were also characterised by rising unemployment, rising inflation and protracted industrial disputes that were often based upon issues of plant closure and management lockouts. To further blur the distinction between the 1970s and Thatcherism, it should be remembered that the first monetarist budget was delivered by a Labour Chancellor; that the first attempts at comprehensive industrial relations legislation aiming to restrict strike activity was undertaken by a Labour Government (In Place of Strife) in the 1960s and was being pursued by an earlier Conservative Government (The Industrial Relations Act 1972). Trade union activity in the 1970s, then, was often confined to defensive actions within a context of difficult economic times.

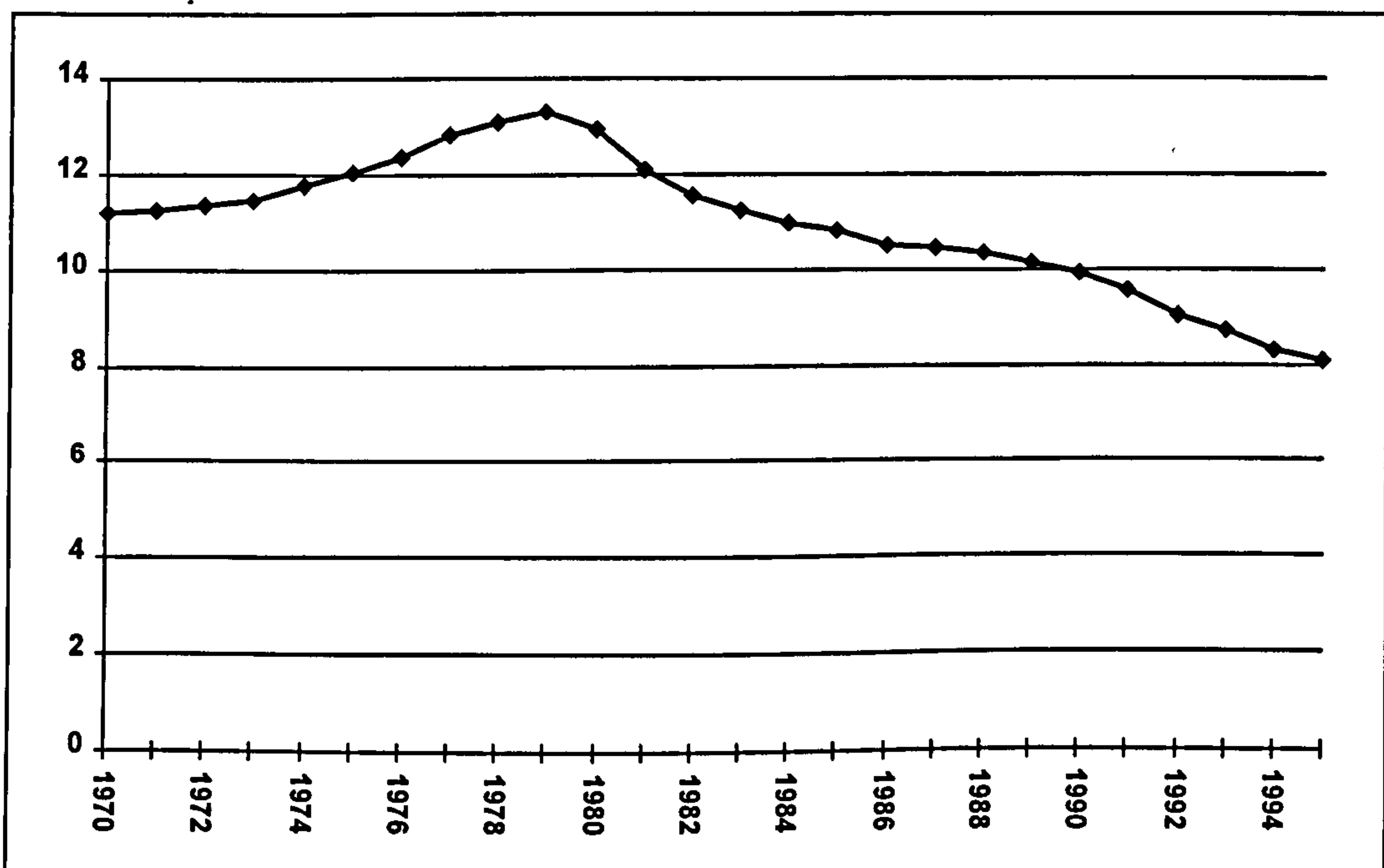
This being said, however, the Thatcher Government of 1979 was a watershed in many ways. The incoming government made a priority of 'reforming' industrial relations in the UK and in terms of legislation and general approach, the Conservative governments of 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992 maintained a greater consistency on this aspect of policy than on any other issue. While the phraseology may have altered over time (e.g. references to 'supply-side' labour markets became references to 'flexibility'), the agenda remained consistent: restrict the capacity of workers to take collective action against employers. As one Director put it in 1981,

Managers for twenty years have had a buffeting from government and unions and we have been put in a can't win situation ... we have an opportunity now that will last for two or three years. Then the unions will get themselves together again; and the government, like all governments, will run out of steam. So grab it now. We have had a pounding and we are fed up with it. I think it would be fair to say that it's almost vengeance. (Les Collinson, Managing Director and Management Consultant, *Financial Times* 5 January 1981. Quoted in MacInnes 1987 p92)

This agenda was pursued through direct legislative measures; by direct confrontation with trade unions in industrial disputes in situations where the state was the employer (the 1984-5 miners strike); by directly siding with employers in industrial disputes in

the private sector (the 1986 News International dispute); and by redefining the legal and economic boundaries of the state (privatisation and deregulation). In addition, all of the above occurred under a period of permanently high structural unemployment, which severely reduced the potential for the type of organised union resistance that occurred in response to government attempts to constrain union activity in the 1970s. The result has been an overall decline in trade union influence. One indicator of this is the well documented decline in trade union membership over the period Figure 4:1 shows this decline from the 1980s, which contrasts with the previous period of sustained trade union membership growth.

Figure 4:1: Trade Union Membership (millions) 1970 - 1995



(Ref: Labour Market Trends 1997 p39: Data based on Certification Officer data)

a) Trade union legislation 1979 - 1996

The most obvious source of government activity on trade unions has been legislative. Prior to 1979, the legal status of industrial relations in the UK has traditionally been characterised as being voluntarist, or based upon the notion of *collective laissez faire* (Martin 1998). From 1979, however, the legislative programme ensured that the state became pro-actively involved in the conduct of industrial relations and of the labour market. Anti trade union legislation began in 1980 and continued throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Legislation was introduced to undermine the viability of trade

unions in three important ways (Brown et al 1997). First, legislation was aimed at shifting the conduct of industrial relations back to private law - making trade unions liable for the consequences of industrial disputes; second, legislation aimed to undermine 'props' to collective bargaining - wages councils, national bargaining and fair wages resolutions; and third, legislation was aimed directly at the re-regulation of collective action - the direct intervention in the conduct of trade union activities themselves.

These measures, then, aimed to reduce strike activity through restricting picketing, outlawing secondary, 'political' and 'sympathy' strikes and by imposing secret ballot arrangements, with prior notice to affected employers, for strikes. In addition, legislation aimed to undermine the legitimacy of trade unions within the workplace as a whole through negating the scope of collective bargaining. This took the form of restricting, then removing closed-shop arrangements, providing 'opt-outs' for union members not wishing to comply with balloted industrial action and by the requirement of members' positive endorsement for 'check-off' arrangements for union subscriptions. Taken as a whole, these legislative measures tended to undermine the instrumentalist appeal of trade union membership. Table 4:1 provides a summary of the legislation.

Table 4:1: Employment Legislation 1979 - 1995

Act	Summary
Employment Act 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction in employee rights in unfair dismissal • maternity rights to reinstatement reduced • restrictions to closed shop • repeal of trade union recognition procedure • restrictions on picketing • secondary picketing outlawed • limitations to secondary strikes • extension of grounds for refusal to join union
Employment Act 1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reinforcement of closed shop restrictions • 'union labour only' commercial contracts outlawed • selective dismissal of strikers now legal • new definition of trade dispute • 'political' strikes outlawed • removal of trade union immunity from civil courts
Trade Union Act 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 yearly ballots for voting members of union NECs • secret ballots for industrial action • ballots to establish political funds • redefinition of 'political' in political funding
Wages Act 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wages councils only allowed to set single minimum rate of pay and single overtime rate • workers under age of 21 not covered by minimum wage
Sex Discrimination Act 1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removed exception for small firms from complying with Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Employment Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • union must hold separate ballot for each affected workplace • ballot must provide other alternatives to strike action • members have right not to be disciplined by union • all union NEC members subject to 5 year ballot • new Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members • post-entry closed-shop outlawed
Employment Act 1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-entry closed shop outlawed • union liable for officials who call for industrial action • restrictions on unofficial strike action • increased employer freedom to dismiss employee taking unofficial strike action • further restrictions to secondary action
Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • union members given right to join union of choice • full postal ballot before strike • employers to receive seven days notice of strike • union members to authorise subscription 'check-off' • abolition of 26 wages councils • removal of ACAS's requirement to encourage collective bargaining

(Ref: Blyton & Turnbull 1994: pp163-164)

b) Government role in disputes during the 1980s

Another source of government intervention during this period was in its direct involvement in industrial disputes, both where the state was employer and otherwise. While the involvement of the state in industrial disputes was hardly new, here, the combined effect of this with anti-union legislation, and rising unemployment in the more unionised sections of the economy increased the impact of government involvement. In addition, the government had made some of these disputes 'show-case' demonstrations of how it was not going to capitulate to the subversive influence of trade union power.

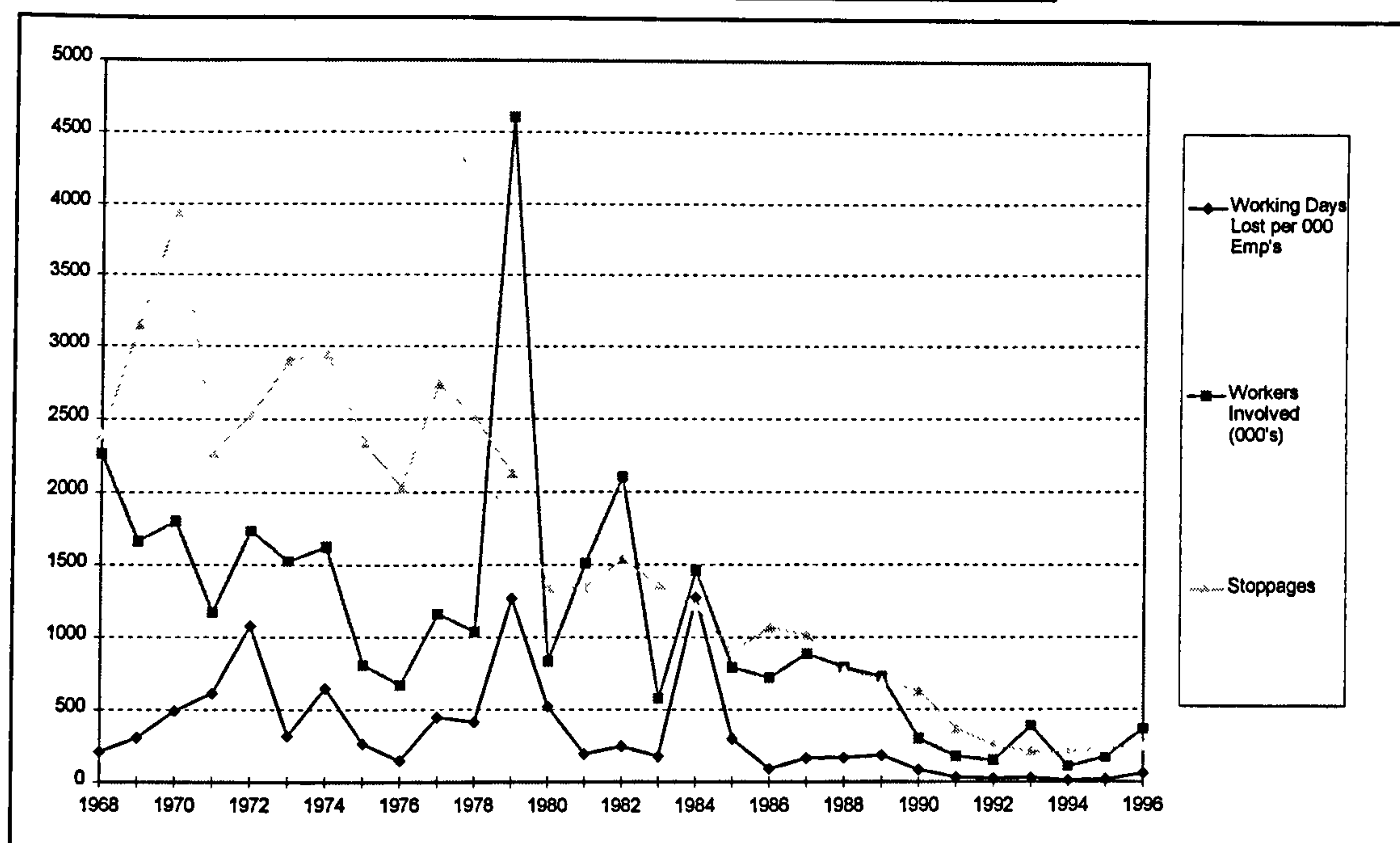
The incoming Conservative government of 1979 saw 'trade union power' as a threat to the trade union legislation, itself set up to thwart the perceived threat that trade unions had to its economic policy. This fear was exacerbated by the apparent humiliation of the previous Conservative government by organised trade union resistance to its industrial relations legislation and, more significantly, by the miners strikes of 1972 and 1973-4. As a prelude, the first real direct state intervention in an industrial dispute during the Thatcher administration was the Stockport Messenger dispute of 1983. Here, the police and the courts were successfully used to enforce the new anti picketing laws in a recognition dispute with the NGA union. The watershed dispute of the Thatcher regime was most obviously, however, the 1984-5 miners strike. For this showcase dispute, all the mechanisms of the state were brought into play to defeat the miners including not only anti-trade union legislation, but prior economic planning, the centralised co-ordination of policing arrangements, news management and even the withdrawal of welfare benefits (Couller et al 1984; Green 1990). Coal stocks were built up in advance to insulate against the knock-on economic effects; the dispute was provoked over the issue of jobs - in order that a compromise would be unlikely to be negotiable; social security benefits were selectively withdrawn from miners families; challenges were made to the legality of the strike; 'breakaway' elements in the union were actively encouraged; and the police were centrally reorganised and deployed to physically break the strike. The miners strike polarised public opinion and when the miners were defeated, a political message was demonstrated to trade unionists. In the aftermath of the strike *The Guardian* commented:

The defeat of the miners will be seen as a landmark in the decline of the industrial working class and the advocates of political strike action. (Guardian 5 March 1985 quoted in Hain 1986 p224)

While this assertion overestimates the capacity to suppress industrial conflict, it does demonstrate a shift in attitude in 'progressive' and centre-left political opinion towards trade unions as being a progressive force. It also gave employers a demonstration of the type of 'industrial relations' that was now possible. This manifested itself, a year later, in the *News International* dispute where, again, a trade union with a prior history of firm entrenchment and workplace organisation, the NGA and SOGAT 82, was defeated. In this case the law and police were used in defence of a private-sector employer's right to dismiss an entire unionised workforce and replace it with a new workforce, with the support of the employer-friendly EETPU who provided the only recognised representation for the replacement workforce.

Other important disputes took place in the 1980s and early 1990s, and these were not all defeated. Indeed, a number of other 'industrial relations benchmark' organisations suffered setbacks when confronted by strike activity - notably Ford in 1988 (Starkey & McKinlay 1989). In addition, the 1990s saw a rise in the propensity to take industrial action in new areas - notably in the *National Health Service*. Some of this action even prompted some comments of a summer of discontent in 1989 and even a second summer of discontent in 1996 (Heery 1997). Overall, however, high profile industrial disputes became rarer in the latter 1980s and 1990s and even where they did take place, they were often more inclined toward series of one-day stoppages and of greater attention paid to harnessing public opinion. Figure 4:2, below, shows the continuous reduction in strike activity over the period, broken by the 'winter of discontent' and the 1984-5 miners strike.

Figure 4:2 Strike Activity 1968 - 1996



(ref. Employment Gazette 1989 p350; Labour Market Trends 1997 p218)

c) Redefining government intervention

A third source of government intervention into industrial relations was in the form of direct and indirect economic intervention aimed at promoting 'good' industrial relations. With the abandonment of formal incomes policy from 1979, other forms of regulation were pursued to achieve the same ends. These took the forms of broad economic policy, the privatisation/deregulation agenda, the use of foreign direct investors to promote model practice and the changing nature of the state-as-employer.

In terms of broad economic policy, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was the first attempt by the Thatcher administration to discipline employers and workers into pay restraint. The MTFS was intended to be the practical application of monetarism, whereby the cycle between price and wage inflation was to be broken, therefore breaking the 'stagflationary' inflation/unemployment trade-off of the *Long Run Phillips Curve* (Friedman 1968). The outcome, though not the outcome predicted by the monetarist gurus, had a direct impact on the labour market through the induction of high levels of unemployment into the economy. The ideological message here was one of 'living within our means', meaning that businesses had to be able to make changes (reductions) to the size of their work-forces where the market demanded cost reductions, without interference from the monopoly power of trade unions. In the 1990s

this principle has become orthodoxy and is now pursued in the guise of 'downsizing' by large corporations wishing to display to financiers their ability to shed labour at will in the face of 'globalisation'. In 1979, however, this was not the case. The major economic shakeout that the MTFS induced was a major factor in the well documented steep decline in trade union membership during the early 1980s. It affected many trade union members directly due to the disproportionate effect that this economic contraction had on large-scale, 'traditional' heavy industry, where trade union density had been highest.

The second and probably most significant form taken by government economic intervention affecting trade unions, was the reorganisation of major industries through the 'privatisation' agenda - combining state asset sales and deregulation. In contrast to the official government rhetoric of the time, however, the reorganisation of the state in the 1980s constituted a re-definition, rather than a withdrawal of government economic intervention. The entire privatisation programme, despite the variety in the status and manner by which these various state assets were transferred to the market, constituted an attempt to introduce greater labour-market 'flexibility' and to discipline workers into the idea that their own interests were best served by ensuring the long-term profitability of the organisation in which they were working.

The privatisation programme, in contrast to previous denationalisation programmes, became a proactive agenda. Paradoxically, however, while privatisation was a policy pursued with great zeal in the 1980s it was nevertheless an agenda that was largely improvised and later given an ideological rationale. Privatisation did not appear on the 1979 Conservative manifesto. Swann (1988) places the origin of the privatisation agenda from the end of the Heath government in 1974 and the role played by the 1973 miners strike. The economic agenda for the Conservatives from 1975 onwards, centred around Friedman's monetarism and the Bacon and Eltis thesis - described in chapter 2. The response was Keith Joseph's production of 'The Right Approach to the Economy' in 1977 and the Ridley Report in 1978. These linked the efficiency of industry with the trade union 'question'. This theme continued into the 1979 Conservative manifesto where the only mention of denationalisation was for the recently nationalised *Britoil*, *British Aerospace*, *National Freight* and the shipbuilding industry. The agenda only

shifted when the Government considered that it might not be able to make these industries efficient. As then minister John Moore commented:

Why has these industries' performance been so disappointing...They do their best but are faced with an impossible task. The odds are stacked against them. Not only are the industries constantly at risk from political and bureaucratic interference, the managers must at times wonder what it is they are supposed to be managing. Are they industries or social services? (Moore 1986)

By the 1983 manifesto this emphasis had changed, yet still failed to use the term 'privatisation':

A company which has to satisfy its customers and compete to survive is more likely to be efficient, alert to innovation, and genuinely accountable to the public...We shall continue our programme to expose state-owned firms to real competition... We shall transfer more state-owned businesses to independent ownership. (Conservative Party 1983)

The 1983-87 Government made much more of the privatisation agenda, this time based upon the rhetoric of public floatation and 'wider share ownership'. By the time of the 1987 election, the language had changed:

We were determined to make share ownership available to the whole nation. Just as with cars, television sets, washing machines and foreign holidays, it would no longer be a privilege of the few; it would be the expectation of the many...

...In the next parliament...we will privatise more state industries in ways that increase share ownership, both for the employees and for the public at large. (Conservative Party 1987)

Even here, however, privatisation remained as much motivated by increasing government short term revenue as it was about '*rolling back the frontiers of the state*' as former prime minister MacMillan famously commented when accusing the government of '*selling off the family silver*'.

If many of the political and economic justifications for privatisation were unfulfilled, the desired impact on employment relations within the affected industries certainly was. From the protagonists of deregulation/privatisation, public monopoly was replaced with private monopoly. In this situation, the state was not removed from the strategic direction of such industries. As a number of commentators - protagonists and critics - have noted, the privatisation agenda developed with a parallel development of whole new structures of regulation (Swann op cit; Price 1994). Here, then, deregulation could more appropriately be interpreted as a re-definition of regulation. The regulation that was introduced, however effectively it worked in practice, was restricted to protecting the interests of consumers and competitors. It was not concerned with the protection of

employees interests - quite the reverse. It was not until the 1990s until European *TUPE* legislation (Transfer of Undertakings: Protection of Employment) put this on the agenda - to the dismay of the government at the time.

A common theme that seems to permeate all the privatisation/deregulations is the importance of contract relationships. Based, partly, upon theories such as transaction-cost economics (Williamson 1997), it became economically fashionable in the 1980s, to break-up the multi-function organisation into its constituent parts. The resulting 'lean' organisation is expected to gain savings through the enhanced ability of the 'core business' to control dependent contractors, without the requirement of having to maintain the 'social wage' of employees working within the outsourced contractor (wage parity, terms and conditions of employment, job security etc). The tendency is for employment decisions to be passed down to the contractor level. This, combined with an increased necessity for continuous cost reductions (to maintain share value performance and/or maintain prices set by regulatory bodies) has led to large job cuts. This, of course, is the primary justification for compulsory competitive tendering (CCT).

Government activity was also focused on the way in which it encouraged foreign direct investment (FDI). This was another important form of the re-constitution of workplace industrial relations. The government used its promotion of 'good industrial relations' - a reduction in strike rates and a declining trade union membership - to attract foreign investors. In turn, it also promoted high profile foreign investors as models of industrial harmony. The arrival of Nissan in 1986 was hailed as a great victory for the Government's industrial relations policy, as much as for its economic policy. Nissan was then paraded as a model for industrial relations. Its apparent success was further used to discipline the aspirations of workers in the British motor industry and beyond (Oliver & Wilkinson 1989; 1992; Garrahan and Stewart 1992). Here, the greenfield site manufacturer dominates the local economy and can influence employment practices both directly, through its own employment practices, indirectly, through its regulation of dependent supply chain companies, and indirectly again, through the promotion of the corporate vision of employment relations:

Nissan and other contemporary greenfield site operators strive towards a fully corporate manufacturing organisation that contains within it what at best can only be described as sublimated conflict. (Garrahan & Stewart *ibid.* pp66-67)

A fourth way in which industrial relations was affected by government sponsorship was through the way in which the government re-defined its own role as an employer. Key to this was the shift away from a 'model employer' ethos. Thornley (1995) notes, however, that this ideal concept of the state being 'model employer' is itself a myth. She points out that such a definition views the state as neutral, and therefore ignores the differences in party political influence, or how the dynamics of industrial conflict vary between sectors. She argues that the 'model employer' assumption inherently views industrial relations within the state as a series of 'processes', thereby ignoring the outcomes of conflict. There is strength in this argument. Indeed, the very fact that it is this self-same 'model employer' that is subjecting public sector workers to the discipline of the market, belies the notion that employment relations within the state are inherently stable. However, in principle it could be accepted that the Government, during the 1980s, consciously moved away from practices associated with what was regarded as 'model employer' practice.

Some significant changes to the industrial relations climate, as a whole, took place during the 1980s then. All of the above mentioned changes had a significant bearing in the way in which industrial relations was conducted in local government. The overall function of legislation, employment deregulation, privatisation and the lionising of employment 'best practice' in high profile FDI deals, has been to induce 'market awareness' into the workforce as a whole. The following section will highlight how these changes affected industrial relations in local government.

Local Government Industrial Relations

The formal industrial relations structures in local government have developed as part of the general reorganisation of collective bargaining arrangements in the state throughout the twentieth century. This, in turn, has been tied-up with the growth - and later contracting - of the state sector and the shifting profile of occupations and trades within it, and with the prevailing industrial relations climate nationally.

a) Bargaining structures

The first formal bargaining structures to emerge in local government were those that emerged as a result of the Whitley Committee's recommendations for Civil Service practice in 1919. The recommendations were initially resisted by the government because it was argued that public sector employees could not be assessed for relative performance with relation to the market, as was the case in the private sector (Thomson & Beaumont 1978). Whitley Councils, however, were eventually recognised as being the official joint negotiating bodies for Civil Servants. Local government inclusion in this mechanism took longer. Despite union demands for national bargaining structures and the setting up of sectional bodies such as the *National Joint Industrial Council for Local Authorities' Non Trading Services* for some manual workers in local government, national bargaining did not become the prime focus of industrial relations in local government until wartime legislation shifted the agenda in 1940 (Thomson & Beaumont *ibid.*). The bargaining focus of Whitleyism was based upon the principle of consultation (rather than bargaining), upon a principle of consensus agreements and of national, rather than local, bargaining (Fairbrother 1996). The trade unions involved in local government (NALGO and NUPE) were founded, in the main, as 'staff associations' and developed in line with local government management. Here union structures developed in line with Whitley structures.

By the 1970s, the collective bargaining structures set up for local government were becoming increasingly anachronistic (Fairbrother *ibid.*). Bargaining between unions and employers became more hostile as local government became a target for budgetary constraints. With this, the Whitleyist assumption of consensus disappeared, though national bargaining remained.

b) Developments in the 1980s and 1990s

Along with the generally hostile climate facing trade unions in the 1980s, local government trade unions faced the further ignominy of representing workers in a sector controlled by the government's political opponents. As was noted in chapter 2, local government formed a large proportion of public expenditure and was seen as a potential threat to the monetarist economic plan of the 1980s, particularly where it was controlled by of the Government's political opponents. NALGO and NUPE were portrayed as

being part of an 'unholy alliance' along with profligate high spending authorities: further, they were also demonised for their part in collapse of the previous Labour Government's *Social Contract* incomes policy in the Winter of Discontent in 1978/9.

While there was a brief time when alliances that held together the *new urban left* (NUL) in local government held some degree of coherence, this was not to say that there were not tensions even here leading, paradoxically, to higher than average levels of industrial conflict in these authorities. Heery (1987) notes the paradox that Labour left administrations, which tended to be more generous employers and which were nominally working in allegiance with the trade unions, tended to face greater resistance from trade unions because of (a) the strength of trade unions in Labour controlled areas and (b) because of an underlying mutual mistrust about the means by which decentralisation and equal opportunities policies were being implemented. While Heery notes that conflict was often due to the confrontational stance by which NUL administrations attempted to implement decentralisation and equal opportunities policies, Lansley et al (1989) locate the problem in the weakness and political naiveté of NUL administrations, being guilty of failing to adequately *confront* unions. In contrast, Miller (1996) notes that, for NALGO activists in Islington Council in the 1980s, difficulties arose where they were trying to match a variety of interests: *politically*, being supportive of the NUL agenda; *professionally* being concerned about the service; but *as trade unionists*, being concerned about the likely impact on members' working conditions and of the impact on the union as a whole.

Trade Unions and Quality

There is a close correlation between the introduction of performance management and quality management initiatives and an increasing trend toward the decentralisation of collective bargaining arrangements in local authorities. According to Bryson et al (1993) the introduction of quality and performance management initiatives

...have had a major impact on the personnel practices of these authorities including the introduction of performance related pay for white collar staff and in some cases profit related pay for manual staff in direct service organisations. This represents a major departure from the tradition of the national agreement which sought to set national standards in terms and conditions of work. (Bryson et al 1993 p563)

This is due to assumptions within quality management about the prescribed structure of the work organisation and the recommended communications structures within this. Both of these have no formal place for collective bargaining.

a) Delayering and collective bargaining

...implementation [of TQM] begins with the drawing-up of a quality policy statement, and the establishment of the *appropriate organisational structure*, both for managing and encouraging involvement in quality through teamwork. (Oakland 1989 p29 - italics added)

Implementing 'pure' TQM successfully into a local authority implies structural re-organisation of some sort. TQM is not dissimilar to HRM in this. There are two dangers for union organisation here. First, it re-focuses strategic decision-making, affecting the authority-wide collective bargaining relationships; and second, it re-focuses operational decision-making, potentially challenging the role of the union representative or shop steward.

The decentralising focus of TQM tends to shift the focus of bargaining to localised bargaining. The focus is on the de-centralisation of decision-making, thus enabling the 'empowerment' of front-line staff to be more responsive to customer, or service user needs. Because the adoption of TQM-type policies have been made realisable through the internal restructuring required for CCT (see chapter 3) it is possible that a quality policy may not be directly responsible for shifts in bargaining structures per se. Nevertheless, successful implementation of TQM, according to its protagonists, depends upon this reorganisation. This may have serious implications for the bargaining structures that trade unions operate under in local government, which is based overwhelmingly on Whitley-based national agreement based structures. Colling (1995a) and Fairbrother (1996) note the detrimental effects that local government decentralisation strategies have had on trade unions. Conversely, Beaumont (1990) notes that national bargaining has been based upon, among other factors, local government unions traditionally having inadequate local steward organisation to successfully negotiate locally. In such circumstances localised bargaining in such circumstances may even have the effect of a derecognition scenario. A comparison of typical bargaining arrangements in local government are reproduced from Beaumont (ibid.) and shown in Tables 4:2 and 4:3 below. Though not fully comparable, they do indicate the general shift towards localisation throughout the 1980s.

Table 4:2: Public Sector Bargaining Structures - 1978

	National only	National plus supplementary	Local	No agreement
Managers	76.7	11.3	2.7	9.3
Professionals	80.0	12.9	0.9	6.2
Intermediate non-manual	82.7	12.8	1.1	3.3
Junior non-manual	86.8	9.7	1.1	2.3
Foremen	70.0	19.3	5.5	5.2
Skilled manual	65.1	27.4	3.5	3.9
Semi-skilled manual	78.4	17.1	1.1	3.4
Unskilled manual	66.6	28.2	2.0	3.1

(ref. Gregory & Thomson BJIR XIX/1 1981 - IN: Beaumont 1992 p106)

Table 4:3: Local Government Bargaining Structures 1990

(Districts 1990)	National conditions (unmodified)	National modified by local variations	Local with ref. to national conditions	Local conditions
Chief Executives	24.4	55.4	13.6	6.1
Chief Officers	25.8	54.9	13.6	5.6
APT&C	26.8	57.3	11.7	4.2
Manual	33.8	46.0	12.7	4.7
Craft & Chief Officers	38.0	43.7	11.3	3.3

(ref. NALGO IN Beaumont 1992: p113.)

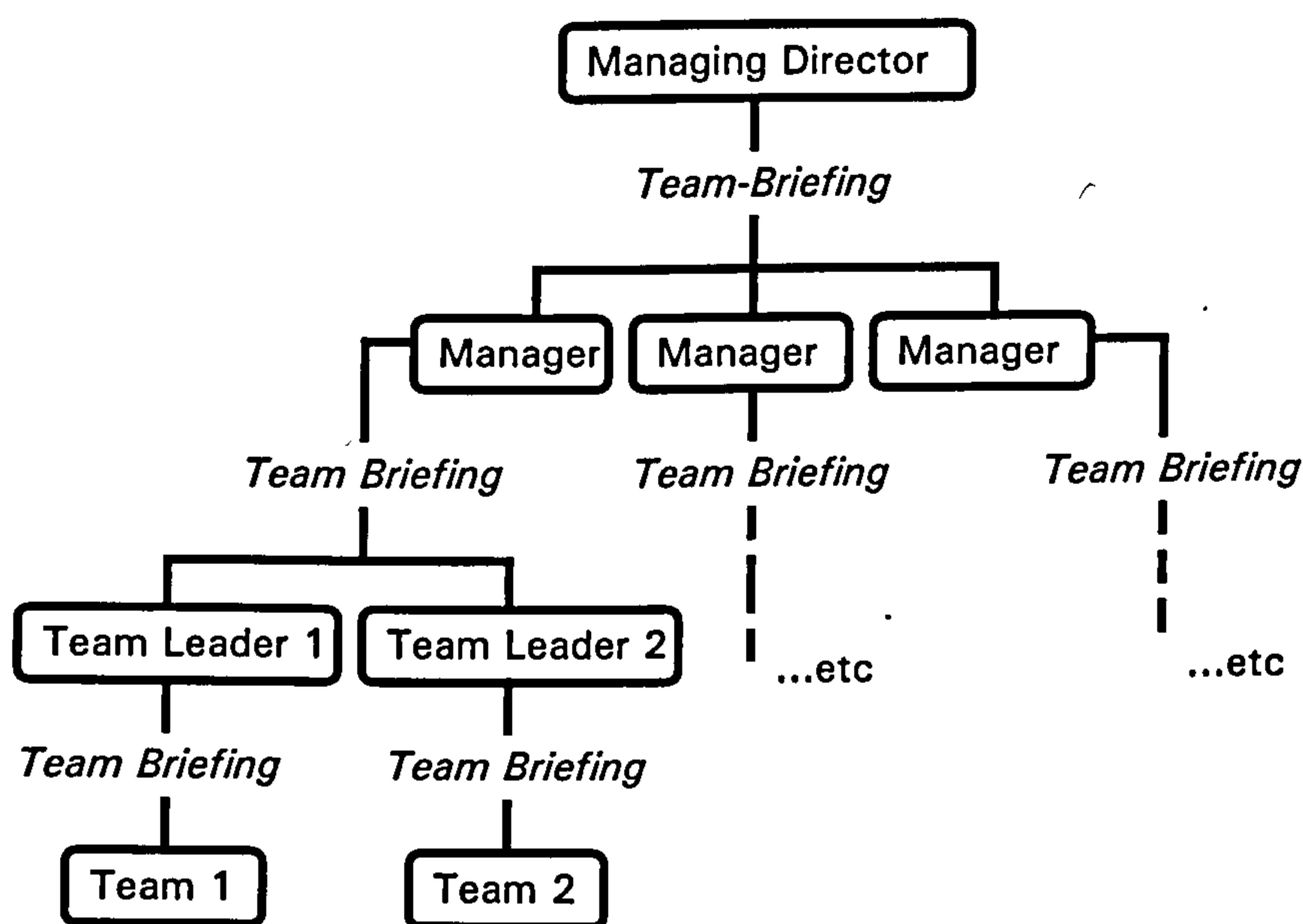
Another aspect of structural reorganisation is the desired effect on official lines of communication which, in TQM, is intended to allow more effective managerial decision-making at the operational level. The intention, here, is to simplify internal decision-making through the replacement of vertical hierarchies with horizontal structures and teams.

Two critical communications issues in TQM are communications relating to decision-making channels, and communications/information about processes. At the lowest hierarchical level, communications would ideally be expected to be informal and incremental with increased routine decisions being taken at the lowest level through 'teams' and through the basic operations of internal customer-supplier chains.

At the senior organisational level, decision-making may be expected to be strategic, highly structured and play a high emphasis on 'leadership' and planning. Most TQM models stress a critical role in top-down decision-making at this level, emphasising a need for the TQM message to flow downwards through an organisation's structure. The 'management team' would be expected to have the authority and responsibility to take

agreed action and would meet regularly to report back on progress. One possible version of this is in the use of 'team-briefings' whereby information is transmitted progressively downwards throughout the organisation, through small briefing sessions based around the team format (see figure 4:3). While it is rarely mentioned in prescriptive TQM literature, it is assumed that trade-unions would accept these official lines of communications. This is due, largely, to the fact that TQM was developed around unitarist assumptions of organisational culture.

Figure 4:3: Team-Briefing (generic)



The structural and communications requirements within quality management, then, potentially challenge the established lines of communications between stewards and members in a highly unionised set-up; and challenge the standard format of collective bargaining. Where unions are by-passed on some of the operational decision-making issues, unions could be isolated from important areas and could face legitimacy problems from members. It was this perceived threat by unions that led to Ford abandoning early attempts to set-up quality circles in the early 1980s (Starkey & McKinlay 1989).

b) Employment changes in local government

Another, more blunt, challenge to trade union organisation comes from the effects of declining employment and the shift in the composition of employment in local government. The take-up of quality management initiatives in local government have been on the back of the managerialist agenda shift described in chapter 2 and 3. To summarise, managerialism justifies the use of commercial management practices to replace 'outmoded' models of public service management it asserts the unchallenged management prerogative in organisational decision-making. While quality management methods are wholly compatible with these unitarist assertions, its protagonists are likely to be keen to distance its paternalistic aspirations to 'empower' workers from workers' prior association of management change programmes and the adoption of commercial management practices. Conversely these same quality management methods may be implicitly being used to 'focus minds' - where increased managerial scrutiny of output performance go hand in hand with selective job cutting. In short, CCT has proved to be one of the major catalysts for the adoption of quality management *and* with large scale downgrading of employment conditions. Table 4:4 shows the marked fall in full-time employment in local government from 1985. While some areas have seen a rise (*Economic Development and Housing*) those most exposed to CCT have seen marked decline (*Construction, Leisure, Refuse*). While some other services have been positively affected by the transference of responsibility to local government (*Social Services* through *Care in the Community*), others have been adversely affected by opt-out legislation (non teaching *Education* through Polytechnic 'incorporation' and *Local Management of Schools*). Overall, though, full-time employment in local government declined by nearly 20% over this period.

Table 4:4: Change in Local Government Full-Time Employment 1985 - 1997 (England, Selected Services)

Service	1985	1990		1997	
	No (k)	No (k)	% Diff (85) ¹	No (k)	% Diff (85)
Education (non teaching)	169	160	-5.5	118	-29.9
Construction	103	93	-9.2	55	-46.6
Social Services	138	155	+12.6	151	+9.8
Libraries, Museums & Art Galleries	23	24	+1.6	20	-14.3
Leisure & Recreation	65	64	-2.3	44	-32.2
Environmental Health	19	18	-2.7	16	-15.8
Refuse, Recycling & Cleansing	38	30	-21.4	23	-37.8
Housing	50	58	+15.6	59	+17.9
Planning & Economic Development	19	22	+13.6	25	+29.5
Other ²	235	224	-4.6	163	-30.7
Total	860	849	-1.3	676	-21.4

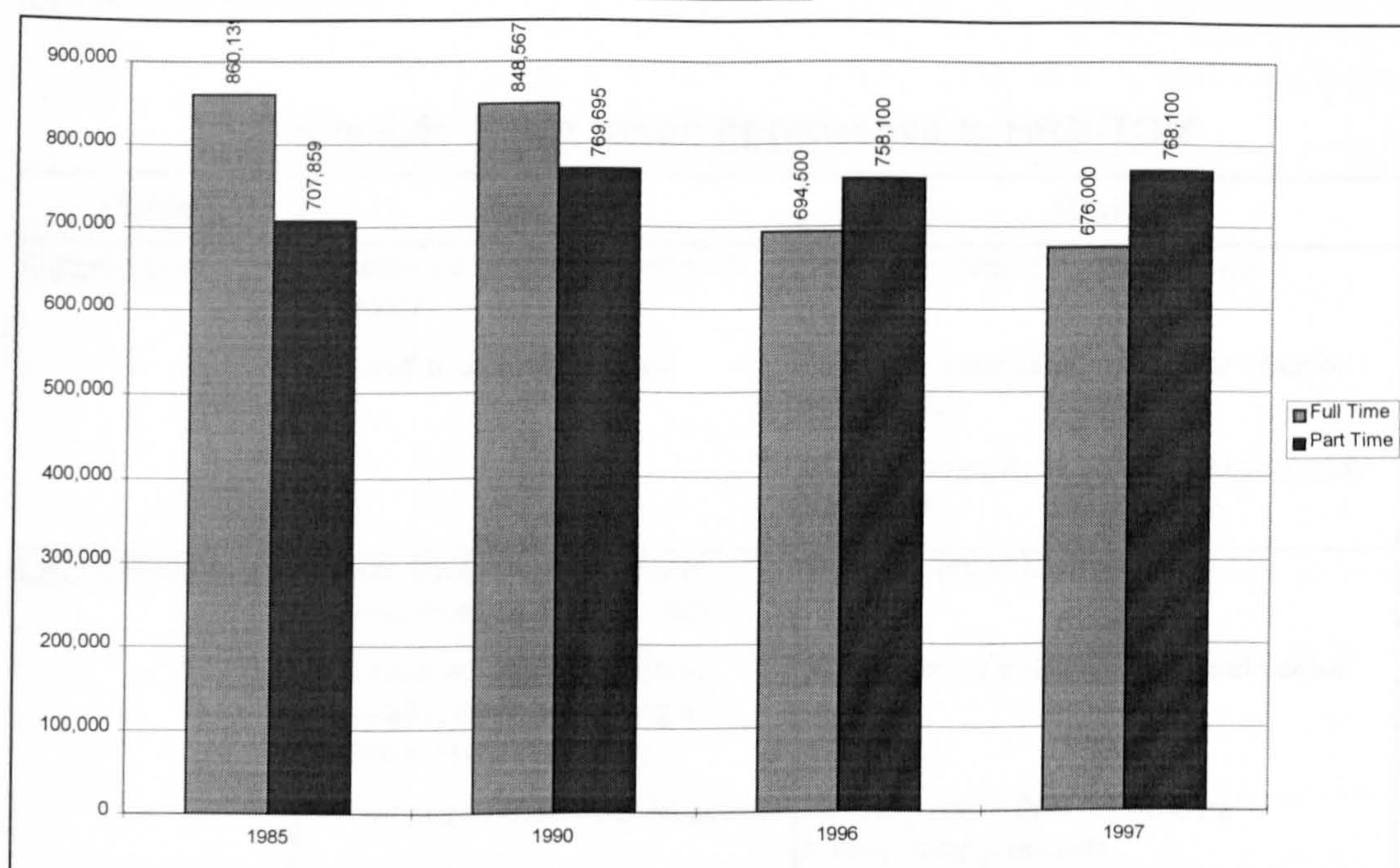
(Source Joint Staffing Watch: 1985; 1990; 1997. Figures rounded)

In addition to this trend, the tenure of employment in local government has shifted. Figure 4:4 shows how the distribution of total employment has been consistently moving from full-time to part-time employment - part-time employees now over half of all employees in local government services covered by the main public service unions outside teaching.

¹ % Diff = per cent change in staff from 1985 level

² 'Other' includes 'Miscellaneous Services' and 'Transport' from pre 1990 JSW figures and 'Engineering & Technical' 'Corporate Services: Finance & Computing' and 'Corporate Services: Other' from 1990 onwards JSW figures.

Figure 4:4: Full-Time/Part-Time Employment (England, Selected Services)



(Source Joint Staffing Watch: 1985; 1990; 1995; 1996; 1997: see footnote 2 from table 4:4)

Quality and Trade Union Strategies for Renewal

Trade union responses to the (often unilateral) introduction of management initiatives such as HRM and TQM have been mixed. This has in large part been due to the general problems being faced by unions over the 1980s and 1990s and of the subsequent reactive nature of trade union responses. By the start of the 1990s, union responses were beginning to show signs of more coherent responses to HRM and TQM initiatives. These responses tied-up with more general responses to the issue of trade union 'renewal'. Arguments providing solutions for trade union renewal necessarily depend upon the definition of the main cause of union decline. While consensus exists as to the general factors involved - being hostile legislation, labour market changes, higher levels of permanent unemployment, cyclical economic conditions - no such agreement exists as to which factors have been the determining factors. These arguments, however, have affected unions' outlook and, from 1997, government policy on trade unions. Broadly, union responses tend to follow a number of general approaches. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (nd) offer what is probably the most useful typology of potential responses to HRM/TQM, these being opposition, local

responses, minimalist responses, positive approaches or active promotion with a union agenda (see table 4:5).

Table 4:5: Trade Union Approaches to HRM/TQM

Option	Benefits	Risks
Opposition	Maintains traditional adversarial approach No need to adapt or change	Unions by-passed by management Members questioning relevance of union membership Miss opportunity to be involved in quality initiatives
Local Response	Allows issues to be addressed without having a formal policy Maintains adversarial position nationally, while presenting a 'positive' response locally No blurring of traditional IR agenda No need for unions to change or adapt	Wide variety of local practices No support or guidance from trade union Reacting rather than influencing management proposals Quality initiative remains with management
Minimalist Approach	Provides clear policy and guidelines Provides framework for local officials and members Maintains uniformity of approach	Takes no account of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local practices • existing relationships • reasons for and scope of initiatives Limits scope of local officials to develop optimum solution Could be perceived as negative, if conditional upon achieving 'up-front' agreement
Positive Approach	Allows for tailor made approach Allows unions to optimize their level of input Opportunity for greater involvement of members Builds members identification with union More involved in shaping final outcomes	Could blur traditional 'us and them' relationships Blurring of traditional bargaining agenda Undermining of union solidarity Variety of local outcomes
Actively Promote with Own Agenda	More involved in setting Seen to address wider needs	Could be perceived as 'doing management's job' Undermining of union solidarity

(Source: ICTU nd)

In practice, Fitzgerald et al (1996) note three broad 'clusters' of responses in the UK. The first cluster, typified by the (ex) EETPU, is one of positive acceptance. For this union, this response is in line with their general 'social partnership' stance on industrial relations adopted throughout the 1980s. This model, however, is also the one that is implicitly (if not explicitly) adopted by the Labour Government from 1997, and is justified by the generic Post-Fordism line of reasoning. A second cluster identified by Fitzgerald et al is one associated with the GMB and is described as a pluralist stance - accepting the management agenda, but within the context of the centrality of collective bargaining. The third cluster identified is the one associated with the TGWU and is described as 'holding on to independence' - an assertion of union autonomy where it reluctantly had to accept HRM practices. In the context of 'public service' however, no official union response has yet been forthcoming. In this type of work the issue of 'quality' takes on additional political significance - as a weapon in protecting services; or as a means by which to make staff more efficient. With these points in mind, the remainder of this chapter will define a condensed typology of union strategies, based upon the main arguments proposed by academics and commentators. The broad categories are (i) responses based upon the realisation that collectivism is in permanent decline, (ii) responses based upon the premise that the industrial relations climate is cyclical (iii) responses based upon the need to build wider coalitions (iv) responses based upon 'bottom-up' approaches of union renewal.

a) Changes in the nature of collectivism

The first model for renewal is associated with the generic Post-Fordism/flexible-specialisation argument, described in chapter 2. This forms the basis of the arguments used by 'new realist' approaches, such as that adopted by the now defunct EETPU. The Post Fordist interpretation has arguably been the most influential of all the solutions offered for trade union revival because, despite it apparently undermining the very legitimacy of collective action or association. The ideas explicit in Post Fordism became increasingly implicit in the policy proposals of the Labour Party during the 1980s, influencing policy areas relating to public service provision by challenging universalist principles and providing enhanced legitimacy to the types of managerialism described in chapter 2. In the area of industrial relations the Post Fordist models of 'partnership' and co-determination began to influence policy after the 1987 general

election defeat (Labour Party 1988). It now provides the assumptions which underpin the '*New Labour*' government policy agenda on the issue of trade unions and employment.

Post Fordism essentially asserts that collectivist associations have become redundant in (post) industrial society due to the shift away from mass production and mass consumption patterns, in favour of niche markets and individualist social and political identity. The industrial relations manifestation of this thinking is that, to survive, trade unions should embrace 'social partnership' models of industrial relations and offer members fringe benefits:

The EETPU's lead in embracing private pension schemes, BUPA, internal flexibility, union-organised training and single-company unions are all consistent with this path of post-Fordist industrial relations (Murray 1988 p12)

The argument goes that unions became out of touch with members during the 1980s, and were feeling increasingly alienated by confrontational approaches to industrial relations. This change of attitude was caused by the change in composition of the working population, through a Post Fordist logic, to a flexible, part-time, feminised workplace. The benefits of abandoning 'Fordist' modes of collectivism are said to be increased consultation of management and increased legitimacy for the union. The issue of quality, of course, is seen as the very manifestation of Post-Fordist production.

There are, apart from the issues already identified in chapter 2, problems with the assumptions that determine this agenda. First, it is assumed that women, white collar, 'pink collar' and professional workers necessarily have a different agenda to the 'militant' male blue collar workers associated with the 1970s. However, should these arguments hold true it would be expected that local government industrial relations would be particularly affected by these trends. Although local government has a sizeable blue collar section to its work-force, it is also made up of large numbers of white collar, professional and clerical staff and it has a large number of women workers - and these were the areas that saw a large growth in membership during the 1970s (Kelly 1990). Despite the increasing use of part-time and temporary employment and the effects that CCT has had, union membership in the 1990s, despite some decline, remains relatively high. As has been noted, the direction of the relationship between management and unions during the 1980s and early 1990s became more, not less,

confrontational and therefore the notion that any gender or occupational changes to the work-force necessarily correlates with changes to a collectivist stance would seem false. Indeed, loyalty towards professional or service-user based ethical principles has often led to a reinforcement of the legitimacy of union activity within the workplace.

Despite these problems, the generic Post-Fordist model seems to have been influential within trade unions. Heery and Kelly (1994) term this as a shift to 'managerial unionism' whereby the servicing of members' individual needs is based upon an assumption that trade union membership is based upon instrumentalism. Trade unions have accordingly embarked upon internal reorganisation, managerial rationalisation and the use of advertising: effectively appealing to the assumed managerialist values that employers adopt to harness employee commitment.

b) Cyclical changes in trade union activity

An alternative suggestion for the decline in trade union membership and participation, based upon a shift in the nature of collectivism, is that which sees workers' insecurity caused by labour market insecurity brought on by downturns in the business cycle.

In some ways this argument contains some similarities with the Post Fordist analysis. In its crudest form it contains an element of determinism - particularly where over-associated with Kondratieff cycles. However, less deterministic variants have been applied to the fortunes of trade unions and do provide some useful insights and, in addition, the business cycle argument does not assume any permanent shift in collective consciousness. In assessing the crisis in trade union membership recruitment and retention over the 1980s Kelly (1990) criticises the view that trade unions are necessarily on a path of continuous decline. The argument that membership decline is a product of a changing workforce structure - implied in Post Fordist analysis among others - is inconsistent with the overall shift in trade union membership over a longer period. The steep decline in union membership in the 1980s was preceded by a decade of sustained growth in union membership. In addition, the membership growth in the 1970s was particularly marked in white collar, technician and women workers. In addition, the decline in overall membership in the UK over the 1980s was not matched uniformly in other advanced capitalist (or so-called 'post industrial') economies. In many cases membership declined more steeply than in the UK - particularly in the US.

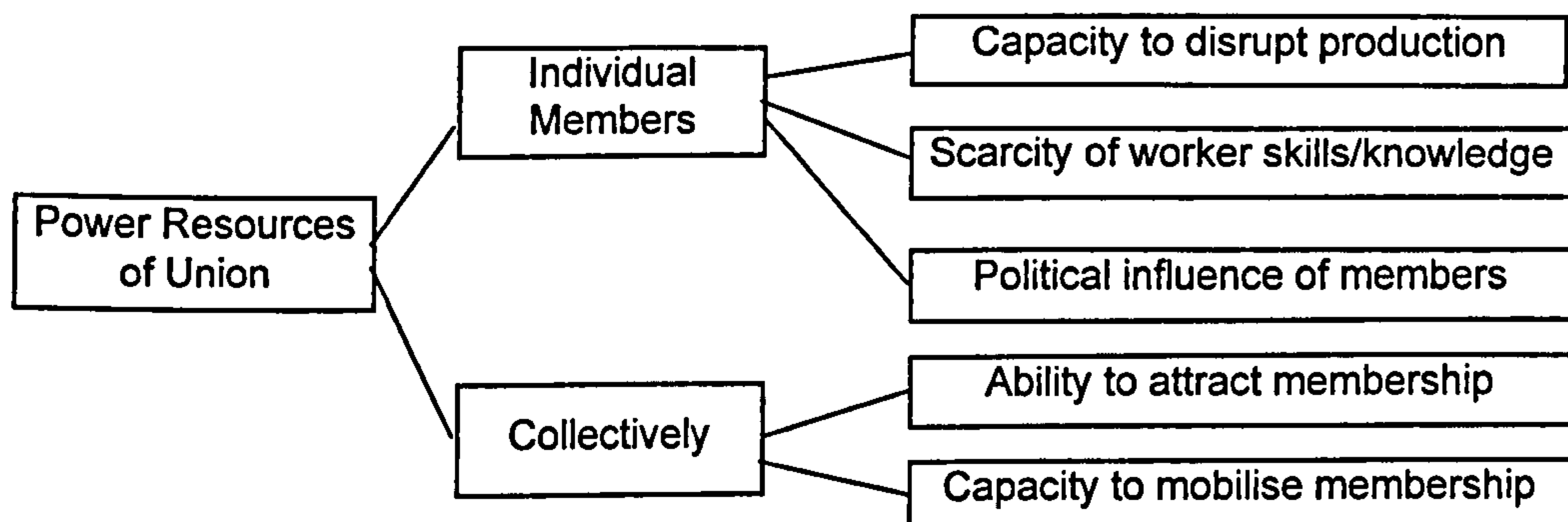
In other countries, however, membership increased - particularly noted here is Canada. This evidence, according to Kelly, suggests that a uniform trend cannot be based around any demographic shifts in the composition of the working population. Historically, Kelly notes the rise and fall in trade union membership and related this to the business cycle. During recessions in the late 19th century and 1930s, union membership and strike activity declined markedly. At periods of increased economic activity, however, workers increased security fuelled demands for increased wages and conditions. These processes can be seen in the 1970s and 1980s.

Through the business cycle argument, then, the permeation into the workplace over the 1980s of unitarist management methodologies such as quality management would be seen, not as an indicator of management legitimacy and consensus, but as an indicator of the current condition of management-union power relationships. Changes to these conditions could, then, see a change in the way quality management schemes are received and implemented. While cyclical explanations of trade union activity offers some explanations as to current and possible future industrial relations scenarios, they do not - nor they claim to - offer strategies or tactics to enact a change in the fortunes in trade union fortunes. Indeed, the growth of 'managerialist unionism' could be seen as the 'cyclical' response to trade union fortunes within the present business cycle.

The inter-related factors of relative employer/union power resources and the existence of periods of cyclical re-adjustment provide some base criteria to formulate potential strategies for trade unions. Kelly's model, above, refers to Batstone's (1988) model. Batstone discusses the issue of strategy in relation to how changes to production systems, product markets and institutional patterns of regulation interact with the permanent features determining trade union and employer power resources. The power resources discussed are worthy of further consideration here. Trade unions' power resources are derived from members' individual power resources within the workplace and the collective power resources derived from trade union organisation. Individual worker's power resources are (a) the capacity to disrupt production, (b) the '*scarcity value of the characteristics which the worker brings to the employer*' (ibid) - this being skill, knowledge etc., and (c) the political influence that workers can hold. The union's collective resources are derived from the ability to maximise the individual power resources, but is compounded by the level of ability to *gain association* - membership -

by workers and by the level of its *capacity to mobilise its members*. Figure 4:5 provides a summary.

Figure 4: 5: Trade Union Power Resources



(Derived from Batstone 1988)

All of the above factors are affected by the goal of the union - ranging from militancy through to instrumentalism - and of the changing power resources of the employer; all of which are affected by said changes to production systems, product markets and institutional arrangements. Further to this, union strategy is affected by its approach to achieving its major goals - often leading to compromising on short term agenda to achieve what is perceived to be achievable. The union's position here, then, is determined by its mobilising capacity which, in turn, is affected by such factors as membership density, level of commitment and involvement by members and the complexity of the organisation members are employed at.

In the local government scenario, then, a number of factors combine. CCT has proven a catalyst in weakening political influence of members through relocating the threat to employment relations away from the direct employer to an unknown external contractor. CCT has also affected the level of complexity within the local government organisation. Nominally, complex organisations could be considered to increase inertia in negotiating mechanisms - unions requiring more complex forms of representation and employers finding consensus agreements more difficult to achieve. The devolution of management structures involved in CCT - and more so with TQM - breaks down this intertwining of conflicting interests. This last factor has assisted managements' in their capacity to reorganise workplace relations away from authority-wide negotiations.

Dealing with unions closer to the workplace, however, may not undermine trade union organisation in the longer term, however, as will be discussed later.

c) Public service coalitions and the co-opting of quality

Another likely set of options for trade unions, with specific reference to public service unions, is that of co-opting the issue of quality to protect the interests of service users and employees alike. At a practical level, *Unison* has attempted to pursue the issue of quality as a justification for retaining in-house service provision against the threat of CCT

Unison believes that public services should be provided by direct labour.

It is important that the case for direct labour is re-stated to councils preparing for white collar CCT. We need to ensure that they are fully committed to the in-house service, and know why they are going through these processes. A commitment to direct labour can help shape many of the decisions councils face...(*Unison* nd)

While such a strategy, in the face of CCT, is probably in the best interests of *Unison* members, it does pose some dangers. Most significantly the promotion of quality, within the context of CCT, inevitably raises the danger of *Unison* being co-opted into the process of implementing quality management. As has been pointed out, the rules governing CCT ensure that quality can only be addressed in an exclusively managerialist context. In supporting, uncritically, the use of quality management for retaining services in-house could pose future dangers for *Unison* in its bargaining and steward organisation (as described above).

Another option of adopting quality is offered by Miller (1996). From a study of industrial conflict at Islington Council during the 1980s, Miller suggests that the failure of the NUL strategy to harness the interests of user groups simultaneously with those of NALGO activists and members was due to the failure of the various parties (NUL councillors, community groups, professionals, managers and NALGO) to fully consult each other at the outset. This lack of consultation was exacerbated by a mutual lack of trust of each party's sectional interests and by the additional pressure being imposed by central government. Nevertheless, Miller argues that traditional industrial relations approaches are insufficient to understand the nature of industrial relations in this scenario because of the overlapping sectional interests of trade unionists in this scenario. Future strategies based on coalitions, it is argued, would be most likely to succeed under a broader social movement, which could more effectively marry the

interests of the groups concerned. In practical terms, Miller sees the likelihood of *Unison* being able to promote progressive public services, while simultaneously pursuing the interests of workers:

The new union will also have to balance such competing internal sectional demands against those of organised service users, community organisations and social movements, as well as political parties, for better quality services, yet without necessarily gaining and automatic increase in resources, and greater involvement in the determination of social welfare policies and organisational structures and practices. It is likely, especially given the ebb and flow of such social forces at least in their local manifestation, that *Unison* will attempt to play a calculating game that protects as much of what it has, and is careful about what it trades in, in return for any changes to working practices. (Miller op cit p234)

While Miller's focus of attention is based upon conflict emerging in NUL strategy on decentralisation, the argument could equally apply to the issue of 'service quality'. The problem again, however, is that the terms by which quality is likely to be pursued will be - at best - through user-defined quality *by proxy of managerial control*.

d) Workplace based unionism and union renewal

With all the above changes and dislocations, there is no evidence to suggest that the position of trade unions within local government are becoming somehow anachronistic to current or future realities. The assertion that this may be the case is based, at least in part, upon an assertion that the nature of work itself is being individualised with the processes of managerialism. This assumption is strongly refuted, and discussed more fully in chapter 5. In terms of collective bargaining, however, the 'inevitable decline' argument is also refuted, upon the arguments stated earlier, that trade union bargaining power as a whole, tends to be tied into the broader business cycle. It is therefore quite possible that trade union activity as a whole could witness some resurgence.

Using case-study evidence which includes a local authority housing department, Fosh (1993) argues that trade union viability can be greatly enhanced in situations where local leadership offers a collectivist outlook with a participative leadership style. Recognising that formal and informal union activity can be many faceted and may be motivated by an attachment to the union based on an individualistic or collectivist outlook; and motivated by an ideological or instrumentalist assumptions about collectivism, Fosh argues that

...local leaders, by their ability to lead in a way that encourages members to become involved and to see the collective implications of the issues that arise, can build upon surges of

participation and interest, thus increasing the strength of workplace unionism. (Fosh 1993 p581)

Workplace-based renewal is most recently put forward by Peter Fairbrother (1994; 1996). Fairbrother asserts that the changes that have been undermining trade union bargaining power within the state sector over the 1980s onwards are now creating conditions within public sector unions, which have the potential for invigorating a new active and participatory form of trade unionism:

With moves towards more decentralised forms of management, union members have taken tentative steps to generate more participative and active forms of unionism. This, however, is not a straightforward or inevitable process, being the subject of debate and contest about the best way to proceed in circumstances of uncertainty and unpredictability. Nonetheless, where union members exploit these structural circumstances, there is the prospect that a process of renewal will occur. (Fairbrother 1996: p111)

Fairbrother's argument is based upon research conducted on activities observed in civil service unions and, crucially here, social services departments' NALGO and NUPE branches in two local authorities. Structural changes to management within the two authorities had the effect of relocating the focus of bargaining power away from national and regional union officials, more toward local stewards who were negotiating with issues of terms and conditions on a more regular basis.

The important factors in this process, for Fairbrother, could be summarised as following. The restructuring of the state over the 1980s has had the effect of devolving operational management whilst centralising strategic management issues, the latter holding the former to account through devolving budget responsibility under tight contractual control mechanisms. The effect of this has been the deregulation of important aspects of employment to management at the workplace level. The problem for local government unions here has been that the structure of bargaining mechanisms was based at national and regional level, based upon Whitley structures built around assumptions of unions being staff associations negotiating on a consensual basis. Despite the fact that these assumptions were being challenged within NUPE and NALGO in the 1970s, these structures remained the focus of the unions and were becoming increasingly anachronistic by the late 1980s. National-based bargaining structures discouraged membership participation at the local level and stewards were often used as mere ciphers to convey policy between membership and regional level officials. The shift towards localising employment conditions, then, created tensions

between local stewards, where the bargaining was now having to take place, and regional level, where the bargaining experience and expertise was located. From this Fairbrother has noted a 'partly submerged vibrancy' of union activity at department, rather than authority level, regional and authority-based activists and officials were now becoming dependent upon local activists for information as to developments occurring at the workplace level.

No longer is it possible for unions to organise on the assumption of relatively remote and inactive memberships, involved in union activity at the behest of national leaders or regional officers. This is a form of unionism which does not allow local activists readily to address the pressing problems that have begun to emerge through the restructuring of the 1980s (Fairbrother 1996 p136)

While all this offers the possibility of union renewal in the state sector as a whole, and local government in particular, Fairbrother also warns against some dangers. First, because of the often dispersed nature of workplaces and variety of occupational groups involved in local government, there is a danger that developments to relocate the focal point of union activism could happen in a too ad-hoc manner, which would be counter-productive. Secondly, without some form of co-ordination, there lies a danger that splits could emerge within union branches. Third, there is a danger that if localised developments occur without any form of co-ordination, local agendas may veer toward enterprise unionism and/or the co-option of a local branch by sectional interests, possibly in pursuit of managerial goals

Fitzgerald et al (1996) are wary of the 'union renewal' strategy because its analysis of the 'problem' - the under-developed nature of workplace-level trade unionism - assumes that pay bargaining structures reflect union activity and strength. However, Fitzgerald et al note that the 'renewal' approach does have some value with relation to quality management:

The actual experience of managerial quality strategies may be very different as they are used to challenge traditional systems of job regulation. This is not an unmediated process particularly as professional codes and a public service ethos still permeate much of local government. Of equal importance is the role of the union branch and our case shows that there are opportunities to build on the organisational strength developed around CCT campaigns in order to seek to exploit the contradictions in management quality strategies. (Fitzgerald et al op cit p131)

With these issues in mind there may be an agenda, within the 'union renewal' theme, by which the issue of quality may be fruitfully addressed by trade unions.

Summary

The introduction of quality management into local government has occurred against a background of other important issues for trade unions. The nature of the labour market, the restructuring of local government and the general weakening of trade union power over the 1980s and 1990s has meant that trade unions have not been able to successfully resist the imposition of such strategies. The introduction of quality management also offers some dangers for trade unions. First, quality management, in its prescribed form, potentially challenges national and authority-wide bargaining through the inherent decentralising tendencies involved in such strategies. Second, quality management also poses a challenge to steward organisation in the attempt to rationalise internal channels of communication. However, the prescribed forms of quality management are often not the versions that are actually implemented - even in the private sector where they originate - particularly where trade unions have been involved. While local government unions have, implicitly at least, endorsed the use of 'quality' as a means of resisting CCT, the actual outcomes of the management-led schemes that may be implemented are likely to enter into the general arena of industrial relations, particularly at the workplace level. In this scenario a number of strategies may be adopted locally, though remaining fully integrated with national developments. Nationally, *Unison* should remain at the very least sceptical, rather than 'positive', about quality management.

CHAPTER 5

QUALITY AND THE STATE SECTOR LABOUR PROCESS IN THE 1990S

In chapter 4 the implications of introducing quality management into local government were examined in respect to the position of trade unions and collective bargaining. This chapter will examine the introduction quality management into local government and its implications for the regulation and organisation of work. This area relates strongly to the industrial relations aspect discussed in the previous chapter. However, due to a largely unwelcome dichotomy that seems to have developed between 'industrial relations theory' and 'labour process theory', it seems appropriate to address the issues separately in order to integrate the two issues.

This chapter will highlight the major areas of theoretical concern which are important to the organisation of work in local government in the 1990s and in the emergence of newer forms of management control which have emerged - particularly the co-option of 'quality'. In order to assess this, it is important to consider a number of wider influences. The main influences concerned here are the influence of current orthodoxies surrounding work in the 1990s - 'flexibility', 'insecurity' etc; developments in the reorganisation of employment in the public sector in the 1990s; and the content of 'new' forms of management - particularly quality management.

Employment Patterns in the 1990s

There is no doubt that the qualitative nature of the UK labour market altered in the 1980s. Inspired by *new right* economic doctrine, successive governments in the 1980s and early 1990s made various attempts to remove 'rigidities' from the labour market. Labour market 'rigidities', here, are seen as any obstacle to the ability of an employer to reduce labour costs through (a) its unilateral ability to hire and fire labour; (b) the ability to bid down wages with recourse only to going market rates; and (c) the ability to maximise output from its workers through its manipulation of the reward-effort bargain¹. The obstacles variously identified were, then, trade unions, all forms of wage-

¹ Another 'supply-side' rigidity is the issue of skills and the degree to which the skills workers possess match the skills employers require.

fixing, state benefits that diminished dependency upon employment as the main source of income, and legal restrictions placed upon employers. Partly because the *new right* was not fully coherent ideologically (see chapters 2 and 4) and partly because of 'politics', the 'supply-side' policies pursued during the 1980s were uneven in their application and outcomes. As is discussed in chapter 4, however, trade unions were always seen as the most important target and policy aimed at neutralising the effect of trade unions was pursued relentlessly. Dealing with the 'trade union issue' was the prerequisite in allowing the other changes in labour supply: these being abolishing wage councils, loosening employer liabilities and restrictions on employment, and creating more favourable conditions for employers when managing the effort-reward bargain in the labour process. It could be argued that 'globalisation' has been an important determinant of change here as well. However, the debate as to the specific nature of 'globalisation' is, at present, unclear and in most guises is prone to some of the over-generalised and determinist assumptions present in the Post-Fordist analysis (criticised in chapter 2) and in much of the 'flexibility' analysis - discussed below. Where 'globalisation' can be said to be of concern here, is in the almost unlimited capacity that now exists for the movement of capital. Even here, however, capital movement was, in the UK at least, enabled largely through deregulation of capital controls in the early 1980s (allowing capital to leave) and of the high levels of foreign direct investment directly encouraged by the Government (see chapter 4).

Overshadowing these issues, however, was (and is) the prevailing issue of unemployment. The shift in the economy to permanently higher levels of structural unemployment were, consequences of government policy, through intent and through indirect outcomes (Layard & Nickell 1989). This, combined with the inter-related decline in trade union membership, described in chapter 4, provide some of the major determinants of the change in the labour market as a whole. This being said, other important factors also contributed. The major one of importance here, has been the pervasive influence of 'flexibility'.

a) The orthodoxy of flexibility

Flexibility is currently seen as not only a positive heuristic by a consensus of all the major political parties and management, but also as a labour market fact. The 1990s has

effectively seen the reification of flexibility. An examination of the more specific claims about flexibility, however, make the claims into its empirical reality unconvincing. Flexibility has been criticised as being an amorphous term referring to a number of different situations (Pollert 1991). In one version flexibility refers to employer strategy, in another it refers to the adaptability of workers, and in yet another it refers to the legal framework governing employment.

In the 'flexible firm' model it is argued that organisations are increasingly dividing their work-forces into 'core' and 'periphery' workers (Atkinson & Meager 1986). Core workers are deemed to be functionally flexible, being multi-skilled and occupying positions of relative labour market security. Peripheral workers, in contrast, are deemed to be numerically flexible - typically being temporary, part-time or sub-contracted and thus occupy insecure sectors of the labour market. In another version Beatson (1995) proposes 'flexibility on the extensive margin' - meaning the ability of a firm to modify the number of employees; flexibility of the intensive margin' - meaning the ability of a firm to re-deploy labour internally; and 'wage' or 'reward' flexibility - meaning the ability of a firm to modify payment and incentive schemes to suit market conditions. Empirically, however, evidence of these employer-strategy models is, at the very least, inconclusive (Hunter et al 1993) and even where there may be evidence of such a strategy, it is unclear as to how this compares historically to any period of time where all employment was secure (Pollert op. cit.).

Other definitions of flexibility are tied to 'radical break' theories such as that of Post Fordism, flexible specialisation and regulationism (Pollert op. cit.) - which are subject to the criticisms described in chapter 2.

The fact that flexibility may be suspect as an absolute reality, however, is less significant than its increasing orthodoxy among policy makers and employers. Pollert has identified flexibility as an orthodoxy which serves to obscure the wider context in which it is used:

...the overarching importance of flexibility during the 1980s are complex, involving the relationship of ideology and concrete developments in policy and practice...: the resurgence of neo-classical economic policies, preoccupation with strategic management, 'Japanisation' and dualism. But there is a further political and ideological level of explanation which locates the flexibility debate within the conservative tradition of industrial society theory and models of social integration and equilibrium. (Pollert 1991 p9)

b) The insecure workforce

While the agenda surrounding flexibility is inexorably tied up with certain ideological connotations, an emerging debate is developing around the concept of the 'insecure workforce' (Heery and Salmon 1998). It is accepted that problems may exist with 'the insecure workforce' definition if contemporary employment is seen as being insecure relative to prior periods, which offered stability - which is clearly not the case if female employment and employment among ethnic minorities, as well as labour market segregation based on 'skill' is taken into account. However, a concept of the insecure workforce can offer a recognition that, as a consequence of higher structural unemployment, deregulated employment protection, weaker trade unions and a managerialist hegemony of the employment agenda, that there is a general perception that jobs are perceived as being less secure in the 1990s than they have been in previous periods - Beynon (1997) summarises the evidence of this general perception. Furthermore, the 'insecure workforce' does not resort to neo-classical ideological assumptions or to the problems of labour market dualism which are problematic in the radical break assertions of flexibility. Indeed, while not assuming homogeneity among the workforce, insecurity is likely to affect more than the so-called peripheral workers. The effects of 'downsizing' and out-sourcing - seemingly viewed as a fashionable indicator of corporate virility in the 1990s - tends to threaten core as well as peripheral workers. The dualism inherent in flexibility fails to recognise that today's functionally flexible core worker cannot be guaranteed not to be tomorrow's numerically flexible peripheral worker.

A *perception* of insecurity is hard to define, but is more related to the fear of redundancy and unemployment than the actual rate of redundancy and unemployment. As Brown (1997) notes, if the perceptions are real then so are the consequences of those perceptions. Despite a number of studies implying that such insecurity is unjustified through the evidence displayed in redundancy rates, government rhetorical assertions that there will be no more 'jobs-for-life' effectively states labour market insecurity as *official policy*: if there is no insecurity then government labour market policies over the 1980s and 1990s would be deemed to have failed.

The existence of an underlying insecurity will obviously have an affect on the labour process but the effects are likely to be difficult to assess when tied up with managerial strategies that call for employee commitment. A scenario can be envisaged whereby management strategy demanding employee commitment may get such commitment out of fear rather than enthusiasm. This issue will be discussed in relation to quality later. Another factor of importance, here, is the fact that changes to the public sector have meant that, in contrast to perceptions in the past, insecurity is now a factor in public sector employment.

Work in the Public Sector

"The general trend is that jobs are being lost, and fewer people are trying to do as much or more work... All this talk of efficiency savings is just getting rid of people, and persuading staff to work harder." Spokeswoman for Unison on local government employment.
(Independent on Sunday 21 Sept 1997)

While there is no definitive analysis of a distinctive labour process existing in the state sector, it is clear that there are certain characteristics involved in the organisation of work in the public sector which distinguish it from the organisation of work in the private sector. Most importantly, the labour process in a private sector organisation is linked to the accumulation process and, ultimately, the driving mechanism for defining managerial success in the organisation of work, here, is profit. This mechanism does not exist in most of the areas that remain in the public sector in the UK in the 1990s. The aim of government policy from the 1980s onwards, however, was aimed at changing this relationship through the series of measures described in chapter 2. Flynn (1994) notes that public service organisations in the 1990s have a number of distinguishing organisational characteristics as a result of these changes. First, public service organisations are now divided into either 'buyers' or 'sellers'; second competition has increased both between and within organisations; third, moves have been made to 'devolve' management; fourth, there have been moves away from national pay bargaining (see chapter 4); and fifth, differentials have increased within the effected organisations.

A number of important developments arise from these issues. First, because the marketisation of public sector organisations was explicitly intended to increase productivity within these services, there was an associated knock-on effect on the

working conditions of employees in these services. Second, the marketisation of public services produces a different set of outcomes to normal market conditions and therefore a different effect on the labour process than in either the private sector, or the 'traditional' public sector. Third, the managerialist agenda that has driven the whole process of public service transformation challenges the autonomy of a relatively powerful group of workers within public services - professionals. These issues will be further discussed below.

a) Marketisation and the stimulation of productivity

Government policy from the 1980s onwards has been aimed at attempting to stimulate market mechanisms into the public sector and in all cases one of the explicit aims has been to subject workers in the public sector to the same pressures and 'stimuli' that workers in the private sector were subjected to. Where privatisation was not possible to achieve this, 'quasi markets' (LeGrand 1990) and contractual relationships were grafted onto the structure of public sector organisations to substitute market conditions: the internal market in the NHS, market testing in the Civil Service and CCT in local government. Explicit in the promotion of these policies was its intended impact upon productivity and working practices.

"Competitive tendering means more than savings. Benefits accrue from setting clear specifications, the acquisition of new and improved management skills, the cultivation of a more business like and innovative approach, the removal of restrictive practices, the setting of targets for standards and productivity and the development of performance indicators. The whole process, whether authorities have won the work themselves or awarded contracts to private firms, has been the catalyst for increased efficiency, better value for money, and the best possible service for the customer." (Ian Lang, MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, speaking in Scottish Grand Committee on local government structure and finance in Scotland on 18 June 1991: cited in *Competing for Quality*: DoE 1991)

The most obvious form in which an improving 'efficiency' could be demonstrated was through the reduction in employment. During the 1980s and 1990s the Conservative Government continuously made the 'over-staffing' of local authorities a political issue and with the ideological convergence of *New Labour* on this issue - in opposition and later into government - reducing employment in local authorities is now seen to be an end in itself. In chapter 4, the reduction in direct and full-time employment over the 1980s and 1990s has been indicated. Reducing direct staff does not *in itself* constitute an increase in efficiency; the link between output efficiency and direct employment

cannot be *directly* made. However, assuming that the levels of service *needs* and relative levels of service *provision* have remained constant, the large-scale reductions in full-time employment, combined with the shift from full-time to part-time employment (both indicated in figure 4:8 in chapter 4) and the downward pressure that CCT places upon average wages and working conditions, the aggregate affect has been fewer staff doing more work on lower wages. Of course, 'other things *not* remaining equal' it is likely that some decline in levels of service provision has occurred. In any event, because it remains true that absolute employment has declined over this period, any increased productivity cannot be considered to be a zero-sum 'win-win' equation when considering the fortunes of those ex-employees. Indeed, for those remaining a question remains as to whether the productivity gains made (in terms of the output of work per employee) was (and is being) made through encouraging workers to work 'smarter-not-harder' or whether it was (and is being) made through the intensification of work.

b) Quasi-markets and performance stimuli

A second consequence of these developments is that the quasi-marketisation of public sector organisations produces two counter tendencies. On the one hand, the sudden transformation to quasi-commercial status inevitably produces a greater shock to the working conditions of those working within those organisations than would be expected in a 'normal' private sector organisation - where change could be expected to be permanent and gradual. Conversely, what remains of the public sector in the 1990s is that which is involved in non-marketable services - either because the services being produced are either public or merit goods, or because the services being provided remain too politically sensitive to be overtly privatised. Because of this much of the actual *work* involved in public services is not subject to 'market clearing' stimulated by market-based success criteria: the 'demand' for the work provided variously by social workers, librarians, nurses, tax officers, street cleaners or pest control officers is (largely) unaffected by general economic upswings or downswings. Introducing quasi-markets, then, will always be crude simulations, rather than actual manifestations of a 'real' market. 'Demand' for services is isolated from its 'output'; and 'output' is completely separated from revenue generation (and the capacity to link productivity to reward).

c) Managerialism and professional workers

A third characteristic of public sector work, partly relating to the previous point, is that public service organisations contain a significantly higher proportion of workers who adhere to a professional or 'public service' ethos, than is the norm in the private sector. These issues are perhaps most prominent in the area of quality, where the managerialist redefinition of quality seeks to remove discretionary decision-making from professionals (Lawson 1993; Davies & Kirkpatrick 1995). Professionals have traditionally been able to create labour market havens to ensure higher degrees of autonomy from orthodox managerial agendas. The introduction of a managerialist agenda that has accompanied the changes of the 1980s and 1990s, is therefore likely to introduce a new arena of conflict between these traditional büro-professionals and their managers, where professionals themselves are not co-opted into the process. Areas of conflict are likely to include scenarios where attempts to de-skill, regulate or standardise professionals' work in the name of efficiency, equity or customer responsiveness are met with resistance to the undermining of professional autonomy.

Quality and the Labour Process

The introduction of quality management into the operation of public services, then, must be seen within the wider context. Quality management is being introduced into a public service workplace, where employment security has been reduced through various quasi-market mechanisms, where the pressure to improve 'efficiency' is seen as the prime imperative, where trade unions retain a strong presence and where these issues coexist in a 'political' environment. For quality management to have any relevance within local government at all, then, the very rationale for its introduction must contribute to the changing relationships between these factors. While understanding the terrain into which quality management is entering in itself provides clues as to what quality management must be, to understand how quality management is likely to affect work in local government, it is necessary to take a closer examination of what quality *does*. This involves inter-related issues of managerial objectives, the labour process, power relations at work and control mechanisms. The number of contributing background features, however, adds to the variety of the pre-existing conditions likely to be found within any one organisation. While quality management may be

predisposed to affect certain changes in workplace relations, there are a number of possible outcomes in practice. Just as Taylorism came to be defined in terms of its *outcome*, rather than its *intent* (i.e. a workplace dominated by demarcation and complex collective bargaining, arrangements, rather than a workplace regulated by unitarist managerial decision-making operating reward management) so quality management should be judged. There is a tendency for writers to define various 'new management' methods as representing continuity or change in managerial control mechanisms. Insufficient attention is paid to the fact that control mechanisms introduced by management may use a combination of control strategies. Here, then, just-in-time (JIT) production methods may be based upon forms of surveillance to which a 'panopticon' metaphor may be appropriate in one workplace scenario (Sewell & Wilkinson 1992); but this does not necessarily make the panopticon the basis of JIT. It may be that what appears to be total management hegemony of the labour process, upon closer examination requires the support of less 'pure' forms of control as circumstances change; perhaps because management cannot make the prescribed methods work at all to plan (Roper et al 1997). Quality management, as a 'new management' method, then, may well rely on a number of control methods to achieve its ends.

Of key importance in defining what quality management - to use, for the moment, the generic term - attempts to *do*, is to understand, specifically how quality itself is defined and identified. Quality, as a precise concept, is elusive, as all the quality gurus assert. The following is a list of OED (1961) definitions of *quality*:

1. Character, disposition, nature.
2. A mental or moral attribute, trait, or characteristic; a feature of ones character; a habit.
3. Rank or disposition in (a) society. *Now rare*.
4. Nobility, high birth or rank, good social position. *Now arch*.
5. Profession, occupation, business, esp. that of actor.
6. Title, description, character, capacity. *Now rare*.
7. An attribute, property, special feature or characteristic.
8. The nature, kind or character (of something). Now restricted to cases in which there is a comparison (expressed or implied) with other things of the same kind; hence the degree or grade of excellence etc. possessed by a thing.
9. Without article.
10. Logic of propositions.
11. A particular class, kind or grade of anything as determined by its quality.

By these various definitions it is clear that quality has meant a number of things over time, but in all definitions the term has retained a degree of honorific status: quality is, and has been, universally perceived as *good*, as Pfeffer and Coote (1991) note.

However, rather than this being an unimportant aspect of quality, as Pfeffer and Coote imply, the fact that the term itself is so value-laden has implications for how working practices imbued with such status is likely to be implemented and received. The definition of quality in the form that management requires it to be used is necessarily more specific because it has to be totally compatible with managerial decision-making processes. Ultimately for management, quality relates to the status of the product or service that an organisation produces, *as defined by the end user*. The importance of managing quality, then, is as important as managing the end price of the service or product. In a market situation the enhancement of product quality while maintaining a fixed price, enhances the relative value of the product and therefore increasing market share and ultimately, profits (quality management was developed entirely as a private sector methodology - as was described in chapter 3). Further to this quality, within quality management, can be further broken down and a number of distinctions have been made by a number of writers - both prescriptive and critical. Distinctions between quality management 'styles' could be considered useful in highlighting a historical shift in emphasis from detective to preventative forms of quality management (see Legge 1995). Similarly, distinctions between emphases on 'control' and 'assurance' approaches to quality is also often made (Walsh 1991). However, these distinctions do not allow for management practices that rely on combinations of styles and approaches: even in the 'pioneering' Japanese factories, while quality may be approached through internal customer chains, preventative methods and 'teamwork', in most cases, traditional 'inspectors' are still used to check the final product. Indeed, Elger & Smith (1998) note how a variety of differing labour strategies are used by Japanese transplants in the UK. Quality, then, does not depend upon a fixed mode of control. Rather than using a typology that requires a mutually exclusive definition of quality management style, then, the definition being proposed here is one that focuses on the particular aspect of quality that is being managed in any particular situation.

Quality management operates upon three general aspects of quality. At the basic level, quality management is concerned with *reducing waste*, therefore reducing costs, and ultimately enhancing *real* productivity. Here, the focus is on reducing the level of defective products produced. At the second level, quality management is concerned with increasing the *reliability* of the product, thereby enhancing the *reputation* of the

product. Thirdly, quality management aims to directly enhance the *value* of the product, through improving the characteristics of the product. The form in which quality is being managed affects the way in which quality is managed. While much focus has been placed, by implication, upon the fact that organisations now see the third form of quality as the focus of attention, it should be noted that the management of the third form tends to assume that the second form is already under control, which in turn assumes the prior control of the first form. Yet all three remain separate objectives. By implication, then, different quality objectives have different effects on the organisation of work. In TQM, all three of these objectives could be said to be important. Therefore the impact on the labour process could be expected to be complex.

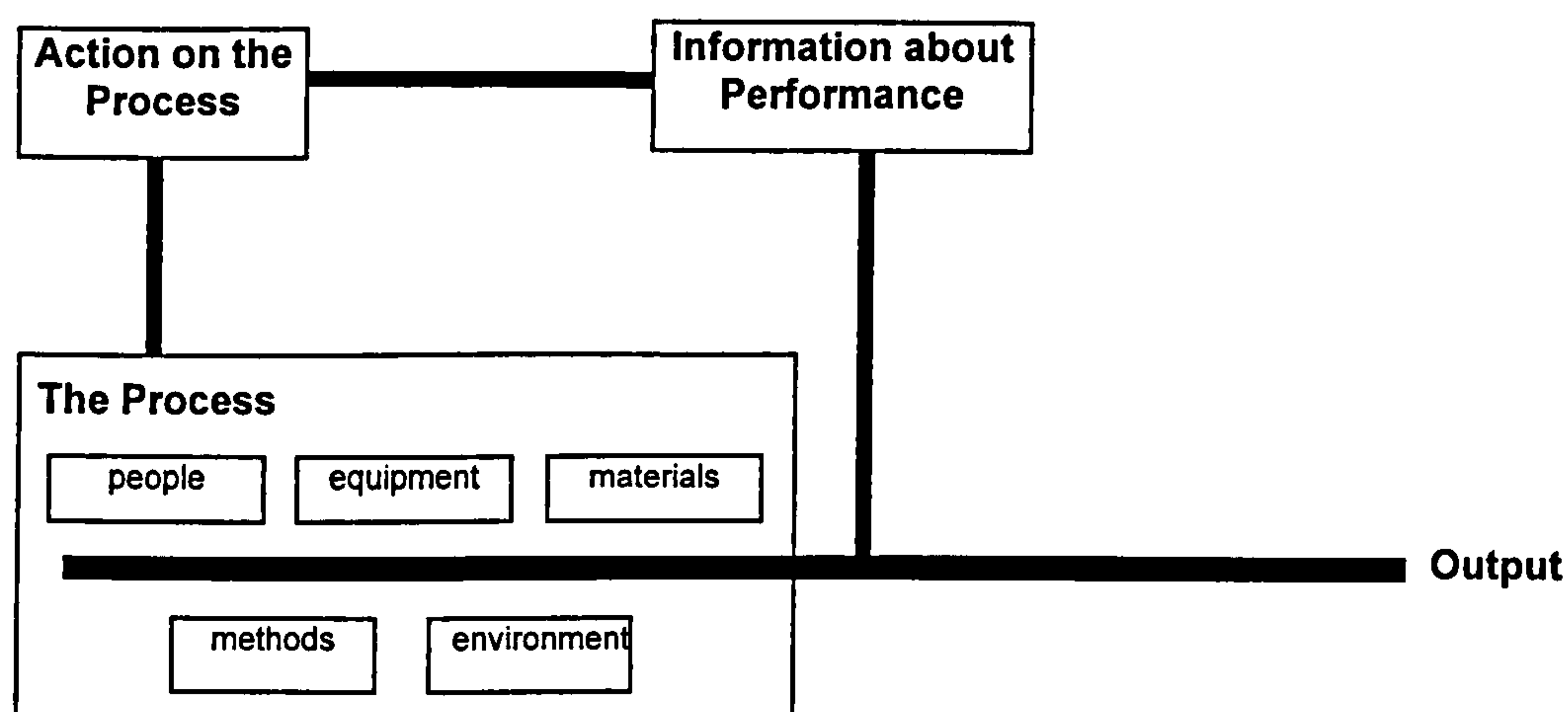
a) Managing for quality (i) increasing reliability (work standardisation)

Increasing the reliability of a product or service requires increasing process consistency and implies a standardisation of work routines. Standardising work as a means to enhancing quality is, of course, very much a Taylorian approach to a problem, yet is forms the basis of systemic approaches to quality such as *ISO 9000*, which has proven so popular with managements over the 1980s and 1990s. The tendency for quality management to standardise work, however, cannot be dismissed as an anachronistic Fordist approach to the labour process, however. Work standardisation is built into any commercial management process that attempts to deal with the enhancement of product reliability. The 'unreliability' of a product or service is caused by a combination of an unreliable process and inadequate detection methods. Ultimately, prevention is preferable to detection, on a cost basis alone. Prevention, then, entails a standardisation of processes. This could entail the designing-in of fail-safe mechanisms into a process ('*poka-yoke*') - whose purpose it is to remove discretion from the worker - or it could mean the use of measurement and monitoring processes to predict the future output of a process. In an large-volume production environment, detection, apart from being an unreliable method in itself, suffers from diminishing returns as the efficiency of the process increases. This is well illustrated in some of the 'mini-parables' found in some of the *quality gurus*' writing: an inspector whose job it is to verify the output of a process with a 30 per-cent defect rate, is more likely to be successful than an inspector attempting to detect the occasional defect from a process with a 0.5 per-cent defect rate. Therefore it is possible for an increase in the quality-efficiency of a process to lead to

an increase in the output defect-rate. The answer is the use of statistical process control (SPC). Through SPC, product and process variation is measured in order to control it. It is an important element in the preventative nature of problem-solving in TQM, providing the information for continuous improvement. For Deming SPC is critical but also plays a significant role in most of the *gurus'* models.

Measurement must be seen as an integral part of a planned, implemented quality management programme. Selection of key measures must be part of senior management's responsibility and they must be collectively identified, agreed, monitored and used as the basis of decision making. (Bendell et al 1993 p31)

The use of SPC to monitor process performance is the norm in many manufacturing environments. It allows manufacturing operations to work to nominal defect rates of six defects per million parts - which is effectively zero considering that production runs will be operating at considerably less than one million. SPC itself, however, does not improve process reliability; SPC is operated as the tool by which processes can be fine tuned to ensure optimum settings for a zero-defect output. Importantly, though, information produced from SPC monitoring is information that enters into the domain occupied by managerial control. Not only is the *process* being made more transparent by use of monitoring, but so is the worker. Crucially, however, the aim of SPC monitoring is to ultimately remove *all* variation from the process; that is to remove all worker discretion from the process. By incremental stages, the process is intended to become incrementally more knowable by management as the operation of that process becomes increasingly predictable. A format for the use of SPC, as used in the motor industry, is reproduced in figure 5:1, below.

Figure 5:1: Process Control using SPC

(Adapted: Ford Motor Co 1984)

The use of SPC has been mainly applicable to a manufacturing environment, where a process is mechanical. However, the principle is claimed to be universal. Quoting from the Ford SPC handbook:

...the basic concept of using statistical signals to improve performance can be applied to any area where work is done, the output exhibits variation and there is a desire for improvement. Examples range from component characteristics to book-keeping error rates, performance characteristics to computer information system, or transit times for incoming materials. (Ford Motor Co 1984 p1)

The monitoring of performance has become an increasing focus in service areas: monitoring telephone response times, monitoring written reply response times are examples. In the public sector this has been further encouraged by the increasing use of performance indicators: school league tables, *Citizen's Charter* indicators and even the much maligned 'cones hotline'.

The proceduralisation of work processes is also the main function of ISO 9000 - which has also seen rapid growth in uptake from the late 1980s onward. ISO 9000 and its derivatives provides a standard format for the management of quality. While the system it creates is intended to be adaptable to any organisational setting, ISO 9000 has a number of specific pre-requisites: it requires strict documentation, accurate record retention and the ability to trace back any quality problems to their source. Here again,

then, in the name of improving service or product output reliability, there is a tendency towards the standardisation of work regimes occurring.

b) Managing for quality (ii) reducing waste (increasing productivity)

Managing to reduce the level of defective products (or services) produced is largely about identifying and reducing mistakes. In 'pure' Taylorist management, this is achieved by breaking down work tasks and de-skilling the worker through the use of designated quality inspectors. In just-in-time (JIT) production - with which TQM is partly derived - the onus is re-directed back to the worker.

JIT reduces all elements of slack among the various factors of production (Oliver 1991). The logic of JIT is to enhance exposure to the same uncertainties which are insulated against in 'just-in-case' methods. JIT's strength is in its ability to constantly seek out bottlenecks and problems in order to remove them. While JIT is concerned chiefly with the general productivity of a series of work processes, it is interconnected with the issue of quality, because quality concerns are one of the key causes of bottlenecks. JIT achieves this by reversing the direction of information flow i.e. information is generated from the final process and flows upstream. Buffers between processes are intentionally reduced to a bare minimum in order that, ideally, zero buffers exist between processes. The outcome, then, is that JIT has integrating effect between process operations.

Despite some exaggerated claims to total worker autonomy in JIT work methods - largely unfounded in any close examination of the prescribed Toyota system (Cusumano 1991) - the important differences between Taylorist and JIT working methods, according to Wood:

...has been to *change the nature of assembly line design* by industrial engineering. The target is to eliminate the 'non-average' so that nothing goes wrong at a given speed and scale of operation. (Wood 1989 - p450 italics added)

With this important element of control in the hands of management, what is left of the design of work organisation, is delegated to the work 'team'. Here then, because of the inter-dependency created between previously autonomous work processes, the individual worker is subjected to a work routine which is necessarily made 'transparent' to other workers and, crucially, to management. This does not constitute autonomy. The all important decision-making is dictated to by the speed of the final process. In short,

the key to work design in JIT is in the harnessing of the 'tacit skills' of workers that, in 'pure' Taylorism, can be used to insulate workers from some of the pressures of the line. This, then, amounts to an intensification of work and has perhaps best been exemplified by Kamata's (1982) description of working on the Toyota gearbox line.

The operational principle of JIT is effectively applied in TQM and the principle that operations and functions should become inter-dependent can be translated from manufacturing to administrative and even service work (Deming op cit.). Where any two processes run concurrently, it is argued, 'customer-supply chains' can be used to integrate operations.

c) Managing for quality (iii) enhancing value-added (changing attitudes)

In the 'culture' movement one can see how Taylor's original attempt at direct, stick and carrot control of the workforce has long since given way to a much more subtle and indirect approach. Managers now work to create the right climate, to encourage identification with corporate goals, high motivation, internalisation of 'constructive attitudes' (Pollitt 1990a: p24)

In attempting to maximise output value, the management of quality aims to make continuous, positive improvements upon the product or service being produced. Here, the aim is to promote worker involvement in clearly defined areas of decision-making so as to maximise the fortunes of the organisation 'for the mutual benefit of all'. It is in this guise of quality management that only real form of worker 'empowerment' could be argued to be taking place. Even here, however, the effects are not clear. In encouraging worker involvement in enhancing value-added, management enters into the arena of 'identity work', 'culture management' and the vexed issue of 'emotional labour'.

For the advocates of TQM, 'culture' is of critical importance. It is the cultivation of 'appropriate' employee attitudes that is the key to a successful 'quality breakthrough' and 'changing attitudes' is often emphasised as being a core prerequisite in managerialist texts on the subject. However, even ignoring the external 'structural' conditions that are likely to play a part in shaping attitudes, it is difficult to see the manipulation of worker attitudes as not being, at least partly, effected by the use of structural or bureaucratic means. Legge (1995) notes that organisations implementing cultural change programmes invariably resort to empiricist-rational strategies - appealing to employees' recognising a 'need' for change; normative re-educative

strategies - attempting to change attitudes by re-training exercises; and power-coercive strategies - using some form of threat to those *not* seen to have changed attitudes. In practice these strategies are realised through re-organisation, re-education and replacement. There is a paradox here, as Legge notes:

...it is interesting that the mechanisms by which messages of initiative, autonomy, innovation, risk-taking and personal responsibility are conveyed - organisation-wide cascaded briefings, training days, appraisal systems - are themselves highly bureaucratic. (Legge 1995 p199)

Even where the manipulation of worker attitudes is not claimed to be a product of a bureaucratic process, it is hard to see how the work environment created by management will not be a key catalyst in the outcome of any change in 'culture'. As an example, for its protagonists, JIT is stated to work because it is employed within a wider system that '*respects the human system*' (Sugimori et al 1977; Monden 1983). However, the continuous removal of 'slack resources' (inventory and labour) from processes itself creates the imperative for improvement: the culture of continuous improvement ('*kaizen*') here, then, may be more a result of necessity than through a successful creation of a unitarist culture within the organisation (Berggren 1993). In one interpretation, for example, JIT and TQM are associated with a change from bureaucratic control mechanisms to Foucauldian definitions of control through the 'panopticon' effect of self regulation (Sewell and Wilkinson 1992). Here, the use of internal customer chains, combined with the increased visibility of work processes, subjects individual workers to the managerial gaze. Others see work regimes such as JIT and TQM as the intensification of Fordist practices, rather than a departure (Slaughter 1987; Berggren op cit.). There are a number of methodological implications in these arguments, and these will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

While the fact that the main protagonists of TQM hold unitarist assumptions about organisations and that this distorts their view of the wider dynamics of the situation, it is informative to see *how* these advocates place 'culture' in the quest for quality - after all, these 'gurus' remain influential among the managerial class who are implementing the prescribed schemes. It is in these assumptions that TQM merges with HRM in its view of the individuated worker. The language of 'empowerment' used here, is based upon the ideal of the individual who requires only the guidance and leadership of managers in order to fulfil the goals of the organisation, while management's role is

ensure that the individual worker is provided with the correct training and incentives. The appropriate phrase here is making the worker 'own the problem'. It is important to note that, despite some selective reading of TQM texts by those who see it as part of a Post Fordist paradigm of intra-organisational harmony and co-operation, TQM in no way negates the importance of hierarchy. Quality can *only* be achieved by the organisation following a single vision, pursued relentlessly by all, through the leadership of the most senior executives and while the good intentions of willing employees are seen as important, employee empowerment does not mean that good intentions will be considered enough:

Equally dangerous, however, are the uninformed who try to follow their natural instincts because they 'know what quality is when they see it'. This type of intuitive approach will lead to serious attitude problems, which do no more than reflect the understanding and knowledge of quality that are present in an organisation. (Oakland 1989 p14)

It is important to note that devolving decision-making in activities such as 'quality circles' 'kaizen' activities, 'force field analysis' (IDS 1990) could be seen as the delegating-down of a de-skilled decision-making process: the *methodology* for making decisions is conducted by management and this process is then handed to the worker (or team of workers) to operate within a context defined by management.

Continuing on the 'culture' theme, one recent development on the issue has been an interest in the issue of 'identity work' (Thompson & McHugh 1995) and 'emotional labour' (Taylor 1997). In contrast to the general emphasis in viewing the mobilisation of commitment through increasing employee autonomy within specific parameters, the issue of 'emotional labour' introduces the notion of the regulation of employee attitude.

In 'pink collar work' - i.e. work that is specifically concerned with 'service' or with direct customer interface - the actual service encounter becomes the actual 'product'. Therefore assessing, monitoring and controlling, output quality here requires the regulation of the totality of features that make up this encounter. Typically this may include aesthetic aspects such as the condition of the environment that the service takes place in - the layout of reception areas, for example - the availability and accessibility of information for service users, or the dress codes of employees. The growth in the use of 'one-stop-shops' is an example here. In addition, however, the quality of the service encounter may also include less tangible aspects such as the politeness, responsiveness

and helpfulness of staff. Key to this is the mobilisation of commitment through the ‘identity’ of the worker as determined by the public service ethos.

In Taylor’s (1997) study, he notes that the use of managerial control to effect the service encounter involved a degree of ‘positive discretion’ being delegated to employees. In his case, employees were being encouraged to use the customer contact situation to sell other company services; an activity in which management actively supported employees’ using a personal approach with customers. In addition, however, the delegation of such ‘tactical responsibility’ occurred ‘at the same time as *‘strategic’ managerial control is centralised through sophisticated workplace surveillance*’ (ibid. p191). Monitoring here was based upon the collection and evaluation of ‘hard’ performance indicators and of ‘soft’ subjective criteria, such as ‘attitude’ and teamwork performance, often through the use of ‘mystery shoppers’, customer feedback and the monitoring of telephone-sales interactions.

TQM as paradigm shift

There has been a general tendency to place the quality agenda within a wider shift in management, away from ‘old’ conflictual, collectivist management forms associated with Taylorism. This assumption is almost completely false upon any close examination of the prescribed values of TQM *and* of its observed reality. The issues upon which the Taylorist/TQM dichotomy seem to be based are shown in table 5:1 below.

Table 5:1: Definitions of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Management Styles

‘Old Management’	‘New Management’
Taylorist	Post Taylorist
Fordist	Post-Fordist
‘Hard’	‘Soft’
Bureaucratic	Entrepreneurial
Compliance	Commitment
Hierarchy	Delayed
Regimentation	Flexibility
Managers as planners	Managers as leaders
Workers are passive	Workers are empowered
Workers identity is ‘collective’	Workers identity is ‘individuated’

(various sources)

A first assumption made about TQM is that it is a *Post-Fordist* form of management. This often occurs by default through assuming the *Post-Fordist* definition of contemporary socio-economic organisation as an uncontentious descriptive term, rather than a theoretical proposition. In these cases, then, the assumption leads merely to a teleological argument: TQM is a *Post-Fordist* management methodology because it exists in a *Post-Fordist* era. In other cases, however, the *Post-Fordist* position is implied rather than explicitly asserted. The general assumptions in this line of reasoning is closely associated with - the *Post-Fordist* arguments in industrial relations discussed in chapter 4. Correspondingly, the assumption that TQM is 'post-Taylorist' contains the same errors as the *Post-Fordist* analysis (discussed in chapters 2 and 4).

In most cases the 'radical break' assumptions about the nature of TQM are less overt, though often containing some of the same errors. Another example of this tendency is in the assertion that TQM fits with an 'entrepreneurial' form of management, as compared to 'old' management - which was bureaucratic. Here, TQM is seen as being a manifestation of the organisation transforming workers' identities to one of customer consciousness:

In reconstructing the commercial organisation around the character of the sovereign consumer, the work-based subject is also reconceptualised: the employee is re-imagined as an individual actor in search of meaning, responsibility, a sense of personal achievement and a maximised quality of life. Work is now construed as an activity through which people produce and discover a sense of personal identity. In effect, workers are encouraged to view work as consumers...(DuGay 1996 p78)

However, such assertions are often based upon managerialist assertions of what TQM is *intended* to do and how this compares to 'traditional' methods, rather than what actually happens and how this compares to 'traditional' management methods. Legge's observation, noted earlier, that entrepreneurial-style re-education programmes are, paradoxically, dependent on highly bureaucratic procedures is apt, here. One of the key problems in assessing the content of TQM is in distinguishing how much of it is rhetoric. It is invariably presented in a manner which claims its revolutionary character: it is unlikely that a managerial discourse presenting itself as merely making incremental changes to some aspects of tried and tested management methods would make much headway in what seems an increasingly competitive management consultancy market. In reality, however, examples of implemented versions of such practices are likely to be very familiar to 'traditional' methods (Roper et al op cit.). The problem arises as to

whether the prescribed versions of TQM, or the implemented versions of TQM are considered to be the authentic ones.

Another distinction often made between TQM and 'traditional' quality methods is in the importance played on the 'soft' - as opposed to 'hard' - elements of quality. While there is a strong emphasis on these 'soft' elements - attitudes, company 'culture', 'empowerment' etc - this is not at the expense of dropping the 'hard' aspects to quality management. On the contrary, TQM methodology explicitly requires the use of quantitative methods of performance evaluation as a prerequisite - the importance that SPC plays in TQM, described in section (b) above is a demonstration of this. In addition to this, the contested issue of 'emotional labour' and its attempted regulation - described in (c) above - show that what may appear to be a move towards subjectification of the labour process may, in fact, be an attempt to regulate subjective behaviour. Here then, it may be more appropriate to see methods such as TQM as reigning-in aspects of the labour process previously under-exploited in 'traditional' methods.

Another dichotomy that is often assumed between TQM/HRM and Taylorism, is between a focus on the former's focus on employee 'commitment' as opposed to the latter's focus on 'compliance'. The fact that TQM and HRM place a great deal of attention on the issue of employee commitment is not disputed. The generic model tends to place employee commitment being reciprocated by the employer's paternalistic recognition of its workers' value: the adage that 'people are our most valuable asset' is a good example. However, because there is an emphasis on employee attitudes in TQM, this does not equate to an abandonment of worker compliance as a prerequisite of managerial authority. The distinction may more accurately be a shift from *compliance* to *compliance with commitment*.

This misunderstanding is also present in the other dichotomous assertions that Taylorism favours hierarchy whereas TQM favours delayed structures. TQM does tend to be associated with flatter management structures, but the quality gurus strongly emphasise the importance of top-down leadership as the most important first stage in a TQM programme (Deming 1986). The differences that exist, here, are perhaps differences in language: rather than managers being seen as organisers, as Taylor

asserts, there is a focus on managers as 'leaders', which is more in fitting with the language of 'entrepreneurial' management preferred in TQM.

One area where a distinction could be made between Taylorist and TQM-type assertions of management is in the view taken of workers themselves. Taylor's principal objective is in subverting workers' natural tendency to 'soldier'; a reference to the effort-reward bargain. His use of control and incentives reflected this. For the quality gurus, however, there is a stated assumption that workers only require leadership:

Give the work force a chance to work with pride, and the 3 per cent that apparently don't care will erode itself by peer pressure. (Deming op cit. p85)

While this is an important difference, it also seems to reveal an important - if not obvious - similarity: this being that there remains strong unitarist and managerialist assumptions in both Taylor's and Deming's definition of the organisation. Indeed, Taylor's language concerning workers' motivation is not so dissimilar to Deming's once the workers have been 'correctly' organised:

This close, intimate, personal co-operation between the management and the men is of the essence of modern scientific or task management (Taylor 1911 p26)

During all these years there has never been a single strike among the men working under this system. In place of the suspicious watchfulness and the more or less open warfare which characterizes the ordinary types of management, there is universally friendly co-operation between the management and the men. (ibid p28)

Quality management is often, though not exclusively, placed within the 'new' 'soft' forms of management. Much of the critical assessments of TQM seem to have taken the anti-Taylorist rhetoric present in the prescriptive managerialist texts at face value. The attempted distancing from Taylorian management is not new. It is interesting to note that, while Braverman over-states the prevalence of pure Taylorism, he recognises that other management 'schools' have co-existed with Taylorism. While many of these 'schools' have often placed themselves in direct opposition to Taylorism, Braverman notes their duplicity within a broader context:

Work itself is organised according to Taylorian principles, while personnel departments and academics have busied themselves with the selection, training, manipulation, pacification and adjustment of "manpower" to suit the work process so organised. Taylorism dominates the world of production; the practitioners of "human relations" and "industrial psychology" are the maintenance crew for the human machinery. If Taylorism does not exist as a separate school today, that is because, apart from the bad odor of the name, it is no longer the property

of a faction, since its fundamental teachings have become the bedrock of all work design.
(Braverman 1974 p87)

While there are important distinctions between Taylorist and 'new' forms of management, these seem to have been over-emphasised in relation to the similarities. This problem is often due to making comparisons that are not based upon historical context. Retrospectively comparing the operations of the idealised workplace of 1930 (assumed to be Henry Ford's production-line) to the idealised workplace of the 1990s (assumed to be the JIT production system in a Japanese transplant) is not helpful. Numerous 'external' factors, aside from labour-markets and industrial relations practices - which could include relative levels of development, demographic differences and legislative differences, mitigate to make comparisons difficult. Where caricatures are avoided, however, a remarkable degree of similarity could be seen to exist between supposedly polar opposite types, Williams, Haslam and Williams' (1992) comparison of Ford's Highland Park facility with the Japanese production system is a good example here. As a further demonstration of the dangers of overly relying on rhetorical caricatures of management typologies, the following is a transcription of an article written about the 'future of production', published in a special edition of a journal in which the transformation of the economic, social and political order is discussed. The article contains general terms of references expected within a Post Fordist position: references to the new sophisticated consumer, the need for flexibility in production etc. The article, however, was published in 1930 and refers to, what would now be termed 'Fordism':

...there is no doubt that the consumer is in the saddle and that he (sic) is having more say about the nature and the quality of the articles that he accepts, than before. He is becoming much harder to please. For example, it was not very long ago that the qualities of a "good shoe" could all be summed up in the virtue of wearing ability. Today, a shoe is not "good" unless it offers, in addition, comfort, flexibility, style, and other advantages.

Finally, the buyer is getting to be a change-loving individual. He wants this today and that tomorrow. He looks forward to the new and he expects improvement.

There is the writing on the wall. If production is to satisfy, it must become increasingly sensitive to consumer desires, either present or potential, and increasingly flexible in adjusting itself to changes in consumer predilections. (Schell 1930 p28)

There is no evidence within the managerialist sources, then, to suggest any mutually exclusive paradigm shift existing between 'old', 'Fordist', 'hard' quality management and 'new', 'post-Fordist', 'soft' quality management. Providing that such dichotomous definitions are avoided, however, comparisons of quality management types is

legitimate - perhaps based upon a number of factors on a continuum, as described in chapter 3. In a 'real world scenario', then, a particular quality management policy could be operating at a number of different levels - which may be manifested in a number of apparently contradictory ways.

At a descriptive level highlighting differences between management typologies is sometimes useful - the typology offered here, in chapter 3 (figure 3:2) is an example. Rather than seeing developments in management methods as being based upon such paradigm shifts it is important to see developments as being largely incremental, being based upon core managerialist values.

Within this context it is perhaps useful to highlight the continuity between Taylorian principles and the TQM model. Table 5:2 provides a reference.

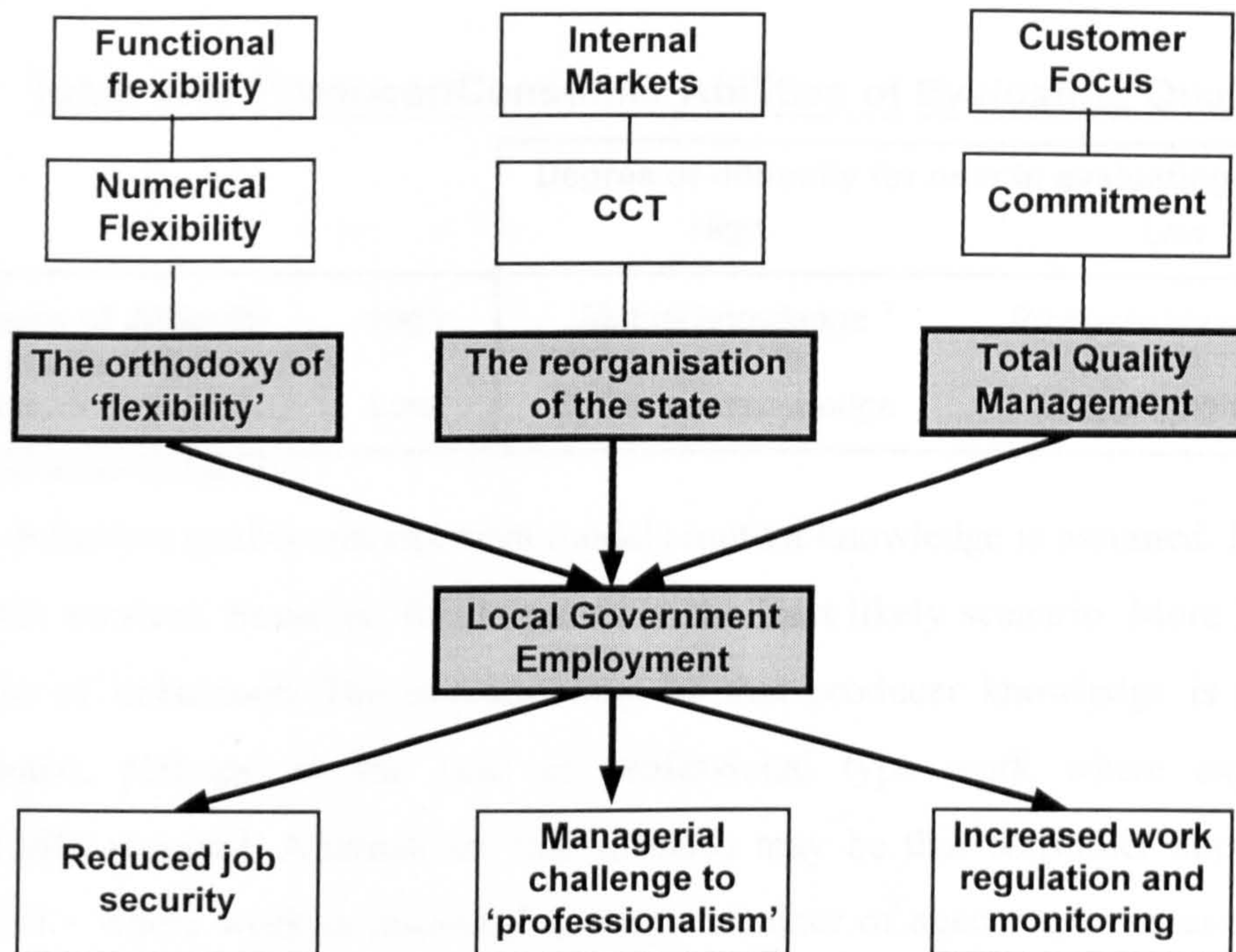
Table 5:2: Taylorian and TQM Models Compared

	Taylorism	TQM
Role of Management	Control	'Leadership'
View of Workers	Tendency towards 'systematic soldiering'	Natural willingness to do a good job - given the opportunity
Implementation	Top-Down	Top-Down
Application	Universal	Universal
Key Tools	'Science'	Statistics
View of Management	Planning of work (50% of total responsibility)	Maintenance of system (>90% of total responsibility)
Role of Workers	Passive role - tasks determined by management	Discretionary role - innovation under strict parameters and methodology set by management

It is notable that the three principal managerial objectives of quality management described in section (a) above are all incorporated within TQM - which is allegedly anti-Taylorian in its approach.

Quality and the Labour Process in Local Government

This section will discuss some of the labour process implications of introducing quality management methods into local government. In doing this it will incorporate the background influences of 'insecurity' and the structural changes made to the local authority as employer- which were discussed earlier - with the general labour process issues raised in the nature of quality management as a whole. Figure 5:2 below, based upon the arguments based in this chapter, shows a proposed format.

Figure 5:2: Influences on the Organisation of Work in Local Government

The introduction of quality management methods into local authority work has been prompted by the general managerialist shift in local government throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In practice this has meant that quality has been pursued predominantly through the market and through performance indicators laid down by central government (Walsh *op cit*). However it is not as straightforward as this. The adoption of quality methods designed to react to market stimuli cannot be expected to adapt to operating in areas where these indicators either do not exist, or have been artificially created: the success criteria of a TQM policy being operated in a car factory will ultimately be increased market share and/or increased profitability (this is what the euphemism achieving customer satisfaction or 'delight' actually means); what success criteria, then, is used for measuring the output of social services, or building regulations, or environmental health? The nature of the 'service encounter' present in most local government activities has meant that orthodox methods of quality management through the 'quality control' approach is not viable (Walsh 1991; 1995; Gaster 1991; Pfeffer & Coote 1991). Not only this but the difference in the nature of different services does not allow for uniform approaches to quality in all areas. One demonstration of this is provided by Walsh (1991). Here, imbalances between the

producer’s ability to evaluate quality is compared with the user or recipient (see table 5:3).

Table 5:3: Producer/Consumer Abilities of Evaluating Quality

		Degree of difficulty for user in evaluating quality	
		High	Low
Degree of difficulty for producer in evaluating quality	High	Mutual knowledge	Producer knowledge
	Low	Consumer knowledge	Mutual ignorance

(Source: Walsh 1991 p509)

In the definitive quality management models mutual knowledge is assumed. In the area of public services, however, this is probably the least likely scenario. More likely is a scenario of imbalance. The scenario may be that producer knowledge is prevalent, manifested, perhaps, in the case of professional type work where expertise is specifically required. Alternatively the scenario may be that consumer knowledge is prevalent - where work is dispersed among a number of agencies, or inter-dependent services within one agency, where the output is invisible and the user’s needs are changing, where the identity of the provider is considered important by the user and where the perception of quality varies greatly between one user and another. Finally, there may be mutual ignorance as to the quality of outcome - this could be in the case of services where the outcome is long term, or in services where the output is intended to be preventative (i.e. the success criteria is if nothing happens). This implies that not only are the effects of quality management likely to differ as a result of the particular nature of ‘quality’ that is attempted to be managed, but there are likely to be further differences based upon the actual service relationship with the service user. Here, the situation becomes somewhat complex, particularly as work in a particular service may fall under different knowledge-based categories depending upon the relationship of particular job functions within that service. So, for example, social work may be considered to be preventative in terms of the assessment of its quality output - and therefore be based upon ‘mutual ignorance’; yet it could simultaneously be considered to be only one input into a wider array of services in the area of ‘Care in the Community’ - which would place this aspect of the work under the category of ‘producer knowledge’. Table 5:4 provides examples of how services may be viewed within this matrix.

Table 5:4: Knowledge Asymmetries and Quality Assessment in Local Government

Knowledge Base	Example	Service Examples
Mutual Knowledge	Simple goods and services	
Producer Knowledge	Professional services	Architects, accountants, legal advisors
Consumer Knowledge	Team-based services	Social services
	Multi-agency services	<i>'Care in the Community'</i> : social services, housing, welfare rights
	<i>'Identity'</i> based work	Youth work
	Services with wide variety of consumer expectations	Libraries, reception areas, sport and leisure, finance
Mutual Ignorance	Longer term services	Planning, building regulations
	Preventative services	Environmental health, trading standards

Managing output quality in public services, then, produces a number of complexities for the commercial management practices that form the basis of quality management which in turn provide unique circumstances in the management of the labour process. First, the fact that the output of such work is public goods means that market share criteria cannot be used as the ultimate indicator of success. Despite the attempts to commodify public services, they remain inherently political. These two related factors introduce complexity into the criteria by which quality management attempts to objectify the criteria by which the output of work is assessed. A third factor is that local authorities, through statutory regulations, provide a number of minimum services which, in a commercial environment, would be outsourced or dropped completely where it was seen to be diversifying from the business's 'core activities'. This introduces organisational complexity into the situation. In turn this dictates that managing quality involves managing a disparate array of trades, professions and skills, which in turn complicates the scrutinisation of work processes.

Because of these issues, and the general background of the '3Es' mentality forced upon the public sector in the 1980s and 1990s managing quality in local government is better

understood in the previously discussed forms of *increasing standardisation, reducing waste* and enhancing the *value-added* of services.

a) Managing output consistency: the management of equity

This aspect of quality is, perhaps, the one that could be argued to fit the most comfortably with a 'public service ethos'. The objectives of maintaining output consistency and reliability are the values which are contained within professional codes of conduct regarding equity. The transfer of responsibility for assuring this in TQM, however, challenges the discretion of professionals. This is an important example of left-right convergence to managerialist consensus. TQM simultaneously offers a solution to those who see professional power as being based upon an ability to protect restrictive work practices, and to those who see professional power as being the unconstrained ability to use status and legal-rational power to avoid accountability to service users. Morgan and Murgatroyd state:

TQM is, in its essential nature, subversive of professional exclusivity and requires strong collaborative working. There is no essential reason why the equal and full collaboration of professionals within a TQM-committed organisation cannot be achieved, but tradition and history dictate that a full awareness of this aspect is needed together with conscious commitment to undo professional demarcations if needed. (Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994 p52)

This aspect of quality is likely to apply more to regulatory functions within local authorities: environmental health, trading standards, building control; and also *Care in the Community* work such as social services, housing and welfare rights; and also, possibly, what Gaster (op cit.) terms 'front-line' work.

The means by which this transfer of the control of equity and output consistency from 'unaccountable' professionals to 'accountable' managers, is operationalised through the use of the increasing array of public consultations and surveys used by councils and by the array of *Citizen's Charter* performance criteria governing complaints procedures. For the more pro-active, the *Charter Mark* award scheme probably offers the most comprehensive managerial package to ensure that 'customer expectations' can be clearly built into work processes and organisation. In addition, the ISO 9000 quality system standard also offers a means by which to formalise work processes that may previously have been more discretionary.

b) Reducing waste: internal customers, CCT and cutting costs

The general notion of using quality management as an implicit means of reducing waste in the private sector can be measured in the form of reducing relative costs. In effect this is improving efficiency or improving productivity. The benefits of increasing efficiency by these means in the private sector can be either used to maintain output at a consistent level *or* be used to increase output at the original cost, therefore hoping to increase revenue. The benefits of this could then enter into the collective bargaining arena. A good example of this was the productivity increases that were gained by Ford UK over the 1980s through various restructuring programmes, including quality initiatives. The apparent improved financial success that these programmes had was used by workers to force wages and conditions improvements in the dispute of 1987 (Starkey & McKinlay 1989; Wilkinson & Oliver 1990) In contrast, benefits from increasing efficiency in the public sector are not likely to be as straightforward. In most cases, increasing the efficiency of a service provided by a local authority will not increase revenue. Nevertheless an increasing tendency of the 1980s and 1990s has been the attempted linkage of public sector pay to productivity:

"The Government's approach to public sector pay continues to be that pay and price increases should be offset, or more than offset, by efficiencies and other economies" Kenneth Clarke: Chancellor of the Exchequer September 1995 (Independent 19/9/95)

In practice, the association that has been created between quality, efficiency, productivity and staffing has led to an implicit linkage between the issue of quality and work rates. Given the labour intensive nature of most local government services, this inevitably means work intensification and/or staff cutbacks:

The impact of the pursuit of quality in the public service, through the use of market-based mechanisms, has been a significant reduction in the number of staff employed. Competition is seen as ensuring the delivery of better-quality services at lower cost, which, given the labour-intensive nature of public service, inevitably means lower staffing. (Walsh 1995b p95)

With the increasing pressure to cut staff costs there has been increasing pressure on all aspects of employee performance. This has not only affected the increasing use of 'flexibility' (numerical and functional), but pressure to reduce absenteeism among employees as well (Walsh 1995a).

The linkage between quality and work intensification is further enhanced with the structural reorganisation of local authorities required in the CCT process (the client contractor split and the associated cost-centre ethos to the delivery of services). The need to comply with Central Government imposed performance indicators (Audit Commission/Scottish/Welsh Offices and Citizen's Charter), combined with the increased ability to create transparency in individual responsibilities, has transformed the organisation of work in local government to a regime that is increasingly similar to the underlying logic within JIT. This is further realised with the increasing applicability of 'performance management' type approaches to quality - integrating the issues of quality to cost-based issues.

c) Service and emotion - customer care

In this format, quality management is concerned with the management of the service encounter. The aim here, is to ensure that staff are sufficiently 'customer oriented'. While, if taken to particularly evangelistic levels, this could affect all workers - in the sense that most employees are likely to have *some* level of contact with the public - in practice the management of customer care is likely to affect those whose work is explicitly concerned with dealing with the public. This would include quasi-commercial operations - like leisure; 'reception' type work - such as that involved in *one-stop-shops*; and employees who work in libraries or other public access areas.

While the management of 'culture' may take a number of forms - from highly subjectivist to highly regulatory, as noted earlier in this chapter - it is perhaps more popularly manifested, as a management system, in the *Investors in People* IiP award scheme with its explicit linking of corporate goals to work practices and training, and with *Charter Mark*.

Summary

The introduction of quality management into local government, then, is explicitly concerned with changing the labour process - as it is in the commercial organisations in which was pioneered. The difficulty in introducing a management methodology into the operation of public services, however, is that unlike the commercial organisation, no equivalent indicators of success are available. The proclaimed win-win scenario of

quality management being able to deliver increased market share or revenue - and this being able to secure benefits to workers - is not available. The logic of quality management in this scenario, then, is that it is to be used to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of service delivery with no tangible benefits to workers. The co-option or supplanting of the 'public service ethos' into a 'customer-centred' approach to work is implied here. However, the background of increasing employment insecurity in public services is likely to provide a more tangible form of motivation.

Section IV

Methodology

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCHING THE WORKPLACE IN PUBLIC SERVICES

In Section IV the methodological issues involved in this thesis will be outlined. Key issues here include a consideration of the underlying philosophical assumptions about the research process; theoretical concerns involved with researching work, employment relations and the labour process - which necessarily contains some overlap with issues raised in section III of this thesis; a rationale for the choice of research methods used to realise these concerns; and how these methods were put into practice in the research actually conducted for this thesis.

The following chapter, chapter 7, is concerned with these latter issues - the actual conduct of research. This chapter is concerned with 'theory': of how research should be conducted in researching public service workplaces, and how representative contextualised case studies can be selected to do this.

Realism and Research

At the heart of any research is the relationship between the (middle range) theory being generated or tested, the data which is being used - and the methods by which the data is applied to theory - and the methods by which these data are collected. These relationships are determined by the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions that inform the research. These assumptions are, in turn, determined by the (first order) theory from which the assumptions that govern the definition of the research 'problem' are derived - whether or not the first order theory is explicitly acknowledged. The theory that underlies the research assumptions also ties in with the specific philosophical justification for the methodological approach. The starting point for this research is informed, predominantly, by a Marxist approach to the study of work organisation: the underlying assumption here, being that the relationship between workers and management within the local state set-up is ultimately conflictual due to the nature of the employment relationship itself, which is determined by the market relationship by which the capacity to work is commodified.

A key issue in applying research is the relationship that theory-building and data-gathering have with each other. The underlying philosophical stance taken to this issue, here, is a realist position whereby the relationships and mechanisms that determine events are assessed in addition to the events themselves.

For the realist, adequate causal explanations require the discovery both of regular relations between phenomena, and of some kind of mechanism that links them. So, in explaining any particular phenomenon, we must not only make reference to those events which initiate the process of change: we must also give a description of that process itself. (Keat & Urry 1982 p31)

Realism acknowledges the existence of abstract unobservable issues - 'labour markets', ideology and relative power relationships, for example - as being *real* factors in determining the tangible actions and behaviour of workers and managers. In contrast, the positivist approach explicitly rules out the existence of such mediating factors¹.

a) The inadequacy of positivism

The positivist approach asserts that knowledge is contingent and that, through the use of logical arguments, events may be predicted, but not explained, because causality can never be attributed. Since Popper (1963) the generally accepted positivist paradigm asserts that valid research adopts a hypothetico-deductivist stance- i.e. that theory provides the basis for which empirical data can be related. Here, scientific progress is achieved through the principle of falsification, whereby a given theory is deemed valid only where absolute criteria are laid down for its unequivocal acceptance in order that the theory is capable of being disproved by subsequent scientific investigation. Theory, then, is only ever partial and scientific progress is incremental. In practical terms, positivism is challenged by Kuhn (1970) who argues that scientific knowledge does not, in practice, progress incrementally through falsification, but through the less rigorous process of 'paradigm shifts' whereby current scientific orthodoxy is bolstered through the personalities and institutions that are supported by existing theory. Where scientific opinion has changed dramatically, Kuhn argues that this is when a large enough body of scientific opinion has been built up to challenge the current orthodoxy. In the social sciences, positivism has been undermined more drastically by the inherent epistemological weaknesses that Kuhn's argument identifies: i.e. that positivism's

¹ In positivist economics, for example, markets are seen as they are observed at a fixed point in time - this being the cause (or effect) of positivist economics assuming that markets are in a state of equilibria

claims to scientific objectivity are, at best, misinformed and at worst, render positivism as nothing more than ideology. The critique of positivism within social science has been well documented and, as such, it now has few *open* adherents. Bell and Newby (1977) note that the attacks came from within, as well as from outside the disciplines of positivism. Where positivism could no longer claim universal applicability it became fatally flawed.

b) Realism: causality and essentialism

The strength of the realist position is its focus on the mechanisms that determine events. However, this in itself is problematic. Positivist critics argue that realism is limited by the 'problem of induction', the problem of causation and essentialism. The problem of induction introduces the concept that it is impossible to guarantee that the observation of any event - day following night - can lead to the conclusion that the event will continue to occur. Following from this, it is argued that causation can never be attributed. For this reason, the positivist scientific approach claims not to depend upon any notion of causation, but merely to note the sequence of events in observed phenomena. However, as Sayer (1992) argues, while the 'problem of induction' is real, the conclusions drawn from the problem are invalid. First, the problem assumes atomism - that all events are mutually exclusive, and that observation is punctiform, rather than continuous. This assumption leads to the conclusion that change is possible *between* things, but not *within* things - which is clearly ludicrous. Sayer argues that, in any case, realism does not rely upon induction as a means of understanding events: because observed events are related to prior knowledge of objects and relationships and because prior knowledge also allows the possibility of dismissing spurious relationships. In effect, realism uses *retroduction* whereby natural necessity is presupposed and prior knowledge of the behaviour of objects can be assumed. If prior knowledge cannot be relied on in this way, the implication would be that we cannot *ever* rely on prior experience of any phenomena.

In addition to the problem of causality, realism is accused of essentialism. Essentialism is the doctrine that the aim of science is to discover the 'essence' of things; that science is achieved through making generalised claims based upon intuitive claims made through induction; that the 'essence of things are unchanging; that every object has a

single, unchanging 'essence'; and that absolute knowledge can be achieved about the 'essence' of an object (Sayer op cit). Realism, however, is guilty of none of these, particularly where the criticism relates to the problem of induction - which is rejected. In addition, realism does not claim to be able to attain 'absolute truth':

...we can express our (fallible) knowledge of necessity in the world in terms of *either* definitions or logically contingent statements and that which we choose is of little importance (ibid p163 - emphasis in original)

Of course, in addition to the stated ontological and epistemological concerns, criticisms of the realist definition of scientific method are inexorably tied to the assumptions inherent in opposing views. In the case of the positivist critique, the ideological assumption that a 'scientific' method *cannot* seek to identify the internal mechanisms and relationships between objects or phenomena, is tied to the assertion that scientific enquiry *should not* seek to examine deeper meanings that underlie surface appearances. If the positivist assertion were to be accepted in the research here, no examination could be pursued to understand any differences in opinions expressed by workers and opinions expressed by managers; by disparities between expressed opinion and other 'external' criteria; or by the varying circumstances that exist in the different workplaces examined.

c) Mid range theory, data and method

Because realism accepts that causal relationships are often partial in their conditions, some of the underpinnings of grounded theory, which has been influential in case-study based research, has been considered to offer some possibilities for the generation of mid-range theory within a realist framework. Grounded theory takes an incremental view of the research process whereby theory-building is conducted with direct reference to the primary empirical data:

Our strategy of comparative analysis for generating theory puts a high emphasis on *theory as process*; that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product. (Glaser & Strauss 1967 p32 - Italics in original)

Grounded theory tends to be an approach which is based in the immediate and micro-oriented research subject. However, for Layder (1993) there are aspects to the grounded theory approach which make it compatible with a realist approach Layder takes what he views as the positive elements of grounded theory, whereby models can be built directly from research data, and incorporates the aspect of critique and the acceptance

of social structure, made possible by the realist approach. It does this through the use of 'sensitising' or background concepts in the research area in order to provide an acknowledged starting point for the research, without being tied to these concepts. Realism aims to examine observable data without excluding the possibility of incorporating macro and structural influences which come into play within a case-study merely because they cannot be directly observed. This has been considered by grounded theorists who note that...

The grounded theory mode of research requires that the explanatory conditions be brought into analysis and not be restricted to those that seem to have immediate bearing on the phenomenon under study. (Strauss & Corbin 1990)

A significant element in this research was in the acknowledgement of power as a phenomenon which had to be interpreted, and that this inevitably needed to incorporate the use of a theoretical perspective in which to view employment relationships, collective bargaining and the labour process in local government. In this respect the realist perspective allows levels of theoretical underpinning not fully compatible with pure grounded theory:

The realist position encourages the researcher to seek out aspects of society which are not immediately apparent or 'obvious' in the normal course of observation, interviewing or the examination of documentary evidence. (Layder op cit. pp54-55)

Research involved in this thesis causes some theoretical problems in that its focus lies somewhere between the scope of an 'industrial relations' approach and labour process theory. This chapter relates current issues surrounding the 'labour process debate' (LPD) to the broad issues of industrial relations in the state sector in the 1990s, adopting an 'employee relations' approach.

Industrial Relations, Employment Relations and Labour Process Theory

Because of the interconnected nature of theory and method, the arguments and discussion in this chapter necessarily relate to the problems, issues and debates discussed in previous chapters: the appropriate means by which a workplace should be researched depends, ultimately, upon how the workplace itself is conceived.

Because of the structure, history and institutions involved in local government employment, an approach which recognises collective bargaining as a central determinant is vital in understanding the context of any changing relationships. Broadly

speaking, an industrial relations approach achieves this. On the issue of changing work patterns under quality regimes, however, theoretical considerations from an industrial relations approach necessarily need to fully incorporate the nature of changes *at the workplace level*. Labour process theory enables this through its focus on *the control and organisation of work*. The labour process debate as a whole, however, has had a tendency to undervalue the role of labour within the employment arena. The aim here is to highlight the areas of convergence between these two broad camps.

Unlike managerialist approaches to employment relations such as 'human resources management' (HRM), the industrial relations approach retains a vital element of critique, recognising conflict as inherent within the management/employee relationship (whether this be Marxist, pluralist institutionalist, or elitist). The industrial relations approach, however, has tended to focus upon the (formal or informal) relationships that develop around collective bargaining: the focus of attention is essentially that of management-union relationships. A problem here is that the essential dynamics that underpin changing relationships are secondary considerations to the outcomes. The industrial relations approach also has an 'image' problem, associated with being overly concerned with exclusively male, manual labour in heavy or primary industries (Blyton & Turnbull 1994). For these reasons a number of writers have switched emphasis from industrial relations that of employment relations or employee relations (Blyton & Turnbull *op cit*; Beaumont 1995). Blyton and Turnbull's (*ibid.*) approach provides a useful framework. Here, the employment relationship remains central to analysis and employees can be seen, collectively, as distinct from management. It does not assume (or preclude) formal institutions and structures, trade union involvement, or any sectoral bias. It also retains, crucially, a focus on the central dynamics of change.

A useful demonstration of this, though not in these terms, is provided in the business cycle explanations of trade union activity (see chapter 4). Here, Kelly (1990) assesses the decline in British trade union membership from 1979 in context of wider influences. The usual factors such as the decline in sectors traditionally associated with high density unionisation, hostile legislation and higher levels of structural unemployment do not, individually, explain the decline. These factors, together with the business cycle, were able to affect unions' ability to organise and it was this, according to Kelly, that affected workers attitudes towards trade union involvement, *though not about the*

legitimacy of trade unions per se. Kelly notes that positive perceptions of unions are inversely proportionate to their bargaining power. Union membership, then, could be seen as being more attributable to the *bargaining power of particular workers in particular circumstances*, than to the image of trade unions as either 'new-realist' or 'dinosaur'.

Broadly, then, this case demonstrates the need to contextualise changes within the broader environment and of shifting power relationships at the workplace level. If a union's appeal is based upon its perceived bargaining power in the workplace, and if that bargaining power is dependent, in part, upon the capacity and willingness of its members to act, then some attention to the workplace itself warrants closer attention.

Recent Trends in the Labour Process Debate (LPD)

Until relatively recently, Marxian approaches had dominated the agenda within the labour-process debate (LPD). This, however, has now changed and labour process theory (LPT) is now engaged in a 'crisis' in which the founding principles upon which LPT are based' - ultimately, the labour theory of value - are attempted to be replaced with a subjectivist definition of the labour process, where the central focus of the labour process is the individuated worker. This is of central importance in the way that the organisation of work is researched.

a) The initial debate: Braverman

The LPD was initiated by the publication of *Labor and Monopoly Capital* in which Braverman (1974) re-introduces Marx's work on the labour process into the analysis of work over the twentieth century and, in particular, the analysis of the control of work. While Braverman's analysis is essentially an analysis of the degrading effect that Taylorist management has had on work over the twentieth century, the assertion is that Taylorism is itself a natural outcome of capitalist development in the social organisation of work. Here, then, scientific management enables the transformation of the worker's capacity to work into actual work - a function that cannot be assumed by the mere purchasing of labour power. Scientific management, by Taylor's own intent, provides the optimum means by which this can be achieved. Through the increased subdivision of labour tasks, the *control* aspect of work - the design and planning aspect of a

product and process - is separated from the *execution* aspect of work - the physical effort. In order to gain maximum productivity from workers, management's task is, then, to monopolise the *control* aspect, predominantly through the use of technology - which is also controlled by management. According to Braverman, this amounts to a permanent drive to deskill workers and the consequent permanent degradation of work itself.

Braverman's work challenged orthodox views that technology was enhancing the quality of working life and it provoked debate from the outset. Initially problems were seen to be in Braverman's definition of skill and his overly romanticised view of 'craft' work. It was also criticised for the over-dependence his thesis had upon Taylorism as a universally applied management methodology. Finally, and crucially, Braverman viewed the process of deskilling and work degradation as one pursued by management with no tacit or organised resistance by workers (Elger 1982). Nevertheless, the debate that ensued created a new sub-discipline within the broad area of employment and throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s there was some degree of academic interest into some of the broad themes that the Braverman debate had created. At this time these themes were largely related to the application of technology in the workplace, deskilling and work degradation. By the mid 1980s, however, attention began to be placed upon new forms of management that were seemingly becoming popular at the time.

b) The 1980s: 'Japanisation'

By the 1980s the focus of attention had begun to shift away from the initial pre-occupation with post Braverman debates about Taylorism and technology and into new areas of concern. The apparent crisis in the North American and European motor industry provoked a shift in emphasis within the LPD. Firstly, the relative decline in the importance of the motor industry as a vanguard industry prompted a greater focus of attention to be made on an agenda of the transposition of straightforward Taylorism into 'Japanisation'. The focus, here, was now on the analysis of new work regimes - particularly just-in-time (JIT) manufacturing, 'team' based work and quality circles (Turnbull 1988; Wood 1989; Oliver 1991; Oliver & Wilkinson 1992; Sewell and Wilkinson 1992). Similarly, the focus of research switched from 'brownfield'

manufacturing to Japanese 'greenfield' transplants, sub-contracting arrangements and the knock-on effects on competitors and suppliers (Rainnie 1991; 1993; Garrahan & Stewart 1992). Related to this was increased interest in the plethora of 'new' management types that seemed to be emerging in the 1980s - heralding an increased level of interest on the critical assessment of the content of these management styles (particularly HRM and TQM). Whilst not always dichotomous, definitions of HRM and TQM during the 1980s tended to divide along two main paths within the LPD. Definitions tended to focus on either the respective roles of HRM and TQM in a restructuring of capital - changing working arrangements and practices; or they saw HRM/TQM as part of an ideological project to re-educate workers expectations (see chapters 4 and 5). While this marked a shift away from the previous over-emphasis on Taylorism as the basis of all management, it raised the possibility of shifting LPT into areas that focused upon the differences that can exist between management strategies, rather than seeing management as being reducible to the process of work degradation. These trends grew in the 1990s.

c) The 1990s: quality, subjectivity and power

While the LPD shifted away from the focus on the issues raised by Braverman in the 1990s, the focal point of debate shifted again, based on fundamentally different approaches to work organisation. While a shift in agenda is welcome, the shift that appears to have occurred is one which challenges the very notion of a 'labour process' in the first place. The shift is attributable to the need to incorporate the issue of subjectivity into the analysis of the labour process. At the outset of the LPD, one of the most significant criticisms of Braverman's analysis was the omission of how and where workers resist and thwart Taylorian attempts to degrade the labour process:

[Braverman's analysis] warrants a treatment of the working class as an object of capital, which, while underlining the capacity of capital to reorganize the labour process, degrade the labourer and propel her/him from sector to sector, forgets that the working class remains an active agency in the capital relation. (Elger 1982 p24)

Subjectivity here, then, refers to the inadequacy of explanations that attempt to objectify the issue of control, without understanding the interplay of subjective agendas as part of the internal dynamics of change. The subjectivism that has emerged as a major tenet in the LPD in the 1990s, however, is one which seeks to supplant the issue of work degradation - present in all post Braverman LPT - with subjugation - almost

exclusively derived from interpretations of the works of Michel Foucault. A major focus of this trend has been in the interpretation of the issue of quality in management. In previous chapters some of the key characteristics of generic quality management types have been outlined and these areas remain largely uncontroversial within the critical texts on the subject, although the emphasis may be contested by some.

The divisions as to the nature of quality management occurs along the issue of whether quality management in the 1980s - in particular, TQM, represents a departure from Taylorian logic. This is an area of some debate - largely dependent upon various authors definition of the essential nature of quality management: i.e. that it is the manifestation of Post Fordist management, or that it is the mobilisation of subjectivist power discourses, or that it represents an intensification of Taylorian management principles.

This is often implied, rather than stated. The introduction of a notion of radical discontinuity in the labour process also, however, has been introduced simultaneously with a break in labour process analysis *per se*. The issue of departure is on the issue of subjectivity. The apparent importance of subjectivity in TQM and HRM has provided an opportunity for some to make a break with the Bravermanian notion of objective conditions affecting the power relationship between managers and workers and replacing it with a concept of subjective power/knowledge relationships adapted from Foucault. Knights and Wilmott (1989) begin this with a critique of Marxian labour process theory, re-stating the problems in Braverman's analysis of the labour process as being essentialist while at the same time romanticising the issue of skill within the labour process. Initially this is stated as being intended to compliment current understandings of the labour process:

...is it possible to take subjectivity seriously without degenerating into a 'subjectivist' analysis of the social world? (Knights & Wilmott 1989 p535)

However, subsequent contributions seem to draw the Foucauldian analysis of the labour process into this very area. In essence, the Foucauldian interpretation of the labour process relies upon the concept of power discourses being operated within the workplace in such a way as to harness the consent of individuated worker, therefore removing the 'problem' of resorting to a dualist definition of power:

...the freedom of the subject is directed narrowly, and in a self-disciplined fashion, towards participation in practices which are known or understood to provide the individual with a sense of security and belonging. In short, it is the comparative social isolation which subjects suffer as a result of the individualising impact of modern power that renders individuals vulnerable to precisely the demands or expectations that such power makes of them. (ibid p550)

The key aspect of power for Foucauldians, then, is that power and resistance are synonymous with each other. Power is manifested in the form of knowledge imbalances which serve to provide the basis for control through self regulation. Here, then, TQM could be seen as representing a managerial response to coping with the new individuated worker, created by the demise of collectivism, and as an attempt to delegate increased responsibility to the individual worker:

...TQM may be seen as one of the most recent in a long line of managerial discourses that have professed to fill the gap left open by the decline of earlier forms of collectivism. Quality management, or more accurately its managerial plausibility, is at least in part a reflection of the necessity for large corporations to find new and innovative ways of competing constructively, and of managing fragmented workforces. (Kerfoot & Knights 1995 p222)

A key issue in the Foucauldian interpretation of the 'new labour process' is in the status given to managerialist text. The trend towards a subjectivism in LPT could be made, at least in part, on academic fashion: a point of departure is made between the 'old' objectivist approach of Taylorism and its equivalent critique in Bravermanian analysis; and the 'new' subjectivist approach of TQM and HRM with its equivalent critique in Foucault. However, much has been made of differences between Taylor and TQM where differences have often been slight. Taylorism and TQM do not occupy polar opposite positions as methodologies, and are markedly similar in other ways, as is noted in chapter 5.

d) Bringing the employee back in: misbehaviour

The false assumption that TQM occupies a polar opposite to Taylorism, provides a useful indicator of one of the key problems in Foucauldian LPT. In a comprehensive critique of Foucauldian LPT, Thompson and Ackroyd (1995) point out that in using a definition of power that places power and resistance in the same location at the same time, it depends upon the perception of power to exist. In practice, Thompson and Ackroyd note that studies that have adopted such an approach have not located resistance and that, paradoxically, resistance is therefore deemed to have been 'squeezed out' by the success of new management practices. While the Foucauldian

castigates approaches to LPT that attempt to presuppose external relationships to the workplace that are not directly perceived within the workplace (e.g. labour theory of value) the Foucauldian position itself depends upon a framework that requires power to be sought from outside the perception of workers:

Given that post-structuralists believe that language constitutes reality, perhaps it is the case that the language of the prison, of docile and obedient workers..., of colonisation and conquest, becomes the Foucauldian's own conceptual cage. (Thompson & Ackroyd op cit. p624)

Because the Foucauldian is so concerned to avoid any association with '*the specific character of employment relations in a capitalist society*' (ibid p625) the analytical approach '*is not actually a specific account of the workplace at all*' (ibid. p625). There is no (acknowledged) underlying reason or logic for managers to be subjugating workers to the disciplinary regimes except for an apparent desire to harness 'power-knowledge' for its own sake - despite this rationale apparently being universal for all managers.

Most damaging of all, however, is that the Foucauldian definition of power does not, in practice, allow any place where resistance can exist. While power is identified as being with managers through the knowledge imbalances created by new managerial regimes, no account is taken of the potential resources available to workers outside the managerial agenda: because resistance always occurs where power is exercised, and vice-versa, the Foucauldian only needs examine management agendas to determine where resistance is being neutralised. Such an approach is, at best, inadequate and, a worst, serves only to reinforce assumptions present in managerialist discourses:

Whether it be the establishment of Taylorism, bureaucracy, human relations, or new technology, extravagant claims as to the rationality and effectiveness were made by managerial advocates and too often believed by academics. We now know that workers learned to bend the bars in these particular iron cages. Why should the current crop of new management practices be any different? (ibid p629)

Thompson and Ackroyd call for an approach which recognises conflict existing within the workplace which does not merely reinterpret the terms of managerialist strategy. They argue that labour be put back into the centre of industrial sociology - and by implication LPT - to where resistance occurs at the workplace. In particular, they cite a return to the study of informal resistance at the workplace - or 'misbehaviour' as a way forward in the use of subjectivism within employment relations.

e) **Bringing the employment relationship back in: the 'collective worker'**

In a critique of Thompson & Ackroyd, however, Martinez-Lucio and Stewart (1997) criticise their use of 'misbehaviour' as a conceptual device. While agreeing with Thompson and Ackroyd's refutation of the demise of workplace conflict, they point out that Thompson and Ackroyd's own critique falls victim to an assumption that the growth of HRM unequivocally individuate workplace relations. Here, Martniez-Lucio and Stewart note the importance of the essentially collectivist nature of productive relationships within the labour process:

Under these determinate conditions of the capitalist mode of production work is never an individual process despite worker experiences to the contrary. (Martinez-Lucio & Stewart op cit p53)

Of course, such an assertion depends upon being able to assert that relational conditions *can* exist despite the perception of those involved. This is not to say that subjective perceptions are not very important, but rather that external relations can exist outside the perceptions of the individual worker. The stated *attempt* to individuate workers in HRM, then, should not be confused with the actual practice of individuation. Indeed, it should not even assume that this is even being attempted. Such an assumption is based upon erroneous understanding of the 'individual' and the 'collective'. The individuated worker is assumed, rather than observed, because of the growing orthodoxy contained within the terms of reference used to define labour (e.g. management literature, 'Post-Fordism', 'flexibility').

...there is an inherent negation of an ideal typical understanding of the 'collective' and its decline in political, social and economic terms,... 'individualisation' is constructed through a discourse of equivalence whereby its character is constituted ideologically and intellectually on the basis of a negation of its 'opposite', in this case collectivism. (ibid. p59)

Here, Martinez-Lucio and Stewart argue that in the rediscovery of 'misbehaviour', Thompson and Ackroyd bring the 'employee' back into industrial sociology, but not 'labour'. It falls victim to the criticism that 'misbehaviour' is merely a reaction to managerial agendas which, in turn, assumes that alternative agendas do not exist within the workplace.

Martinez-Lucio and Stewart offer a research agenda that attempts to integrate the inter-relationships between individualism and collectivism at work. These include a focus on the '*...contradictions that emerge from the construction of management-centred notions*

of collective interests and points of identification through social institutions such as teamworking' (ibid. p71); an examination of the differences in collective identities that emerge on the basis of workplace sub-units; the effect that new management initiatives are having upon collective bargaining dialogue; new collectivist agendas based upon themes of ethnicity and gender and; emerging relationships between different elements within the labour movement on these issues. While all these issues have not been addressed here, there is a recognition that collective identities - in the form of trade union activity - remain a crucial issue inseparable from the labour process.

Conceptually, then, the research agenda in this thesis was concerned about ensuring an approach which could interpret the motives and rationale adopted by managers and workers within a specific employment relationship. The pursuit of management goals, here, occurred within a specific political environment, but that did not assume management omnipotence. Managers use of prescribed quality management methods was not assumed to be uniform due to, first, differences in emphasis caused by pre-existing local situations; second, uneven interpretations of what constituted 'quality management'; and third, the difference in outcome of such strategies as affected by overt and tacit distortion by workers. As for the outcome of implementing quality management in terms of the workers experience, the research agenda did not assume that managers' stated agendas to constitute the whole agenda. For example an agenda may be stated as being 'improved customer service through increased employee responsiveness' whereas the implicit agenda may equally be 'increased employee responsiveness through enhanced customer feedback'. Workers were also assumed to be capable of resisting, or deviating managers' agendas either individually or collectively, and either tacitly or overtly. These issues were important in the actual methods chosen to research the workplaces involved and are described in the following chapter.

Defining the Contingent Factors in the Local Authority Workplace

Chronologically, the first aspect to conducting research, before 'the problem' can be identified, is defining the background issues. Layder, taking a realist methodological stance, considers it legitimate to use elements of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967) whereby models can be built incrementally from research data - implying

induction - can be combined with a hypothetico-deductivist approach to macro-theory and data and the relationship between the two.

Realism attempts to rescue some of the useful aspects of an objective scientific approach to social phenomena while rejecting those aspects that have proved to be inadequate or troublesome (Layder 1993 p54)

It does this through the use of 'sensitising' or background concepts in the research area in order to provide an acknowledged starting point for the research, without being tied to these concepts. Realism aims to examine observable data without excluding the possibility of incorporating macro and structural influences which come into play within a case-study merely because they cannot be directly observed. Considering these background issues, then, defines the parameters of the research and determines who or what would be appropriate subjects for research. In this case, background issues discussed in sections II and III of this thesis formed the basis of how local authorities could be contextualised and compared to each other. Local authorities, while having similar status and being of a similar nature regardless of local situations, are also a widely disparate collection of organisations.

...local authorities do not constitute a homogenous group of employing units. There are major structural differences between the different types of authority - shire districts and counties, metropolitan districts and London Boroughs - in terms of the areas and populations covered, and the range of services provided and the occupational diversity of the workforces employed. (Kessler 1991 p3)

Walsh et al (1997) contextualised their local authority case studies by size and type of authority, the approach to CCT and the approach to the client contractor split. Other factors could be political orientation, geographical location, and the demographic composition of the population. In turn these affect, or are affected by, such factors as the structure of the local economy, unemployment rates, levels of deprivation, the influence of local lobbies. In this sense context is vital. A national picture is not possible by the use of broad aggregate data because there are just too many 'variables' to contend with. What is required is a number of representative cases - in sampling terminology this could be termed the use of 'purposive sampling' (Robson 1993).

The contingent factors involved in researching the effect of quality management on employment relations in local government are summarised below.

a) Quality policy

The only important selection criteria, as far as the use of quality management methods, was to select authorities that operated a quality policy. Pairing an authority with a quality policy against an authority without a quality policy was not an option. Pairing quality oriented authorities against non-quality oriented authorities would have necessarily reduced the level of contextualisation in other areas. More importantly, however, it would not have been legitimate to make any inference out of the likely impact of the 'non-implementation' of a certain policy.

This is not to suggest that selection, on this criterion, was straightforward. At early stages of the research a number of authorities implicitly singled themselves out for inclusion as case studies through their high profile quality programmes. The authorities that could have been selected merely through this, however, would have proven inadequate in terms of other important case study criteria noted below. For this reason the primary method of selection, for this category, was based upon data derived from the LGMB Quality Survey in 1994. The authorities that were selected were those that scored highly (upper quartile) in terms of their stated use of TQM and scored highly (upper quartile) on a cumulative score derived from a number of quality management initiatives in the form of a *Q-score* (this is described more fully in chapter 3).

From the total number of authorities selected as 'critical case scenarios', in terms of their stated quality management usage, further filtering was conducted in order to ensure that other important contextualisation of case studies could be made. This further selection was based upon the categories described below.

b) Political influence

At the most obvious level, local authorities vary according to which political party has control. This factor is likely to be the strongest determinant of policies such as contracting-out council work (through either CCT or VCT) and of the relationship between management and the union. In turn the motive behind the adoption of quality management practices are likely to be affected by these. Conservative authorities could, on this broad basis, be said to favour contracting work out and be more hostile to union involvement in management decision-making.

In practice, a binary division between Conservative and non-Conservative is not as simple; even where confining this to a straightforward Conservative/Labour split. First, there is the obvious issue of policy inheritance. Local government has been consistently shifting out of Conservative control throughout the 1990s. This has meant that choosing a non-Conservative case-study also requires a sub-division between an authority that is a long-standing Labour authority pursuing a quality agenda, a Labour/Liberal Democrat council that is the reluctant inheritor of Conservative quality policy, or an ex Conservative authority that is pursuing its own quality policy agenda.

A further distinction to be made is that of ideological differences among different Labour councils and among different Conservative councils. A Labour council, for example, may be of a 'new-Labour', 'modernising', 'post-Fordist' hue; in contrast it may instead be of a more 'traditional' paternalist-collectivist hue; yet again it may be of a new-urban-left hue. Similarly, a Conservative council may be of a 'radical' new-suburban-right bent; or it may be more 'traditional', paternalist-patrician in its outlook.² All these factors must be taken into account when considering the selection of a 'representative' council.

c) Authority type

A significant distinction between local authorities is that of their structural type. Through numerous changes, over four decades, local authorities span a wide variety of sizes, responsibilities, workforce sizes and borough/county populations. In 1996 local government was re-organised in Scotland and Wales, abolishing the existing two tier district, county and regional authorities in favour of new unitary authorities. Because this structural re-organisation affected issues relating to management continuity, case-studies were not selected from these authorities, except for pilot studies at initial stages.

In England local authorities are divided into five basic types: county councils, district councils, metropolitan boroughs, London boroughs and unitary authorities. District and county councils operate over the same geographical area in a two tier arrangement. The counties operate the major labour intensive services (education, social services, libraries, housing) while district councils, at the more localised level fulfil the remaining services, including refuse collection, leisure services and most of the

² See chapter 2 for a fuller explanation of these ideological sub-groups.

regulatory functions (building regulations, environmental health etc.). For this reason counties are much larger employers than districts (see table 6:1 for summary). In the case of the metropolitan and London boroughs, these assumed unitary status following the abolition of the metropolitan counties and the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986. These authorities are also, then, large employers.

Table 6:1: Local Authority Structures: Summary

Authority Type	Employment (WTE 1995)*			Functions
	(Mean)	(Highest)	(Lowest)	
Counties	16,077	32,650	8,403	Strategic planning; national park & countryside functions; traffic & transportation; highways; caravan sites; education; housing (reserve powers) social services; police; fire services; Food & Drugs Act 1955; weights & measures; libraries, museums & art galleries; refuse disposal.
Districts	673	3,683	144	Baths & pools; car parks - off street; museums & art galleries; planning; cemeteries & crematoria; environmental health; electoral registration; markets and fairs; parks and open spaces; housing; refuse collection.
Metropolitan Boroughs	11,004	35,755	5,079	All local government functions (see County and District functions)
London Boroughs	6,406	9,983	3,712	Baths & public halls; cemeteries & crematoria; education & youth employment; electoral registration; environmental health; food & drugs; housing & slum clearance; libraries, museums & art galleries; local roads (construction, maintenance, lighting & improvement); Offices, Shops & Railways Premises Act; parking places for vehicles; parks & open spaces; personal social services; refuse collection & street cleansing; town planning; weights & measures.

(Source: Joint Staffing Watch DoE Sept 1996. *Based upon LGMB sample, 1996)

In addition to the size of workforces, the differing types of work conducted by different authority types will also have an effect on the membership profile of the union. Broadly, district councils would be likely to have a higher proportion of APT&C staff (ex NALGO) and metropolitan boroughs would be likely to have a higher rate of manual staff and/or 'caring-service' staff (ex NUPE; GMB; TGWU).

d) Union entrenchment

The position of the trade union (in this case *Unison*) within an authority is likely to be partly determined by a combination of the above factors (entrenchment of the Labour Party locally, size of the workforce and services conducted by the council. It is also

likely to be based upon unique characteristics developed within local circumstances. For example, membership density may, for a number of reasons, be higher in areas where general union density is higher. This in turn is likely to be affected by the structure of the local economy, local unemployment rates, the local propensity for industrial militancy, along with particular histories and disputes within the authority itself.

e) Contextualising the contingent factors

The criteria, above, cover the most important sources of local authority variation. Other binary pairings could have been considered (northern and southern; urban and rural; affluent and economically deprived) but the criteria selected inter-relate with these factors in a number of ways so as to ensure that most situations can be allowed for.

It becomes apparent, when considering the number of likely 'key' influences on authority differentiation, that selecting 'representative' cases for each possible condition would be impossible - given realistic constraints of finance and time. However, it is not methodologically necessary to include all possible permutations to be able to make some conclusive observations and comments - providing that case study observations are *contextualised*.

Instead of using any of these 'variables' as 'blunt instruments' to define paired case studies, these factors can be considered as indicative of a type, but not a stereotype. For example, it may be expected that a Labour authority would be more likely to be union-friendly and a Conservative authority would be more likely to be union-hostile, yet these relationships carry complications. For example Heery notes the ambiguous nature of the relationship between Labour councils and local authority trades unions:

The propensity of local government workers to take strike and other industrial action is positively associated with the proportion of council seats held by the Labour Party. "Local socialism", it would appear, is more effective in prompting trade unions into defensive action than cuts or privatisation (Heery 1987 p194)

He notes that this relationship became strained particularly where the NUL prevailed. Similarly Colling (1995b) notes the hostile relations existing between a London Labour authority and the trade unions regarding the implementation of quality programmes.

Contextualisation of each case study was based upon a variety of published secondary sources about the authority in question. A precedent, here, is with Crabbe's (1992)

methodological approach to a study of the effects of CCT to DSO contracts in local government. Crabbe defined his case-study selection as being based upon considering much the same criteria, in a non-rigid, non-quantitative manner.

Different pressures such as local political conditions, industrial traditions and other subjective influences have provided varying environments and experiences which would not have come out in a structured quantitative survey (Crabbe: 1992 p182)

Crabbe uses case-studies as the focus of research and within that context uses telephone questioning of union officers, councillors etc.; documentary evidence and interviewing: *"I have avoided any focus on one specific situation and attempted to use a broad comparative approach"* (ibid: p183). He thus allows for the following factors:

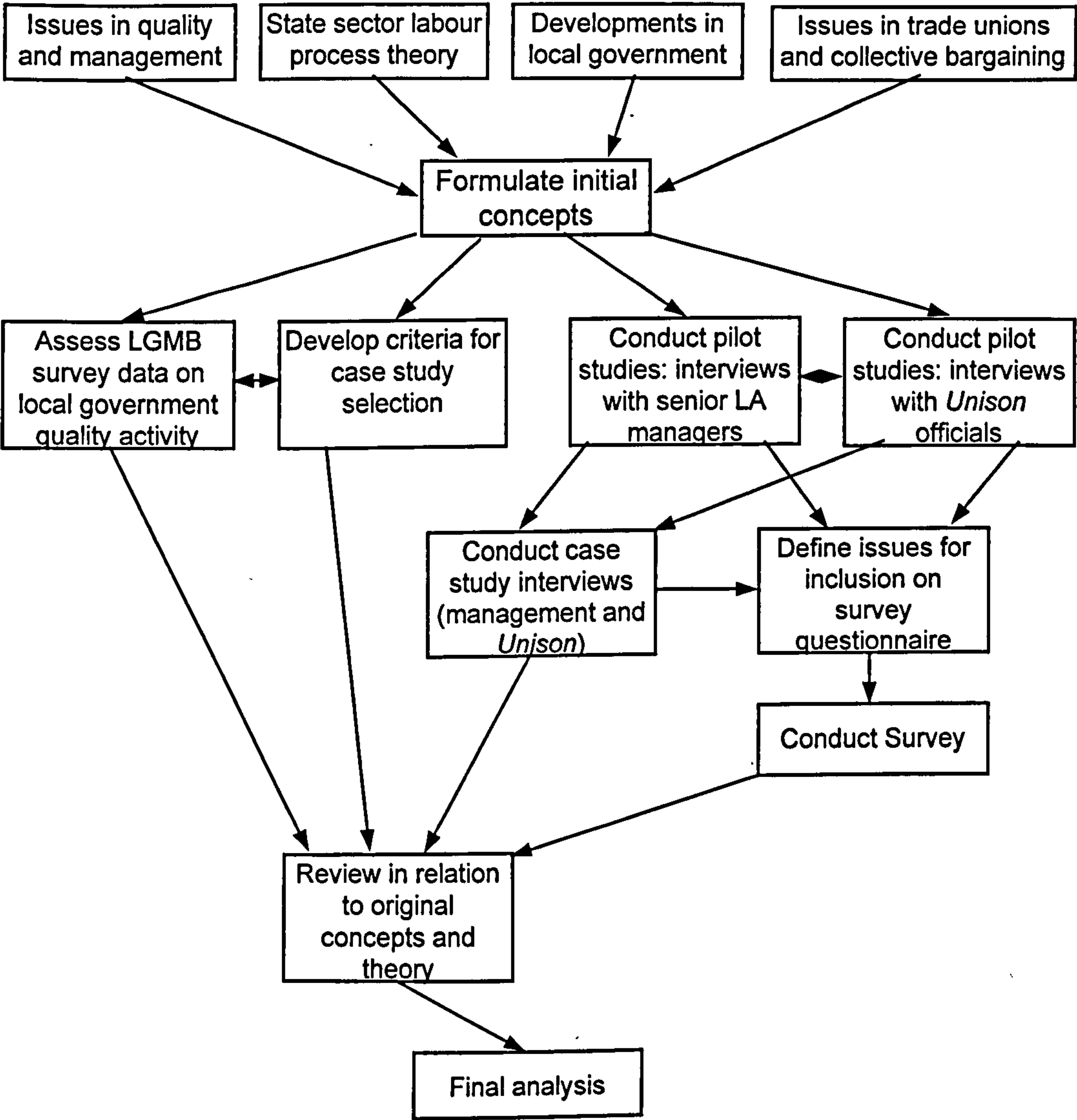
- Political complexion of the Authority
- The defined activities being studied
- The Contractors involved
- The prevalence of DSOs

Each case is then contextualised with a description of the authority's demography, recent political history and policy before the case is explored.

f) Differentiation by work type

Contextualisation is also vitally important within case studies themselves. Because of the wide variety of functions carried out by local authorities, varying from 'professional' work to unskilled manual work, the nature of the work areas being studied is vital (see chapter 5). Through this, the effects of specific policies on specific work regimes in specific services can be examined. Where it is possible to examine identical services in different authorities, some comparison can be made. Similar considerations are made at different hierarchical levels of management within the authorities being studied. This can show differences of perceptions at these levels and the extent by which middle managers feel that they are being either de-skilled or 'empowered' by the effects of quality management - and how these experiences differ depending on the quality method involved.

Figure 6:1: Theory Concepts and Data



CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY SELECTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter will define the methods and case study selection used in this thesis. The methodology adopted in this research is based upon a plurality of appropriate research techniques used within a number of contextualised case-studies. Within this setting the approach adopted for the investigation and interpretation of events was in line with a *realist* interpretation of social science, as discussed in chapter 6.

The parameters of the research process could be broken-down into four areas: defining the research issue, the availability of research data, the material constraints limiting research, and the selection of research strategies (Layder 1993). The first area - defining the nature of the research issue - was informed by a reading of recent literature on developments within local government. These issues - briefly these being managerialism, restructuring of collective bargaining and the labour process in public services - are described in sections II and III of this thesis. The second issue - the availability and accessibility of data - concerned issues of gaining access to information about the nature and reactions to quality policies within local authorities. In turn, this required agreement by senior managers to be interviewed, and to provide access to other representative members of staff to be interviewed: it also required simultaneous agreement by case study *Unison* branch representatives to be interviewed and agreement and co-operation by the *Unison* branch in the conducting of a questionnaire survey of membership opinions. The third issue - concerning financial, time and material resources at the researcher's disposal - were not particularly prohibitive, but did restrict research to one researcher, a three year timescale and limited the number of case studies and the scale of the survey. Finally, the fourth issue - the selection of the research strategies generally thought appropriate within the field of study - was informed by what was known of other research conducted in organisational settings. Research, then, was conducted in a series of contextualised case studies. The rationale for the research process is described, chronologically, in the following sections.

Stage 1: Using a Case Study Approach

The core of the research for this thesis was conducted in four local authorities. Broadly defined, a case study approach is an in-depth analysis of a single case that is representative *in some way* of a research topic. Beyond this, a case study may take a number of forms. Methods used in case-studies have ranged from highly experimental, quantitative studies to highly qualitative descriptive studies. Hakim (1987) has placed case study types on a broad continuum between descriptive reports and rigorous hypothesis testing. Craig-Smith (1991) has noted that providing the *context* of a case-study is incorporated, the analysis can be considered valid: the case-study selected need not be justified through any statistical representativeness but through its ability to demonstrate 'logical inference'. Thus the case-study can provide the basis for a depth analysis providing that conclusions are restricted to the context in which the case study has been selected.

A case study approach has been increasingly seen as the appropriate strategy to adopt in an organisational setting:

Case studies are a useful design for research on organisations and institutions in both the private and public sectors, and encompass studies of firms (including very small firms), workplaces, schools, trade unions, bureaucracies, studies of 'best practice', policy implementation and evaluation, industrial relations, management and organisation issues, organisational cultures, processes of change and adaptation, extending to comparative studies of nations, governments and multinationals. (Hakim 1987 pp69-70)

A key strength of using a case study approach is that it offers advantages of flexibility in being able to adopt research methods appropriate to the specific organisation in question. The practice of using a variety of research techniques within a case-study is both methodologically consistent *with*, and is a prerequisite *for* valid case study research (see Hakim op cit.; Craig-Smith op cit.).

There are, aside from the practicalities discussed above, serious methodological justifications for adopting a pluralistic approach. One justification is based on the principle that a single-method approach should *not* be relied upon. The argument here is that claims that any one methodological approach can offer universal applicability - what Bell and Newby (1977) term 'methodolatory' - have been undermined by the demise of positivism as the dominant methodological paradigm (see chapter 6).

The other significant justification for adopting a multistrategy approach is based upon the premise that the validity of any research will be enhanced the greater the number of approaches that the problem is tackled. This has taken a number of forms but probably the most widely known has been that of Denzin's 'multiple triangulation' (Denzin 1978). Denzin's approach, however, has been noted to be somewhat constraining (Hakim op cit.) in that it is largely an approach designed for large scale research involving macro and micro analysis, the use of more than one researcher and using a number of theoretical approaches in order to triangulate the research and does not therefore lend itself to case-study research. This does not, however, detract from the benefits that can be gained by applying the *principle* of multiple-triangulation: the use of a range of methods to support and corroborate each other. In this research it was not possible, or desirable, to triangulate case studies with similar characteristics.

The research methods used to investigate the aims and outcomes of implementing quality management in local government need to be able to identify what, specifically, is being implemented. This requires the comparative assessment of management strategies to known managerial models. In addition to being able to distinguish the nature of the *intended* management policies being pursued, however, it is also important to distinguish the origins and motives for management strategy in each case. Methods used here need to be able to determine how pre-existing management-worker relationships affect the choices being made by managers - something that cannot be done by merely accepting a '*retrospective rationalisation on the part of the main actors*' (Hunter & Beaumont 1993 p318). Most importantly, research methods need to be able to assess the *outcomes* of the implemented strategy - again balancing the opinions of policy implementers with other affected people and other context-specific criteria.

To do all this, a range of 'triangulated' methods were used - in varying degrees, according to the stage of research - depending upon the nature of access granted in each case. The results were then able to be interpreted within context to the case-study criteria. The methods used, then, included the use of secondary survey data on quality policy, documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaire survey data on trade union member attitudes.

Stage 2: Selecting Criteria for Case Study

The fact that quality management policies in local authorities may be affected by a number of contingent factors was established in chapter 6. Factors here included the variety in quality management methods themselves, structural differences between authorities, political and ideological differences, and differences between union entrenchment and management-union relationships. Selecting case studies could not, practically, be based upon pairing cases on all these issues as this would involve too great a number of cases leading to an over dilution of research in each case. Case studies were therefore selected according to their use of quality management, and then by contextualising according to the other contingent factors.

a) Identifying authorities' use of quality management

Initial selection involved the analysis of survey data conducted by the LGMB in 1994, 1995 and 1996 of local authority use of quality management initiatives. This established the general level of quality management usage, shown in chapter 3, and allowed average and 'exemplary' authorities to be identified. From this, a number of authorities that had higher than average use of quality management initiatives, were selected (see case study profiles below). From the number of authorities selected, some were further highlighted through the relatively high profile nature of their quality policies through publicity in local government journals and networks.

b) Contextualising authorities

At this stage a number of authorities were 'shortlisted' for further contact, ensuring that a good mix of metropolitan/district, Labour/Conservative, strong union/weak union etc. (available through local government publications, yearbooks, trade unions local authorities' own world-wide web sites and general sources). Contact was made, through the 'Chief Executive' of each, by letter and by telephone follow-up, and documentary information about the authority and its quality policy was requested. Documents used at this stage was, primarily, for background information only. While care was taken to use any documentary information in a legitimate manner (Mason 1996), the information sought from documents, here, was about the structure, political control, demography, and brief history of the case study authority in question and could be taken at 'face value'.

Using this information, case-studies were narrowed down, ensuring that a broad mix remained. After allowing for this, other factors was based upon self-selection: the authorities which provided information and which were responsive, remained case studies. Finally, three authorities were dropped from the selection, purely on the basis that only five authorities could be studied in any depth. The five that remained had a high (reported) usage of quality management methods and were diverse in all the other contingent factors discussed.

Stage 3: Identifying and Contextualising Management & Union Policies

Once the case study authorities had been identified and contextualised, management's quality policies had to be contextualised within the parameters identified in chapter 6.

a) Documentary evidence

Documentary evidence used at this stage was in the form of policy documents, quality management strategy documents and minutes of meetings. Attention was paid, here, to identifying the underlying motivations for the quality policy being adopted, given the possible alternatives of being driven by *new urban left* (NUL), *post NUL*, *new suburban right* (NSR) or officer-led 'managerialist' motives (see chapter 2). More careful consideration was given with data used here, therefore, to how documents were interpreted. Using the background information used at the previous stage, the different nuances in ideology were based upon implied stances on a range of 'NUL' 'NSR' priorities, as well as stances on specific issues such as compulsory competitive tendering and trade union involvement/entrenchment within the authority. Figures 7:7 - 7:9 at the end of this chapter provides a summary of how the selected authorities compared on these themes.

Management policy was not interpreted solely through documentation. The information taken from documentary evidence was also used to provide background information that informed the questions used when interviewing senior managers at the next stage.

Stage 4: Assessing Senior Management and Union Branch Policy

At this stage, contacts were made within each local authority in order to assess the policy and outcomes (see stage 5, below) of quality management implementation. Here,

the primary method of investigation was the semi-structured interview, supported by secondary sources (for example, management reports, minutes of meetings, staff surveys etc.). The main method of investigation used here, however, was the semi-structured interview.

a) The semi-structured interview

Interviewing provides the most practical means by which people's opinions can be gauged without constraining responses. Semi-structured interviewing allows opinions to be gauged within the specific context of the interviewee, whilst pursuing the agenda determined by the wider issues raised.

While the good research interview may have a therapeutic side effect, it is structured in terms of the research problem. The interview structure is not fixed by predetermined questions, as it is in the questionnaire, but is designed to provide the informant with freedom to introduce materials that were not anticipated by the interviewer. (Foote-Whyte 1978 p111)

Interview schedules were prepared in advance from information known about the authorities, and their broad quality policies. Questions remained general, however, in order that the interview could follow a course dictated by the interaction of the interview participants, thus allowing the focus to change from interview to interview - according to the differences in emphasis placed by interviewees.

Interviewing was one of the principal methods used in gaining insights into managers' motives, rationale and opinions about the use of quality management. It was also the main method used in gauging the opinions of trade union officials in authorities. In both these cases, researcher bias - on the grounds of 'culture' or 'status' - was probably small - the interview effectively being a 'peer interview' or possibly an 'elite interview'.

Stage 5: Assessing Quality Management Practice

Assessing the perceived *practice* of quality management policies was, chronologically, done concurrently with the assessment of the policies themselves. The methods and interpretation of this aspect, however, warrants separate discussion. Methods used to assess management and union practices included the interviewing of line managers, union officials and supervisory staff. Interviewees at this stage tended to be self-selecting - or, perhaps more accurately, selected by senior managers. Those selected

were those managers who were identified as being able to provide the greatest insight into the successful operation of quality management.

Where possible, as in the *Arun* and *Newcastle* cases, interview data was supplemented with the use of focus group interviews and, as in the *Brent* and *Newcastle* cases, by further examination of secondary information (staff surveys) provided by senior managers at the authorities. Where this information was available, careful attention was paid to the questions asked and the purpose of the survey and *interpretation* of results was qualified within this context.

a) Focus group interview with managers

In some cases it became possible to conduct group interviews. The format for this form of interviewing was conducted with focus group techniques in mind. Most of the rationale for focus group interviewing is identical to that of semi-structured interviewing: it allows free expression to targeted issues raised pro-actively by the researcher. However, the focus group differs in that it contains its own dynamic and the agenda can be shifted by any of the contributors. The result can be more valuable as the nominal level of analysis becomes the consensus of the group itself, as well as the individual opinions within that consensus. The researcher, in this scenario, becomes a moderator rather than an interviewer and the task of analysis begins during the group session (Goldman and McDonald 1987).

Three group interviews were conducted. Two were conducted with *Unison* shop stewards at *Newcastle* and one was conducted with a group of managers at *Arun*, who met regularly to discuss quality issues. In all of these cases, then, the groups satisfied an important criterion essential for successful focus group sessions; that the participants are comfortable with each other, in order that a rapport can be built (Morgan 1995). Prepared questions were presented at a thematic level following the same agenda as the interview schedules used for the case study concerned.

Stage 6: Assessing Worker and Steward Perceptions

Informed by knowledge acquired about management's intended policy on quality management, by senior, line managers and trade union officials' perceptions of the outcomes of these policies, worker and union representatives opinions' were finally

sought on the main themes of this thesis: how does quality management affect working conditions in public services and how does this affect the position of the trade union? Methods used here were, where possible, semi-structured interviews (leisure workers at *Wycombe*), focus group interviews (youth worker stewards and activists at *Newcastle*), and the use of a self completion questionnaire survey (all authorities).

a) Interviewing workers

Where it was possible, low-graded workers were interviewed individually (*Wycombe*). This introduced a different social context to the interview, not present when interviewing managers. Whereas the managers who had been interviewed were predominantly self-selecting and could have been expected to have been familiar with much of the agenda, the situation was somewhat different in the case of lower-grade staff that were interviewed. While staff who were interviewed did so voluntarily, they were not 'self-selecting' in the way that senior managers had been, knowing nothing of the research prior to interview. In one case, the setting of staff interviews was also not ideal, being in a seated public area rather than a private office - where managers had been interviewed. These factors, combined, are likely to have biased some interviews somewhat and possibly constrained interviewees' ability to freely respond. While responses from these interviews have been included in the overall research, care has been taken not to attribute too much to them independently of other sources.

b) Focus group interviews with staff

As indicated above, two group interviews were conducted at *Newcastle*. The same considerations were given, here, as when interviewing managers in a focus group (see above) In this case, however, there was an additional dynamic, in that two focus group interviews were conducted, concerning similar issues at different stages of the research. The first interview, conducted at the early stages of the research, was set-up by the Branch Secretary to discuss the implications of introducing ISO 9002 quality manuals into various workplaces. Participants included *Unison* representatives, the Branch Secretary, myself and a researcher from the *University of Northumbria*. This interview was exploratory and formed the basis for formulating further research. The second interview was conducted towards the end of the research. It was set-up by myself and consisted of a workplace *Unison* representative and five *Unison* members. This

interview pursued themes that had arisen from all the previous interviews and documentary research. While *direct* comparisons could not be made (because the participants were different), it was possible to draw *some* conclusions from the differences and similarities between the two interviews.

c) Staff questionnaire survey

Quantitative methods, in realism, can be considered legitimate for disclosing mechanisms involved within a process (Sayer op cit.); or for the provision of 'sensitising data' (Layder op cit.). Problems arise, however, where quantitative methods are used in a manner where they attempt to collapse complex relationships into mere sequences of events. Because survey data is analysed through the use of statistical methods, it is an inherently acausal technique.

Contrasting with the prestigious view of the modeller as the guardian of 'science' is the image of mediocrity increasingly associated with the research project which uses the 'regression bash' as a substitute for thinking. This mediocrity derives partly from the limited scope of the techniques and partly from the way they are frequently used. (Sayer op cit. p201)

While Sayer is sceptical about the validity of using statistical methods within a realist approach, he does not rule out such methods entirely - providing that they are combined with conceptual and theoretical clarity and where combined with qualitative methods to understand the more complex nature of causal relationships.

A questionnaire survey was conducted to gauge opinion about more targeted issues. The targeted issues were based upon findings in earlier interviews with managers at pilot case studies and some of the early interviews conducted with union officials at case study authorities. These were:

- Is quality management of much concern; is it just a 'fad'?
- Has quality management increased 'commitment'?
- Has quality management been intertwined with increasing workloads?
- Could quality management undermine the union?

The questionnaire survey is an appropriate method for gauging representative opinions - albeit in a constrained format. Using a questionnaire was considered justified in this study for two main reasons. First, it provided access to the opinions of staff who may otherwise have been excluded by the 'gatekeepers' who were providing access to each case study. Managers, in particular, could have been expected to have presented

examples of 'best practice' which may not have been representative of general experiences. Secondly, it allowed comparisons between authorities and between services. The limitations of survey methodology are largely negated by the fact that the survey was providing only part of the overall account of opinion in the case studies.

The questionnaire layout is divided into five main sections. The first section provides basic information about the respondent for coding. The second section concerns the respondent's level of knowledge about the quality policy being operated in his/her authority - and the respondent's general impression of the policy. The third section seeks the respondent's opinion as to whether the policy was increasing workloads. The fourth section seeks the opinions about the impact of the policy on the union. Finally, the fifth section uses a series of likert-scale statements on all of these issues. The questionnaire also includes four open-ended questions (see appendices ii, iii, iv and v).

Questionnaires were initially designed to be able to operate at two levels; at the union official/steward level and at the ordinary union member level. Two basic questionnaires were therefore used (appendices ii and iii). Though most questions are standard to both questionnaire types - and could thus be coded the same - some questions are different. In addition, one case-study authority - *Newcastle* - only one section of the authority was being studied (Community and Leisure Services). A 'hybrid' version of the two questionnaires was therefore produced to reflect this situation (appendices iv and v).

The four basic questionnaire designs involved, then were:

- No 1 Standard questionnaire for union officials/stewards
- No 2 Standard questionnaire for ordinary union members
- No 3 Hybrid version of version No 1 (Newcastle Leisure Services only)
- No 3 Hybrid version of version No 2 (Newcastle Leisure Services only)

Distribution of the questionnaires was arranged through direct contact with union (*Unison*) branch officials at each council. When agreement was made, a first stage of questionnaires was put to all union officials and stewards at the branch. After this stage was completed, further assistance from the official was requested in the dissemination of questionnaires to ordinary members. Responses from the first stage was, however, inadequate to make general comparisons and was, therefore, not used for further analysis.

Questionnaires were sent to individual members with a covering letter of support from the union branch and seal-able return-paid envelopes. Respondents were then able to return the completed questionnaires via the union branch.

Response rates for the ordinary member surveys averaged at about 20 per cent (see table 7:1), though accurate figures were not possible because distribution was based upon membership lists held by the branch and invariably the membership list was not up to date. There was, for example, an overlap, equating to a few per cent, of ex-members *included* and new members *excluded*. A second reason for the imprecision of response rates was that an accurate count was sometimes not taken in cases where the branch distributed the questionnaires. The latter problem was difficult to overcome because this information was received retrospectively and conducting a second survey would have been counter-productive for reasons of time, finance and the risk of jeopardising the good will of the branch and its members.

Table 7:1: Response Rates to Questionnaire Survey

	Q'aire No	Date sent:	No. Ret'd	%
Newcastle Stewards	1001-1027	2/10/96	8	29
Brent Stewards	2001-2045	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wycombe Stewards	4001-4025	14/10/96	5	20
Arun Stewards	5001-5012	23/10/96	5	N/A
Newcastle Members	6001-6240	21/10/96	50	21
Brent Members	7001-7800	6/01/97	144	18
Wycombe Members	9001-9233	14/10/96	43	18.5
Arun Members	0001-0280	5/5/97	74	26.5

Details of the survey responses are provided in chapter 9.

Summary of Methods Used

A variety of methods were used in this research, then, within the context of carefully selected case studies. There were some differences in the *quantity* of methods used in each case due to the degree of access granted and/or the level of 'self-selection' - particularly in relation to the number of interviews conducted. However, in all cases *at least* one senior manager, union official and at least two line managers were interviewed in all cases, as well as documentation and primary survey data. Additional, if uneven, information, was available in the form of focus group interviews and further interviews with managers and staff, and secondary data supplied by managers.

Table 7:2, below, shows the range of methods used in the case studies and table 7:3 shows the relationship between methods, data and theory-building adopted.

Table 7:2: Research Methods (National Agendas)

Issue	Method/Source
Government policy on quality	Official documents, pilot interviews (Scottish Office), academic literature
Party policies on quality	Policy Documents, academic literature, practitioner conference (South Lanarkshire DC)
Trends in local government management policy on quality	Practitioner journals/publicity, LGMB quality survey, pilot study: Grampian Regional Council, practitioner conference (South Lanarkshire DC)
Trade union policies on quality	Trade union publications, academic literature

Table 7:3: Research Methods (Case Studies)

Stage/Issue	Methods Used			
	Brent	Wycombe	Newcastle	Arun
1 & 2) Profiling, local authorities	(All) Published data (Local Government Yearbook, DoE Staffwatch etc.), local authority publicity.			
3) Identifying and contextualising management and union policies	Council publicity. LGMB survey data. Management policy documents.	LGMB survey data. Management policy documents.	LGMB survey data. Management policy documents. Council committee meeting minutes.	Council publicity. LGMB survey data. Management policy documents..
4) Assessing management and union branch policy	Semi-structured interviews with senior quality manager, HR manager and union branch secretary.	Semi-structured interviews with senior HR manager and union branch secretary.	Union consultation documents, minutes from meetings. Semi-structured interviews with senior manager, and union branch secretary.	Semi-structured interview with branch secretary. Semi-structured interviews with chief executive, senior manager and union branch secretary
5) Assessing quality management practice	Semi-structured interviews with senior quality manager, HR manager, 12 line managers and union branch secretary. Secondary data from management reviews.	Semi-structured interviews with senior quality/HR manager, 5 line managers, a team leader, 12 workers and the union branch secretary.	Semi-structured interviews with senior quality manager (corporate), senior quality manager (Leisure), union branch secretary, assistant branch secretary. 2 focus group interviews with staff and stewards.	Semi-structured interviews with chief executive, senior customer care manager, 5 line managers, a focus group of customer care 'enablers' and the union branch secretary
6) Assessing worker perceptions of quality management	Questionnaire survey, plus interviews (see above)	Questionnaire survey, plus interviews (see above)	Questionnaire survey, plus interviews and focus group interviews (see above)	Questionnaire survey, plus interviews (see above)

Some Case Study Profiles

A number of authorities were contacted for inclusion and background research was conducted on many of those that were considered to be good candidates. Telephone discussions and interviews were conducted with relevant officers, documentary analysis of policies and minutes were carried out and visits were made to a number of authorities. From this, five authorities were ultimately chosen for detailed research.

a) Pilot Studies

At early stages contact was made with a number of authorities that would not be pursued as in-depth case studies. These initial pilot studies proved useful grounding, however, in formulating some basic concepts for further investigation. The first such authority contacted was Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council. Useful background information relating to the relationship between the political leadership of the council and the administrative leadership of the council (management), in relationship to CCT and the adoption of a formal quality management programme, was obtained in the form of documentary evidence and telephone contacts. A second study involved formal semi-structured interviews and documentary information from Grampian Regional Council. This proved more useful in formulating further research ideas in all of the areas eventually pursued. Unfortunately Grampian Regional Council, like all councils in Scotland, was in the process of being abolished in re-organisational changes during 1996 - making in-depth follow-up work impossible. Finally, contact was made with a new Scottish unitary authority in 1996 - South Lanarkshire Council, following its predecessor (Hamilton District Council) holding a conference on the use of quality management in local government.

b) London Borough of Brent Council

Brent is a London Metropolitan Borough situated towards the north-west of the city. It has one of the highest populations of all the London boroughs, being an estimated 257,200 in 1990¹. It was created in the local government re-organisation of 1963 through merging two pre-existing boroughs demographically different to each other: Willesden being an 'inner city' borough, with a large working-class population and

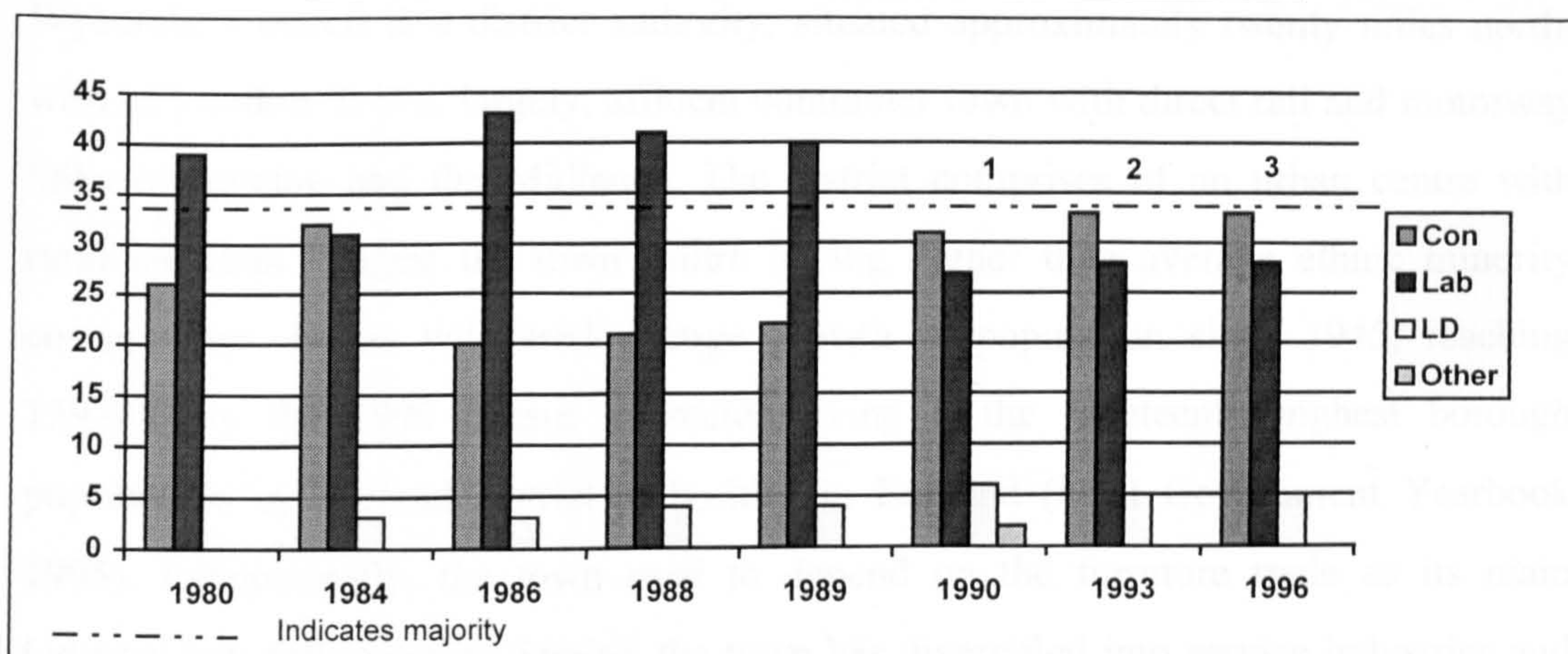
¹ The 1990 estimate being, probably, more accurate than actual census data in the case of London boroughs

latent Labour Party support; and Wembley being suburban with a more middle-class, Conservative electorate. The borough is the most ethnically diverse in the UK - having a 44.8 per-cent non-white population (Brent Council 1994) - and much of the local politics of the past two decades have been affected by this factor. The borough, as a whole, has also experienced high levels of unemployment and deprivation over two decades.

Because of the demographic factors discussed above, the Council has been a 'natural marginal' council: between 1980 and 1996 it changed control from Labour to Conservative and back to Labour again, with numerous coalitions in between (see figure 7:2). Since 1993 control had been determined by the casting vote of the mayor and in 1996 (during the period of research) control switched, again, to Labour - again, through the casting vote of the Mayor.

During the early to mid 1980s Brent was one of the 'New-Urban-Left' (NUL) authorities pursuing policies of 'defending services' - thereby attempting to maintain high levels of employment within the Council; and anti-racism - mainly through 'positive discrimination' in service provision and council employment practice. It was one of a number of high profile London authorities demonised as 'loony left' by the national media at the time.

In 1990 control switched to a 'New-Suburban-Right' (NSR) Conservative majority whose priorities were those pioneered by authorities such as Wandsworth i.e. lowering local taxation by reducing spending through measures such as voluntary competitive tendering ('*CCT is for wimps*' as one officer paraphrased it); shedding administrative and manual staff, cutting 'unnecessary' services and adopting 'a more commercial approach' to administration as a whole. These priorities remained until mid 1996, when control switched back to Labour (see figure 7:1).

Figure 7:1: Councillor Composition: Brent LBC

Source Data: Local Government Yearbook

- 1) Minority Conservative Administration with support of two Labour defectors.
- 2) Conservative Control through casting vote of the Mayor.
- 3) Death of local councillor temporarily removes majority. Labour/Lib-Dem take control through replacement of mayor.

On the broad quantitative measure of management take-up of quality initiatives (see chapter 3) Brent has had a high usage and implementation-rate of quality methods (see Table 7:4). From LGMB data Brent was in the upper quartile of local authorities, in terms of overall use of quality methods in 1994, 1995 and 1996. In terms of corporate use of quality methods Brent was in the top 3 per-cent for 1994, though falling dramatically the following year and rising, again, to an above average score in 1996 (though this fluctuation was due more to a change in Brent's definition of 'corporate') than its actual use of quality management methods.

Table 7:4: Brent LBC Comparative Quality 'Rating'

	Brent	All Councils: Mean	All Councils: Median
Overall use of quality (1994)	8	4.44	4
Overall use of quality (1995)	8	4.49	5
Overall use of quality (1996)	8	4.86	5
Corporate use of quality (1994)	7	2.68	2
Corporate use of quality (1995)	2	2.38	2
Corporate use of quality (1996)	4	2.55	2

(Source Data: LGMB 1994; 1995, 1996)

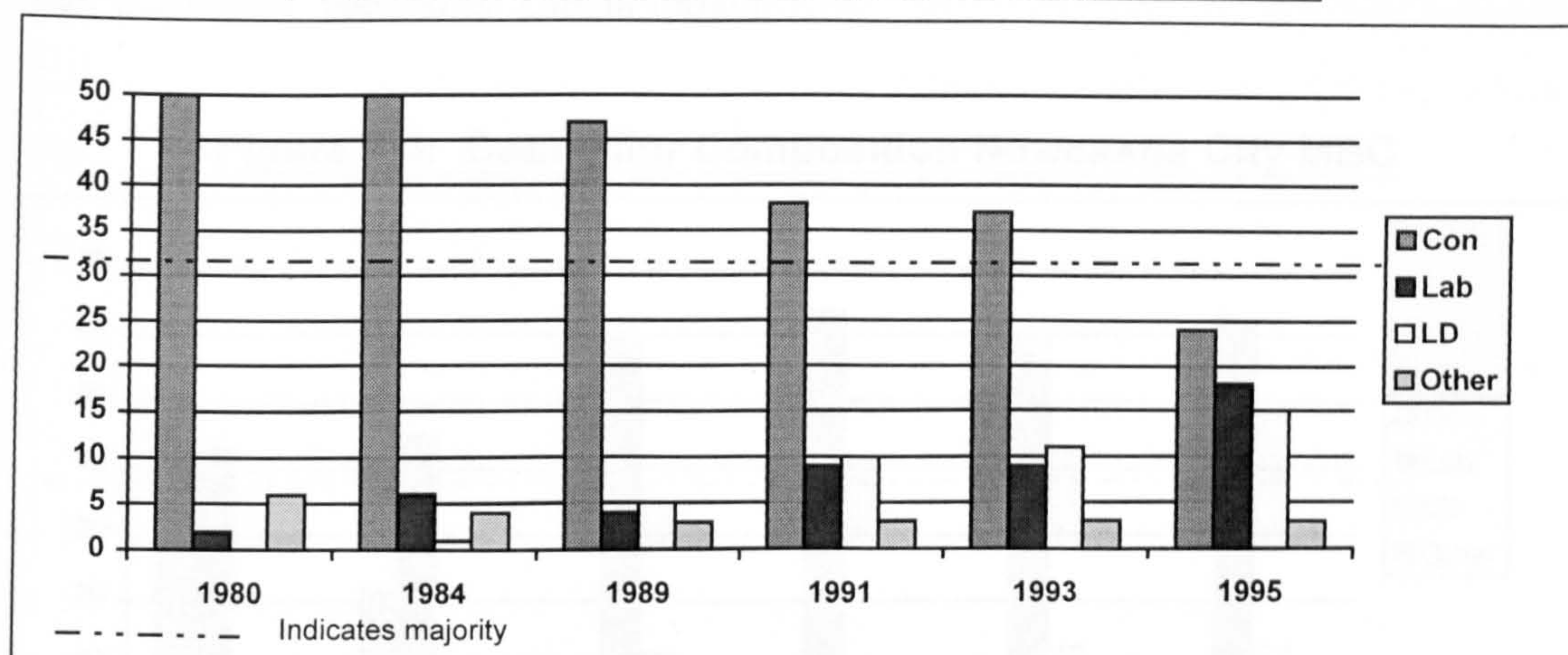
Brent's quality campaign, '*the Quality Council*' and its innovation of using '*One-Stop-Shops*' have been among the most high profile of any quality initiatives pursued by a local authority.

c) Wycombe District Council

Wycombe Council is a district authority, situated approximately twenty miles north-west of London. It is a, largely, affluent commuter town with direct rail and motorway links to London and the Midlands. The district comprises of an urban centre with rural/suburban fringes; the town centre having higher than average ethnic minority communities. It has witnessed a large growth in population since 1945, reaching 159,600 by the 1990 census estimate, giving it the nineteenth highest borough populations in England district authorities in England (local Government Yearbook 1995). Economically, the town used to depend on the furniture trade as its main industry but, following its demise, the town has diversified into service industries and small-scale 'sunrise' industries. Unemployment has been below the national average since the war and trade union membership in the Borough reflects the generally low rates seen throughout the region.

The Council has been dominated by the Conservative party since the end of the first world war and could be considered to be a classically 'patrician Tory' borough. For example, leading councillors, while supporting the virtues of private sector 'experience' in public office, did not support CCT being imposed on their council's activities: policy on CCT was firmly in favour of winning all in-house contracts.

In the 1995 local elections, however, the borough was affected by the same electoral swings that affected most Councils in the mid 1990s, and the Conservatives lost their majority to an uneasy coalition of Labour and the Liberal Democrats (see figure 7:2).

Figure 7:2: Councillor Composition Wycombe DC

Source Data: Local Government Yearbook

Wycombe's use of quality methods has been very high, on the scale developed from the LGMB Quality Surveys (see table 7:5). In terms of its overall use of quality methods, Wycombe's 'score' was in the upper quartile of local authorities for 1994, 1995 and 1996. In its 'corporate' use of quality methods, it was in the top 2 per-cent of local authorities in 1994, though this fell progressively in 1995 and 1996 - possibly reflecting a change in perception in how it defined some of its activities.

Table 7:5: Wycombe DC Comparative Quality 'Rating'

	WDC	All Councils: Mean	All Councils: Median
Overall use of quality (1994)	7	4.44	4
Overall use of quality (1995)	7	4.49	5
Overall use of quality (1996)	7	4.86	5
Corporate use of quality (1994)	8	2.68	2
Corporate use of quality (1995)	6	2.38	2
Corporate use of quality (1996)	3	2.55	2

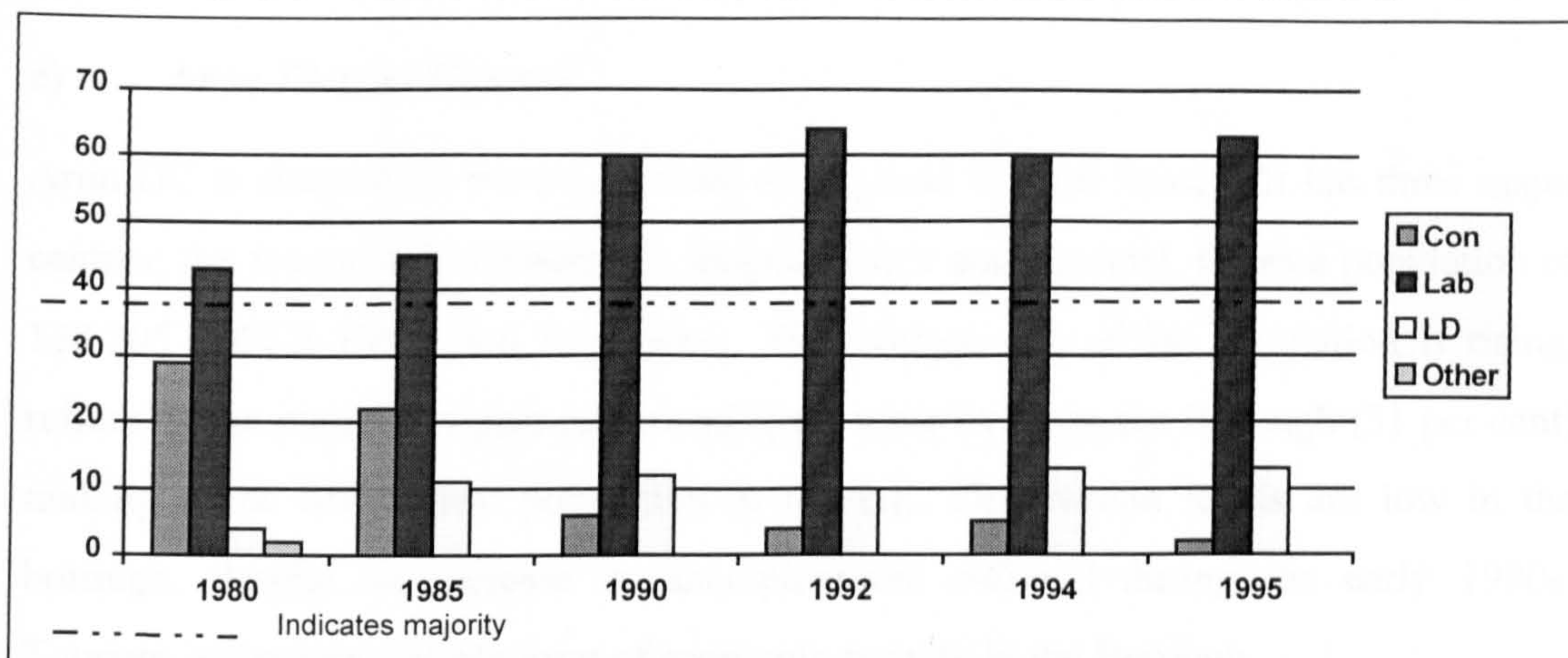
(Source Data: LGMB 1994; 1995, 1996)

d) Newcastle upon Tyne City Council (Metropolitan Borough)

Newcastle is at the heart of the North East England conurbation. It is an urban borough with a population of 247,190 (Local Government Yearbook 1995). With its traditional industrial base - shipbuilding and coal - in long-term decline, it is considered to be 'post-industrial' and has high levels of structural unemployment in common with the regional norm - 11.5 per-cent of the workforce (Employment Gazette 1995). The Council, like all councils and Parliamentary constituencies in the conurbation is

dominated by the Labour Party (see figure 7:3) and the ruling Labour group is firmly of the 'traditional' paternalist Labour mould.

Figure 7:3: Councillor Composition Newcastle City MBC



Source Data: Local Government Yearbook

The council has a firm policy of retaining all services in-house and consults with trade unions at policy level. The unions (or *Unison*) has strong local base: as recently as Spring 1995 it was able to effect a one day strike in opposition to spending cuts. Indeed, Painter defines Newcastle as an archetypal 'Fordist' council:

...(it) is dominated by paternalist labourism. The local state on Tyneside remains dominated by Fordist forms of organisation, and continues to relate to its social and economic environment in much the same way as under Fordism. Large scale, direct, public service provision is still the norm. The government's compulsory competitive tendering legislation has failed significantly to reduce the extent of direct provision, the strength of the union movement, or the wages and working conditions of council staff. (Painter 1991 p40)

Table 7:6: Newcastle City MBC Comparative Quality 'Rating'

	Newcastle	All Councils: Mean	All Councils: Median
Overall use of quality (1994)	6	4.44	4
Overall use of quality (1995)	6	4.49	5
Overall use of quality (1996)	6	4.86	5
Corporate use of quality (1994)	4	2.68	2
Corporate use of quality (1995)	3	2.38	2
Corporate use of quality (1996)	3	2.55	2

(Source Data: LGMB 1994; 1995, 1996)

While the Authority is roughly average in terms of the take-up of quality management, one department has seen a high level of activity on this - though this is not visible on the crude Q-scores shown above. There was no plan to implement TQM corporately at the time of research because of the autonomous nature of departments at the authority.

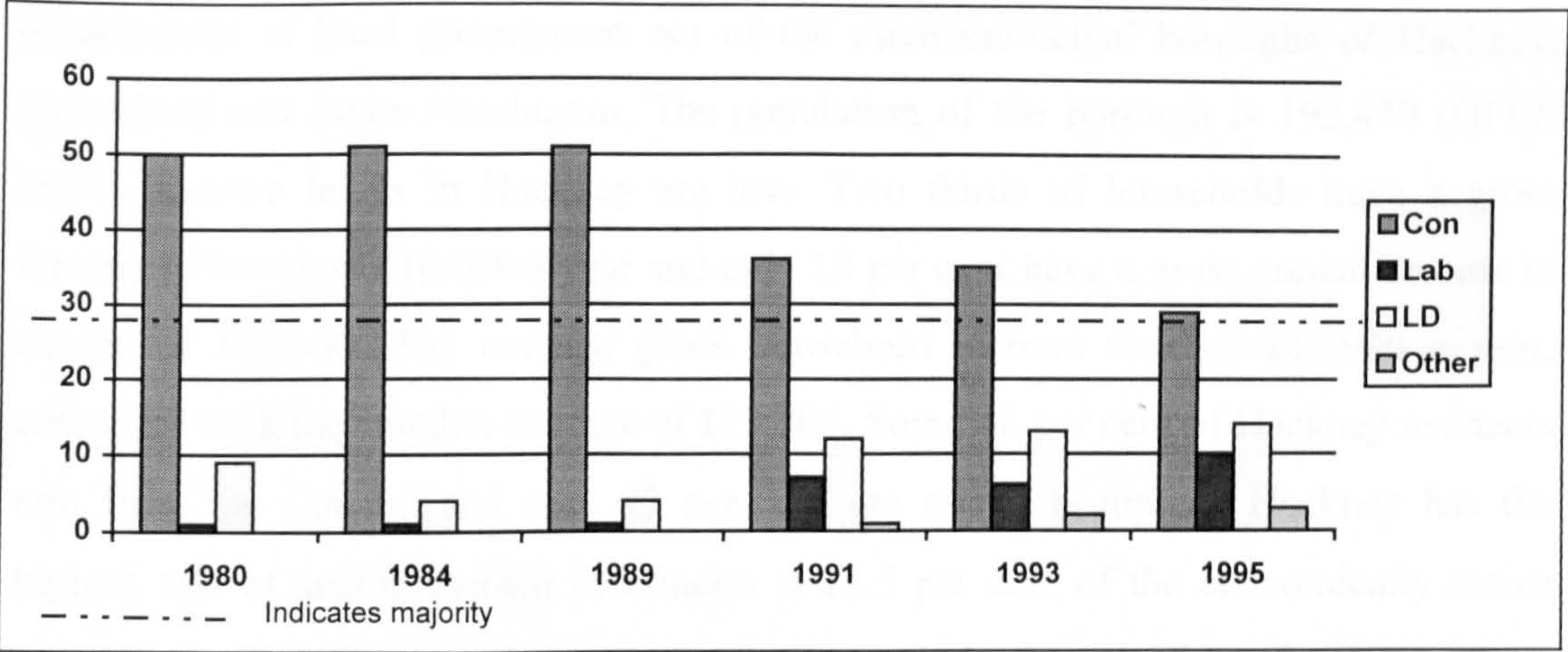
The one department pursuing quality management, *Leisure Newcastle*, adopted a firm commitment to TQM - though largely through the pursuit of ISO 9000 accreditation, for which the Authority boasted the first residential day centre in the country to be so accredited.

e) **Arun District Council**

Arun DC is situated on the South coast of England in rural Sussex. It has three major centres; the towns of Littlehampton, Bognor Regis and Arundel. It has a population of 138,205 (OPCS 1995) and is growing. The average age of the population is rising, reflecting the number of post-retirement age people living in the Borough (31 per cent) making it the fifth oldest population in the UK. Deprivation levels are low in the borough, despite an increase in unemployment suffered during the early 1990s. Tourism is the most visible form of economic activity in the Borough.

Politically, Arun could be considered to be a classic Tory council. It remained Conservative after the 1995 elections, where many other 'safe' councils were lost (see figure 7:4). Traditionally, the ideological hue of the local Party could be said to that of the patrician Tory: one officer noted that they were the type who would "*come back to run the Council after having run the Empire*". Some challenges were made to this in the 1980s, with a NUR faction in ascendancy within the ruling group, but that this had now subsided following leadership changes in the early 1990s. As such, policy on CCT was to bid for the services being tendered, with the intention of retaining them where practicable.

Figure 7:4: Councillor Composition Arun DC



Source Data: Local Government Yearbook

Arun scores highly on the quality rating measure. In overall use it scores slightly above average, but for corporate policy initiatives, it is in the upper quartile (see table 7:7). Arun’s quality policy is focused around a ‘customer care’ approach (it is known, officially as *Working for the Public*).

Table 7:7: Arun DC Comparative Quality ‘Rating’

	Arun	All Councils: Mean	All Councils: Median
Overall use of quality (1994)	6	4.44	4
Overall use of quality (1995)	5	4.49	5
Overall use of quality (1996)	6	4.86	5
Corporate use of quality (1994)	6	2.68	2
Corporate use of quality (1995)	4	2.38	2
Corporate use of quality (1996)	4	2.55	2

(Source Data: LGMB 1994; 1995, 1996)

The union at Arun is of moderate strength for a borough of its size, with low to moderate membership levels, no full-time staff and with little active bargaining with the Authority.

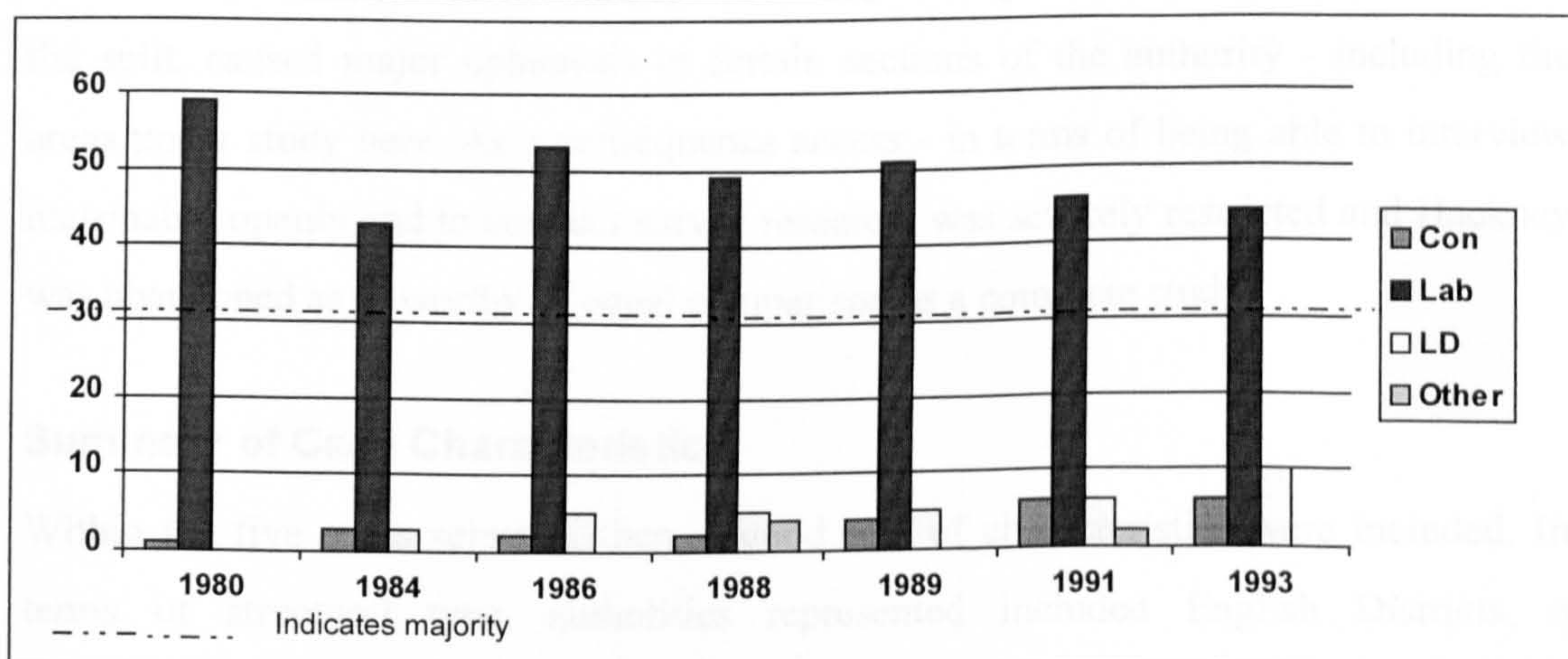
f) London Borough of Hackney Council (abandoned as full case study)

In addition to the above four complete case studies, another - Hackney Borough Council - was selected for inclusion. While some research, including a number of interviews, was carried out - and was therefore of general use in terms of understanding management agendas in quality policy areas and certain services - it became an inadequate case study for general comparison, as will now be explained.

Hackney is a densely populated inner London borough created in the 1965 re-organisation of local government out of the three municipal boroughs of Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington. The population of the borough is 192,479 (OPCS 1994). Income levels in Hackney are low. Two thirds of households have a gross income of less than £10,000 a year and only 15 per cent have a gross annual income in excess of £20,000. The average gross household income time of £11,900 a year, compared with the London average of £19,700. Some 48 per cent of Hackney residents rent from the Council and only 27 per cent are owner occupiers. Hackney has the highest rate of unemployment in London at 25.5 per cent of the economically active population. The Borough is one of the most ethnically mixed in the UK, ethnic minorities making up 33.6 per cent of the population.

As a consequence of the above factors it is no surprise that Hackney is a safe Labour borough and has been associated with the NUL throughout the 1980s (though not to the same extent as *Lambeth*, *Islington* or *Brent*). In 1996, however, the ruling Labour group split - effectively making the Borough a hung council (see figure 7:5).

Figure 7:5: Councillor Composition Hackney LBC



Source Data: Local Government Yearbook

It is broadly representative of the NUL with its strong commitment to retaining services in-house. Trade unions were expected (and were subsequently found to be) relatively strong in the authority and were consulted at policy level. Hackney was also, however, representative of a 'left' Labour council with difficult relations with in-house trade-unions. Lansley et al (1989) note how, in 1983 "*Hackney's plans for decentralisation*

were first blocked, and then killed off by the resistance of the workforce and the management to the radical changes proposed.” (p112).

Hackney's quality rating was comparatively high, as table 7:8 shows.

Table 7:8: Hackney LBC Comparative Quality 'Rating'

	Hackney	All Councils: Mean	All Councils: Median
Overall use of quality (1994)	7	4.44	4
Overall use of quality (1995)	5	4.49	5
Overall use of quality (1996)	8	4.86	5
Corporate use of quality (1994)	5	2.68	2
Corporate use of quality (1995)	3	2.38	2
Corporate use of quality (1996)	5	2.55	2

(Source Data: LGMB 1994; 1995, 1996)

TQM had been adopted at corporate and departmental levels. During the latter half of 1996, a number of factors combined to make continued access difficult at the council. The first factor was a split in the ruling Labour group, which effectively removed political certainty that existed previously and focused unwanted attention onto the authority. In addition the union became embroiled in controversies stemming back from the 1980s, on top of it not being able to integrate its NALGO and NUPE sections very successfully. Finally, restructuring proposed by management and agreed just prior to the split, caused major upheavals in certain sections of the authority - including the areas under study here. As a consequence access - in terms of being able to interview reasonably openly and to conduct survey research, was severely restricted and Hackney was abandoned as unworthy of equal comparison as a complete study.

Summary of Case Characteristics

Within the five cases selected, then, a good mix of characteristics were included. In terms of structural type, authorities represented included English Districts, a Metropolitan Borough and London Boroughs. Types excluded were English Counties and, for reasons relating to structural re-organisation, Scottish, Welsh and English Unitary authorities. In terms of politics, cases included Labour, Conservative and a Labour/Liberal Democrat 'balanced' (hung) council. The selection included two authorities that experienced a change in control during the period of study, authorities of long standing single-party domination and an authority that was demographically very marginal. Ideologically councils varied from 'new-suburban right' to (post) 'new-

urban left' to 'pragmatic'. All authorities had a declared quality policy, but corporate approaches to CCT varied from being pro-actively in favour of outsourcing, to 'pragmatic' compliance, to active hostility. Trade union entrenchment varied from high density with full-time officials and fully consulted over council policy, to medium density, with lay officials, to being under threat of de-recognition. Most of these characteristics are displayed in figures 7:6 to 7:8.

Figure 7:6: Characteristics of Local Party Influences

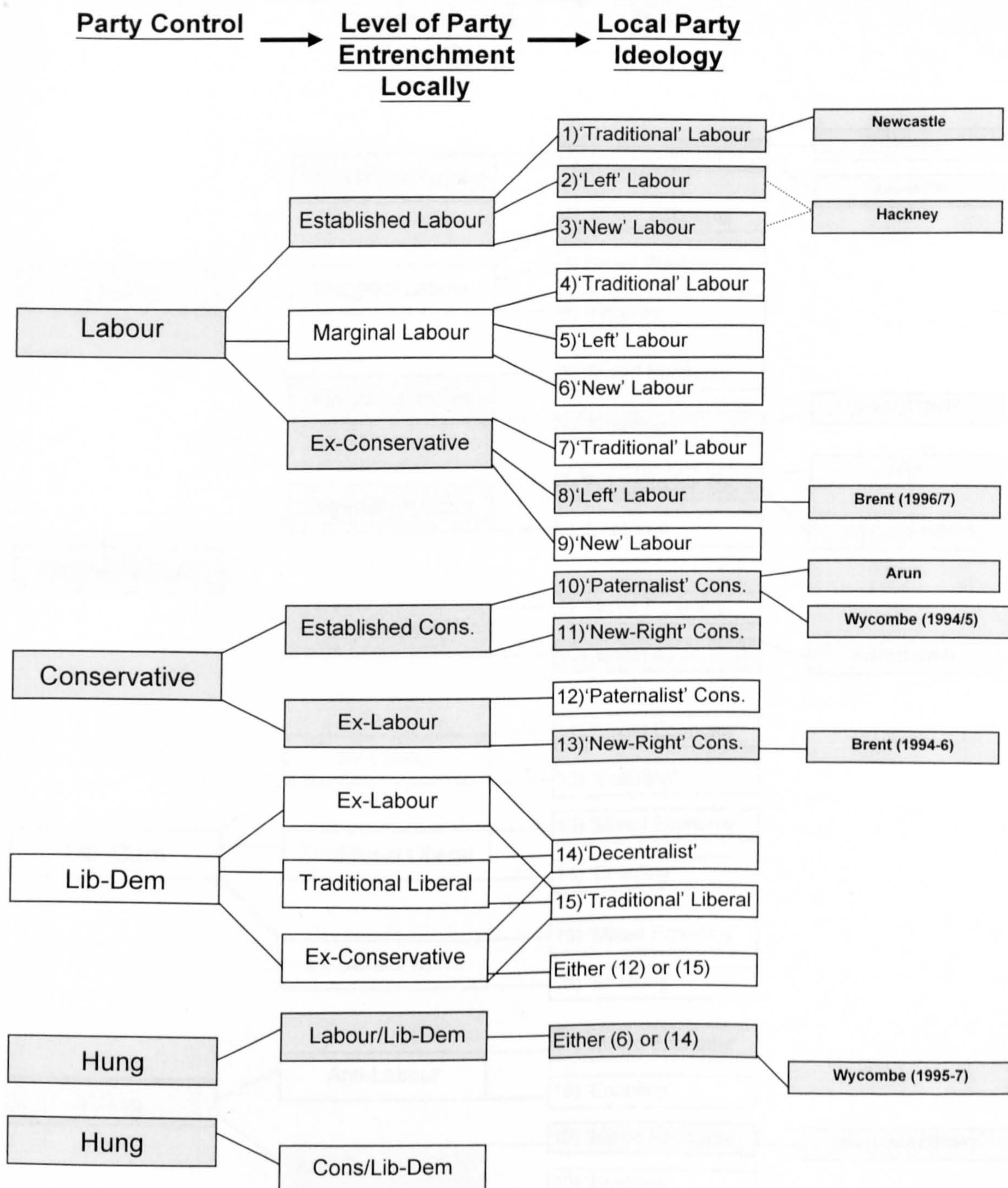


Figure 7:7: Local Party Influences on CCT Policy

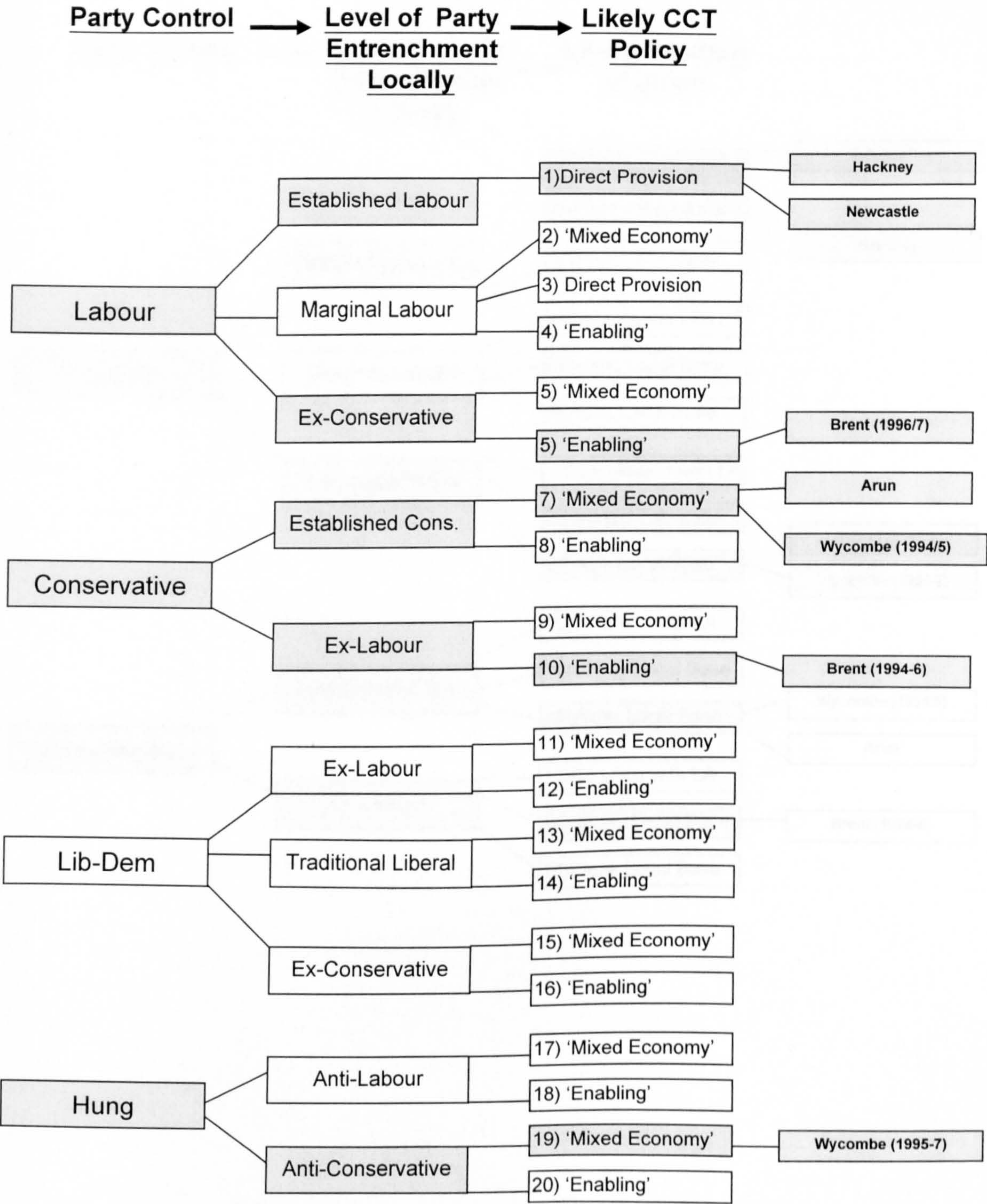
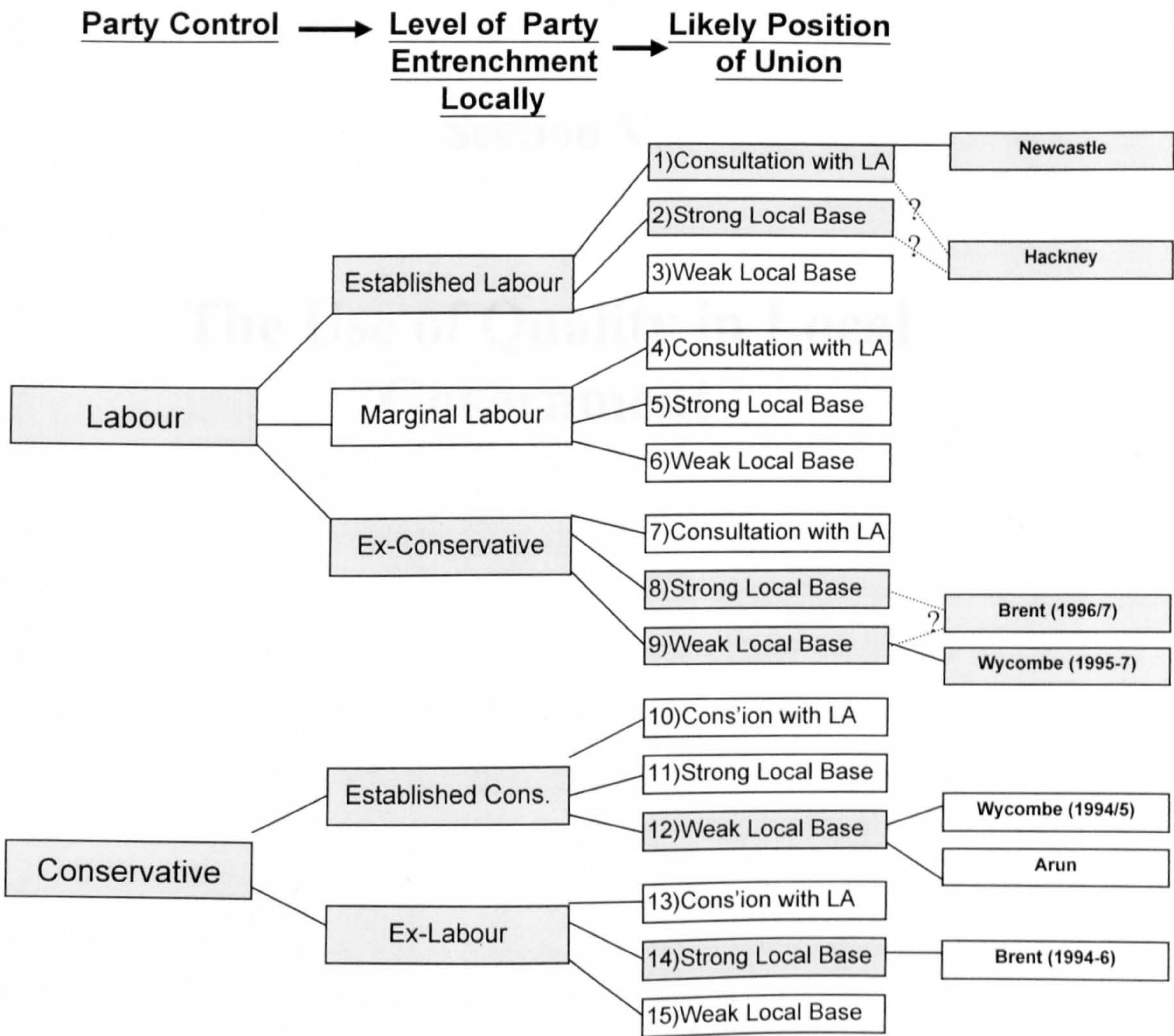


Figure 7:8: Likely Relationship Between Local Authority and Trade Union(s)



Section V

The Use of Quality in Local Government

CHAPTER 8

QUALITY IN FOUR AUTHORITIES

This chapter presents the findings of research conducted in the four selected case-study authorities described in chapter 7. The findings presented here indicate the nature and background of the quality management policy pursued in each authority. Specifically, it describes the perceptions of senior managers responsible for implementing quality management policies, the reactions of other managers to the policies and the reactions of *Unison* officials to the policies. Because of the difference in the context and nature of the quality management policies being pursued in each case - a result of the different background issues involved in each case - different approaches to quality management policy emerged. As a result, the focus of research necessarily varied from case to case, as and where different agendas were raised. What is reported in this chapter reflects the opinions and perceptions of relevant local spokespersons on management and *Unison* sides.

Broadly, some distinct differences were found, resulting from the different approaches taken towards quality and the position of the union in each case. Findings also indicate, however, a number of common themes. Table 8:0:1 summarises the case study characteristics and the quality policies being pursued, in relation to some of the criteria discussed in chapter 7.

Table 8:0:1: Case Study Characteristics

	Brent	Wycombe	Newcastle	Arun
Authority Type	London borough	District	Met. borough	District
Demography	Urban/suburban mix. High deprivation. Broad ethnic mix	Rural/suburban mix. Affluent.	Urban. High unemployment. Ex industrial.	Coastal resort. Tourism oriented. Aged population.
Political Control	Con (Lab 1996)	Hung (Lab/LD)	Lab	Con
Workforce	4,105 ¹	636 ²	11,519 ³	537 ⁴
Union Density	Declined, stabilising	Low, rising	High	Low
Union-Management Relations	Conflictual.	Consensus	Negotiated	Consensus
CCT Policy	Favours outsourcing	'Best value' pragmatism	Favours in-house	Selective outsourcing
Quality Policy	Devolved Holistic	Performance/PRP	ISO 9002	Customer Care

¹ 1993: (Brent Council Quality Review)² 1996: WTE (Joint Staffing Watch 1996)³ 1996: WTE (Joint Staffing Watch 1996)⁴ 1996: WTE (Joint Staffing Watch 1996)

8.1: The London Borough of Brent Council

Case Characteristics

- NSR Conservative controlled (1994-6)
- Favours contracting-out
- Conflictual management-union relations
- Post NUL Labour controlled (1996-7)

Quality Policy

a) *The Quality Council*

The origins of Brent's quality strategy date back to budgetary crises in 1988. From this point 'infrastructural' changes were instigated to combat future financial problems and an internal review was set up, which reported after the political leadership had changed. In 1991 the Council launched the *Quality Council* policy on the back of the previous changes.

The new *Quality Council* policy made a few ideological references to suit the new-right agenda of the new administration, including a commitment to a client/contractor split, and customer orientation. Nevertheless the *Quality Council* policy was produced in isolation from party political influence and the essence of the 'values' incorporated were essentially managerialist, including commitment to:

- 'strong leadership'
- 'Total Quality'
- 'clear accountability'
- 'total ownership'
- 'simple direct communication'
- 'maximum devolution'
- 'strong staff development'

The policy was driven by the chief executive, who

"...was a skilful person at dealing with politicians. He had the political groups all signed-up to the Total Quality programme in broad terms. I don't know...to what extent they were involved in discussing the nitty-gritty of it; I suspect very little."
(Manager: Quality Unit)

The *Quality Council* was launched to the entire workforce, at a conference centre, in 1991. Its new 'mission statement' was:

To be quite simply the best local authority in the country. A local authority in which the community we represent and serve, and the staff we employ, have pride. We will concentrate on achieving excellence through Total Quality. (Brent Council 1991)

A number of schemes were introduced to set the quality programme into action. First, a *Total Quality* programme was set up. 'Quality facilitators' were trained and set about advising on improvement programmes at various council services. The role of the quality facilitators was sometimes more than just advisory, however, as was suggested by one senior manager:

"...it was quite deliberately an attempt to go behind,...or go around, managers who weren't doing-the-business... The Quality Facilitators had that particular role. That created some tensions. It was a sensible strategy because, clearly, if we've got managers in place who were not committed to quality - and not prepared to become committed to quality - then, in an organisation that where that's...a founding goal, [they've] got to go." (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

'Quality Time' was another initiative created at this time. The purpose of this was to set aside time for staff to be trained in various aspects of customer care - such as telephone manner and responding to complaints. The information and training, at this stage was generalised and basic, reflecting the universalistic assumptions of TQM methodology:

"...in theory it's as useful for people who are delivering childcare services as it is for people who are doing noise pollution, for example, which inherently have nothing in common apart from the fact that they're services to the community of Brent." (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

Being pitched at this general level, however, it was not universally appreciated, particularly by staff operating in some of the more 'professional' services:

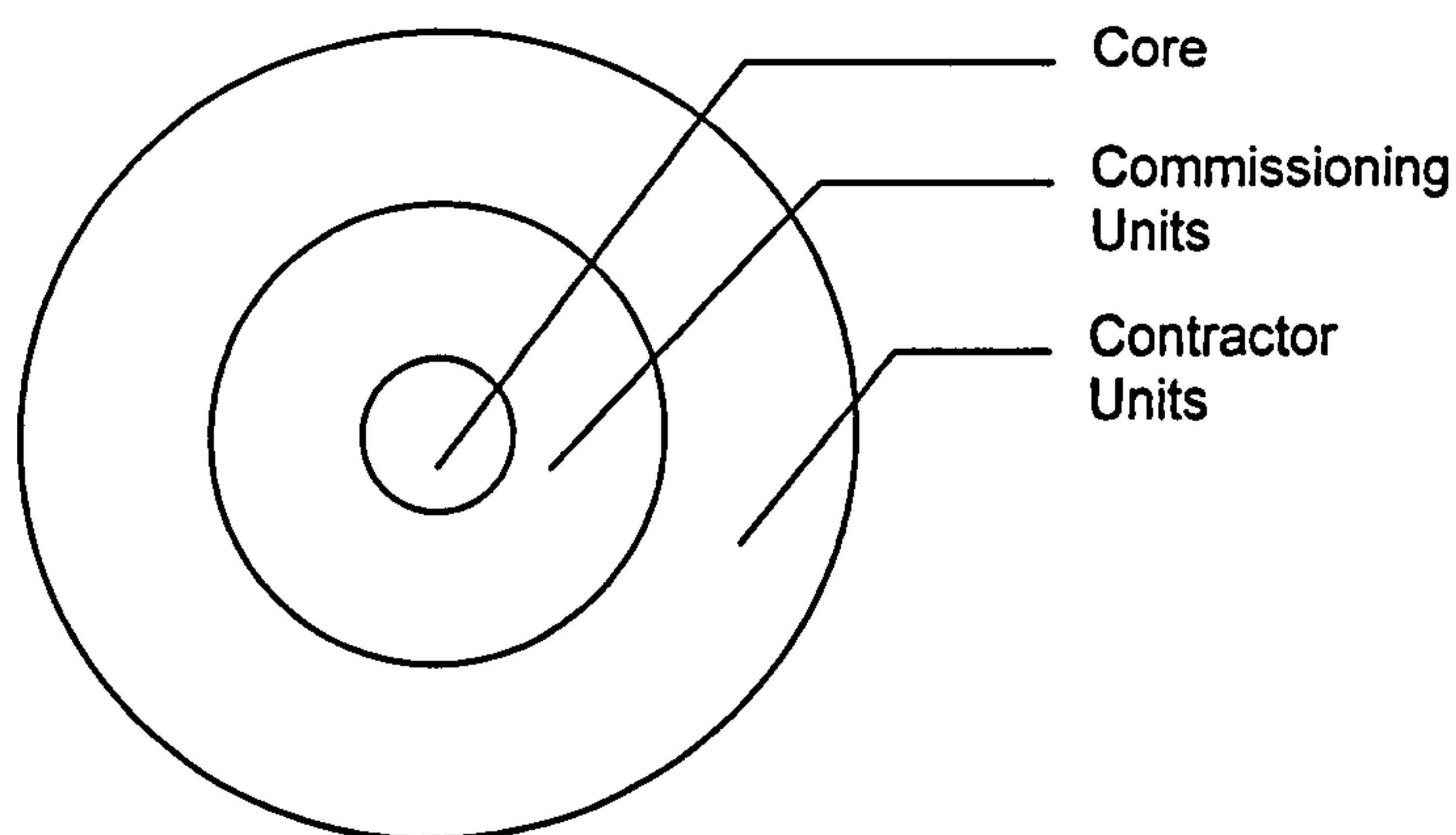
"Some actually resented the training...I don't think that people that are earning £20,000 a year, or something, need to be told how to answer a phone - there's ways of doing it." (Team Leader: Business Unit)

b) *Devolution*

Running in parallel with the *Quality Council*, at this time, was a policy of decentralisation. From 1990 Council activities, then based in large departments, were divided into 150 units: 13 'core' units, 7 'commissioning' units and 130 'contractor businesses' (see figure 8:1:1). This process began in 1990 reaching its climax in 1992. At some stage between 1990 and 1993 decentralisation had changed to *Devolution*

and had become an organisational priority. The formal structure is illustrated in figure 8:1:1, below.

Figure 8:1:1: Brent LBC Devolved Council Structure



Devolution added a structural dimension to quality, making Brent a virtually pure example of the 'enabling authority' model. *Devolution* was now seen as the key element in the Council's approach to quality. A commissioning manager put it that he believed that "...*Devolution has been the single most important engine of the quality process*".

The nominal arrangement for ensuring that Brent's corporate quality requirements were met was through the contract relationship. *Business Units* would take responsibility for the method of service delivery, while *Commissioning Units* would set the outcome targets.

One of the principal aims of *Devolution* was the 'empowerment' of unit managers. This was enabled by devolving budgets to individual units, shifting discretionary decision-making powers away from the centre to the level of the manager of the affected service. The scope of this decision-making was quite wide-ranging. It covered issues such as the choice of cleaning and maintenance contractors (i.e. managers were not compelled to use Council DSO services); the purchasing of equipment; and, significantly, issues relating to hiring, firing, training and promotion of staff (though there were Corporate Standards that had to be complied with).

"Now I can say to a contractor 'come here tomorrow and if you're not here tomorrow don't bother coming' - and they're here tomorrow. So you've got the power to actually demand things and get best value for money" (Director: Business Unit)

Managers were encouraged to adopt an 'entrepreneurial' attitude to organising their units and could be rewarded by being allowed to 're-invest' savings made from cost-savings made.

c) *BrentMark*

In 1993 the *Quality Council* policy was reviewed. The *Mission Statement* was retained in its entirety but its *Statement of Values* was appended to include 'value[ing] and empowerment of staff' to go along with 'a quality service', 'an efficient organisation' and 'serving our customers'.

At this time it was recognised that the Council required a mechanism that would enable it to maintain a corporate approach to quality, appropriate to the devolved structure that existed, as it was perceived that there were discrepancies between the best and weaker services. One of the executive directors was given the task of developing an approach to service improvement that would help remedy deficiencies in 'procedural competence' whilst providing a corporate framework for 'continuous quality improvement', and a *Quality Development Unit* (QDU) was set-up at the core of the Council. The result was *BrentMark*, which was launched in December 1995.

BrentMark was a mandatory award scheme based upon the systemic requirements of *ISO 9000*, the customer-centred requirements of *Chartermark* and the training and development requirements of *Investors in People* (IiP). All internal and external contractors would be required to be accredited to *BrentMark*. It was also, however, a conscious effort to ensure that devolved business units maintained their corporate identity. A problem with devolving management structures, not surprisingly, was a loss of relative power at the centre and there had been some concern, at the core, that some units had become *too* autonomous:

"...people started to do UDI - which a devolved culture, of course, encourages - and that's not clever. There was a phase, in 1993/4, when the programme lost corporate direction..." (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

d) Externalisation

At the same time as *BrentMark* was being finalised by management, councillors were preparing the next phase in their agenda. The priority remained on 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' of service provision - measured by relationship to cost - but now the targets became more specific. The priority changed to one of delivering 'year-on-year' cuts in council taxes by budget cuts and selling-off council activities - except for a much streamlined core. In this environment *BrentMark* had some credibility problems. Some Conservative councillors were wary, perceiving it as creating obstacles to their externalisation programme:

"...if there is a point where Members have to choose between the different agendas - if we can't actually achieve quality and regeneration and externalisation objectives - which one they'll choose? I think everyone's pretty clear that externalisation comes first" (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

The externalisation programme led to considerable anxiety among staff and managers. While some employee protection was now available through TUPE, and this may have had the effect of deterring 'bad' potential private sector employers in some cases, it could not allay the fears of staff in most services:

"...people go out under TUPE. A year afterwards a lot of them are made redundant - or their conditions of service are reduced...[T]o be innovative like we've done, you know; getting inspectors to accept hot-desking; work from home; all the computers at home; faxes - but there's a willingness to do that from staff. If you say 'well sod it: you're all out now and by-the-way we're going to cut your salary as well'...they'll do the work but I don't think we'd probably get the commitment." (Senior Manager: regulatory service business unit)

Many managers, previously enthused by 'empowerment', were now feeling 'betrayed' by the externalisation project. Managers at regulatory services felt that externalisation was inherently problematic (if not potentially illegal) and there was a feeling, at the core, that by selling off strategic activities:

"If you cut the Core too much then you cut the people who are able to make things happen somewhere else and that's a risk. It's certainly a risk that you could rely upon us in the Core being aware of." (Manager: Personnel Services)

The accompanying year-on-year cuts to budgets were having a similar effect. At first managers felt able to absorb these as the financial benefits of cutting staff and

deregulating working practices could be passed on. These benefits, however, could only be passed-on while it was considered physically possible:

"...the degree, now, of the reduction of the work-force and the extra work we're expected to do - the demand that's placed on us - is such that there comes a point where actual quality of service, now, will reduce. We've soaked-up lots of work - lots of extra demands being placed on us. We managed to take on extra work...but they don't seem to accept there is a limit to how far you can go with that." (Senior Manager: regulatory service business unit)

e) Retreat

One significant element of management uncertainty was the politicisation of quality - the identification of the *Quality Council* programme with the Conservative NSR agenda of cutting jobs and services and of externalisation - within the context of a very slender majority. This was recognised, particularly, by management within the QDU. It was anticipated, however, that much of the quality agenda had now entered mainstream Labour Party thinking and it was hoped that this would guide thinking, should political control switch:

"At base level all of this stuff is completely apolitical. They all believe in customers being happy with services; they all believe in good processes; they all believe in well trained staff; they all believe in good management - which is what this is all about. It's not ideological stuff, quality. But anything can get caught-up in that kind of [cross-fire]." (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

In 1996 leadership of the Council switched back to Labour. The immediate priority was the cancellation of the externalisation policy. Other than this the policy initiatives of the new administration were constrained by existing budgetary arrangements, and so the new administration had to prioritise. Within two days of the new administration taking office, the QDU and *BrentMark* were abolished.

Policy Outcomes and Reactions

Overall, the *Quality Council* had the effect of intensifying work regimes while simultaneously demanding additional commitment from staff, although important differences were detected between different service functions. While increasing efficiency could be used to enhance services at a static cost, the priority was to use efficiency gains merely to maintain service levels and reduce costs - i.e. staff. This responsibility had been passed down to local managers, working to budgets. This

situation was aptly described by one manager as follows: *"I think that there's more pressure on staff. Success brings pressure."*

a) Work Organisation

The *Quality Council* policy made significant changes to the working environment at the council. Of the early initiatives, *Quality Time* was one which was seen, by senior management, as significant in changing the way staff approached their work:

"I don't think we really anticipated quite how far reaching its effects would be in terms of empowering people and changing the way they behave" (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

Devolution meant that local managers were given a contract, some targets and a budget to work to, along with a high degree of discretion on most aspects of staffing. This 'empowerment' encouraged managers to improvise with working practices. Initially this did not necessarily lead to a deterioration in working conditions. In the case of one regulatory service, savings were made by allowing staff to work from home through 'hot-desking', therefore saving money on accommodation and time. However, in this case the savings gained were not fed into enhancing the service but into allowing the manager to *"...reduce the number of inspectors...still cover the work and do it quicker and cheaper than we could do it before."*

For staff, the combination of local managers with greater discretionary powers and the same managers under increased pressure to reduce costs from a separate commissioning unit proved a powerful incentive to co-operate, or at least to be less uncooperative - especially in labour intensive areas of work where 'over-staffing' was perceived to be a problem. The effect, here, was that managers had greater control over making changes to working conditions:

"...those people who aren't up to it, either they're gone, or they're on less money and there's always a problem with that - I'd prefer it if they were gone, but usually there's a choice...and, yeah, there's a few people who aren't going to be happy about it, because they're being paid what they're worth" (Library Manager:)

Although it was generally managers who were made to feel 'empowered', there was strong commitment to pass this down to staff, in the form of 'functional flexibility' so that any member of staff could:

"...identify the problem and solve it at the same time and feel that they're able to do that...I'd rather they have a go and messed it up than didn't have a go. That's what I hate; people pass[ing] responsibility for things... In fairness people pursue their self interest - which is to earn more by having more responsibility and having more staff." (Senior Manager: Arts & Community business unit)

Devolution also enabled unit managers to introduce 'flexibility' into employment contracts affecting hours and conditions. One manager compared this to arrangements before where:

"...we might have had to employ someone who's paid at a certain, kind-of, rate after a certain number of hours, or got paid double always, at the weekend... which becomes expensive." (ibid.)

b) Culture, Commitment and Ideology

A strong emphasis was made, in the *Quality Council* programme, on employee commitment:

'Our staff will have pride in the Council, will have confidence and trust in their managers and leaders, and will feel ownership of and involvement in the process of change and the provision of quality service.' (Charles Wood: op cit.)

and...

'There will be no one working for Brent Council who does not understand its beliefs and ambitions and how it intends to progress. There will be no one who has not been directly touched by their ambition to succeed.' (ibid.)

The aim was, within the context of a devolved structure, to maintain the benefits of a unified corporate culture engendering pride and loyalty to the wider organisation. One issue that was identified as a potential problem, initially, was that staff morale was thought to be adversely affected by the Council's image:

"... people can be limited by other people's perceptions of what they can achieve...if people assume that your organisation is bonkers - whether it's loony left or barmy right... - that can be demoralising"(Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

At the outset, however, the *Quality Council* agenda aimed to harness this 'unfair reputation', as part of the rationale to motivate staff. As one senior manager explained:

"If you think you're at the bottom of the heap there's no place to go but up. If you're knocking about the middle and you've always been okay, it's difficult to get that head-of-steam going for a big jump and being near the bottom was used deliberately as a spur here. So it can be used as an inspiration to people." (ibid.)

On the whole, commitment was partly enabled by harnessing employee attachment to a 'public service ethos'. The TQM rationale, however, did come into conflict with this:

"...people can also hide behind [the notion of public service ethos] because it means they can develop life routines that make their life easier for a reasonable return and convince themselves that they are still motivated entirely by public altruistic leanings..." (Senior Manager: Arts and Community business unit)

In other cases, the harsh finances proved an incentive for managers to rid themselves of less productive members of staff which, though more problematic, was sold to staff on this basis (rather than on, say, length of service):

"When you're a small unit...everyone knows everyone else...and therefore if you make decisions which are seen to be the only sensible logical way to deal with it - even though it involves personal...misery for somebody, then people think that...there's justice in the system. If you're forced to do it in a way where you, sort of, hang on to mediocrity; starve potential, then morale drops." (ibid.)

While 'attitudes' were considered significant - as, indeed they are within the whole TQM paradigm - there was also a hint as to the limitations of this in situations where attitudes and competence did not coincide. Managers were constrained, to some extent, by having to encourage 'appropriate attitudes', yet being unable to reward them. This seemed to have a stronger effect in areas of work where required skill levels - and thus labour market security - were lower. In such situations, competence could be more closely tied to 'attitudes' than to knowledge.

"...you've got a few historical situations of people who are basically a bit dim; who are trying their best and are being underpaid - and that's not nice, because these people are trying their best; it's not their fault, but the world has changed. The issue, in terms of working for a job in the private sector, is such that there are practically none that they are capable of doing and it's a rough old world - and that's not nice." (Library Manager)

'Unforeseen' Outcomes

A number of the outcomes of the *Quality Council* policy were not explicitly planned by either the NSR ideological agenda or the managerialist agenda - even if they could be considered to be implicit in these agendas. In this sense such outcomes could be considered to be 'unforeseen'. These problems were, firstly, tensions between the

centre and the devolved units through *Devolution* and, secondly, the effects of the 'downsizing' rationale on morale.

a) *Devolution and 'UDI'*

One of the problems with devolving decision-making was the conflict caused by devolving the staffing decisions down to unit levels. From the centre, the problem was perceived as one of inconsistency:

"There's always been quite a strong feeling that people belong to Brent even though they're devolved. Obviously there are always going to be people who want to be completely UDI and there will be times when they feel very part of Brent and times when they feel not so Brent." (Senior Manager: Quality Unit)

Following the departure of the original chief executive - the '*original architect*' of the *Quality Council* - the new appointee was not received well by some managers, who had different preferences for the replacement. The problem with the new chief executive was that he appeared to be reigning-in some of the powers handed to local managers through *Devolution*. Some of this was possibly due to controlling 'leaks' relating to externalisation and other sensitive political issues, but it was not always perceived as such by managers:

"...his inclination is to be autocratic and to interfere with operational management...There's investigations going on all the time so there's a climate of mistrust and fear and that means that what happens with management's models is that they cease to be lived-and-breathed by people in the organisation." (Senior Manager: Arts and Community business unit)

'Doing a UDI' at this point in time, seemed to be challenging the legitimacy of the whole idea of the council as a unified corporate entity. Yet this was also a quite consistent bi-product of *Devolution*:

"... there are people sitting at the Town Hall imagining that we're still one big happy family - it aint gonna work, because we're not." (ibid.)

One manifestation was that *BrentMark* - as a product of the council core - was seen as part of this centralising imposition:

"...you can get a...development of, what I call, a 'quality-speak'. Once it becomes part of someone's career prospects - you get a sort of...lip-service which isn't necessarily what it's about" (ibid.)

This situation was somewhat paradoxical: there was resentment held about the council core for being too centralist, while simultaneously feeling threatened by externalisation. Externalisation posed other, financial, paradoxes as well. One of the thinly veiled intentions of the large budgetary cuts imposed from 1995 was to further reduce the staff base in all council activities. One of the consequences of this, however, was that redundancy costs, to be paid by individual units, favoured the retention of the more senior staff (because of TUPE). This had the effect of undermining local management discretion on hiring and firing: managers could not as easily reward the 'enthusiastic' and get rid of the 'unenthusiastic':

"...Now that we have to pay all the redundancy costs that is now there - so you are handicapped... You're told to run a business but you're told to run it with shackles on that you inherit from [another] organisation and that is a problem." (ibid.)

"If I got in the situation where the decision is not based on ability but based on what would be the redundancy costs - what is the cheapest person to get rid of - then I've got a big problem...and that is something that I'm determined to avoid." (ibid.)

b) Management by Fear

As has been indicated, the background to the whole *Quality Council* project was the implementation of major staff cut-backs. In 1991 an employee survey reported (among generally favourable opinions about the programme) that *'The massive contraction of the Brent workforce and related organisational upheavals, have resulted in many people lacking any trust in Brent's future'*. In 1993 the *Quality Council* review noted that, along with reducing the number of departments from ten to five, senior managers were cut by one-third and that central departments were *'radically slimmed down'* (Charles Wood: op cit.). Staff-cuts were large and rapid, as the data in table 8:1:1 suggest.

Table 8:1:1: Staffing Levels at Brent LBC: 1991 - 1993

Year	No of Staff
Nov. 1991	7,500
April 1992	6,500
July 1993	4,623
Sept. 1993	4,105

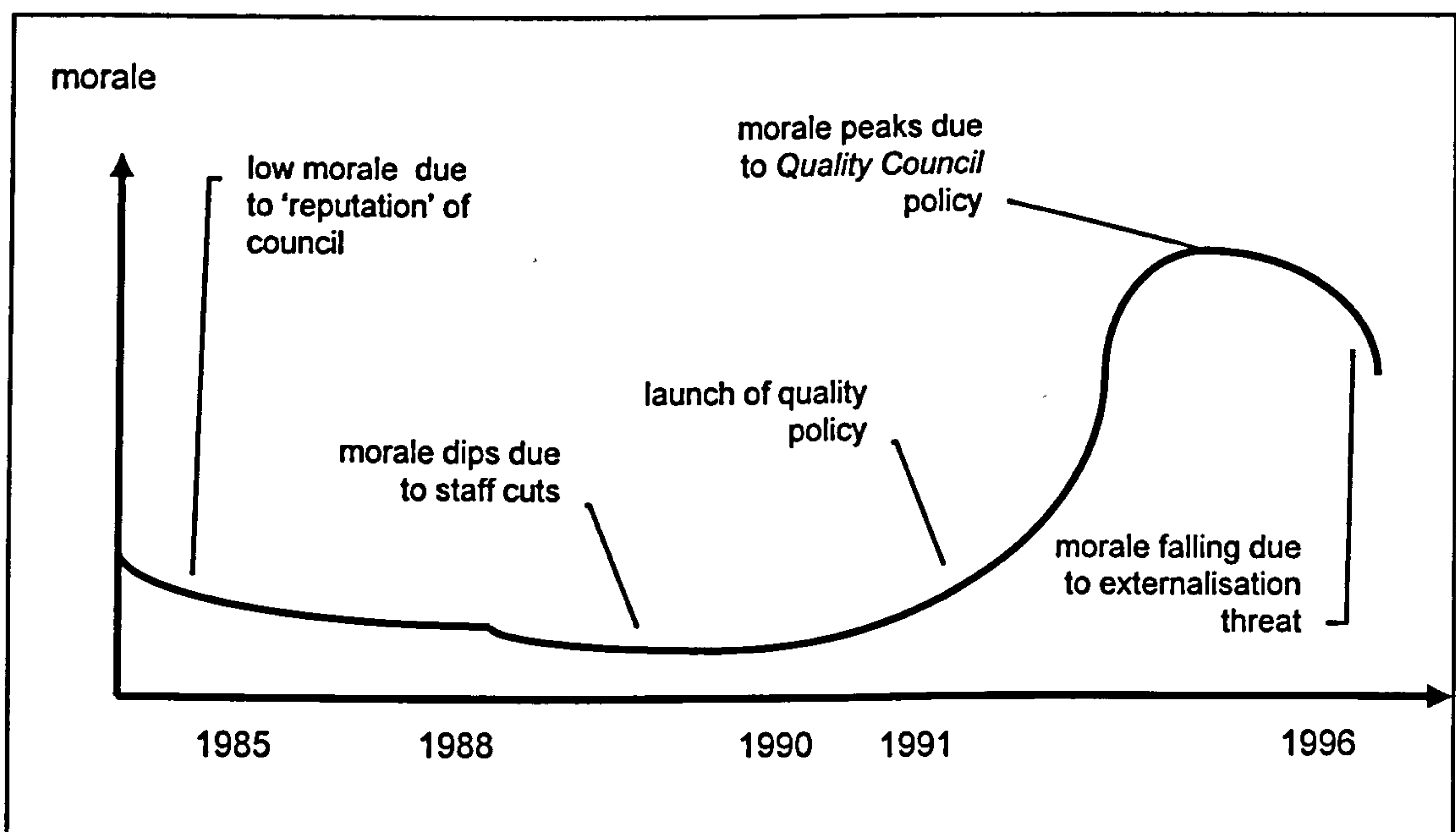
(Source: Brent Council Total Quality Programme Reports 1991-1993)

This climate would have been the backdrop by which any success in retaining staff with 'positive attitudes' should be judged. Put another way, as one manager, said: *"I think morale amongst the survivors is quite good"*. The externalisation threat added to tension here. This was felt by managers:

"There is a...cynicism people feel when they look at a council; which doesn't appear to value staff; which seems more concerned with keeping council tax down - but still professes to be concerned with quality. And so that's hard: it's hard to sell a corporate model of quality when people feel that way...." (Library Manager)

One manager defined overall staff morale as declining after a general rise over the previous few years. In a diagram (reproduced in figure 8:1:2) he described morale as low during the 1980s (through the effects of the controversy surrounding the Council as a whole); then dipping lower as a result of job cuts; then rising sharply as a result of the *Quality Council* policy; and was now dipping as a result of uncertainty due to externalisation.

Figure 8:1:2: Staff Morale: Brent LBC



(Taken from field notes: drawing reproduced directly from Manager's own sketch)

Employee commitment to ideologically Unitarist conceptions of the work organisation, then, were underpinned by the structural changes to the Council. The ideological content, here, seemed to be the outward expression of commitment, through quality, as the positive face; and its negative corollary, compliance through

fear. This issue was most strongly stressed outside the regulatory functions of the Council, particularly where funding was discretionary - i.e. was not determined by statutory requirements of the Council's duties. This was made apparent by one unit manager:

"Unfortunately there is an element of fear in it. I sometimes have to really work on people to persuade them, when they've been ill, that they shouldn't take it as annual leave... Fundamentally it is to do with changing work culture. When I first joined Brent I almost had the received wisdom that I could be sick several times a year without it becoming an issue and I almost saw it as untouchable...It's to do with work culture change; it's to do with the idea of Quality Management - that people are no longer going to be allowed to get away with this sort of thing. I think commitment is part of it as well - getting people to actually work together as a team and to understand the impact of absenteeism for the rest of the team." (Library Manager)

Quality and Unison

The changing work culture at the Council did not happen in isolation from the established trade unions. The presence of the union determined the nature of how the quality policy would be implemented and, conversely, the implementation of the quality policy made a reciprocal impact upon the position of the union within the workplace.

a) Initial Responses to the *Quality Council*

Unison's initial responses to the introduction of 'quality' into the Council agenda was favourable, in principle. A union official explained:

"We don't, essentially, have a formal policy position [on quality]. I mean, what we generally argued for is that we are in favour of...good and decent public services. We're not particularly in favour of things being wasteful and just doing things for the sake of it and we don't particularly have problems with the Council introducing practices to improve the quality - providing it's not to the detriment of staff..."
(Assistant Branch Secretary: *Unison*)

This favourable approach was short-lived, however. Because the *Quality Council* was simultaneously introduced with job cuts, the two were associated with each other. The lack of trust was compounded by a lack of consultation on implementation, on the part of the council. The Conservative administration took a decision

"...that they were going to steamroller this through. They basically, formally, said they were still in consultation with the union, but we'd be sent a committee report

the day before, or the day of, the committee - but had never been spoken to about it." (ibid.)

The union tried to organise a campaign against job-cuts, but official support was often hampered where members felt powerless, *'preferring to keep their heads down'* - and quite often it was hampered by management *'drawing stewards into the process'*. At this stage managers often saw union resistance as merely protecting *'vested producer interests'*:

"I personally think that the public service unions were...culpable in protecting inefficient, white-collar management practices. Perhaps, again, they were doing their job - which is to...advance the interest of their members. In one sense they are, but the corollary of that is that by doing that ...the interests of the wider community were not necessarily being served. People were getting poor services. So that was the contradiction there... It's difficult..." (Senior Manager: Arts and Community business unit)

The union's lack of active co-operation with the *Quality Council*, however, was not serious enough to make any effect on the overall progress of council policy in an atmosphere dictated by job-cuts and competitive tendering: as one manager put it,

"...[the unions] didn't agree with it and in a sense, I suppose, it's their job not to agree with it to some extent. But... at the end of the day the force of logic and economic necessity meant that these things happened anyway... I think that the Union's position was initially to resist things - to try and preserve conditions as they were. But...if that had happened to me when I was putting in a Tender bid I wouldn't have been able to put in a competitive Tender bid." (Senior Manager: Arts and Community business unit)

One significant shift in the council's employment policy was in its attitude toward equal opportunities, moving away from its *'positive discrimination'*/quota based policy into one that was incorporated within a managerialist rationale. Equal opportunities were now submerged into the *'quality'* agenda within IiP:

"...it talks about valuing and empowering staff, with commitment to development and IiP...towards getting the best out of all the staff." (Manager: Human Resources Unit)

While this did not remove the issue from the scope of trade union activities, it did remove the union from a pro-active position on equal opportunities policy. The shift in equal opportunities policy, as a whole, had been identified as a problem in 1993:

'...staff surveys revealed a workforce that believes the changes being made are the right ones and that things are improving, but which has real concerns at the way the change process

has been managed in parts, and in particular a perceived lowering of the importance of equal opportunity policy.' (Charles Wood: op cit.)

Performance related pay (PRP) for managers was introduced with *Devolution*. PRP was intended to work in conjunction with the new contract culture and fixed-term contracts that managers now worked under. Corporately the intention was for PRP to be applied to all staff levels, along with accompanying work appraisal schemes introduced as part of *Performance Management*. However, unit managers also had full discretion on this aspect and did not, in practice, make any linkage between staff appraisals and pay.

b) *Devolution and Collective Bargaining*

With *Devolution*, responsibilities for staffing shifted from the corporate level to devolved *Business Units*, with overall strategic decisions on staffing left to a small *Human Resource Unit* (HRU) situated at the Council core. Apart from providing guidance on issues relating to employment law, the main function of the HRU was to set nominal standards for employment practice. *Corporate Standards* set out criteria for employment practices introduced in devolved units: they needed to be declared beforehand and predictable. Policies had to comply with this minimum, but the detail was down to the individual unit. The HRU made audits and monitored units- though audits were intended to '*provide support rather than being an imposition*'

To this end the HRU issued *Corporate Standards* to define such issues as performance related pay (PRP), equal opportunities, flexible working practices and redundancy:

"...the Standard on redundancy...protecting the image of the Council as a good employer. So, in setting the Standards, we have tried to recognise that there is a dimension about the reputation of the Council; about the image of the Council; about wanting to be a place that's seen as...attracting the best people..." (Manager: Human Resources Unit)

The *Corporate Standards* were very much minimum criteria, setting out advice to units based on 'best practice'. For example there was a *Staff Charter* stating what staff should expect from managers and what managers expect from staff and a statement about *Council* values:

"...we have an image on what our mission is; what our values are - about valuing and empowering staff - and we have some Standards as to how these are to be put into effect..." (ibid.)

During this period, remuneration strategy deliberately related to nationally negotiated terms and conditions. This was seen as the best way of achieving equity throughout the Council - an important principle, despite *Devolution*. However, a strong emphasis was increasingly being made on introducing local variations to national agreements and, over the years, 'flexibility' had been introduced into national agreements along with 'local agreements'. It was, ironically, 'corporate policy', to seek localised staffing conditions. One of the HRUs tasks was:

"...specifically to look for evidence that Business Units were exploiting, to the full, all the flexibility that is available and were aware of all the possibilities of using staff flexibility" (Manager: Human Resources Unit)

c) Derecognition

In 1996 *Unison's* position was threatened further by derecognition. A series of disputes between *Unison* and Social Services were going to industrial tribunals and *Unison*, predominantly through the regional organiser, were publicising a number of these through the local press. A Conservative Councillor proposed that the union be de-recognised and was supported by a number of Councillors. From the point of view of the HRU, this was seen as embarrassing but would be a situation that would probably be resolved; and that day-to-day issues which previously involved the union were carrying on as before. From the union's point of view this was potentially very serious:

"Our union was in a relatively weak position, in that we had no major successful fights to stop the privatisation process. Steward organisation was deteriorating, so it was making it much more difficult to win arguments with people about how to fight..." (Assistant Branch Secretary: Unison)

A demonstration was planned, speakers were brought in and a lot of publicity was generated. The demonstration had 'reasonable' support from the branch plus support from various outside branches. In the event, the issue was resolved by the change in administration shortly after. The actual campaign against derecognition, however, helped bring about 300 to 400 new people into the union *"...and what was also*

important - it wasn't just the numbers...it also helped us build - firm-up - a lot of stewards".

Summary

The holistic TQM-type quality policy at Brent was very much integrated into its policy of using internal markets to streamline the organisation. The quality policy itself developed from the circumstances of a background of financial crisis; a change of political control to an aggressive new-suburban right administration and the appointment of a chief executive with the willingness, desire and ruthlessness to make drastic changes to the structure and staffing of the Council.

Quality was pursued through devolving operational decision-making to the managers of individual services. It was for managers at this level to demonstrate quality targets and specifications were being met within a strictly determined and shrinking budget. The outcome seemed to be that managers, at this devolved level, were broadly enthusiastic and did feel somewhat 'empowered', although the process of devolution had involved a 'shake-out' of those officers who had held on to the 'outmoded' ways of the past. The devolved managers seemed able to use their detachment from the centre as a means by which to ensure that workers fulfilled their roles within the new structure. Where a 'culture' was present, it seemed to be one motivated by an awareness that a local manager was able to hire, fire, promote, demote and train staff according to whether staff could be seen to positively contribute to that manager's targets - which were set by the power brokers at the corporate centre.

This effects of this were not, however, uniform. The level of 'motivation-through-fear' was more marked in service such as Libraries - where demand for the services was intangible but where crude measured outcomes of customer satisfaction were easily obtainable - than was the case for regulatory services such as Environmental Health, Trading Standards or Economic Development - where quality outcomes were not easily definable.

8.2: Wycombe District Council

Case Characteristics

- 'Patrician Conservative' controlled (1994-5)
- 'Pragmatic' approach to CCT
- Unitarian/paternalist view of trade union: consensual relationship
- Labour/Liberal Democrat controlled (1995-7)
- Increased consultation with trade union (1995-7)

Quality Policy

a) Quality Policy Origins

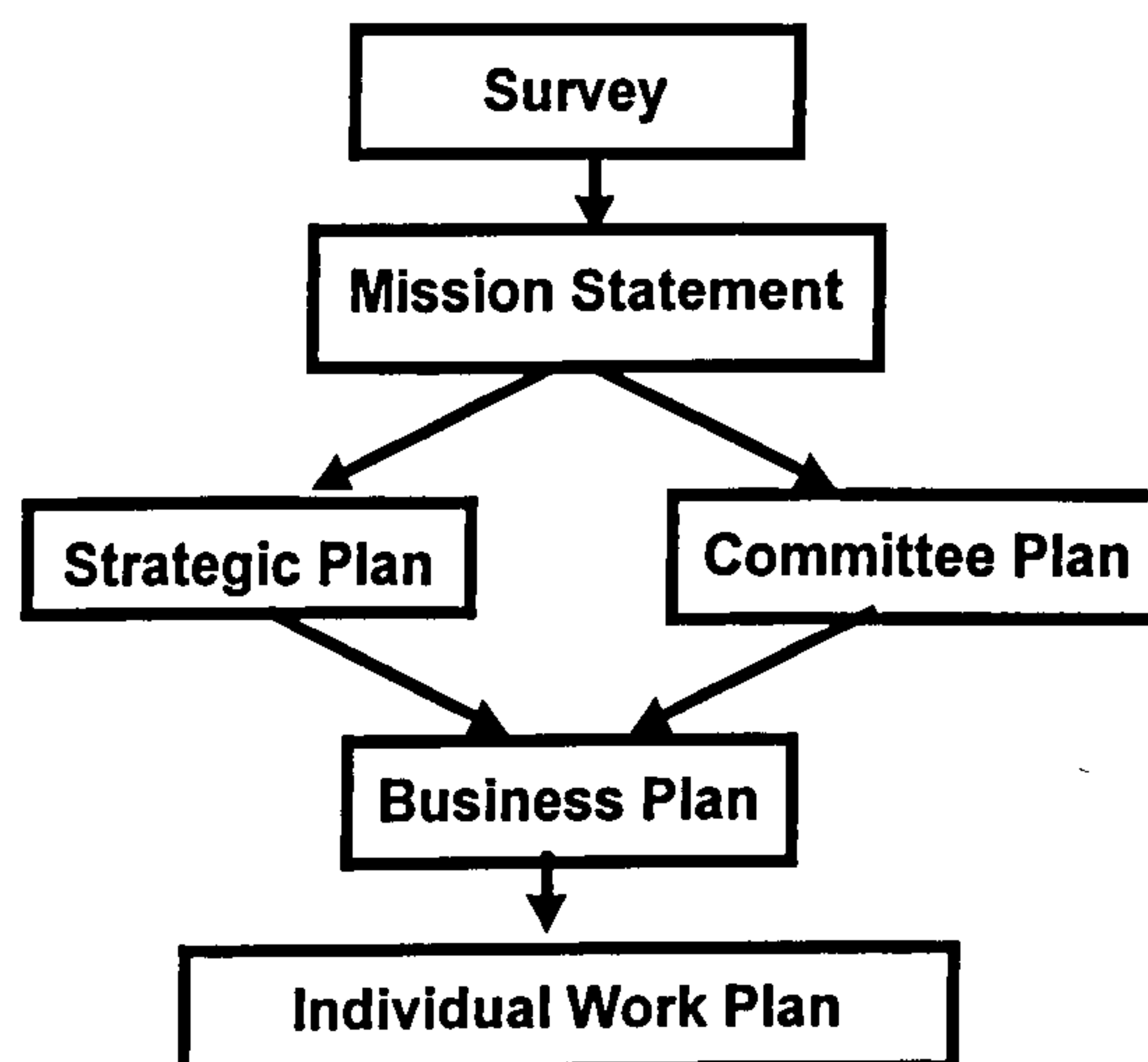
The origins of Wycombe's quality strategy can be traced back to about 1985. At this time the ruling administration at the council, being politically sympathetic to central government's rhetorical hostility to public sector 'red tape' and open espousal of private sector management methods, set-out to reform service provision at the council. With the advent of CCT a review of services was carried out to assess future roles in an 'enabling' environment. With this in mind senior managers set up a forum to seek out 'best practice' from private and other public sector organisations. The forum consisted of a panel of senior officers from each service. Direct outside influences included *Windsor and Maidenhead District Council* who were operating a form of performance management; and *Windsor and Maidenhead Borough Council*, from which Wycombe took some consultants. Following their advice Wycombe employed their own *Performance Management Officer*. The outcome was a *Performance Management* framework in 1987.

b) Performance Management

Performance Management's basic aim was to enhance output by increasing the level of monitoring, assessment and accountability throughout the authority. This was to be achieved through setting performance criteria for departments, sections, teams and individuals and evaluating the performance outputs to these targets. It was oriented very much, then, to the government's '3Es' approach to public management, and in particular, to organisational *effectiveness*. Through various corporate plans, the council's values were intended to filter through the organisation to a point where they

would provide a focus for employee's roles. The format for this is shown in figure 8:2:1.

Figure 8:2:1: Formal Organisation of Quality at Wycombe Council



To enable *Performance Management* to be operationalised, certain changes were made to the authority. In terms of organisational structure, departments were rationalised and responsibilities re-designated into a smaller number of *Directorates*. In addition, the number of tiers in the Authority was reduced to four through a *de-layering* exercise.

Another significant change introduced at this time was that of a performance related pay (PRP) scheme. *PRP* was seen as integral to *Performance Management*; it provided the link between strategic objectives and individual performance. Managers assessing staff were encouraged to

...have the courage of their convictions. There is no advantage in taking the easy way out. Remember that your performance is assessed on the basis of your team. If you give your team the wrong message about their performance by refusing to face the issues, you will not achieve the improvements in performance that you seek from them and you will not meet your own objectives. (Wycombe DC *Performance Management Handbook*)

In practice, though, this was not always felt to be so straightforward. Managers felt that some awards were better received than others. This problem was enhanced by employees disclosing their awards to other employees. Officially disclosure was not permitted but it occurred nevertheless and, as a result, it was being recognised that

there was an element of 'bad feeling' and resentment creeping in, possibly in conflict with the 'team-spirit' which was trying to be engendered.

"If somebody doesn't do very well...it can be a driver to do better next year [although] that depends on them understanding...and agreeing with it...but if they disagree with you...and you have made some - I wouldn't say 'wrong' decisions, but you're not quite on the ball about why - and they go away and instead of being motivated they're..." (Senior Manager: regulatory function)

c) Total Quality Services

At the turn of the decade a new chief executive was appointed to the authority and introduced formal strategic planning based on marketing and public consultation. Every two years public opinion was to be researched and the council's 'values' and *Mission Statement* re-assessed. In 1995, for example, the council's *Mission Statement* was changed from '*Quality Services and Value for Money*' to '*Caring Community, Thriving Economy, Healthy Environment and Value for Money*'.

The council's quality strategy continued to be developed around the *Performance Management* framework. There was no desire to operate a quality policy that was not integrated into the other management changes that had taken place. Quality, specifically, was driven at Wycombe by the *Performance Management Panel*, a *Customer Care Working Party* ("in limbo" at the time of research) and through a *Total Quality Services* policy.

Quality, however, had a number of origins and goals. From *Personnel* it was about 'hearts-and-minds' and of reinforcing the message of *Performance Management*, whereas for others it was concerned with operational processes where quality was about procedures. Two officers had been investigating the possible use of BS 5750 (ISO 9000) and requested its implementation as part of preparations for CCT bids. Conservative council members had consistently refused, however, on the grounds of it being 'overly bureaucratic' and it was only after changes to the political make-up of the Council that ISO 9000 could be pursued by managers in selected services. Wycombe had also been pursuing *Investors in People* (IiP) and had achieved authority wide accreditation in 1992 (being only the third public sector organisation in the country to achieve this). Other quality awards sought included *Chartermarks*, notably for *Building Services*, *Environmental Health* and the Leisure DSO, *ProLeisure*.

The co-ordination of quality policy, then, had to be done with some care so as not to alienate managers in a variety of departments/directorates:

"For us to 'beat the drum of quality' as an initiative in its own right would, in some quarters, have raised the criticism that 'here's the Personnel Department again, looking at the management theory of the time'. So we...started identifying ideas of quality through Performance Management on Total Quality Services which [sort of] reflected the, then, Mission Statement which had Quality Services as one of the three main elements." (Senior Manager: Corporate Services)

Policy Outcomes and Reactions

a) Work Organisation

Performance Management's most significant impact on working conditions was the introduction of monitoring for individual work routines:

By linking the strategic and service objectives of the Authority to jobs and people *Performance Management* ensures that the corporate strategic plan is linked to individual objectives: if individuals achieve their objectives then the Authority will achieve its goals. (Wycombe *Performance Management Handbook*)

Employees were given job descriptions stating duties and responsibilities, from 'major areas of responsibility' down to the 'trivial detail' of tasks. Each job description contained up to six 'key tasks'. These were usually in the format: 'to monitor, control and deploy...'; 'to be accountable for...'; 'to be jointly responsible for ensuring...'; 'to assist in...'. Objectives for individual performance were set out in *Personal Action Plans*, based on a *Performance Review* and by the objectives laid out in the *Business Plan* and ultimately the corporate *Strategic Plan* (as described in figure iv).

"That was a deliberate move, in that we wanted to see the process as development-led i.e. working on a Performance Review process together with Performance Management identifying though Business Planning and Strategic Planning the areas that the Authority ought to be working on and trickling those ideas down to peoples job descriptions and work areas reflecting a single direction..." (Senior Manager: Corporate Services)

Performance was measured in terms of indicators on *quality, quantity, time* and *cost*. The latter three were measured quantitatively whilst quality was seen as focusing on more subjective criteria and has been largely concerned with service delivery in terms of a 'customer-centred' approach.

By monitoring and analysing this sort of information you have the vital management information at your fingertips...this means that you can manage more effectively. You have an early warning system about possible overspends, performance shortfalls, staffing problems. Equally, you have a means of identifying saving, scope for identifying possible service enhancements, a means to recognise particular achievements as they happen. This information may then be fed back into the Monitoring process at the Division or Department level. (Wycombe *Performance Management Handbook*).

Individual performance was reviewed at a regular interview. The interview was intended as a discussion where staff progress could be assessed and encouraged, and corporate objectives reinforced, although it was not (officially) a forum for *PRP* negotiations. Although the effect of performance measurement on the working practices varied according to the work involved, the monitoring processes themselves had some impact on working practices in their own right. This was particularly the case where output could be linked to the performance of generic 'teams'. The introduction of monitoring when combined with team-working, resulted in a dynamic for incrementally enhancing productivity:

"...because team members were having to achieve that, I wouldn't say easily, but because that highlighted the fact that they were actually being monitored on those performance figures, we've now re-assessed that down to five working days...Having said that, our average time is somewhere about two days..." (Team Leader: regulatory function)

In terms of the impact of *Performance Management*, the departments 'furthest from competition' were the ones felt to be most hostile to *Performance Management*.

"...one thing that I believe I have found in this organisation is that those who are closer to competition are clearly more willing to take on new ideas and new initiatives, and those new initiatives closely reflect the ethos of Performance Management...Those further away...are saying, 'well, how relevant is this; we've always done this; these ['traditional'] procedures work for us; we like our hierarchies and it's comfortable; I know what I'm doing, etc.'. So there is a level of discomfort, I would say, and between the people who are out to competition and between the people in Central Services who aren't so close to it." (Senior Manager: Corporate Services)

In the example of *Food Premises* each officer worked a geographical area, assisted by the use of a computer database which had not been available five years previously. Information technology had thus helped to provide information and to monitor performance. However...

"... you rely, very much, on the officer in that district identifying his problem premises and perhaps spending his own, or her own, energies perhaps directed

where they thought best. With 'performance culture' we have here, we're conscious of the fact that we need a broad view in respect of [all the premises]...and obviously if we don't meet our targets then something's gone wrong" (Team Leader: Food Premises)

In this case, then, there had been a level of autonomy in the nature of this type of work.

"We assess the risk to the public...categorise into certain risk elements, or premises. Each officer is designated a certain number of premises...Although it's a yearly target we try to put these into monthly targets. Each officer is assessed on how well they are performing...We get feedback, monthly, as to how well they've done. We try and do that numerically and in graphic form as well." (ibid.)

If, for professional staff, the perception of *Performance Management* may have been related to the degree to which discretion and autonomy of working conditions could be protected, for others - particularly the less skilled, more marginalised workers in the Leisure DSO - the limited amount of discretion in this type of work may have outweighed any perceived benefits or drawbacks in *Performance Management*:

"It's very difficult to instil a sense of pride, quality, into Leisure Assistants. They're 'young bucks' aren't they? Whether they're boys or girls; they're sort of eighteen to twenty...They've got the most boring job in the world and we've looked at how we can improve the quality of job to instil a sense of pride and purpose into it. It's so difficult because you're hamstrung by regulations. The regulation says that you should not stay in this position any longer than forty-five minutes when you are watching the pool...So what can you give to somebody other than walk around and make sure the building's tidy?...You can't give them a project without taking them off shift, which is going to cost you a lot of money. That's the crux of it; the rotation patterns restrict the amount of project work they could do, or we could give them..." (Manager: Leisure DSO)

"...if we could employ a robot to sit by the pool, with a magic eye..." (Manager: Leisure DSO)

"I mean, the production-line, they're moving away from aren't they? They're moving to the Swedish system where you produce the whole car...to get satisfaction [through job rotation etc.]? Well we do that. We've put them on reception and we've created the reception for them..." (Manager: Leisure DSO)

b) Culture, Commitment and Ideology

Although the *Performance Management* initiative was explicitly concerned with changing working practices at the council through direct monitoring processes. Importance was also placed, however, on changing the 'culture' of the authority:

"...I would say that...we have changed people's culture about these issues. Whether when you scratch below the surface...whether you've changed that, I think that's a process that takes slightly longer. We've broken down the barriers, certainly."
(Senior Manager: Corporate Services)

Quality, at Wycombe, was being firmly defined as a customer-centred project:

"Customers is, again, a word that we use reasonably commonly around the organisation. I understand that in some local authorities people are not allowed to use the term customer, but we feel that we need to recognise who our customers are." (ibid.)

The major demand for staff 'commitment' came in the form of 'customer' awareness. This was imposed partly through the effects of changing working conditions (particularly through peer pressure in teamwork) and explicitly through formal management schemes.

Team-induced commitment was to be realised through ensuring that team performance was fed back to the team. This seemed to be successful in at least some areas:

"...Last year we were having some difficulty in meeting the target.. There was a commitment by the staff to actually go out and do the food premises so we actually met the target...[This year] we're certainly lagging behind; we're well short. The officers...agreed to go out in the evening and work Saturday...So they're improving their own performance by, perhaps, peer pressure." (Team Leader: regulatory service)

As for any resistance to these changes:

"...there is a natural resistance, of course, when workloads get heavy, to try and meet some of the targets..." (ibid.)

However, despite there being *"always rumblings"* about not being able to cope there had been little evidence of overt resistance due to the strong *"peer pressure"*.

While the monitoring and assessment processes, described in the previous section, involved some explicit assessment of employee commitment, a more rigorous format was thought to be found in the application of *IiP* and *Chartermark*. In the case of *IiP*, (external) assessors were explicitly looking for staff commitment :

"[They're] looking for commitment, attitude, culture; looking very much on the culture, the ethos of the organisation. Not so much that you've got the procedures in, but its the trying to tease-out any signs of reluctance to give everything to the Customer" (Senior Manager: regulatory service)

Chartermark, in theory, had a similar agenda. In practice, however, applying for *Chartermarks* seemed to have had more to do with gaining credit for what was in place rather than being a catalyst for further change. For managers in the Leisure DSO, for example, it was seen as a means by which public relations could be improved. Faced with some difficulties in motivating staff, however, the (successful) application was, in fact, top-down generated:

"...here's Chartermark; here's something to hang quality on...We were running a reasonable quality service...so we put in for Chartermark...Rather than bottom-up - because of the time constraints that we had - 'Phil' really had to have the thing together, doing most of the work on putting the application together and we worked on trying to get from where we were to where we needed to be to have any chance of winning..." (Manager: DSO)

Staff perceptions at the leisure DSO indicated that the effect of the *Charter Mark* exercise did not have a great impact on changing the 'culture'. The six members of staff interviewed were one *Duty Officer* - whose job was to deputise for management on a shift basis, one was a part time receptionist, three were *Leisure Assistants* and one was a part-time *Fitness Instructor* - who had recently been promoted from reception work through achieving appropriate qualifications. Of the six only the receptionist was a member of a trade union. All of the *Leisure Assistants* had worked at the Centre for less than two years.

On the general impact of *Charter Mark*, all those interviewed stated the positive benefits as being related to the general condition of the building and facilities. Three were unaware of the process involved apart from the fact that an external assessor came to the Centre and asked staff some questions. One Leisure Assistant stated that it had some effect on her job:

"When I first started I was just doing my own thing. Now it's just become a huge team-work - which is good - so I've got to know the management a lot better - office staff and that - which I didn't meet first of all. So we're all, sort of, really working together." (Leisure Assistant)

The Duty Officer, having had more involvement in the process, felt there were some effects:

"If you don't have things like Customer Charter and Investors in People and things like that, you just come to work and you're straight down the line; you don't think

'what can we do'. So it does help you think more...you actually sit down and think 'right, this customer wants et cetera, et cetera' (Leisure Assistant)

In general, however, staff did not feel any real effect as a result of *Charter Mark*:

"All I can really get from it is a basic management point: it'll obviously look good for them - having Charter Mark - and to tell you the truth I can't really see, from my point of view, what difference it will make...I don't think it makes any difference to how the Sports Centre is run." (Leisure Assistant)

Indirectly, however, while *Charter Mark* did not seem to have a noticeable effect on enthusing staff (or pressurising staff) around the theme of customer awareness, it did seem to have a more tangible effect on work standardisation:

"If you lay yourself open and you've got a piece of paper saying 'we will keep to this; pool temperature will be at a certain et cetera' and it's not done, you're leaving yourself open to - they've got something to [...] it can be a downfall of the job" (Duty Officer: Leisure DSO)

c) Teamwork and 'work intensification'

There were indications that - in addition to the intended 'attitudinal' effects on workers, noted above - the introduction of a 'teamwork' approach to working relationships were leading to an increased perception of 'work intensification' - as defined in chapter 5. While the use of teamwork was broadly accepted by those interviewed, comments often revealed that workloads were increasing as a result - the comments made by the *Team Leader* in the regulatory function, above, is an indicator of this.

'Teamwork', at Wycombe, was implicitly introduced into employees' job descriptions as a part of the *Performance Management* framework:

'The standard format of a Job Description at WDC singles out major areas of responsibility (i.e. key tasks) from other main duties, so that staff are aware of the areas in which their successful performance is essential to achieve their, and the teams, objectives.' (WDC Performance Management Handbook)

The effect that the team culture had on working practices, however, varied according to the nature of the work and subsequent interdependency between team members, and upon the monitoring processes that were available to measure team, and individual, performance (these issues will be more fully discussed in chapter 10).

In one case, staff within a regulatory function were seeing increased demands on their services, year-on-year: for the year in question there had been an increase of 20 per-

cent above a projected 5 per-cent growth. In addition some professional staff got the feeling that:

...you're putting us in a strait jacket. There are targets that you've got to achieve...and you've got to get those done and, you know, all the time pushing that. You do get that...But we have redesigned some of our systems to give people more space and to give more control over their job and that, clearly, is important otherwise...you wouldn't need these people with expert training to do it." (Senior Manager: regulatory function)

There was a sense, then, that in some areas the ideological thrust of customer orientation was seeing signs of being undermined by the actual work effort required to fulfil it:

"...someone said 'the Customer is king'...and we had a score of nought-to-ten: how do we think we fare on that? and someone said 'eleven', and everyone agreed 'yeah, eleven'; we are going overboard with 'the Customer'...But, then, looking at it at this division the feeling is that the balance of interests between the customer and staff... is too weighted toward the customer." (ibid.)

This issue was also implied with respect to the issue of appraisal. One member of staff at the Leisure DSO - bearing in mind that the general effects of *Chartermark* did not appear to be strongly felt - commented on the issue of appraisal:

"When I first started I wasn't particularly a hundred per cent about everything - I may have been lagging behind a bit - and then I got pulled aside and got told that I had to make an effort. And I did and it's made me think about my job and how much better I can do for myself and my work colleagues, because I was letting them down as well as myself. And I pulled myself together" (Leisure Assistant)

Quality and Unison

The union's position within the authority was determined by its relative strength and its historical relationship with the authority. It was described by its branch secretary as being 'very non-militant'. A number of factors contributed to this. Firstly, it was characterised by some general distinctions associated with district authorities (as opposed to metropolitan authorities): i.e. it had a small, predominantly white-collar workforce. The branch was, therefore, predominantly ex-NALGO prior to the *Unison* merger in 1992 and was not able to support any full-time staff or officials. Second, because the administration had been of a 'patrician' Tory hue the council tended to have a 'paternalist' attitude to the workforce and to union: NALGO had been seen

more as a professional staff association than a trade union. The union was involved in low-level consultation with council officers and councillors in the form of a *Joint Staff Committee* - though meetings were rare. For managers, the union was seen as a useful conduit for channelling information to staff.

The environment was not overly confrontational, then. This was illustrated by comments by both managers and by the union branch secretary. Membership of the union was about 230 - which was about fifty per-cent of the workforce. Membership had been increasing for a few years, following a large drop in membership in reaction to the (NALGO) national strike in 1987. Brief attempts were made, by the council, to set up a staff association to rival the union. This plan was very short lived as it was found that there was no interest and that no-one was prepared to get involved in its organisation.

For these reasons there was a fair degree of co-operation when it came to CCT bids. The Conservative administration was not keen on national policy with regard to CCT and it was policy that services would remain in-house where possible. To this end, the union gained some concessions on this issue: union representatives were allowed to sit in on meetings where CCT bids were being made.

a) Initial Responses to *Performance Management*

Because of the background to council/union relations, the union was not consulted at the time *Performance Management* was being set-up, although some union views were taken into consideration at the implementation stage. In any event, the union did not have any fundamental objections to Performance Management, providing that it could be seen to be being fair towards staff.

"...it wasn't really a question of us not agreeing with it, it just was coming along and telling us about it. I suppose, to a certain extent, nobody was really that certain how it would pan-out anyway...we've never really been a branch that really, sort of, totally disagrees with everything the Council did - you've probably got that in some places, but - 'we're very non-militant and we're willing to try things; see how it works out.'" (Branch Secretary: Unison)

Consultation also involved, on a less formal level, the involvement of union representatives in some of the team-based consultations with staff. In the case of *Environmental Health* these were fortnightly meetings. Meetings were intended to be

two-way in order that management could gain feed-back. Union involvement here, however, had been unofficial and was often used by managers to assess staff opinion or to legitimise changes:

"...we haven't a very strong union culture here, but we have union reps and we encourage them to talk to line managers, or they can talk to me at any time. They are recognised at Corporate health & safety policy and whilst we don't have a formal representation there, we do have a forum where departmental reps will come to that forum and we will obviously work things through." (Senior Manager: regulatory function)

b) Collective Bargaining

In order to achieve much of the Performance Management agenda, traditional Whitley structures were affected. This was largely through the effects of 'de-layering and PRP, though not exclusively. Officially, the management linkage between pay and performance was '*high performance; high quality; high pay*'. To this end the council developed a 'fast-track pay scale' reflecting national pay bargaining structures with an element of local pay structures.

"There is an option to move away from those [Whitley pay structures] if that were necessary, but we've never chose to do so; we do stick to those. What we did do was reduce the number of scales that we recognise within the organisation, so the various levels within the organisation...pay scales were widened. One of the steps were removed so people could move up the hierarchy faster." (Senior Manager: Corporate Services)

The council opted for roughly halving the number of increments between pay scales. Initially this proved popular because staff were enticed onto the scheme by upgrading all staff to the new (higher) increment grade. Problems were now being foreseen (in the union), though, in that whereas it may have taken ten years to have moved up the increments to reach a higher pay scale, now people were moving the increments faster, but then remaining static at the top of their scale. This was particularly thought to affect middle grades.

c) Performance Related Pay

PRP was awarded, by advice by the line manager, through information gained from the individual *Performance Review*, monitoring information and *Personal Action Plans*. PRP awards were made annually in April as lump-sum cash payments. Pay increments were not affected by the scheme unless performance was deemed to be

very bad. The award was intended to average at about three per-cent of annual salary, though it was possible, in theory, to rise up to ten per-cent for 'outstanding' performance.

When PRP was first introduced it was found that appraisals were indicating that too much money was being paid (in relation to council wage budgets) and the scheme had to be changed, '*moving the goalposts*' as the *Unison* convenor put it.

"...there's not enough money to pay them. So...the figures are fiddled, basically and the staff know that's what's happening. You also have the situation that some departments will mark very strict and so...there won't be many people who will actually get any PRP. You've got other departments that will mark less strictly and...get six, eight, ten per cent and that, sort of, causes annoyance as well...People are not happy with this scheme at all." (Branch Secretary: *Unison*)

Where, initially, PRP awards were seen as a bonus by staff, increasingly they were being seen as routine. In this scenario awards of three per cent were seen as being the minimum expected. Where people were assessed as not exceeding their targets, they were being marked zero and this was thought to be contributing to a credibility problem for the whole scheme. In addition, there was also a residual feeling that appraisal could be unfair, as one worker commented:

"Upstairs, when I was an ordinary Receptionist, it was very difficult because...your leader changed. And I don't think they really knew what we did, to be honest. If you've worked hard and you've progressed and they say 'no you haven't; I don't think you're doing that very well' it does: it demoralises you; it demotivates" (Staff member: Leisure DSO)

As a result of this, *PRP* disputes were becoming a real issue with the union although, to date, the union had not been required to take any official stance on any disputed claim.

d) Equal Opportunities

One final area where the quality agenda seemed to be making inroads into traditional collective bargaining agenda, was in the area of equal opportunities. Based on the CRE document *Racial Equality Means Quality*, equal opportunities, in at least one directorate, was seen as being a 'driving' influence on employment practice. The issue of 'quality', it would seem, was the approach by which an issue deemed to be a political issue, entered into the managerialist arena. In terms of service delivery this

would seem consistent with other aspects of quality: anti-discriminatory practice could be seen as compatible with managerialist notions of equity. Equal opportunities, however, had also come to permeate the quality agenda in the area of employment.

Summary

Quality at Wycombe, then, was predominantly linked to the issue of performance. The long standing political domination of the Conservatives in the authority had ensured that the 'neo-Taylorist' approach to quality favoured by central government throughout the 1980s (Pollitt 1990a) was readily converted into policy here. The policy that was used to pursue this linked individual job specifications, work rates and pay to measurable performance targets. In some areas this seemed to have the effect of intensifying work - particularly where work was organised into teams. Significantly, this seemed to affect regulatory work such as *Environmental Health*. Other areas, particularly in the area of Leisure, seemed to be able to pursue quality through work standardisation and an acceptance that, through the nature of the work involved and the terms and conditions of employment in this area, that staff could not be easily motivated.

8.3: Newcastle City Council

Case Characteristics

- Metropolitan borough council
- Urban city. Ex industrial. High levels of unemployment and deprivation.
- Labour dominated: 'traditional' labour
- Hostile to CCT. Retained all services in-house. Corporate
- Union retains full bargaining and consultation recognition. Branch employs staff.
- Quality policy oriented around ISO 9002. Used for retaining CCT bids.

Quality Policy

Newcastle's quality policy was developed in conjunction with its CCT strategy in order to maintain a consensus among ruling political interests and the trade unions. Nominally the Council committed itself to a TQM approach to quality, but in practice the structure of the authority made this difficult. Although there were signs that the creation of client-contractor splits within the Authority were having some effect in strengthening the centre, the Council had a very departmentalised structure and each department retained a high degree of autonomy from the centre. The major departments were *Chief Executive's Office*; *CityWorks* (the DSO); *Newcastle Personnel*; *Social Services*; *City Treasurers*; *Housing*; *Law and Administration*; *Community and Leisure Services*; *Engineering and Environment and Protection*.

a) The quality framework

In practice, then, the Council's corporate quality policy was pursued by the *Chief Executive's Office* in an advisory capacity. Council-wide quality policy was agreed through a *Quality Services Sub Committee* of the Council and the agreed general policy was laid out in the form of minimum standards that could be agreed by a consensus between departments. The Council's broad quality framework was based around a quality statement launched in July 1993. This quality statement focused on five elements. Firstly the Authority aimed to provide services that were *responsive* to the needs of the community, giving priority to those citizens with the greatest need. Second, it aimed to provide *best value* in the services it provided, through a commitment to regular review of service provision. Third, the Council aimed to

achieve quality services through the promotion of *quality workers* via the use of training. Finally, the Council aimed to pursue quality through what it termed, *quality organisation*, referring to a commitment to '*promote excellence in everything it does. Reducing mistakes and cutting out wasted effort...*' (Newcastle City Council: Putting People First July 1993).

While the framework policy clearly reflected the need to maintain a consensus between party political, trade union and sectional interests within the Authority, it did nonetheless, contain the essential elements of quality as being a managerial concern: a commitment to review working practices, to (re) train staff and an early appliance of 'best value' that was to become official Labour Party policy for local government.

b) Quality and CCT

This latter point indicates some of the external influences that shaped the quality policy. Influences included Labour Party interest in the form of its 'Quality Street' document and the increasing number of performance indicators being monitored through the then Prime Minister's *Citizen's Charter* initiative which, in the words of a senior officer, '*proved a great catalyst*'. The most significant factor was, however, the pressures introduced as a result of CCT.

The *Quality Services Sub-Committee* was initially set-up to look at contracts, how to incorporate quality into the contract specification and how to ensure that in-house quality could be raised to meet these higher quality standards. Previously, a series of 'Service Guarantees' were introduced for various services. These were, however, made obsolescent when new legislation required the Authority to issue service specifications for all services (Local Government Act 1992) - which the Council did - though still as a part of the overall strategy for CCT. In 1993 a *Quality Services Action Plan* was set up, which '*fell on stony ground*'. Eventually the *Quality Statement* was agreed as being an achievable broad initiative for quality - internally and for service users. Along with the statement, a *Quality Framework* was agreed - based on the *Quality Statement*. From this the Sub-Committee produced two reports in 1994 - with the intention of setting out good practice guidelines. In one it was recommended that management adopted quality systems as part of a TQM approach

to quality and include the systemic methods associated with ISO 9000, where appropriate, and IIP as a means of rigorously applying training in Council departments:

Quality systems are beneficial both in general as helping to improve the quality of Council operations and specifically in competitive situations. Total Quality Management and to an extent the components of the quality assurance standard (BS 5750, now known as BS EN ISO 9000) reflect several aspects of the City Council's commitment to quality: responsive services (in considering the fitness of the product - the service - to meet the needs of the customer), quality workers, and quality organisation. (Report of the Quality Forum for Quality Systems: Sept 1994)

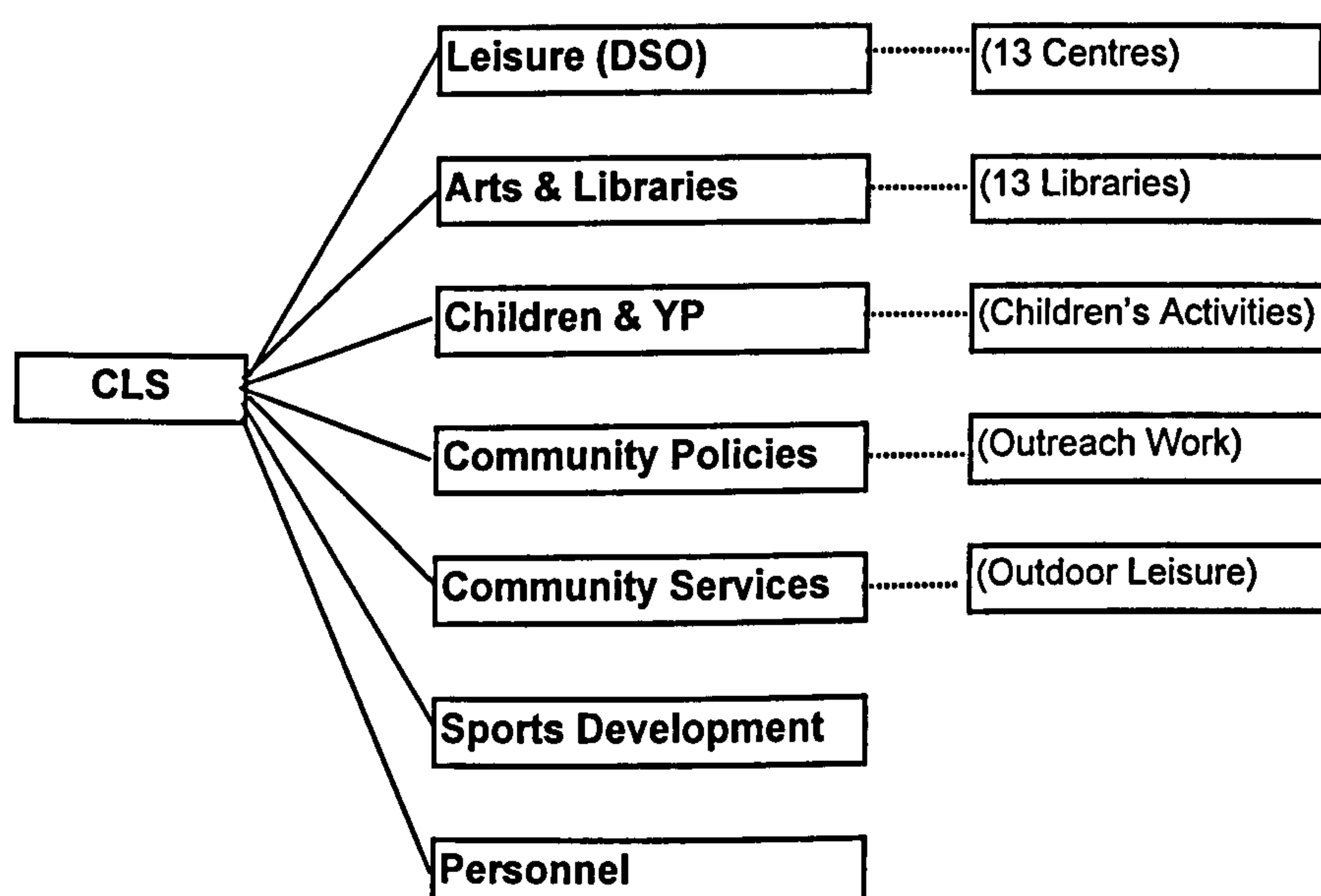
While many of the issues discussed by the Sub-Committee related to complaints, reception, customer service, training staff etc, the focus of quality in relation to CCT was concerned about quality in a wider context and the approach was therefore different. There were four strands here: financial probity, technical competence and ability, health and safety and equal opportunities (a newer fifth would be environmental policy). This began February 1994. They used what they could out of the Act - being wary of anti-competitive behaviour - and out of European legislation. Currently the guidelines was only to be used for CCT contracts but may be brought in for other contracts (equipment etc.). The equal opportunities aspect of these guidelines covered service delivery and employment. It was noted that in terms of employment, guidelines could outlaw racial discrimination through the Race Relations Act 1976, but could not prohibit contractors who practised gender discrimination due to a get-out clause in Local Government Act from the Sex Discrimination Act.

c) Quality in *Community and Leisure Services* (CLS)

CLS was seen by many on the Sub-Committee as the vanguard for the pursuit of quality management. This department was the only one in the Council to have a dedicated quality officer. and this was a policy which focused on TQM via ISO 9002. The Department's leisure DSO was ahead here and was seen by many in the Quality Sub-Committee as the model. It was the first multi-facility organisation in the world to achieve BS 5750 (now ISO 9000). While a number of other DSO units applied individually - *Social Services* had one accreditation - no overall strategy for accreditation was sought.

Quality policy in CLS developed from the policies being pursued in the leisure DSO and was legitimised by the additional threat that could be posed by CCT in a quasi commercial operation. Initial inspiration came from a senior officer who had developed a strategy for the Leisure DSO as a part of his MBA. The quality policy for the entire department stemmed from this although, as will be seen later, was less straightforward when the, then, *Leisure Department*, incorporated the *Community Policies* section and the *Children's and Young People's* section from another department. The structure of CLS is shown in figure 8.3.1 below.

Figure 8.3.1: Organisational Structure of CLS



Quality in the Leisure DSO followed a TQM rationale, according to one senior officer, although not based upon any one specific model. The policy was developed over an 18 month period and included 'awareness training' for all members of staff and more comprehensive TQM training for senior managers. Within this period the management systems of the thirteen centres were unified - in line with TQM and CCT bidding logic and a unified quality system was derived from this. From here it was decided to register for BS 5750 accreditation and became the first multi-function leisure facility in the UK to achieve accreditation in 1989. From 1995 the community, arts and library functions began the process of preparing for ISO 9002 accreditation.

The quality system was driven by the above mentioned senior officer, influenced by the 'Deming approach'. As part of this CLS examined other schemes. Chartermark was applied for at one stage and, while it was not awarded, managers felt that some benefits were gained from the process. In addition IiP was looked into, to support the training element needs the Department. Again, while IiP was not formally applied for, the procedural requirements were applied and 'about 95%' of the requirements of IiP were thought to be in operation at CLS.

As noted, then, CCT provided the biggest incentive by which to drive quality within CLS - particularly due to the quasi-commercial nature of much of the Department's output:

"I think the fear of CCT made everybody pull together and hang their hat on TQM"
(Quality Officer: CLS)

Following on from the successful accreditation of ISO 9002 in the Leisure DSO, it was decided to implement ISO 9002 in the other areas of the Department. One area where this proved a 'cultural shock' was in the *Children and Young People's* (CYP) section.

Quality Policy Outcomes and Reactions

One of the obvious 'outcomes' of the corporate quality strategy was that it did not develop corporately. Many of the reasons for this have already been defined - political priorities focusing on quality as a means to retain CCT contracts - but there were other factors as well.

a) Corporate responses to quality management

One of the key obstacles was departmentalism. Some department managers saw the quality management initiative as a threat to their departmental and professional autonomy and successfully resisted the imposition of a centralised quality management strategy. This problem led to a further issue of the fact that there remained a number of definitions of quality, varying by service, department and over time. This, while being recognised as somewhat inevitable in the general area of public services, was seen as being a further obstruction to developing a corporate strategy for quality.

Another issue was resources. The Authority had maintained relatively high levels of expenditure and staffing throughout the 1980s and was becoming acutely affected by budget cuts of up to £20m (K. Bell: Trade Union News No 23 1995). Inevitably this affected middle management tiers. The Council, then, did not employ a dedicated 'quality' officer - the officer dealing with corporate quality did so as part of other strategies (e.g. CCT and equality). While elected members (councillors) were generally in favour - particularly those involved in the *Sub-Committee*, some were noted to regard the quality agenda as being too 'soft'. Conversely, it was stated by the senior officer responsible for quality that line managers were 'quite keen' on the quality agenda and that they were more motivated than senior managers were on the issue. Professionals were also reported to be relatively happy although, notably, this was within a context that they perceived that they would be able to interpret quality within their own professional context.

b) Responses to quality management in CLS

As the service department that pursued quality management vigorously CLS was also likely to have witnessed more coherent reactions to quality management.

"To some extent work routines are possibly more regimented in that we now have to state what it is we do in terms of a daily operation and we have to, sort of, say this will be done on a four week cycle or a five week cycle, or whatever. Whereas before, if it got missed nobody noticed...now staff, individually - doesn't matter what their job - need to be accountable for the work that they do..." (Quality Officer: CLS)

c) CLS staff surveys

In 1993 a staff survey was conducted by management to assess the attitudes of staff towards various quality issues. This was repeated, in a slightly modified form, in 1996. The response rate in 1993 was 293. This was presumed to be a 100% return on the assumption that completion of the survey was mandatory. The response rate in 1996 was 123, which was 51.3% of the 240 employees in CLS. The survey was concerned, primarily, with the managerial effectiveness of the policy. A summary of the responses is shown in table 8:3:1, below.

Table 8.3.1: Newcastle CLS Staff Survey (Summary)

Issue	Response (%)					
	(1993)			(1996)		
Awareness of quality policy	52*			95		
Quality Policy has improved morale	-					
Quality is important/very important to me	98			100		
Quality as important/very important to management	83			85		
My service is important/very important to customers	94			79		
Customers would rate quality of my service highly	79			-		
Recognition of 'good customer skills/care' (imp/v-imp)	95			97		
Involvement in decision-making on working practices	93			-		
Involvement in 'team activity'	79			72		
Regularity of quality meetings	≤ monthly 30	≥ q'arly 7	one-off 23	≤ monthly 50	≥ q'arly 12	one-off 18
Feel that 'good performance' is recognised	83			always 9	mostly 22	sometimes 31
Feel valued by management	60			always 14	mostly 25	sometimes 26
Feel that manager listens and acts on staff views	45			always 20	mostly 28	sometimes 31
Happy with working relationship with colleagues	49			always 19	mostly 30	sometimes 12
Not received training and/or induction	69			26		
Quality Policy has improved staff morale	-			greatly 4	some 28	none 46 worse 14

(Source: CLS Staff Survey: 1993: 1996)

From a management point of view, then, a number of positive responses to the quality policy emerged. Awareness about 'customer' issues seemed high, quality seemed to be an issue of rising importance (if measured by the increasing regularity of quality meetings at work and by the generally high - if declining - level of 'team' activity) and training seemed to have been improving. On issues involving morale, however, there were indications of some disquiet. Only 9% of respondents in 1996 felt that good performance was always recognised by management and only 14% that they were always valued by management; and while 28 per cent of respondents felt that the

quality policy had caused some improved in morale, 46 per cent felt no difference and 14 per cent felt that morale had declined because of the policy.

Quality and *Unison*

The union branch at Newcastle was comparatively strong. Membership was high and the Branch could justify maintaining full-time officers and administration staff. The union had been able to mobilise workers for industrial action relatively recently over threatened redundancies in 1992 and again for a day-of-action in February 1995. Support was particularly strong in the manual sections of the main DSO and among *Social Services* staff.

The *Branch* had developed a strategy and agreement towards quality management in conjunction with management's commitment to retain all services affected by CCT in-house. As early as 1992, a Branch discussion paper asserted that:

A commitment to quality management is an integral and positive element of the Authority's management response to maintain quality of service delivery and will make a positive contribution to keeping services in-house. However, such a commitment cannot be carried out by one working group or Sub-Committee but must be a total one from all departments; to an agreed process to an agreed commitment to involve the community and user organisations in the broader sense. (Newcastle City Council Joint Trades Union Discussion Paper on Quality 1992 - emphasis in original)

Crucially, then, the union branch clearly had a view that quality was not just a concern about customers and organisational efficiency. Quality management was seen as a tool that could be seen as legitimate if it was to assist in the retention of services in-house. The union was also clearly aware of its relatively strong position of influence here in that there was an awareness that management were keen to ensure that the union endorsed the strategy. The *Branch* was not wholly convinced, however, and to this effect had commissioned external advice and research on the issue of quality management - part of which provided the rationale and access for research here. The commissioned piece of research was conducted by Fitzgerald, Rainnie and Stirling and the report produced, concluded that the *Branch* was in danger of being undermined by the introduction of quality management and that it needed to develop a clear strategy on quality management (*Unison* 1996). Specifically the report recommended that the *Branch* should...

- make use of national and local trade union contacts on the issue
- foster dialogue between other trade union branches on the issue
- encourage discussion within the Branch membership on the issue
- develop an education programme for union representatives

The report further noted that as a prerequisite the union needed to strengthen internal communications within the *Branch*:

The Branch has a well developed system of Departmental reps but it needs to develop mechanisms to strengthen the links between them at least to ensure that information about TQM and HRM is exchanged. The Branch will also need to consider whether these issues are currently being properly dealt with in terms of its own organisation and the formal negotiating structure. (*Unison* 1996)

Finally the report suggested that

...there is a need for a clear response from the branch as a whole which is then effectively communicated to reps. Without that the situation of piecemeal, ad hoc responses will continue to the long term detriment of the branch (ibid.)

a) Initial responses to the introduction of ISO 9002 in CYP (1995)

An area of concern that was being raised within the *Branch* was the implementation of ISO 9002 in the *Children and Young People's* (CYP) section of *CLS*. In 1995 a group discussion with key stewards was arranged in conjunction with the Branch Secretary regarding the recent introduction of a provisional quality manual into *CYP* (see chapter 7).

Branch representatives felt that a coherent strategy was needed to address the issues arising from introducing quality management methods that was not merely agreeing through ignorance, or flatly rejecting methods that may be seen as acceptable in the workplace. The *Branch* had commissioned a study ('Total Management Control') for discussion, pointing to some dangers for the *Branch*.

One cause of concern was the appropriateness of a system-type approach to quality in the area of *Youth Outreach* work - which was now placed under *CLS* - whereas, previously it had operated as part of *Community Education Services*. As a result, *CYP* was having to fall into line with *CLS* quality policy, and this meant that *CYP* had to introduce ISO 9002.

At the initial stages, stewards felt that the introduction of manuals had provided positive benefits to workers. The procedures had been written in draft form, circulated

and discussed. Where they seemed unworkable, or where conflict arose, the procedures were re-written. The scope of the procedures did not infringe upon the actual practice of play or youth-work itself, but were concerned with the identification of responsibilities and guidelines in non-normal situations: i.e. they provided guidelines for health and safety issues, maintenance, equal opportunities policy etc. Stewards reported that workers found this useful: staff were now able to identify exactly what was to be done and who was to be contacted in 'emergency' situations. It was also felt that the manual enabled workers to deflect blame where they may previously have been held responsible for events outside their control (*'we know who we can pass the blame on to now'*). It also emerged that the quality manual incorporated reporting and monitoring procedures for 'Customer Complaints' and for 'Contractor Complaints' (i.e. maintenance - *CityWorks*, cleaning - DSO) - and was also thought to be capable of highlighting resource deficiencies (e.g. quality of buildings etc.).

One problem raised was that part-time workers and volunteers were not fully integrated into the review process. There was no clear consensus about how manuals and procedures could be updated after a final version was accepted (i.e. would there be any formal consultation with union, or would consultation be made through individual staff members).

There was some concern (raised by one steward) that the emphasis (of management) seemed to be that of the *'management of the system, rather than the actual service provision'*. It was further commented that the systematisation of 'play' may lead to a reduction in the autonomy and/or discretion of workers. For example, having standards specifying *how* cleaning-up should be conducted removed the ability of the play worker to determine *who* should clean up: i.e. to allocate the task to the maker-of-the-mess - who may be a 'customer'. It was said here, though, that procedures were not that specific. Another steward noted that if 'customers' of his service were youth, parents and councillors, the only 'customers' with any *power* were councillors - indicating that interests of each were in conflict - and that this was not reflected in the procedures.

At this stage, then, stewards were generally in favour of the new procedures as they were going at present. It was suggested that a future trade union bargaining point *could* be on the issue of preparation time being built into the system - especially for part-timer workers. In the case of youth-work it was suggested that *'output can't be measured'* so the implications were likely to be less severe.

b) Responses to ISO 9002 - immediately prior to the system launch (1997)

At this stage, a manual had been introduced to the *Play Section* of *CYP* - though it was not accredited. One union member criticised the workers' 'lack of ownership' in the project - in that the manual could be revised without *CYP* workers' consultation. Another member noted that, although workers were initially told by management that *CYP* workers would write the manual, the draft that *CYP* workers wrote was taken away and re-written by management. These various manuals were then standardised and integrated into one manual for *CYP* as a whole - which was then to be applied to each appropriate section.

The manual was also considered to be very mechanistic, in that it was overly concerned about procedures but not about relationships - reflecting some of the fears raised in 1995. Here the manual was thought to miss the most important aspect of 'quality' in youth-work.

In terms of the impact on work, quality manuals tended to have a different effect in different workplaces. For example, play-centres tended to be 'open access' and therefore the manual tended to have a greater focus on what facilities should be provided as a minimum. There were, however, implications for the increased scrutiny workers were expected to be subjected to. Monitoring of procedures were to be accompanied with 'non-conformance reports' if facilities were found to fall below the specified requirements.

"At the end of the day, if you audit the system and you give people a 'corrective action report'...that doesn't take into consideration the individuality of the situation. Because if you haven't followed this procedure - you haven't done what you're supposed to do - you need to correct it...you need to correct the situation to fit the procedure...and it's used as a form of social control..." (CYP Unison member)

Apart from this process being too mechanistic, it was also thought likely to pose some practical difficulties which could undermine the discretion of play workers, or even impact upon disciplinary procedures:

"...if we mis-read something, or forget - it's a big manual - then in what way are we held accountable for the things that are in black and white? That's my worry: will there be disciplinary action if I haven't conformed to that? There may be good reasons why I haven't. It might be a genuine error: genuine errors do happen in any system, you know what I mean? And I have a genuine fear about that - although I don't know of that happening. I saw the manual, originally, as something to provide guidance." (CYP Unison member)

This was seen to be a problem, even from the point of view of those workers whose responsibilities it would be to ensure that procedures were adhered to:

"And the rest of us are going around writing bloody cards out...I wish I'd never done the training. I did the training because I wanted to understand it and see how it could best be used for us. But now I feel like all I'll ever end up doing is going round slapping people into line and I'm not prepared to do that." (CYP Unison member)

It was also noted that there were certain aspects of work that it was difficult to proceduralise: while some issues, like health and safety, could be suitable, on other issues the problem lay in areas where workers had to make physical records to prove that things had been checked according to the manual. Here, while the manual indicated what form had to be filled-in, it would *not* guarantee that good quality work was being done. It was perceived that just because a building was opened on time and there were no accidents this did *not* mean that 'a good quality job' had been carried out. One *Unison* member commented that a more 'people oriented' approach to quality management may have been more appropriate in *CYP*:

"...ISO 9000 is seen as an end in itself and I can understand the reasons why, because that suits the current management style...whereas Investors in People is seen as anathema to that management style because IiP is all about involving front-line staff...so I suspect that ISO will be our standard, that will be this service's achievement, it's raison d'être, etc." (CYP Unison member)

This was echoed by others:

"I think it's more of a political tool than a professional tool...it has a certain kudos with the (Council) members...and keep holding for budgets and so on, you know, - protecting the service to some degree." (CYP Unison member)

Despite the implied ability to clarify responsibilities - commented in 1995 - there was a perception that the manual revision procedure was somewhat confusing. While one person could be putting a change form in, somebody else may be putting a 'contra-change' form in because the system may have been working better, for them, as it was. *"...in theory there could be changes every week or every month and you would have to constantly re-read it to know where you are."* (CYP Unison member). Here, however, it was commented that some form of consent was therefore required:

"I think there's got to be more of a, sort of, democratic element to changes. There's bound to be contentious issues, isn't there? ...People are going to have views and they're going to have different views. Then you've got to give people a democratic voice as a team." (Alice: CYP Steward)

From this it was mooted that the manual revision procedure may legitimately become a trade union issue: the notion of accountability and 'democracy' in decision-making - where the issues involved working practices - was considered important:

Well I think there will be issues in the manual [that people will have a problem with] and people want to alter it. And if the system is that we just say 'right we want to alter this' and go to one person to make a decision, then that's not democratic and that's bound to cause problems sooner or later isn't it? (CYP Unison member)

Further, it was considered by one Unison member that some degree of 'democratic, sitting-down-and-discussing-of-the-matter and genuine agreement' was required when the manual was finally issued. This was an issue in which the Union could be involved - particularly as it had been felt that the writing of the manual had been taken out of the workers hands.

There was a general feeling that the whole process was likely to de-motivate staff. Citing others' experience in the Leisure DSO, it was felt that the issue of quality was not adequately tackled by the ISO 9002 process, because quality ought, legitimately, to include issues of *what* services were required, rather than being restricted to *how* the service was being conducted, within pre-determined budgetary parameters. This was commented on by a number of members:

"I mean, you can have a standard, but it doesn't have to mean anything - it can be as low as you want to make it. And that doesn't necessarily mean that what you're providing and what you're providing to that standard will be anywhere near addressing the needs of the people that you're providing it for." (CYP Unison member)

"We sat yesterday, we had a workshop on how to fill in forms. It was okay 'cause we've got a file that thick telling us how to fill in this one form" (CYP Unison member)

"The problem that the Council has got... is that people forget about the internal customer - that's us. They are totally pre-occupied with how the service is perceived by the external customer - except that in our case that means their customer, which are adults and councillors; it really should be young people... We, the deliverers of the service, have been more or less forgotten. We're required to be mechanistic operators, just to ensure that we've got part-time workers in place in which ever section they're supposed to be in; that the building is safe and we make sure that we fill in all their forms - that's about the level of our operation..." (CYP Unison member)

"You can measure how many people came into the room but you can't measure how many went out at the end of that year, though, or their abilities. [The numbers translate] in a way people understand - they can understand bums-on-seats." (Joan: CYP Steward)

Summary

At Newcastle, then, quality policy was based around the structural organisation of the Authority which ensured that departments were relatively strong and autonomous from the centre. In addition, the relative strength of the union within the Council, combined with the political opposition from the ruling Labour Group in the Council, meant that quality policy was initiated by management around the broader context of retaining services in-house in the CCT process. Quality policy was officially based around TQM but in practice was being championed in one department - *Community and Leisure Services* (CLS) - where experience had been gained through implementing ISO 9000 within the leisure DSO. In the case of a newly merged section within CLS - that of *Children and Young People* - the implementation of ISO 9000 was underway at the time of research and a quality manual was being introduced. The intention, initially, was to delegate responsibility for writing procedures to each section, but this was later dropped in favour of rationalising all procedures into one manual. Focus group interviews with stewards suggested that, in the case of workers in CYP, the implementation of an ISO 9000 quality system was not likely to herald an intensification of work. Concerns, here, related more to the effect of work standardisation, the removal of 'ownership' and professional discretion as a result of introducing quality standards. It did, however, indicate a strong

possibility that, due to the union's strong position in the workplace combined with the perception that the quality manual would restrict some elements of professional autonomy, the quality manual could become a contested issue in which the union could have a legitimate interest and involvement.

8.4: Arun District Council

Case Characteristics

- South Coast District
- Population elderly, dispersed, relatively affluent
- Conservative controlled: from *patrician* to *NSR* to *pragmatic*
- Has favoured contracting-out (VCT) at early stages. Competing to retain white collar CCT contracts
- Union density about 55%

Quality Policy

Arun DC's quality policy developed over a number of years in conjunction with external agencies - in particular the Audit Commission. The broad approach to quality was a customer care based model. Arun went through business-type approaches to its administrative processes relatively early. From 1974 there had been a general focus on service delivery, and around 1984 a '*very dynamic*' new chief officer/'chief executive' introduced a '*business orientation*' to the organisation. From this came a number of schemes, the outcome being a customer care focus.

a) *Working for the Public*

Arun's quality policy was based around a *customer care* model, the main focus of which was an initiative known as *Working for the Public*. Set-up in 1987, the policy developed from the Council's then 'competitive approach to management' which embraced contracting-out (i.e. VCT) and followed a 3Es mentality, in line with stated ideology of the then Conservative government. At this stage Arun began working as a 'test bed' for Audit Commission trials on the use of performance indicators. *Working for the Public* evolved from the idea that service effectiveness was to be customer led. This led to the idea of devolved decision-making. In 1987 a four year corporate strategy was launched on the issue of customer care, '*influenced by Clarke and Stewart's customer care ideas*'. *Working for the Public's* stated aims were:

- to serve the public more efficiently and effectively
- to respond better to local community needs
- to create public confidence and interest in the authority
- to improve staff morale and commitment

The changes to the political leadership, within the ruling Conservative group, were significant for the development in the Authority's 'managerialist' outlook. Traditionally, while political control had always been Conservative the demography of the Borough had tended to shape the style of leadership:

"The leaders of this council used to be retired-from-running-the-colonies types, and used to try and run the council in the same way." (Senior Manager)

This changed in the 1980s to a 'Wandsworth-style' NSR. From this, voluntary contracting out of DSO services was pursued (refuse being the most significant) and it was from this agenda that the Audit Commission oriented approach to customer care, described above, was pursued. The political leadership changed again, however, in the early 1990s, to a more 'pragmatic', perhaps 'Majorist' style. One senior officer described how the new leader was more in tune with the senior management of the authority because he was himself a senior manager with *BUPA* and was thus able to grasp the managerial issues faced with running a welfare-service oriented organisation: he *'talked the same language'*. With this change came a change in the chief executive of the Council, and a change in emphasis on the issue of quality. Between 1992 and 1993 a stated political aim was for wider consultation with the public on Council strategy. The predominant focus remained one of customer care, although the style was now different:

"... we were talking earlier about the 3Es - when I came to Arun in 1985 you'd hear a lot of talk about Arun as a business-like authority. I don't think you'd ever have heard anyone mention the word 'customer'. But now it is common parlance. I don't think you'll talk to many people for very long before they'll talk about the customer in one way or another because it's just accepted that that's part of the organisation..." (Senior Manager: Chief Executive's Office)

Quality was defined as *'setting realistic but acceptable standards of service which people are entitled to expect, letting them know what those standards are, and how they can complain to the Council if those standards are not met'* (Arun DC: 1989).

Public consultations were carried out through telephone surveys, 'forum groups', meetings with 'key consultees', public question and answer sessions and staff consultation. The resulting document, *'Achieving a Better Community'*, was produced from this exercise in 1995 and set out the Council's new priorities. Arguably, this exercise could partly be seen as a means by which to justify reducing or maintaining

existing levels of expenditure and services (through 'resource switching) through its prioritising low taxes as a 'customer concern'. However, some re-assessment of service provision was introduced within the scope of this consultation. Influenced by the geography and demography of the authority's population - i.e. ageing and unevenly dispersed - disability access became an issue.

Within the framework of the *Working for the Public* policy, a number of initiatives were pursued. These included an internal review function being operated by a *Working for the Public Group*; the operation of an external consultation group - in the form of Customer Panels; another internal review group set up to make recommendations for internal re-organisation; an interest, at service level in externally audited quality schemes; and the operation, at workplace level, of performance monitoring.

b) *Working for the Public Group*

The *Working for the Public Group* (WPG) has had, according to one of its leading participants, 'a *coercing, cajoling, encouraging, bullying, nagging role*' within the Authority. Its status was advisory, reporting to the Chief Executive's Office, but was capable of recommending changes to service delivery and working practices in all areas of the Council:

...what happens, basically, is that if a good idea comes up, or an initiative is being progressed, some of it is done independently of this group [and a lot is done by service departments themselves]. If we, as a group, tackle an issue then there are some things that we can just get done; we will get done one way or another because we have a certain degree of decision-making...[e.g. the previous weekend, an open day was held on disabilities on the instigation of the WPG] (Member of WPG)

Members of the WPG saw themselves as 'customer champions' and aimed to be a conduit to ensure that issues raised by 'customers' were fed back to the Council. This remit was one which encompassed a wide variety of issues within the community:

"I mean that is a quite specific quality issue, actually, because the quality of care for people with disabilities - in terms of access to buildings, information, employment, education - you know...." (Chair: WPG)

"What we are - in all our particular roles - are genuinely in positions where we're responsible for service [needs of] customers: or we're representing people who are customers. So that's their feedback." (Member: WPG)

WPG had some responsibility for new staff induction and on training. - specifically on introducing new staff to Arun's corporate 'values' - with its key focus on *Working for the Public*. In practice, however, 'getting the message across' to new members of staff was not always conducted at an appropriate time; often induction took place after nearly twelve months of working - which countered the ideal of induction as a means of preventing 'bad habits' permeating working methods.

There was also an awareness by WPG group members that the improvements that the quality schemes set about had a tendency towards diminishing returns. Where initial improvements could be widely publicised, quality could be used to create a momentum, drawing staff into the process as a result. However, the combined effects of declining success-rates (in terms of high profile changes and improvements) and new staff joining the organisation without prior knowledge of these changes, could be somewhat counter-productive in that the diminishing returns on improvements could prove as equally demoralising as initial gains proved 'empowering'. In recognition of this, the WPG devoted time to maintaining the profile of customer care, by its own presence, its distribution of publicity within the Authority and through a number of 'refresher courses' on customer care that it operated. There was a recognition, even here, though, that this could only achieve so much:

"...I think part of the problem was the fact that it wanted to engage everybody - managers right down - and specifically, once you start involving people they wouldn't listen; they-know-all-about-it-anyway. They've got the tee shirt; they don't need a reminder..." (Member WPG)

In terms of the management of quality, there were other motivators that were not initially recognised by WPG. One of these was CCT. In common with managers in other local authorities, hostility that managers initially felt towards CCT subsided where it was seen as a catalyst in being able to make changes to staffing and working arrangements. The Council's 'customer care' policy was seen, partly, as being able to help deliver the contract to the in-house bidder:

"...so clearly it is in the interests of an in-house team to motivate its staff to improve customer services as one way of giving an edge in the CCT challenge. And I noticed that that's quite marked" (Senior Manager: Chief Executive's Office)

The CCT threat was also used, however, to reinforce *Customer Care* as a whole - to legitimise it and with it, the role that the drivers of *Customer Care* had within the authority:

“...there is also a lot of emphasis on the customer side of things and what kind of service is given to the customer because I think there is a realisation that the in-house team will score most highly on the quality issue; on customer service and so on.” (ibid.)

The changes to staffing issues as a whole were also provided with a rationale through CCT. The perceived external threat posed by CCT was used as an indicator of future threats to which the organisation had to respond structurally. The most explicit form that this took, was in the form of the *learning organisation* agenda.

c) *A Learning Organisation*

Arun was pursuing a *Learning Organisation* agenda, an agenda that took ‘permanent organisational change’ as its base assumption and message to the organisation. This model was seen as particularly appropriate because of the diverse nature of the local authority as an organisation - organisations of equivalent complexity in the private sector being far larger.

The aim of the *Learning Organisation* agenda was to empower generic groups in favour of individuals and thus constituted a fundamental re-organisation of the Council’s management structure. The programme was based upon a lengthy consultation process based upon co-opting managers from different departments in which to address key issues of long term significance to the authority. There were parallel internal and external consultations. Internally the aim was for wide consultation to take place, based on expertise, rather than seniority or hierarchical position; externally the aim was to consult with interested parties or groups. It was thus seen as an ‘empowering’ agenda. Fifty key managers, organised into ten ‘learning sets’ were given the brief ‘*what is the long-term future of the organisation?*’. The underlying assumption of ‘permanent change’ in the programme was underpinned by wider factors such as the changing nature of public service, demographic changes, the influence of new technology, and the organisational impacts of CCT. This ‘permanent change’ assumption was intended to shape the Council’s approach to staff

recruitment, training and retention. Responsibility for career development within the Authority was not to be placed with the individual staff member:

"If we take some bright-young-thing on tomorrow, there's no way I, or anyone else, could say 'keep your head down and in ten years time you'll be a principal [officer]' - I mean that's just not the nature of life any more..." (Personnel Director)

Training was, instead, to be self-determined through the Council's appraisal scheme. Employees would state their aims on an individual action plan, itself tied to the Council's mission statement, 'core values' and customer care policy.

d) Other quality methods

Arun operated a number of other quality initiatives, though these all fell under the Working for the Public agenda, and followed a 'customer care' approach to quality. From 1996 Arun introduced *Customer Panels* as a means of accessing 'customer' opinions and feedback about service delivery, although it was recognised that such a self-selecting group could not be perfect, in terms of it being able to be properly representative of the Borough as a whole. There was also some interest in bidding for the Chartermark award scheme in certain services, although the Council had not participated at earlier stages.

In terms of performance evaluation the Council was involved in formally monitoring complaints at an early stage (in collaboration with the Audit Commission). At the time of research, Arun was reviewing the variety of quality methods being used in the Authority. For example it was looking at whether there was too much focus on Audit Commission performance indicators (in consultation with the Audit Commission) and upon the appropriateness of the indicators being used.

Another major catalyst for quality, particularly in terms of re-organising services, was CCT. Despite Arun opting for VCT for refuse collection in the early 1980s (ostensibly on a quality/cost rationale) CCT was not popular in some of the areas it affected in the 1988 legislation - largely because of its affect on staff morale and the disruption it was likely to cause. The actual CCT process, however, was seen by managers as beneficial as it was able to *"focus people's attention on what their roles and functions were"*.

Policy outcomes and Reactions

a) Culture, commitment and ideology

The central focus of Arun's *Working for the Public* policy was about re-focusing employee attitudes towards a customer-centred approach to work. Changing employee attitudes was pro-actively pursued by the Council:

The value which this Council places on customer service has been continually emphasised and reinforced through training with the aim of improving staff morale and commitment to the service they are providing to the public (Arun DC Working for the Public Review August 1995)

It was recognised by managers that staff were motivated by a '*service ethos*', which could vary from service to service - in some areas being concerned about 'the public good', while in others having more tangible 'customers' where the activity was more commercial. A consequence of this was an explicit identification that managerialism was displacing traditional buro-professionalism. This was seen in the perceived demise in the status of professionals within local government to maintain standards.

One senior manager noted that:

"...some of the so-called professions have been, in a sense, de-professionalised...Years ago, in a local authority, the top officers were the engineers, surveyor, the town clerk. They're not any more. The emphasis is more on genuine managers." (Personnel Director)

It was not clear whether managers saw *Customer Care* as a response to this managerialist trend or as a cause of it. The two issues were, however, clearly identified as being linked. One of the more obvious ways in which staff attitudes were intended to be shaped was through the use of formal training programmes - particularly in the area of customer care.

"Through NVQs, that's one of the ways - you know, through everyone talking to you, or those people talking to you - you just build up that number of people who suddenly have seen the light" (Chair: WPG)

This was also the area that the *Learning Organisation* was intended to have some impact. This, however, reversed the formal training logic in that it placed the onus on the individual to define their own training needs - although it was not clear how far this would practically be applied or what the budget limitations would have been. The aim here was to deliberately cut across formal lines of seniority. The *Personnel*

Director recognised that while some people were given 'a new lease of life' by this approach, others were unnerved by it. Opinion, however, according to the Personnel Director, did not divide by length of service: in some cases it was viewed positively by people who were previously not being served by the traditional training set-up.

In addition to formal training there was a move towards further entrenching the customer care ethos on staff. This was being pursued through the 'educational' role that the WPG had in shaping staff attitudes in the area of customer care. The quality message was even being extended to incorporate attitudes regarding internal customer chains as well as external, in line with prescribed TQM methodology:

"...they say 'Oh I don't deal with the public'; you say 'Well, it's customers'; 'Well, I don't deal with customers'; 'Well you're an admin. person aren't you?'; 'Yes'; 'Well, surely all those people you service are customers'; 'Oh yeah' - Ping!"
(Member: WPG)

b) Work organisation

Although most of the initiatives at Arun have focused, primarily, on employee attitudes, this in itself affected work organisation. More specific changes to working practices - such as the use of performance evaluation - were introduced within the scope of this. The Council had a long-term relationship with the Audit Commission for the use of performance evaluation criteria. As such there have been long standing commitments to complaints monitoring. One manager noted that while he supported the right for members of the public to be able to seek redress, the lengthy procedure by which a complaint had to be dealt with often slowed down decision-making and thus adversely affected the quality of service in this respect.

Other uses of employee performance evaluation have been in the form of telephone answering - where forty calls a month were aimed to be monitored for promptness, response, courtesy etc. In practice, however, there were some who were unhappy about the standardisation of customer response in this manner - feeling that it removed discretion:

"'Quality' is very much down to the individual. Some people will always do a good job and provide a good quality of service. Some enforced 'Quality Management' instruments such as specific words to be used when answering the phone often do not ring true. The enforced 'spiel' does not sound genuine, whereas a good member of staff using their own words for answering the telephone will often sound much

more genuine and at ease than a 'rehearsed pet spiel'. There is good and bad in all walks of life, private and public. People are all different, some are good at giving service, others are totally indifferent. Good education and the appreciation of courtesy can enhance genuine quality management. Much of today's so called 'customer' care and quality service is pure window dressing and bull." (Survey response: Payroll worker)

Despite the general contention that the Council's general focus was on employee attitudes - and that working practices were more affected by this - there were signs that this focus was shifting to a more performance-based approach to quality management:

"...the more I think about it, the more I start to think that our job in awareness and so on, is actually over - as far as the blanket awareness... - but maybe now the drivers for quality are going to come from those, kind of, external forces like CCT; like awards; like ISO 9000; or whatever route..." (Senior Manager: Chief Executive's Office)

c) Unintended consequences

The attempt at re-shaping staff attitudes around a customer service ethos was explicitly bound up with staff morale as a whole. Thus, while CCT was found to have a coercive effect in enabling managers to implement changes in working practices, it was not capable of enthusing staff in the way that *Customer Care* apparently intended:

"It gets quite interestingly, sort of, tied-up with staff morale - the customer care. We've found that at times when staff morale has dipped...And now, I mean, there is concern in areas of the organisation that are going for CCT...And we have often found that when morale dips so does customer care, in our view. (Chair: WPG)

and:

"Sometime when staff morale is low the attitude is 'well, never mind the customer, what about us; what are you doing for us?' - which is understandable... We actually have to be a little bit on-guard against it, don't we, because if we let it slip too far then it un-does some of the good work that we've done." (Member: WPG)

One response to this was for management to formally confront employees fears over job insecurity in the form of an employees' charter. This was intended to display the Council's commitment to its staff, using familiar HRM rhetoric, whilst reinforcing, again, the *Customer Care* message:

"...one of the things we did back in the local government review times was produce an employee charter...and we did that because we wanted to have a statement made that said, you know, 'employees matter'. It was on two sides: this is what you're

entitled to as an employee, but this is what you need to give back to the organisation - so it's this two way thing." (Chair: WPG)

The balance, however, was clearly in favour of employee duty and responsibility toward the customer and where it was found that the WPG's remit moved into areas where the interests of staff and 'customers' were in conflict, then it was clear where the WPG stood:

"...we have to be careful that, although we may need to do some work for staff in order to improve customer service, we have to always remember that, as a group, we're set up for the customer. So knock-on effects are fine but if we found ourselves going too far on line that all we were doing really, was for staff then we might have lost our way a bit." (ibid.)

Quality and Unison

Unison membership at Arun was about 340 - which was approximately 55 per-cent of the work-force. Membership was made up out of a predominantly ex-NALGO branch, the main DSO which would have constituted an ex-NUPE branch having been contracted out a number of years previously. The relatively small number of members meant that the Branch was run by lay officials.

Relations between council management and unions were 'consensual' and described by the *Unison* Branch Secretary as being harmonious:

"We've got fairly good employer-employee relationship, I would say...We try and be a progressive union and protect 'the greater good', if you like" (*Unison* Branch Secretary)

a) *Unison* and CCT

Union-management relations, as a result of white-collar CCT, was somewhat ambiguous. CCT generated fear among staff affected and this affected the functioning of the union, in terms of the issues being dealt with as a result:

"Stress is a growth industry here, some of which is related to possible job-loss and CCT..." (*Unison* Branch Secretary)

However, as a consequence of CCT, union membership saw an increase and CCT was also attributed to be the cause of increased interest in the union in general. This was despite the Council having a policy of re-deployment and the employee charter to combat such redundancy fears. As an example, membership had grown in the

Revenues department, where CCT reorganisation was being carried out and where it was expected that between ten to fifteen people were to be re-deployed. People were seeing union membership as an insurance policy.

On another level, CCT was also seen by the Branch Secretary as being a catalyst for increasing co-operation between management and the union, enabling management to make the changes it perceived were necessary to retain the work in-house:

"...we have, as a branch...adopted a policy of trying to protect the greater good; try and actually win the bid; try to streamline. Our critics argue we've gone too much with management, if you like, but there's other people's jobs to protect too. So it's a no-win situation really." (ibid.)

In many ways the union was acting as a conduit for management-staff communications. The union branch was self consciously being co-opted into the management's unitarist approach to reorganisation upon the promise of winning the CCT bid:

"We have regular meetings - in fact we had one this morning - with the Chief Executive and Deputy - to try and encourage staff to compete rigorously; alleviate their concerns and fears and try to be in it all together" (ibid.)

This was partly due to the historical relationship that the union had had at the Authority - the union being relatively weak and having no history of organised conflict with management over the years. This being said, the branch did participate in the 1989 national dispute and did not suffer membership loss as a result (in contrast to Wycombe). Some members did resign, but this was countered by new members who joined as a result of the dispute. Even here, however, it was recognised that the dispute was won in the large metropolitan boroughs and the branch at Arun retained a low profile. The membership of the branch were deemed to be generally low-profile and 'almost apathetic'. For example the Branch Secretary stated that members were only visible at the time when the pay review was due; and a recent AGM only saw fifteen members turn up. As a result there was a shortfall of workplace representatives overall (only twelve).

Because of the above, the union was consequently not directly involved in any formal consultation with management about specific *Customer Care* policies - such as the

initiatives involving telephone answering response times. These were regarded as 'operational matters':

"...they're not matters we'd expect to be consulted on...we're a fairly progressive, forward-thinking organisation; we've got no problem with trying to increase efficiency to the council tax payer." (ibid.)

According to the branch official, union members were not particularly concerned about such issues, although the union had received some complaints from people who had worked at the Council a long time and were '*not keen on changes*': such people were said to see schemes such as the phone answering initiative as a '*personal slight*'. Consultation on broader issues took place through the *Joint Staff Panel* which consisted of executive members of *Unison* (although these used to be departmental representatives) and leading councillors. Issues of 'mutual interest' were discussed here: for example the next meeting was to be a meeting on the *Employment Stability Agreement*, which would formally agree that the Council would '*endeavour*' to re-deploy staff who would be displaced as a result of CCT restructuring.

There was 'little contact' with the union at the national level, but some contact at regional level. *Unison* had provided speakers on CCT, in recent years, to reassure staff that the union was aware of the issue and '*knew how to deal with it*'. The branch official often saw his role as being the contact for other professionals in the union (legal advisors etc.).

b) *Unison and Working for the Public*

The area in which the union had had most day-to-day dealings with the Council on *Working for the Public* was on the issue of appraisal. An appraisal scheme (Personal Appraisal and Learning Scheme: PALS) was an annual appraisal with staff members' individual manager. Here, individual performance over the previous 12 months was reviewed. Though this was not linked to pay, some people liked this and others did not. The problem lay with workers' individual relationship with their line manager. For those with 'bad' personal relationships with managers (estimated at about ten per cent) felt that permanent informal feedback would be more appropriate. The formalisation of appraisal was thought, in these cases, to have possible detrimental effects on careers due to the permanent record of progress that would be held on

record. Some (successfully) refused such appraisal, on the grounds that it was a waste of their time.

PRP, itself, was dropped. It was not popular because of the problem of making it seem to be fair: e.g. in a section of three committee clerks, where one was the section leader - and where only the section leader was awarded a 12 per-cent PRP bonus, it caused bad-feeling. The union made representations, before and during its implementation, and made it clear that they were opposed to it as a principle.

The union was invited to contribute to the *Customer Panel* but was not always able to find a delegate. In principle, though, the union broadly supported the Council's stance on quality. Partly this was due to the link between quality and CCT, as noted. Partly, though, it also reflected an acceptance, by the Branch, of management's paternalist unitarist approach to work organisation in general. As the Branch Secretary noted, on the issue of monitoring:

"I happen to be aware because I do it [as art of my job] on the Performance Review Working Group which talks about customer care all the time so I know about telephone surveys...and there's been no problem with the staff involved...they actually think they do a good job and are quite happy for it to be measured...they do get letters commending them on winning various awards - or whatever - so, for them, it was a positive experience." (Unison Branch Secretary)

c) Bargaining Arrangements

It was thought that the *Learning Organisation* agenda may have affected staff grading structures at some point - this issue was being covered by a management review. In the meantime, Arun was sticking to nationally agreed conditions in terms of pay and grading, though with local variations. Elements within the *Learning Organisation* agenda, though, tended to challenge some of these traditional grading structures in that status differences were squeezed. It was hoped that this process would be able to reduce pay differentials as well. While there would still be a need to ensure that progress was encouraged through wage increases, it was hoped that this could be done in an evolutionary manner by rewarding lower grades disproportionately.

This has probably been due to the increasing emphasis on resource management, IT management and people management. People appointed to Chief Executive positions nowadays tend to have come from a finance background and they're all signed-up to

strategic management. The CCT exercise proved that you didn't need a specialist to run a service:

d) **The Sounding Board**

Despite full recognition of *Unison* and, in words of the Branch Secretary, favourable management-union relations, The Chief Executive of Arun set up an alternative employee consultation forum - the *Sounding Board*. This was made up from representatives from each directorate, though not every service. This forum allowed the *Chief Executive* to bypass formal hierarchies and communicate with staff on a range of issues.

"...I think that some managers find the 'Sounding Board' a bit threatening, because - I mean - at the time when there was a lot of problems with the computers, you know, you got a lot of managers trying to solve this problem and then you've got some staff going straight to the Chief Executive via the Sounding Board and saying 'this isn't working- you know - it's been weeks and weeks and weeks and do you know what's happening to the customers in the mean time as a result of that...'
[but] *It got it sorted'* (Chair: WPG)

In theory the *Sounding Board* was open to all staff and was supposed to be a staff forum. In practice, however, it appeared to be used to pursue management interests, in that it was predominantly used to pursue management interests. The WPG usually met in advance in order to discuss the issues they wanted to raise with the Chief Executive. As a result, the agenda was able to be focused on 'customer' as opposed to employee agendas:

"It is quite surprising that the agenda is, I would say, fifty per cent customer orientated. You would expect that if you had an opportunity to have a good old go that it would be mostly to the staff gripes. But most of the comments that come from the staff to the representatives are things where they feel that customers [will benefit]." (Member WPG Group)

Summary

Quality policy at Arun, then, had a long established background; the Authority having contributed and volunteered its involvement in various Audit Commission schemes throughout the 1980s and 1990s. From this background, the Council had been pursuing quality management through a 'customer care' model of quality. Here, the Authority made a conscious decision to redefine its role as a provider of services

through re-defining local people as 'customers'. To this end a working group - the *Working for the Public Group* (WPG) was set up to redefine working practices in line with this. The WPG had a wide remit and was able to question activities throughout the Authority, input into training and personnel practices as well as offering its own staff awareness campaigns. Out of the four authorities, then, Arun's quality policy was the one that relied most on an exclusively ideological approach. Quality was used as a means of 'adding value' to the services delivered through getting employees to see their work in terms of the customer's expectations of the outcome of that work. The union had historically had a low profile within the Authority and so none of the quality policy was considered as a bargaining issue. Latterly, however, union activity had increased a little, though this was more as a result of threats posed by white collar CCT. At this stage, and through the 'soft HRM' approach of management, the Authority had set up alternative channels of communications to transmit its message to staff.

8:5 Concluding Comments

A number of distinctions emerged in the way that quality policies developed in each case. These differences reflected the different aspect of quality that was primarily being addressed. This, in turn, however, was affected by the pre-existing relationships between trade unions, management and the political leadership. In Brent the quality policy developed as a direct consequence of the financial, political and industrial relations crises that preceded it, allowing management a brief period where radical restructuring could take place. In Wycombe the quality policy evolved from the more 'conventional', Unitarian approach to management, facilitated by a weaker trade union position. In Newcastle the quality policy that emerged was one which could be accepted by the trade unions, and which could be implemented without a need of coercion from the centre. As such the policy that emerged was unevenly implemented. Table 8:5:1 provides a summary of the overall findings.

Table 8:5:1: Quality Policy, Work and Industrial Relations - Case Summaries

	Brent	Wycombe	Newcastle	Arun
Quality Policy	The Quality Council	Performance Management	ISO 9000	Working for the Public
Policy Orientation	Devolved; holistic	Performance base	Manual; working procedures	Customer care
Effects on 'cutting waste'	<u>High.</u> Internal visibility created between devolved units acting as internal customer-supplier chains.	<u>High.</u> Functional flexibility written into job descriptions. Performance evaluated.	<u>Low/Medium.</u> Job tasks prescribed in manual; liabilities defined.	<u>None.</u>
Effects on output consistency and work standardisation	<u>Low/Medium.</u> Increased attention to equity in regulatory functions - 'stakeholder' analogy.	<u>Low/Medium.</u> Some attention to 'stakeholder' issues in regulatory functions.	<u>Medium/High.</u> Manual attempting to standardise work routines in CYP.	<u>Low.</u> Use of 'customer champion' within Authority to change working practices.
Effects on commitment, 'service' and 'emotional labour'	<u>High.</u> Background issues of Devolution and 'externalisation', combined with job cuts inducing commitment through fear.	<u>High.</u> (regulatory functions) due to increased pressure to meet targets. <u>None.</u> (Leisure DSO) due to inability to motivate staff.	<u>None.</u> Introduction of manual counter-productive in staff motivation	<u>High.</u> Official corporate commitment to 'permanent change'. Use of WPG to motivate and monitor staff commitment.
Effects on union	<u>Mixed.</u> Large staff cuts and Devolution making organisation difficult. Staff cuts and derecognition threat re-invigorating steward organisation and membership.	<u>Mixed.</u> General low activity, but growth in membership - partly through PRP scheme - seen to be divisive.	<u>Neutral.</u> Low membership, growing through threat of CCT.	<u>Neutral/Positive.</u> Introduction of manual creating a bargaining issue of quality.

CHAPTER 9

QUALITY AND WORKER ATTITUDES: SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter describes the logistics, design issues and characteristics involved in conducting questionnaire surveys on staff in local authorities, on the subject of quality management, between November 1996 and June 1997.

Survey Design

The survey sample consists of all the trade union members in the case study authorities already studied by qualitative means (in this sense the sample was the population of the union involved - *Unison* - in each authority).

a) Questionnaire design

One basic questionnaire design was used for all authorities for the data presented here¹, although a hybrid version was used in the case of *Newcastle* to accommodate for the fact that only one department was being studied here - for reasons explained in chapter 7.

The questions used in the questionnaire reflect the issues of quality management's effect on work-rates, 'commitment' and the impact on trade union activity². The questions used (particularly the Likert-scale statements) were based upon paraphrased responses to questions raised in pilot study interviews. Other questions related to categorising information about respondents: these included department/service, length of service and level of involvement in the union. One important omission here, was grade. Grade was omitted because it was thought that this may have discouraged lower-grade workers from responding. In retrospect, however, this decision is seen as a mistake. Because *Unison* membership includes staff from all levels of the organisation - including the implementers of the policy. In at least one of the case-studies it was known that the chief executive received a questionnaire. Had grade been included, it would have been possible to have filtered out responses from likely policy

¹ A second version was also used for the study of stewards but response rates were too low for detailed evaluation.

² See appendix iii and v for questionnaire design

implementers. As such the results from the survey are likely to accentuate positive opinions towards quality management.

b) Survey logistics

Distribution of the questionnaires was arranged through direct contact with union branch officials at each council. Questionnaire sets were sent to the *Unison* branches for distribution to all members. Each questionnaire set included one questionnaire, one seal-able return-paid envelope (addressed to the *Unison* branch) and a covering letter of support from the *Unison* branch. The actual logistics of distribution, however, varied and was probably responsible for some of the differences in response rates (see table 9:1). In the case of *Brent*, a list of members was supplied and the researcher was responsible for making up the questionnaire sets on site. In the case of *Wycombe*, the lay official carried out these tasks. At *Newcastle*, the union had administrative staff who were able to carry out the task, while at *Arun*, a membership list was provided and the researcher made the questionnaire sets and sent the batch of sets to the *Branch Secretary* for distribution. In the cases where *Unison* contacts provided assistance, a degree of control was lost in the accuracy of distribution. For example, in the case of *Brent* it was found first hand that membership lists were not fully up to date - a situation which is probably normal. This meant, however, that the exact number of questionnaires sent out was below the originally estimated membership levels. Where this situation was repeated at *Newcastle* - i.e. that the originally stated membership numbers for *CLS* were overestimated - too many questionnaires were issued to the Branch for distribution and, because distribution to members was being organised by the Branch office, the accuracy of the response rate was under-estimated. In addition, it was likely that questionnaires for *Newcastle* were sent out without a covering letter from the union branch resulting, probably, in a degree of confusion as to the purpose of the questionnaire and a subsequent lowering of the response rate. The loss of control at *Newcastle* was reversed in the case of *Arun*, where every aspect, apart from the actual distribution, was carried out by the researcher.

Table 9:1: Survey response rates

	Membership	No Returned	Date Sent	% Returned
Brent	800*	145	6/01/97	18+
Wycombe	230	44	14/10/96	19.1
Newcastle CLS	240	50	21/10/96	20.8
Arun	280	74	5/5/97	26.4

(* exact membership figures not known - figure represents maximum possible)

c) Sampling error

Sampling error could not be calculated for the returned questionnaires. This was partly because of the above mentioned variations in the distribution and collection of questionnaires and partly because of the variation in the knowledge about the survey populations. In the case of Wycombe and Newcastle, where distribution was handled by the branches, no access to membership was available and so the population remained unknown. At Brent, access to the membership list did not provide any accurate information on the membership profile in terms of job functions, length of service, tenure etc. which may have provided a basis upon which to compare the returned questionnaires. In addition, direct access to the membership list, as noted above, merely confirmed the practical realities of lists themselves being inaccurate. While sampling errors could be calculated, however, the practical effects of this was reduced through the knowledge that the target samples were populations of Unison membership in each authority. While it is possible that there could have been a skew in the responses, it was possible to be assured that all *Unison* members had equal chances of receiving a questionnaire.

Survey Respondent Characteristics

Apart from the obvious distinction that could be made between workplace based upon the different employing authority, further distinctions could be made between workers that responded to the questionnaire. The most important distinguishing factor, after the authority worked for, was job function.

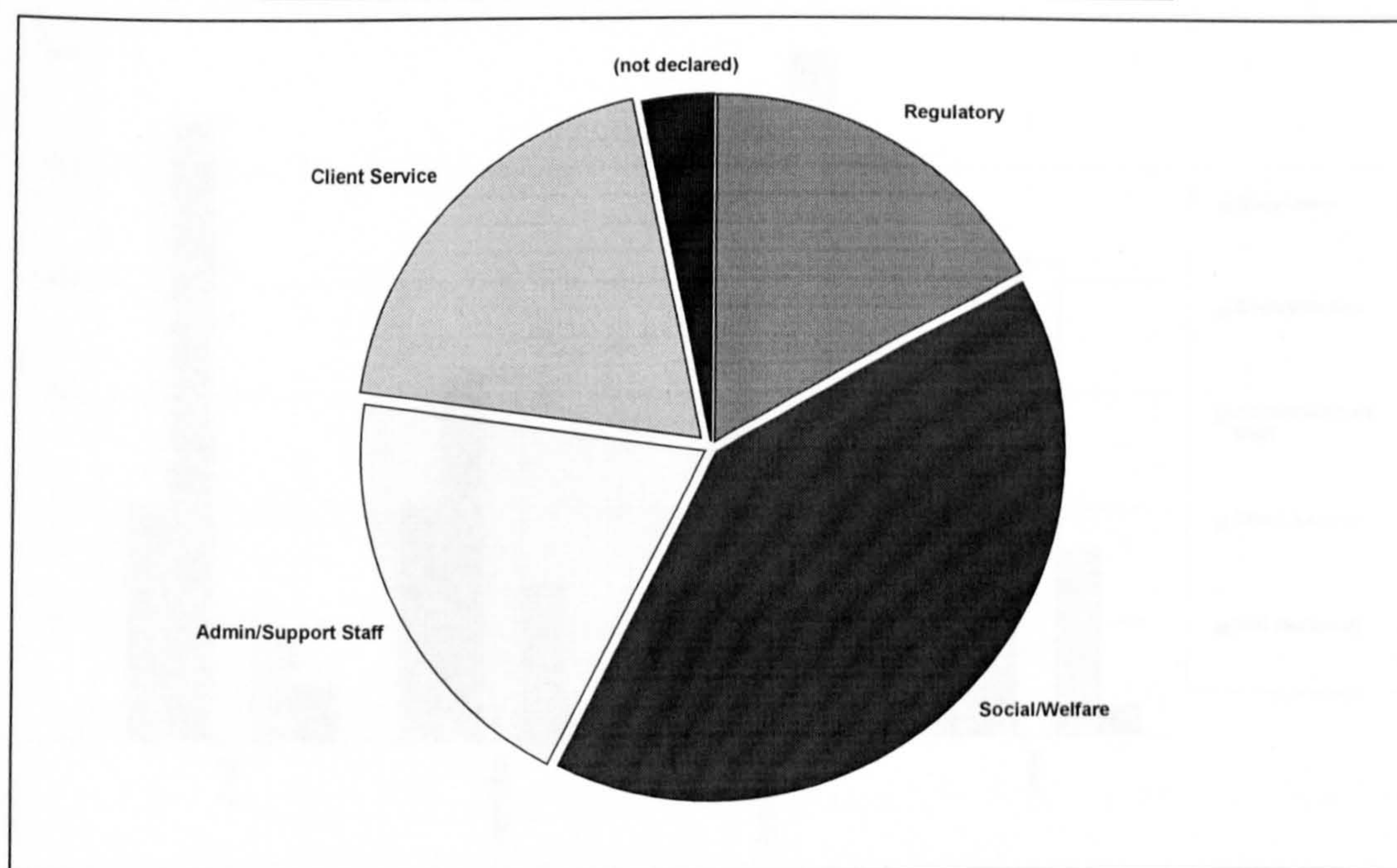
a) Job function

As has been noted in chapter 5, the labour process in local government is not a unified one, but constitutes a variety of work regimes ranging from professional regulatory

work to administrative work to manual 'blue collar work' to 'customer-service' type work in quasi-commercial set-ups. Perceptions of quality management are likely to be affected by its perceived impact on work-rates, autonomy, conditions and exposure to 'customer demand'. A categorisation has therefore been developed to accommodate these workplace-based distinctions³.

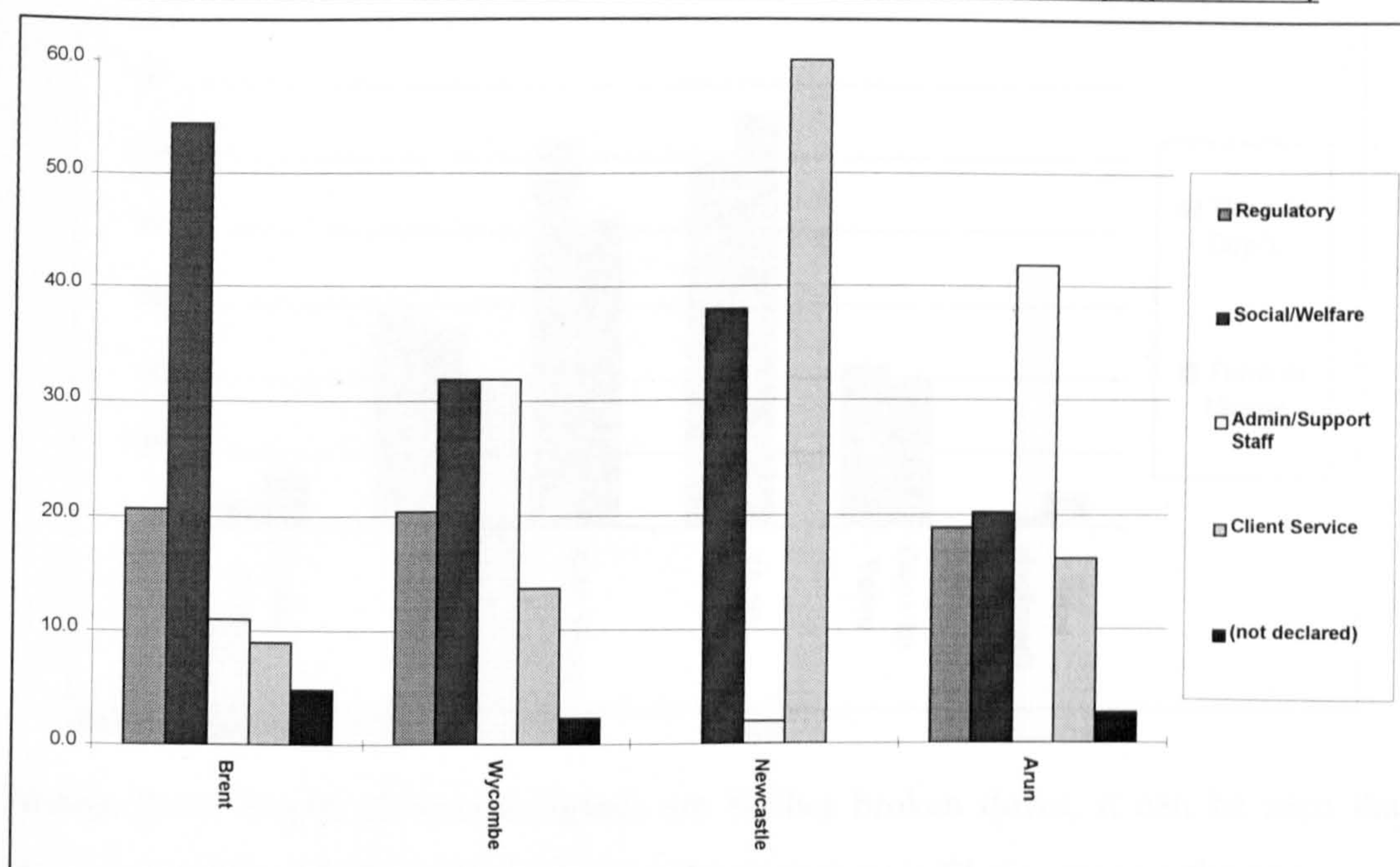
Respondents covered a broad range of job functions - 30 job descriptions or departments were offered. These have been recoded into four broad categories of job function representing the likely distinctions that may be experienced in work regimes within local government work. The categories selected have been informed by the job's relationship to external 'customers'. Here, then, regulatory functions are those functions deemed as being statutory, enforcement-type jobs whose 'customers' were almost indefinable. These tend to be professional type jobs and include services such as environmental health, trading standards and building regulations. The second category is social services/welfare type jobs. This type of work covers a range in terms of pay scale and professional status, but is unified by its relationship to identifiable service users who could, theoretically, be redefined as being 'customers'. People working in social services/welfare area of local government have been identified as having greater militancy than in other types of local government work (Miller 1996) and include social workers, youth workers and housing officers. The third type of work identified is that of internal administrative or support functions within an authority. Such functions may be clerical or manual but are distinguished by the lack of any contact with external customers to the organisation and were, whilst being insulated in this sense, are also the functions most liable to the threat of CCT. Job functions included here are planning, finance, IT support, clerical and personnel. The final category is that of staff working within a client service environment. These are staff in discretionary services that involves contact with the public. These jobs are likely to be involved in areas most susceptible to the pressures associated with direct 'customer' contact. Such jobs include library work, 'One Stop Shops' and leisure work. A proportional breakdown of the respondents by these categories is shown in figure 9:1, below.

³ See Appendix xi for the recoding schedule

Figure 9:1: Survey Responses by Job Function

(All data: total cases = 313.)

A further breakdown, shown in figure 9:2, shows how the breakdown of job functions varies between authorities. While *Wycombe* and *Arun* have a relatively even spread of functions, both *Newcastle* and *Brent* have a higher proportion of social/welfare related respondents. While a breakdown of the population is not possible through a lack of data, here, both *Newcastle* and *Brent* could be expected to have a higher proportion of these types of workers as metropolitan/London boroughs respectively - district authorities do not operate social services and social services typically constitutes a high proportion of direct labour in local government. In addition, because only *CLS* was being sampled at *Newcastle*, most of the job functions in this department are related to either leisure or to youth services (which also explains the high proportion of client service staff here).

Figure 9:2: Respondents by Function and Authority (per-cent)

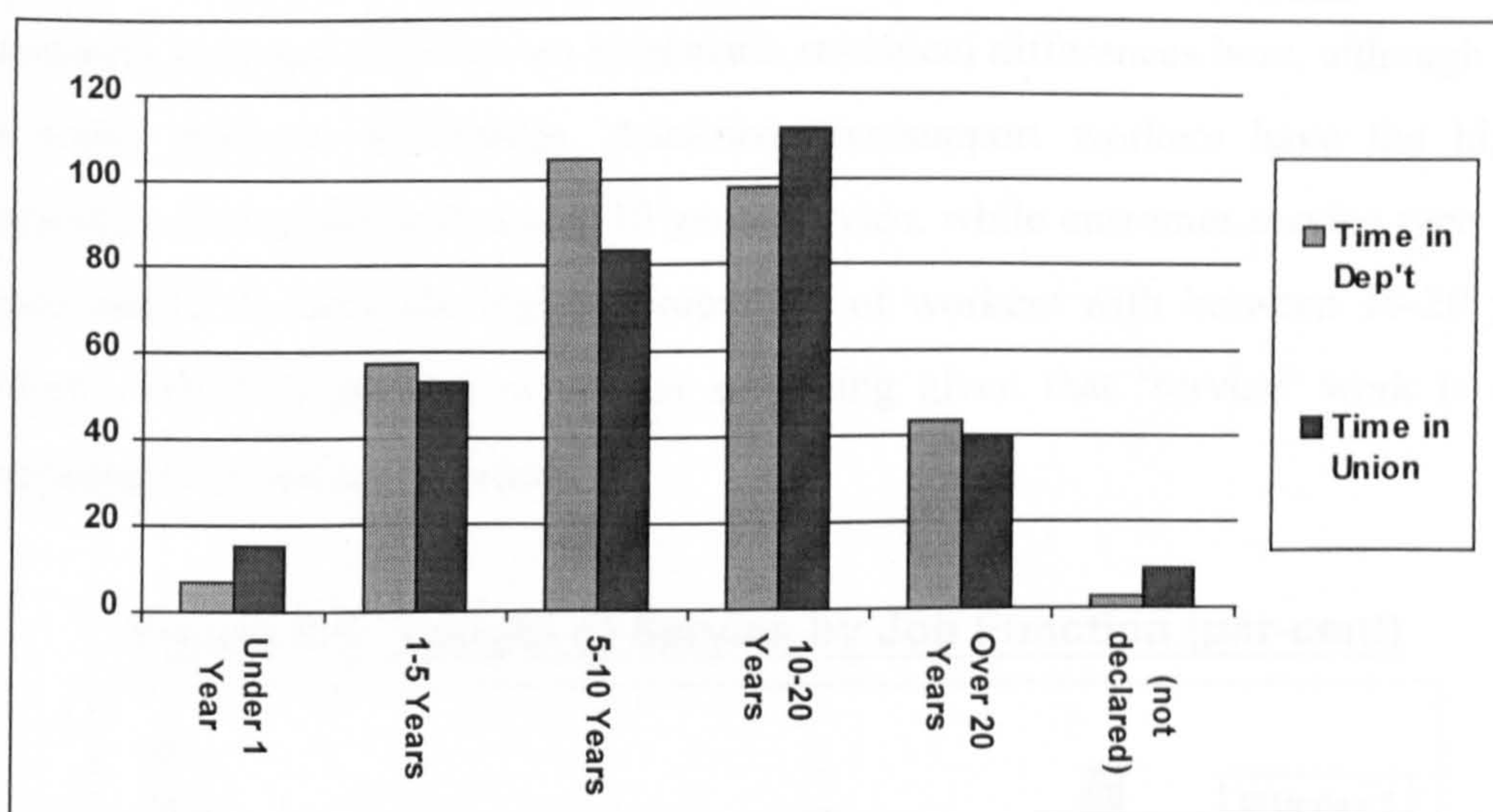
(All data: total cases = 313.)

b) Length of service

Another distinction that could be made between respondents is through length of service. Where 'corporate culture' is considered important, workers with lengthy service records are implicitly assumed to be more resistant to change - this perception was articulated by managers in a number of services in more than one of the case studies (see chapter 8).

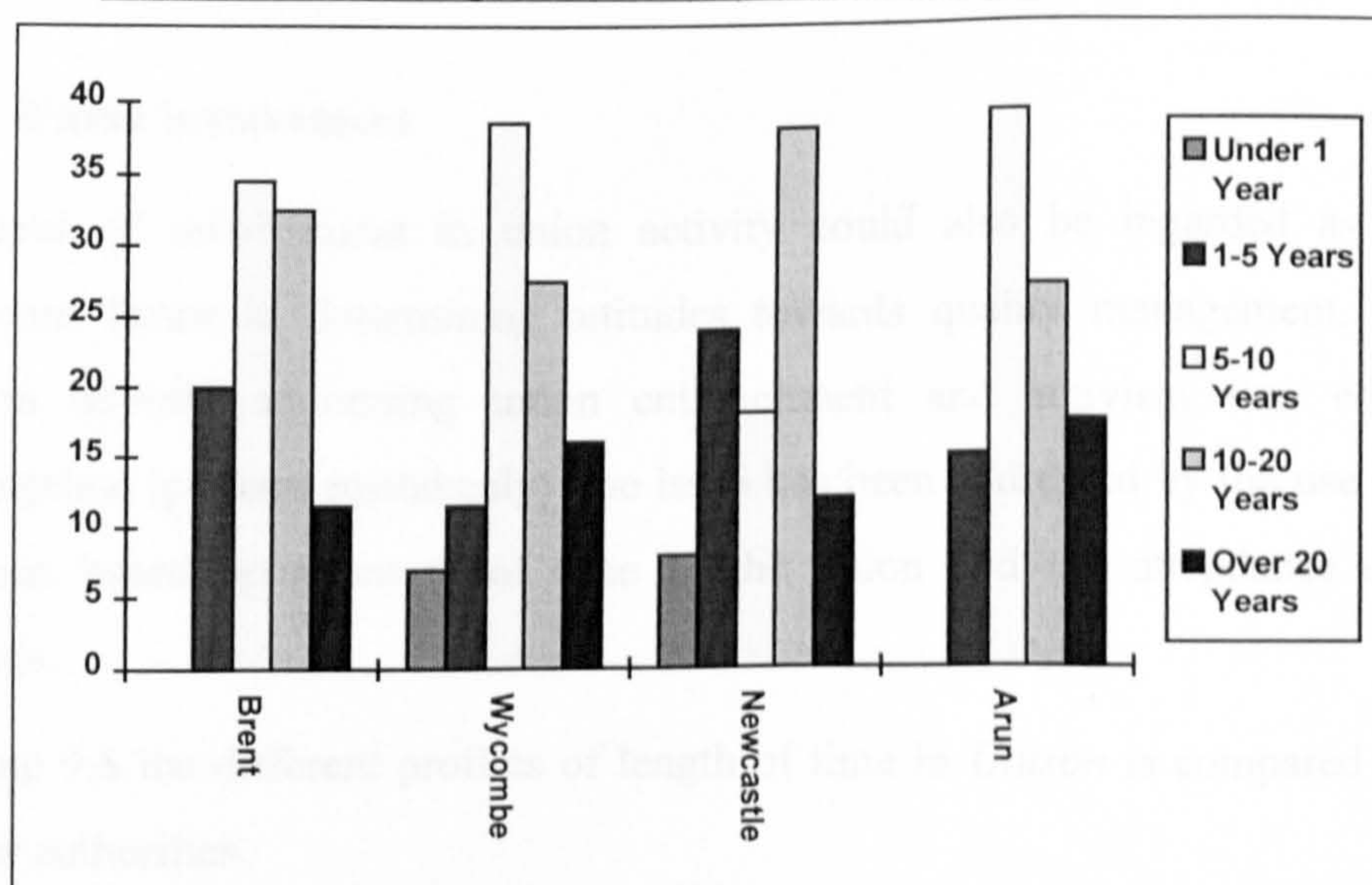
Figure 9:3 shows that length of service among respondents is distributed in an approximately 'normal' manner around a mode average of between 5-10 years service. It is not known how well this distribution is representative of the work-forces as a whole as no information was available to compare this. Because of this, the age profile has been used here merely to profile the respondents.

There is a slight disparity between length of service and the length of time respondents have been in *Unison* (mode average being in the 10-20 years membership). This disparity probably reflects where people have switched jobs, either within a local authority or between local authorities, whilst retaining union membership throughout.

Figure 9:3: Survey Responses by Length of Service

(All data: total cases = 313.)

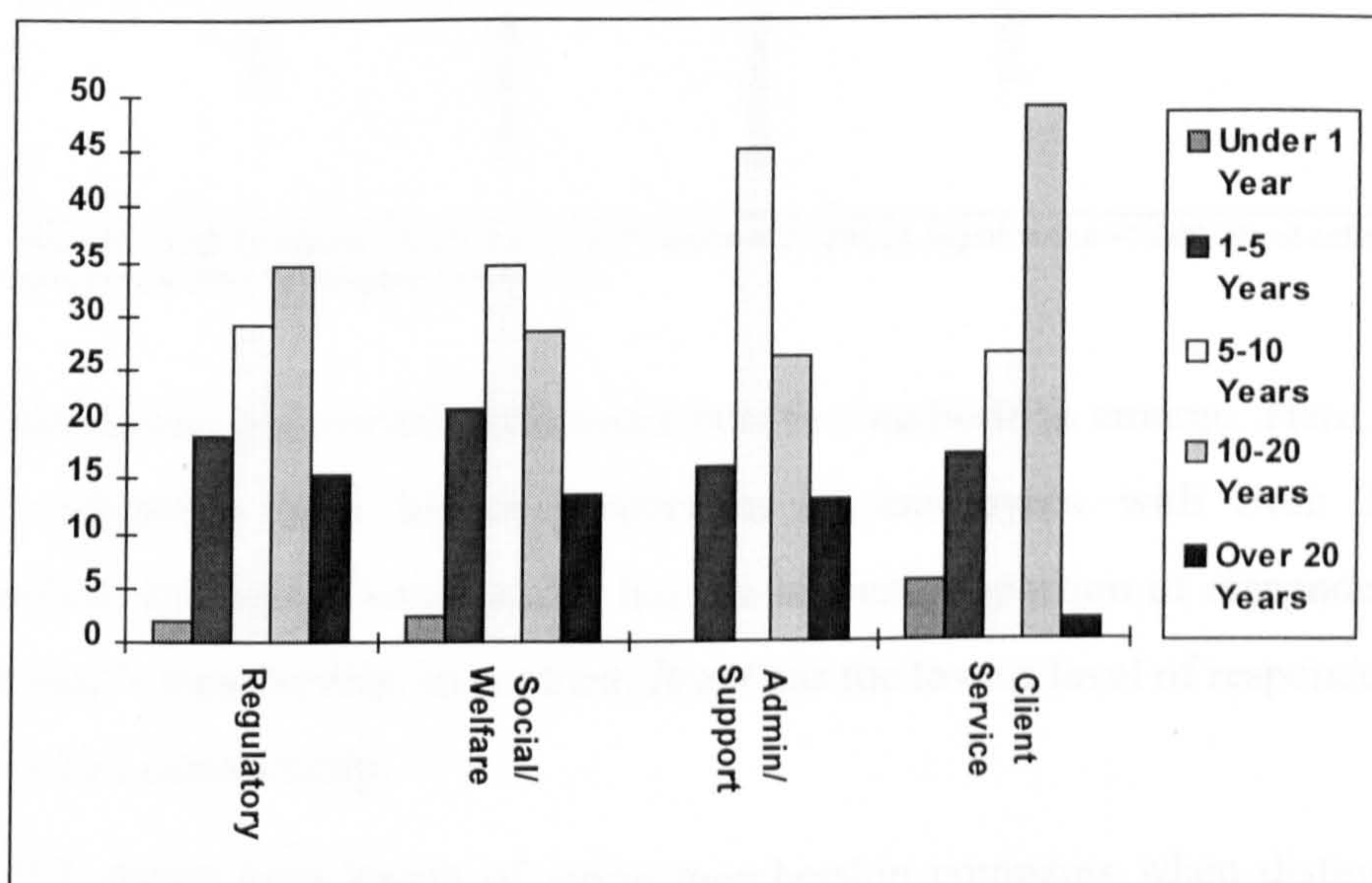
Where these length of service figures are further broken down, it can be seen that there is considerable disparity in the length of service profile between authorities - and this is statistically backed-up by a Pearson value of 26.66 (significance 0.00866). Figure 9:4 shows length of service, as the respective cumulative percentages within each authority. Here, respondents from *Newcastle* have the highest proportion of employees with a service of less than 5 years, though with slightly more than average with over 10 years service.

Figure 9:4: Length of Service by Authority (per-cent)

(All data: missing cases = 3. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 26.65363, significance = 0.00866, No of cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 20%)

Figure 9:5 shows length of service broken down by job function. As can be seen by chi-square readings, there are no systematic statistical differences here, although there are some apparent differences. Administrative/support workers have the highest proportion of workers with under 10 years service, while customer service type work would appear to have the highest proportion of workers with between 10-20 years service - which is perhaps somewhat surprising given that 'service' work is often associated with younger workers.

Figure 9:5: Length of Service by Job Function (per-cent)



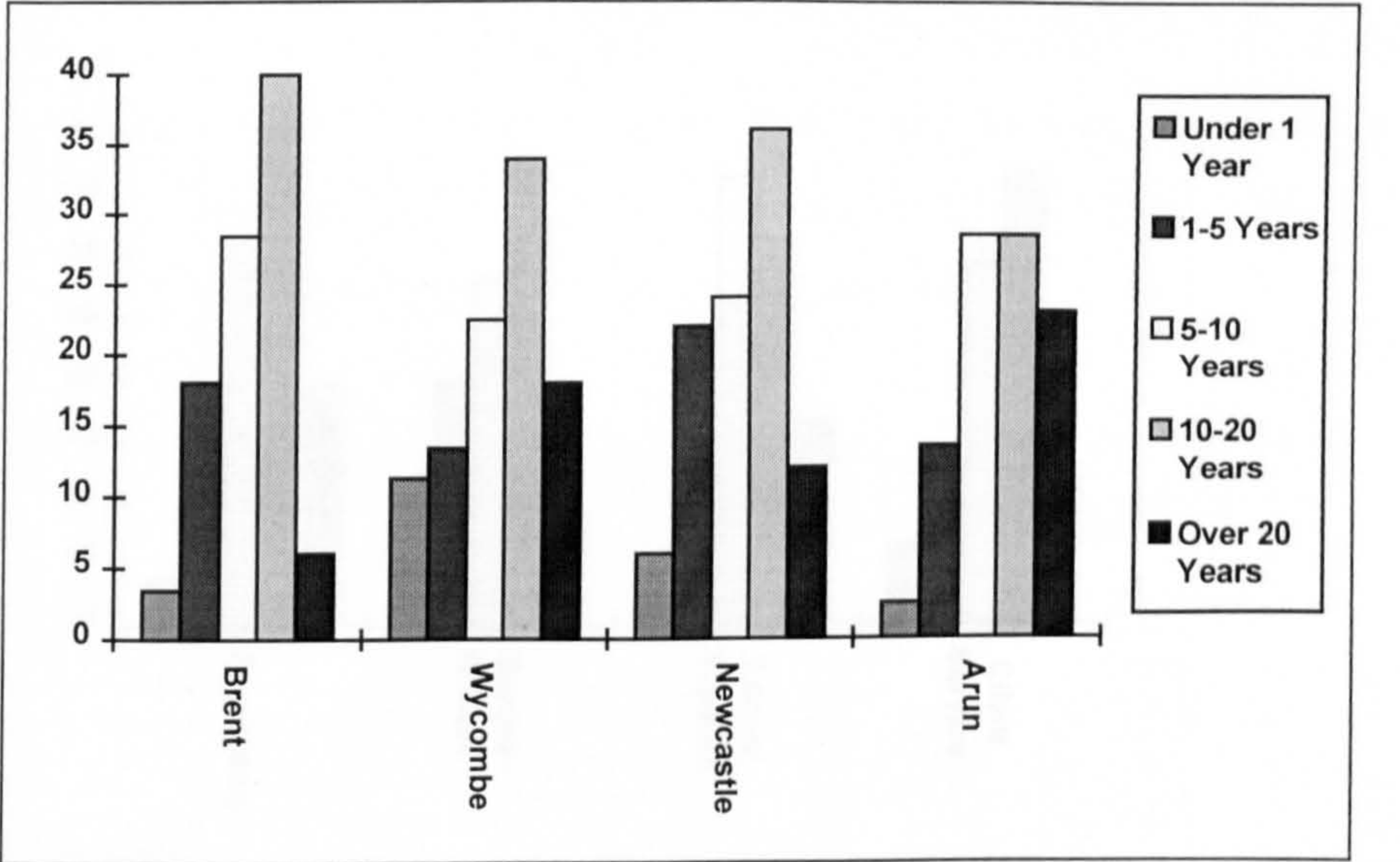
(All data: missing cases = 10. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 12.85855, significance = 0.37941, No of cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 20%)

c) Union involvement

The level of involvement in union activity could also be regarded as being a significant factor in determining attitudes towards quality management. While a question directly addressing union entrenchment and activism was considered inappropriate (perhaps mistakenly), the issue has been addressed by the use of proxy questions based upon length of time in the union and the attendance of union meetings.

In figure 9:6 the different profiles of length of time in *Unison* is compared between the four authorities.

Figure 9:6: Time in Unison by Authority (per-cent)



(All data: missing cases = 9. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 21.29924, significance =0.046, No of cells with minimum expected frequency <5 = 15%)

Some statistically significant differences between authorities emerge. Here, the two district authorities have higher proportions of employees with over 20 years membership, although Wycombe also has the highest proportion of respondents with under 1 year’s membership. In contrast, Brent has the lowest level of respondents with over 20 years membership.

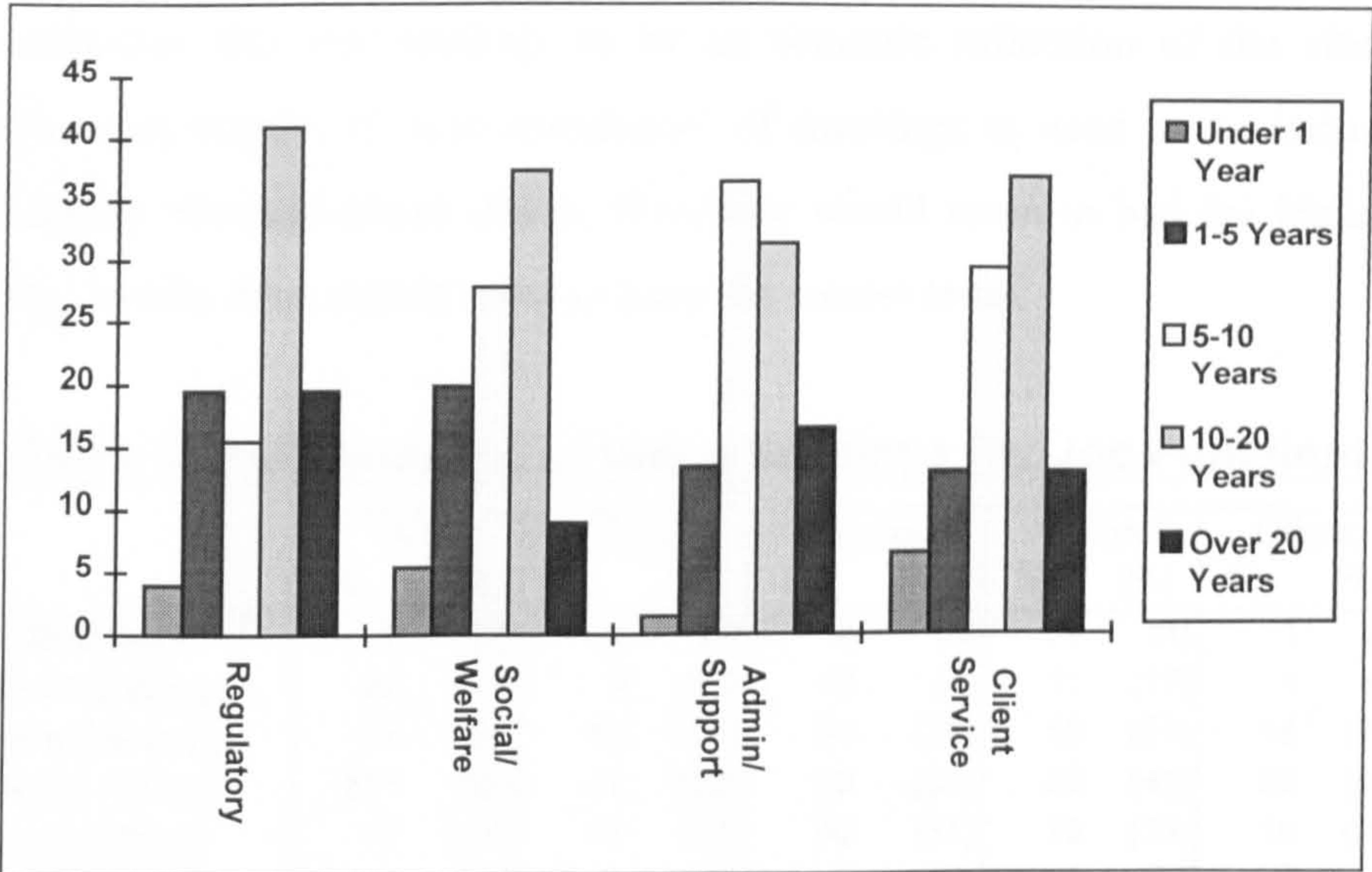
Figure 9:7 shows how length of union membership compares when distinguishing between job functions.

Table 9:7: Attendance of Unions (Meetings) (by Authority)

	Arun		Newcastle		Wycombe		Brent	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All Meetings	33	(100)	45	(100)	24	(100)	34	(100)
At least one meeting	28	(85)	38	(84)	21	(88)	28	(82)
At least two meetings	17	(52)	22	(49)	13	(54)	17	(50)
At least three meetings	10	(30)	13	(29)	8	(33)	10	(29)
At least four meetings	5	(15)	6	(13)	4	(17)	5	(15)
At least five meetings	2	(6)	3	(7)	2	(8)	2	(6)
At least six meetings	1	(3)	1	(2)	1	(4)	1	(3)
At least seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ten meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eleven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twelve meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fourteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventeen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least nineteen meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least twenty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least thirty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least forty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least fifty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least sixty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least seventy-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least eighty-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-one meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-two meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-three meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-four meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-five meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-six meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-seven meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-eight meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least ninety-nine meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
At least one hundred meetings	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)

...are again statistically very significant - with a Pearson value of over 45 and significance value of 0.00002. If attendance at all meetings is used as an indicator of activism, Brent seems to be the authority with the highest proportion of active staff while Newcastle has the lowest - although qualitative evidence outlined in

Figure 9:7: Time in Unison by Job Function (per-cent)



(All data: missing cases = 16. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 12.89221, significance =0.37692, No of cells with minimum expected frequency <5 = 15%)

Here, while the differences *appear* greater than the differences between authorities, they are statistically less significant. Respondents in regulatory services have the highest levels of membership of over 10 years, although respondents in administrative/support functions have the highest levels of membership of 5 years and over.

Table 9:2 shows how the attendance of union meetings varies between authorities.

Table 9:2: Attendance of Union Meetings (by Authority)

	(All)		Brent		Wycombe		Newcastle		Arun	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
All Meetings	7	(2)	5	(3)	1	(2)	0	(0)	1	(1)
Most Meetings	35	(11)	12	(8)	1	(2)	4	(8)	18	(24)
Some Meetings	77	(25)	32	(22)	5	(11)	17	(34)	23	(31)
Rarely Attend	111	(35)	57	(39)	18	(41)	13	(26)	23	(31)
Never Attend	77	(25)	36	(25)	19	(43)	16	(32)	6	(8)
(no response)	6	(2)	3	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(4)
Total	313	(100)	145	(100)	44	(100)	50	(100)	74	(100)

(All data. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 43.1701, significance =0.00002, No of cells with minimum expected frequency <5 = 20%)

Differences, here, are again statistically very significant - with a Pearson value of over 43 and significance value of 0.00002. If attendance at all meetings is used as an indicator of activism, *Brent* seems to be the authority with the highest proportion of activists while *Newcastle* had the lowest - although qualitative evidence outlined in

chapter 8 indicated that while this shows an interesting coroboration of *Brent Unison* branch officials, this was unlikely to be an accurate reflection of the situation at *Newcastle*. Conversely, if ‘non-attendance’ of meetings is used as an indication of relative apathy towards union affairs, *Wycombe* would seem to had the highest level of ‘apathy’, while *Arun* would seem to have the lowest level.

Table 9:3: . Attendance of Union Meetings (by Job Function)

	All No (%)	Reg. No (%)	Social No (%)	Admin. No (%)	Client No (%)
All Meetings	7 (2)	1 (2)	4 (3)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Most Meetings	35 (11)	8 (15)	12 (9)	11 (17)	4 (6)
Some Meetings	77 (24)	15 (28)	31 (24)	13 (21)	15 (24)
Rarely Attend	111 (36)	17 (32)	40 (31)	25 (40)	25 (41)
Never Attend	77 (24)	11 (20)	40 (31)	10 (16)	16 (26)
(no response)	6 (2)	1 (2)	0 (0)	2 (3)	0 (0)
Total (%)	313 (100)	53 (100)	127 (100)	62 (100)	61 (100)

(All data: jobs not declared = 10. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 11.86579, significance =0.45652, No of cells with minimum expected frequency <5 = 20%)

In terms of union meeting attendance by job function, table 9:3 indicates no real difference in terms of ‘activists’ although apparently social work/welfare functions seem, perhaps surprisingly, to have higher rates of ‘apathy’ than in other areas - having a higher than average percentage of members who ‘never attended’ union meetings.

Overall the attendance of union meetings does not seem to reflect the relative levels of ‘activism’ at each authority reported in chapter 8. As such, using attendance of union meetings as a proxy measure does not seem to offer any real indicator of union activism overall and so has not been used further to assess relative attitudes to quality management.

CHAPTER 10

WORKER ATTITUDES TO QUALITY MANAGEMENT

This chapter describes the findings of the survey research carried out on worker attitudes to quality management outlined in chapter 9. Survey data indicates a number of common perceptions about the effect of quality management initiatives on work rates, management legitimacy and trade union representation. Findings also indicate some variance in perceptions on these issues between authorities and, to a lesser extent, between job functions. Statistical distinctions, however, is difficult to establish in most cases - mainly because the sample sizes were too small to establish chi-square (χ^2) figures of association.

The significance of the variance between authorities highlights the different circumstances in terms of political control; the type, size and demography of the authority; and of differences in the relationship between management and *Unison* in each case. These factors, then, affect management strategy in each case and contribute to the differences in the type of quality policy being pursued - as described in chapter 8. These contextual differences, as well as providing the basis for the qualitative differences in quality management strategy, also constitute a significant difference in the manner in which quality management is likely to be received by the work-forces in each case - as is highlighted in chapter 8.

Brent, whose New-Right administration had aggressively been pursuing a decentralisation strategy along with outsourcing, had been pursuing a holistic quality policy based upon the empowerment of local managers in semi-autonomous contractor units. Quality management was pursued through imposition from the centre - as a condition of 'contract'. *Wycombe*, whose long-term Conservative administration had recently been replaced by a hung leadership of Labour and Liberal Democrats. This heralded a greater consultation with *Unison* than had been the case before. The quality policy being pursued here was based upon 'performance management'. At *Newcastle* (Community and Leisure Services - CLS) there had been a long-standing Labour administration which had a large workforce which was organised centrally. *Unison* was fully recognised and had full negotiation and consultation rights. The

quality policy being pursued here was procedure-based - largely around the principles of ISO 9000. *Arun* was a Conservative authority of long-standing. *Unison* was recognised and consulted as a form of 'staff association'. The quality policy being pursued here was of a 'customer care' variety.

Because the research conducted on worker attitudes was based, largely, upon a standardised questionnaire survey, the findings presented in this chapter are presented in 'theme' order, rather than authority-by-authority, as in chapter 8. The themes that are addressed are those highlighted in chapters 3, 4 and 5: These themes are, first, worker perceptions of the quality policy as a whole; second, worker perceptions of quality management's impact upon work-rates and productivity; third, worker perceptions of quality management's role in engendering commitment and the compatibility of quality management to a 'public service ethos'; and fourth, worker perceptions on quality management's implications for trade union representation.

Worker Perception of Quality Management as a Whole

Before assessing the specific issues of the impact of quality management on work rates, workplace ideology and trade union entrenchment, some general findings will be discussed. In general, the survey data suggests that workers are generally aware of the respective quality management policies being pursued in their workplaces and that they consider that it has had some, although not a major, effect on working conditions. In general, workers are reasonably happy with the quality policy, but with some reservations in some areas. Significantly, opinion is divided on all these issues according to the authority worked at (and therefore the type of quality policy being pursued) and, to a lesser extent, by job function.

a) Awareness of quality management policy

The first important consideration, with regards to workers' opinion on the impact of quality management on work, is that of overall awareness of the issue. Given that all the case studies selected had a stated quality management policy, awareness could be expected to have been high. Based upon survey responses (where a score of 1 indicates complete awareness of council-wide quality policy and 5 indicates no

knowledge of any policy), awareness can be considered to be *relatively* high (see table 10:1).

Table 10:1: Awareness of Quality Management

	No	Valid %
Fully aware of management's Council-wide quality policy	117	38
Aware that the Council has got a quality policy	114	37
Only aware of management's quality policy in my service	40	13
Only vaguely aware of any management quality policy	21	6.8
Unaware of any management quality policy	16	5.2

(All data: missing cases = 5)

When these figures are broken down by authority some apparent differences emerge (see table 10:2 and table 10:3)

Table 10:2: Awareness of Quality Management (by Authority)

	Brent		Wycombe		Newcastle		Arun	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
Fully aware of...policy	70	49.5	17	39.5	13	26	17	23.3
Aware...Council has...policy	44	31	14	32.6	18	36	38	52.1
Only aware...in my service	16	11.3	8	18.6	8	16	8	11
Only vaguely aware...	8	5.6	3	7	5	10	5	6.8
Unaware...	4	2.8	1	2.3	6	12	5	6.8

(All data: missing cases = 5. DF = 12, Pearson = 27, significance = 0.00771, number of cells with exp. freq <5 = 30%)

In *Brent*, where the policy was highly publicised and consciously linked to other aspects of work organisation, workers have the highest level of awareness: nearly half claiming full awareness of the council-wide policy. In contrast, at *Newcastle* only 26% claim such knowledge, while 10% are ‘only vaguely aware’ and a further 12% claim ‘no knowledge’ about the quality policy. Chi-square values show that these differences are significant - albeit with some suspicion: χ^2 , with 12 degrees of freedom, has a Pearson value of 27 with a significance of 0.00771, but has 30% of cells with an expected frequency of less than 5. To alleviate this problem, combining the ‘only vaguely aware’ and the ‘unaware’ categories provides a similar picture in figure 10:3, but with more reliable statistical reliability.

Table 10:3: Awareness of Quality Management (by Authority):
Responses Adjusted

	Brent	Wycombe	Newcastle	Arun
Fully aware of...policy	70	17	13	17
Aware...Council has...policy	44	14	18	38
Only aware...in my service	16	8	8	8
Vaguely aware/unaware	12	4	11	10

(All data: missing cases = 5. DF = 12, Pearson = 24.9876, significance = 0.00298, minimum exp. freq = 5.166)

Here, no cells now have an expected minimum frequency less than 5. This improves the significance value at the expense of a lower Pearson value.

Differences are also apparent when differentiating awareness of the councils' quality policies by job function but, here, such differences are less statistically significant - having a lower Pearson value of 17.9, with a significance of 0.116 and having 30% of cells with an expected frequency of below 5 (see table 10:4) - and statistical significance is not improved through combining response categories.

Table 10:4: Awareness of Quality Management (by Job Function)

	Reg		Social		Admin		Client	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
Fully aware of...policy	29	54.7	46	36.5	16	26.2	23	37.7
Aware...Council has...policy	15	28.3	44	34.9	30	49.2	23	37.7
Only aware...in my service	5	9.4	21	16.7	7	11.5	7	11.5
Only vaguely aware...	3	5.7	8	6.3	6	9.8	2	3.3
Unaware...	1	1.9	7	5.6	2	3.3	6	9.8

(All data: missing cases = 12. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 17.9, significance = 0.116, number of cells with exp. freq <5 = 30%)

Those in regulatory functions seem significantly more aware of corporate quality policy than in other functions - with 54.7% declaring 'full awareness' compared to the average of 38%. In contrast, while nearly half of respondents in administration/support functions have a general awareness of the policy, only 26% seem 'fully aware'. Responses from people in social/welfare functions broadly match the average - apart from them having a higher proportion of respondents whose awareness of quality management is restricted to work in their own area.

Respondents who claim 'no knowledge' of the quality policy have been excluded from (most of) the remainder of the analysis here¹.

b) Degree of workers concern about quality management

Related to workers' knowledge of the policy is their perception of the overall importance that the quality policy has on their experience of work. It is recognised that workers' opinions about quality management, whether positive or negative, may not be a priority concern when considered among other workplace issues. The extent to which quality management is seen to be integrated into other aspects of work is an important factor in this. This issue is addressed in the survey through the responses given to two statements:

- *'The quality policy has not affected my concerns about day to day issues'*
- *'All this quality management stuff is just a fad'*

Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 being strongly agree/5 being strongly disagree). The distribution of the strength of agreement/disagreement can then be compared between authority and job function. Likert scale questions are considered to be valid tools of assessing opinion, particularly where questions are put in terms of contentious statements to which a clear response can be made (Moser & Kalton 1971).

The response to the first question used here is shown in table 10:5 below:

¹ Where respondents are excluded, here, caption states 'excludes unawares'. Where 'unawares' are included, caption reads 'all data'.

Table 10:5: Level of Concern About Quality Management (i)

Question 3:6 (i)	<i>'The quality policy has not affected my concerns about day to day issues'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree			disagree	
		1	2	3	4	5
All	9	63 (22%)	46 (16%)	77 (26%)	56 (19%)	41 (14%)
Brent	2	23 (17%)	12 (9%)	39 (28%)	33 (24%)	29 (21%)
Wycombe	0	7 (17%)	9 (21%)	11 (26%)	9 (21%)	6 (14%)
Newcastle	3	14 (31%)	7 (18%)	13 (29%)	3 (7%)	4 (9%)
Arun	4	19 (38%)	18 (26%)	14 (28%)	11 (22%)	2 (4%)
Regulatory	0	6 (11%)	13 (25%)	15 (28%)	11 (21%)	8 (15%)
Social/Welfare	3	30 (26%)	9 (8%)	30 (26%)	28 (24%)	18 (15%)
Admin/Support	3	13 (22%)	10 (21%)	17 (29%)	8 (14%)	8 (14%)
Client Services	3	12 (22%)	14 (25%)	13 (24%)	7 (13%)	6 (11%)
(job not declared)	0	2	0	2	2	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 34.1, significance = 0.00065, minimum expected frequency = 5.94. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 16.487, significance = 0.1699, minimum expected frequency = 7.54)

Here, responses, shown in the shaded 'All' row, suggest an even spread of opinion. Where opinions are grouped by authority and job function, however, opinion appears more divided (significant deviations are shaded). Statistically, there is considerable significance in the differences between authorities here: χ^2 , with 12 degrees of freedom, has a Pearson value of 34.1 with a significance of 0.00065. Here, opinions of respondents in *Newcastle* and *Arun* are skewed, against the average, towards agreement, whereas opinions of respondents in *Brent* are skewed, against the average, towards disagreement. While some apparent differences can also be observed between job functions on this issue, they are not statistically significant, (χ^2 , with 12 degrees of freedom, having a lower Pearson value of 16.5 and a significance of 0.17).

In response to the second question, which more strongly suggests that quality management is 'just a fad', opinion is, again, dispersed across the continuum, though, this time tending to disagree with the statement (see table 10:6).

Table 10:6: Level of Concern About Quality Management (ii)

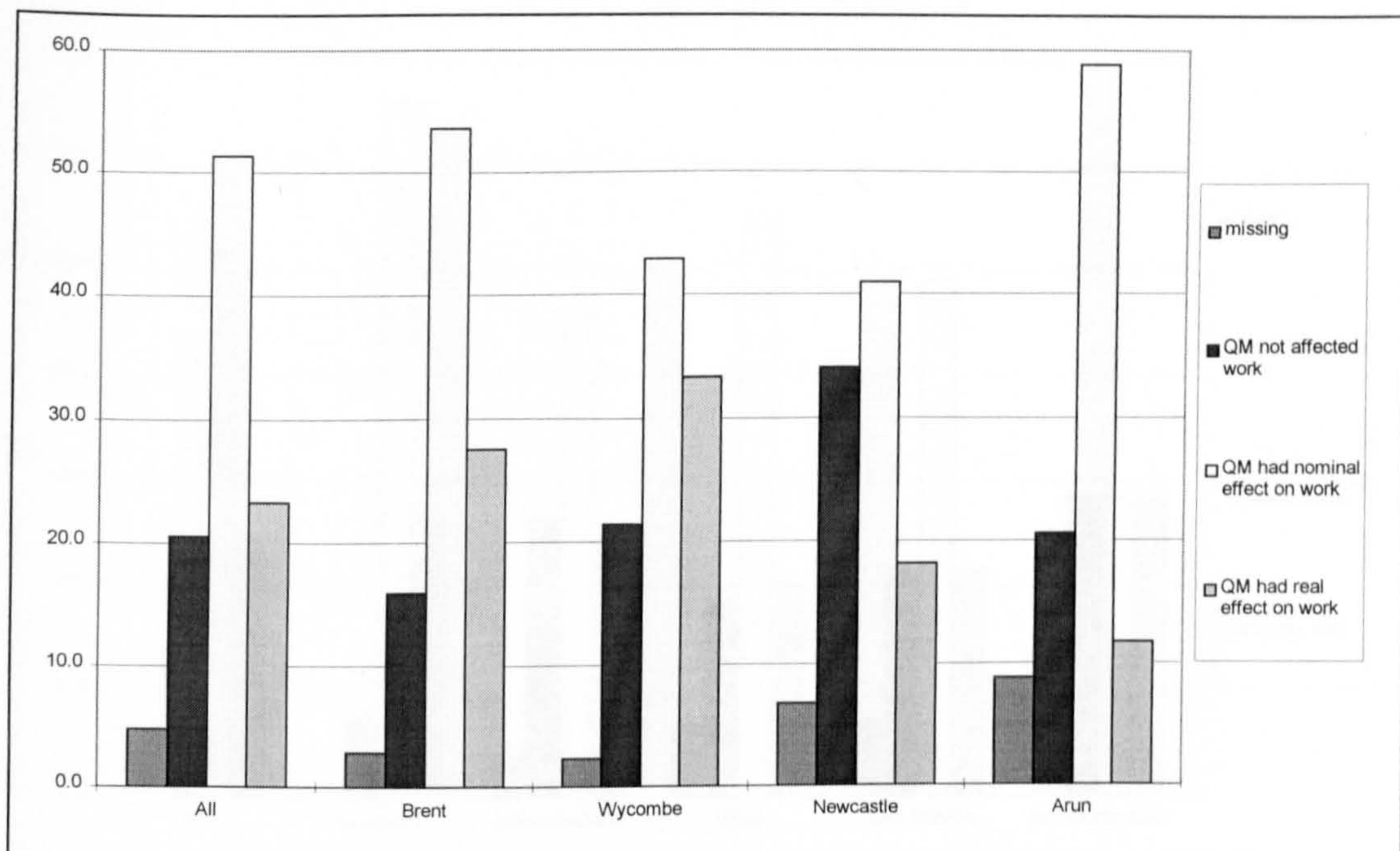
Question 3:6 (ii)	<i>'All this Quality Management stuff is just a fad'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree			disagree	
		1	2	3	4	5
All	10	44 (15%)	42 (14%)	73 (25%)	63 (22%)	60 (20%)
Brent	3	25 (18%)	21 (15%)	35 (25%)	27 (20%)	27 (20%)
Wycombe	1	4 (10%)	5 (12%)	9 (22%)	9 (22%)	14 (34%)
Newcastle	1	22 (18%)	15 (18%)	24 (25%)	12 (21%)	11 (16%)
Arun	5	7 (10%)	8 (12%)	18 (26%)	18 (26%)	12 (18%)
Regulatory	0	4 (7%)	10 (19%)	11 (21%)	10 (19%)	18 (34%)
Social/Welfare	4	27 (23%)	15 (13%)	29 (25%)	24 (20%)	19 (16%)
Admin/Support	3	6 (10%)	8 (14%)	14 (24%)	16 (27%)	12 (20%)
Client Services	2	7 (13%)	6 (11%)	18 (33%)	12 (22%)	10 (18%)
(job not declared)	1	0	3	1	1	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 9.37, significance = 0.67, minimum expected frequency = 6.1. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 17.94, significance = 0.1175, minimum expected frequency = 7.348)

Distinctions between groups is less obvious here with, perhaps, those at *Wycombe Council* and those people working in regulatory functions tending to disagree more than average, while those in social/welfare functions tending to agree more with the statement. Distinctions between authorities or job functions on this opinion, though, are not statistically significant (χ^2 significance being 0.67 and 0.1175 respectively)

This general ambivalence is further illustrated when the responses of the two Likert-scale questions are added together and the combined response scores compressed (score of 2-4 = 'agree'; score of 5-7 = indifferent; score of 8-10 = disagree). The revised responses are shown in figure 10:1.

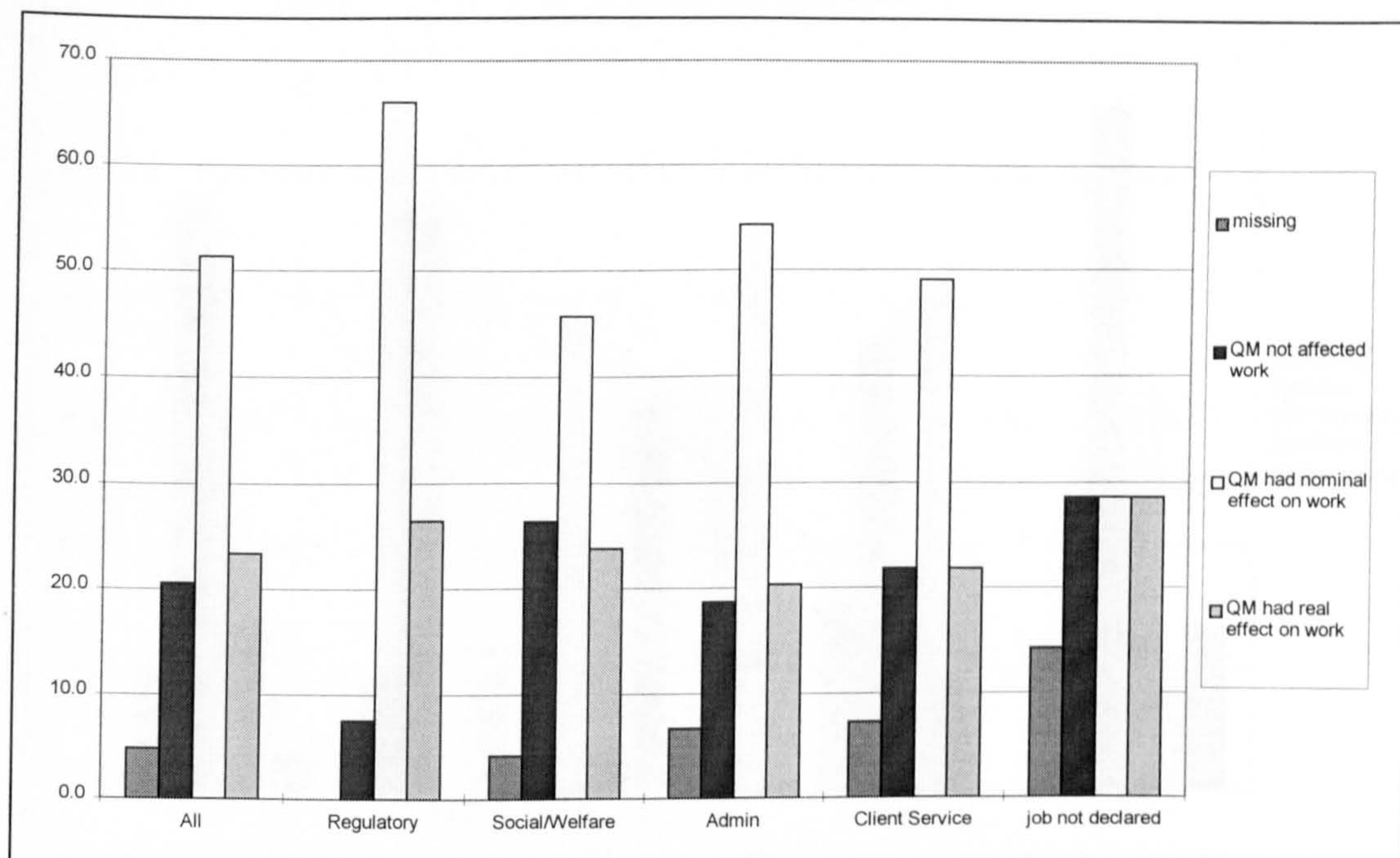
**Figure 10:1: Effect of Quality Management on Overall Concerns at Work
(per-cent of Authority)**



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 15.02132, significance = 0.02009, minimum expected frequency = 8.849)

The prevailing attitude seems to be 'indifference' towards the negative notion that the quality policy has had peripheral effect on work, though slightly more feel that it has had 'no effect' than feel it has had a 'real effect'. There is some difference between authorities in this perception and at the 0.05 confidence level, is statistically significant (χ^2 , with 6 degrees of freedom giving a Pearson value of 15 with a significance of 0.02). Workers at *Wycombe* and *Brent* clearly perceive a greater influence of their respective quality management programmes than is the case at *Newcastle*.

**Figure 10:2: Effect of Quality Management on Overall Concerns at Work
(per-cent of Job Type)**

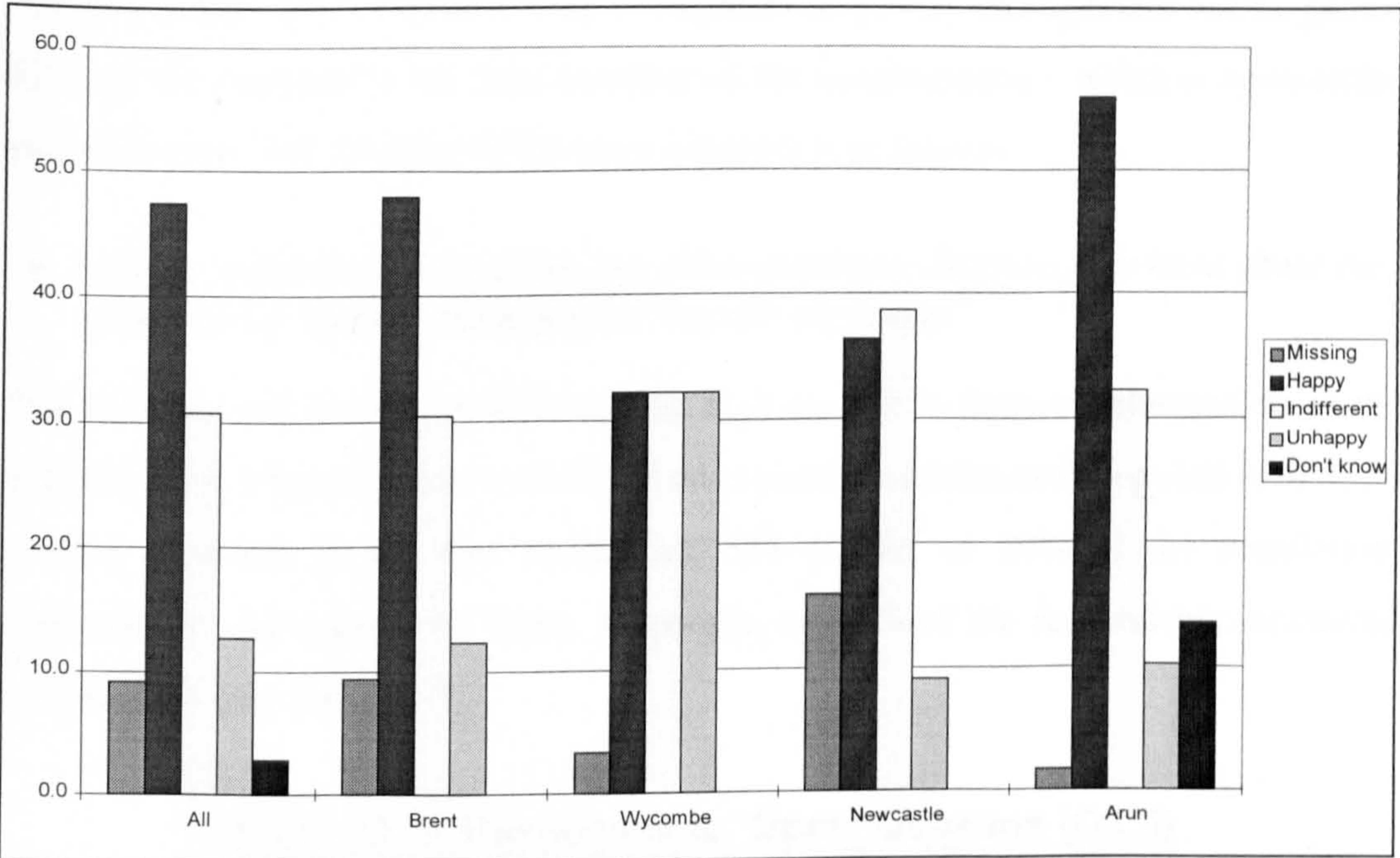


(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 8.95, significance = 0.1765, minimum expected frequency = 10.875)

As figure 10:2 indicates, however, when differentiated by job type, perceptions about quality management's effect on overall work concerns do not appear to differ and have no statistical significance. Those in regulatory functions seem to have a higher than average perception that the policy had some 'nominal effect', and higher level of those who thought it had a 'real effect'. Those in social welfare functions, in contrast, seem most divided between those who think that quality management had 'no effect' and those who think it had a 'real effect'.

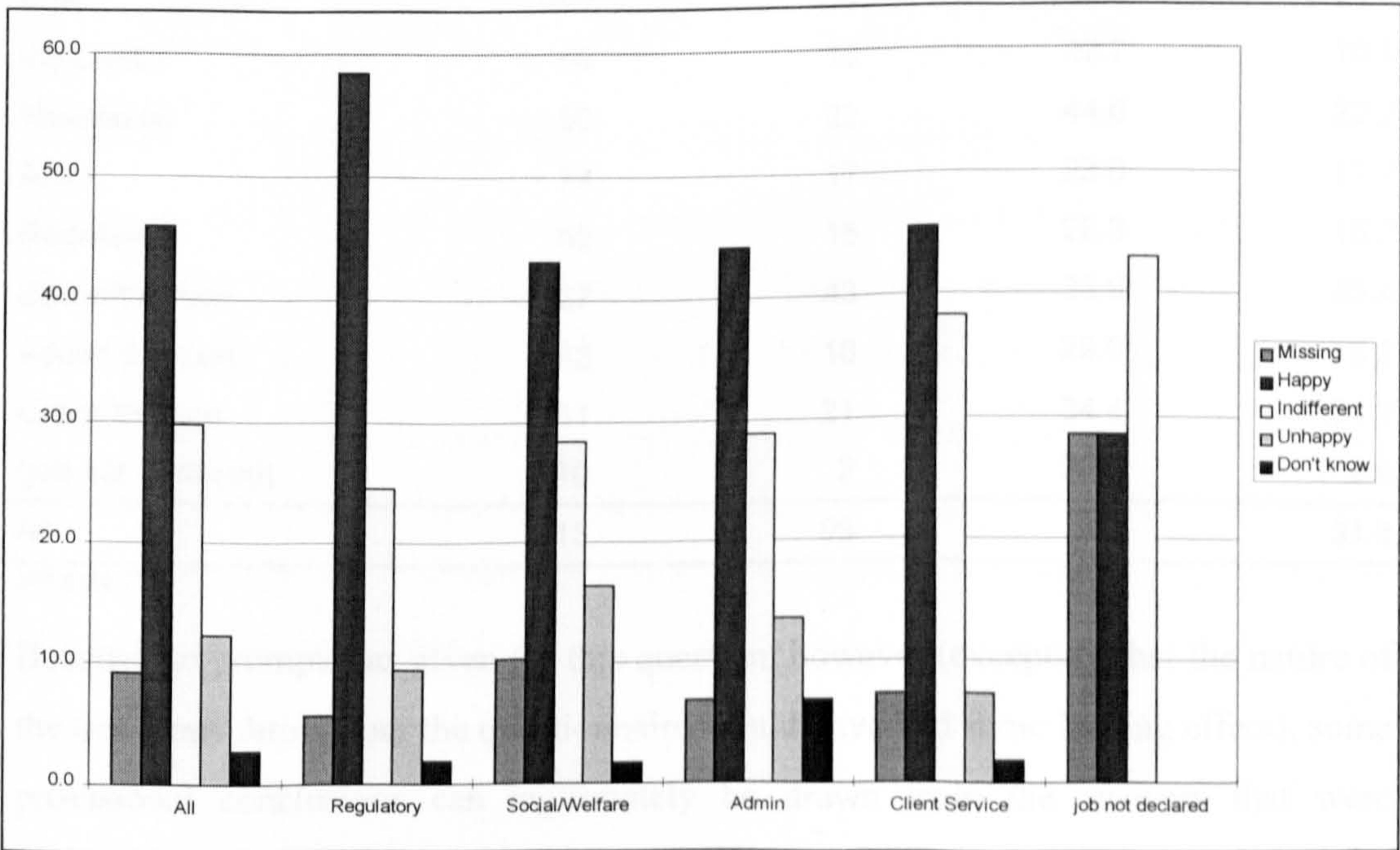
Allied to this issue, is the overall impression of the quality policy; whether the policy is generally approved of or disapproved of. Overall, workers tend to approve of the policy (figure 10:3 and 10:4). There are, again, some differences between authorities (figure 10:3) and, to a lesser extent, between job types (figure 10:4), but the differences in both cases are not statistically significant. *Arun* workers tend to be the most happy with the policy and *Wycombe* workers the least happy. Similarly, workers in regulatory functions tend to be the most happy and those workers involved in social/welfare work the least happy.

Figure 10:3: General Opinion of Quality Management (per-cent of Authority)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 32.0829, significance =0.00019, cells with expected freq <5 = 25%)

Figure 10:4: General Opinion of Quality Management (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 10.303, significance =0.32653, cells with expected freq <5 = 25%)

c) Unprompted views on quality management

Another insight into workers overall perceptions of quality management can be gained through the response to the final question on the questionnaire - which is open-ended and voluntary. The wording of the open question is as follows:

- *“Please feel free to write down any other comments that you may have about the operation of ‘Quality Management’ in your workplace”*

The response rate to this question was not high enough to draw conclusions about the population of respondents as a whole. From a possible (estimated) population of 1550 *Unison* members in the four authorities, 311 people, or 20% of the population, responded to the survey. Of these, 98 people, or 35% of the respondents, answered question 3:8 (see table 10:7).

Table 10:7: Responses to ‘Open’ Question (Q3:8)

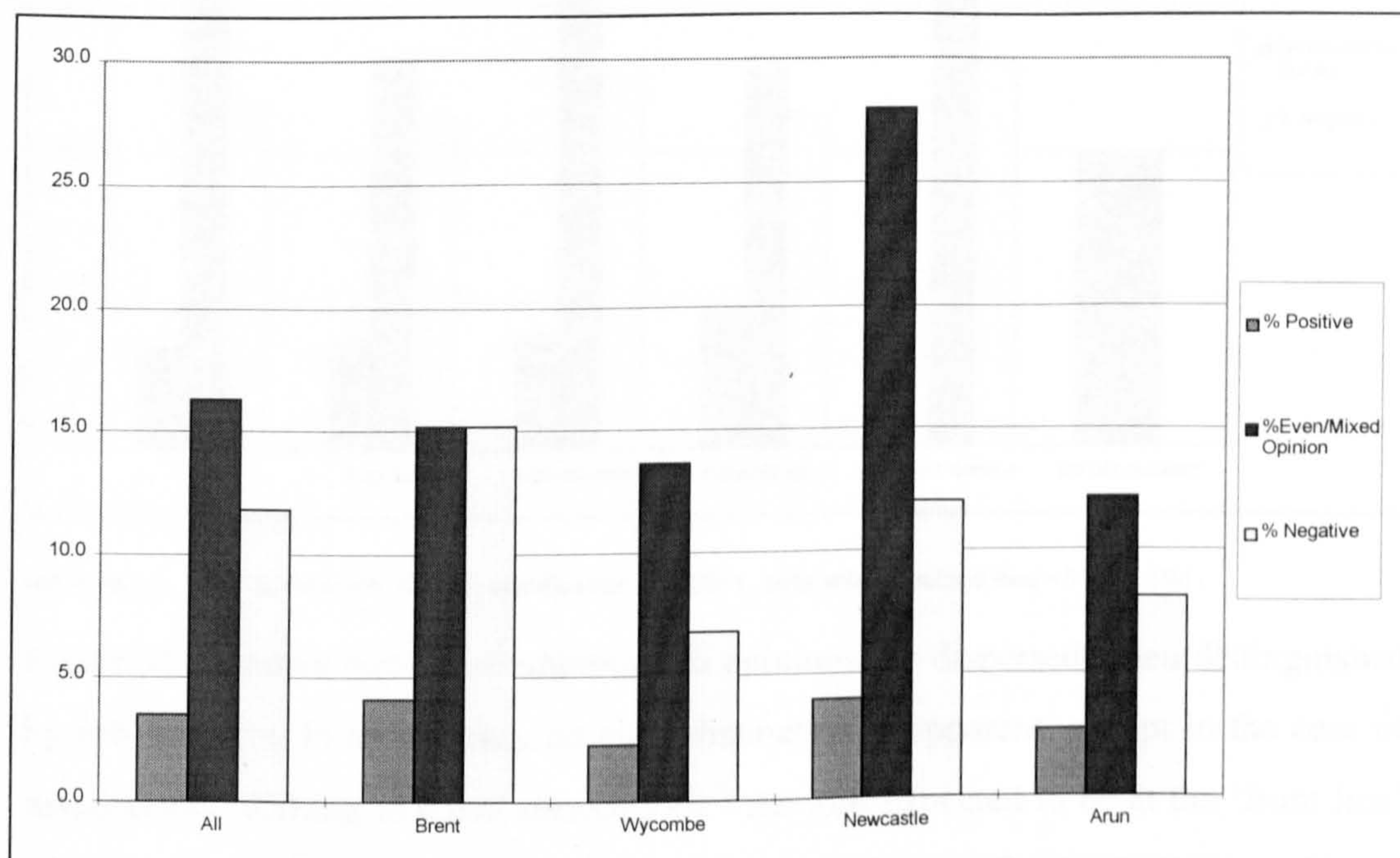
	No of returned questionnaires	No. of responses to Q3:8	% of category (authority/job function) responding to Q3:8	% of total responses responding to Q3:8
Brent	145	50	34.5	50.5
Wycombe	44	10	22.7	10.1
Newcastle	50	22	44.0	22.2
Arun	74	17	23.0	17.2
Regulatory	53	15	28.3	15.2
Social/Welfare	127	43	33.9	43.4
Admin/Support	62	18	29.0	18.2
Client Service	61	21	34.4	21.2
(job not declared)	10	2	20.0	2.0
All	313	99	100	31.6

(All data.)

Because no prompt was given for this question, however (excepting that the nature of the questions throughout the questionnaire would have had some leading effect), some provisional conclusions can legitimately be drawn from the answers that were volunteered.

If the responses are broadly categorised as being either positive, negative, or mixed/neutral views about the quality policy, negative views outnumber the positive views. Figures 10:5 and 10:6 show how these positive/neutral/negative opinions are dispersed as a proportion of all returned questionnaires.

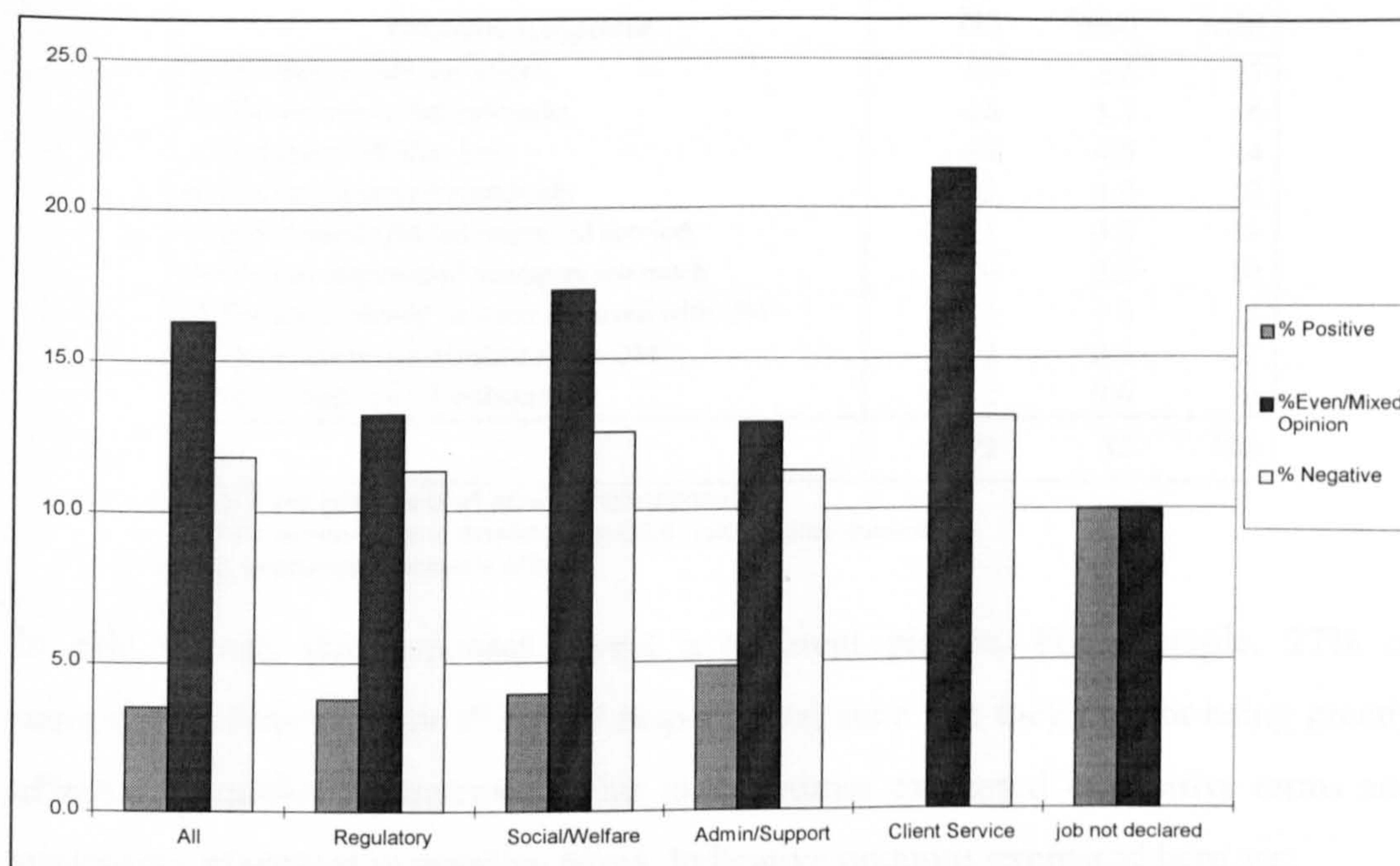
Figure 10:5: Unprompted Opinions of Quality Management as Percentage of Total Responses (by Authority)



(All data. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 2.80925, significance = 0.83238, cells with expected freq < 5 = 33.3%)

In figure 10:5 it can be seen that, overall, most responses fall under the 'mixed views/neutral' category. While, statistically, distinctions cannot be made between authorities on this, there are some observable differences between some authorities. In *Newcastle*, for example, while a high proportion of respondents volunteered an unprompted opinion (44%), the opinions expressed tend to fall disproportionately under the 'mixed views/neutral' category while, in contrast, opinions from *Brent* are disproportionately negative.

Figure 10:6: Unprompted Opinions of Quality Management as percentage of Total Responses (by Job Function)



(All data. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 3.786, significance = 0.70561, cells with expected freq < 5 = 33.3%)

Figure 10:6 shows how these unprompted opinions are dispersed when distinguished by job function. In most cases, no clear distinction is apparent, except in the case of respondents working in client service jobs - the jobs expected to be at the 'front line' of the service encounter. Here, opinion is skewed towards the negative with no positive comments made, just over 20% having 'mixed' or 'even' views and 13% having negative views. Statistical significance in these differences is, again, weak though.

If the responses to question 3:8 are categorised differently, a different distribution of issues are presented. If, instead of categorising opinion on a simple pro-neutral-anti basis, opinion is instead differentiated by issue, responses could be divided into nine categories. Viewed in this way, the categorised responses are distributed as per table 10:8.

Table 10:8: Q3:8 Response Categories*

Recoded Response	Total		
	No	%(a)	%(b)
1) QM has not had any effect	27	8.6	27
2) QM has concealed cut-backs	16	5.1	16
3) QM is a good idea, but...	14	4.5	14
4) QM has increased workloads	12	3.8	12
5) QM is good/QM has improved services	11	3.5	11
6) QM has empowered managers too much	10	3.2	10
7) The union should be more involved with QM	5	1.6	5
8) The union is too negative about QM	2	0.6	2
9) QM is tied to CCT/outsourcing	2	0.6	2
Total	99	32	100

%(a) = per-centage of all returned questionnaires

%(b) = per-centage of responses to Q3:8 (unprompted comments)

(n=99: unprompted opinions only.)

In this format, the responses reveal a different picture. For example, 27% of unprompted responses (or 9% of all respondents) state that they are not being greatly affected by quality management. This is sometimes expressed in positive terms and sometimes expressed in negative terms. Indicative opinions expressed here are:

"The 'Customer care' policy exists but does not affect our section as much as some who have more direct contact with the public. We feel our general attitude has always been one of assistance and co-operation with the public so the new 'system' has generally had little effect." (Planning Engineer: Arun)

"Unaware of it having any real effect. Colleagues seem to be more concerned about admin. matters, not service delivery. Same applies to management. As for councillors...and union...I am deeply cynical." (Outdoor Youth Worker: Newcastle)

"They are just words with little meaning in relation to staff" (Social Services Worker: Brent)

"I believe it's just another fashion that will come and go like many management practices have in the past." (Planning Officer: Wycombe)

Within this group of expressed opinion, however, some interesting differences again emerge between authorities and between job types (see figure 10:7, below). 28% of all staff at Newcastle (64% of all unprompted responses) express this 'lack of any impact' perception about quality management. This is exceptionally high when compared to the equivalent opinions in Arun (8% of all Arun respondents), Wycombe (7%) and Brent (3%). In terms of job types, those in client services express 'a lack of any impact' opinion most - at 16% of all client services responses, or 47% of

unprompted client service responses. This is in marked contrast to those in regulatory functions where this opinion is not expressed by anyone.

The next most popular response, at 5.1% - or 16% of unprompted answers, is that quality management was being used to disguise cut-backs in staff or resources; or that 'quality' was being affected by cuts in resources. This view is tied more to particular authorities than to job types. It is disproportionately felt in the two metropolitan boroughs, being the most frequent response in *Brent* (8%) and the second most frequent in *Newcastle* (4%), yet is only expressed by one other respondent in both the other two authorities (*Arun*).

Examples of these responses include:

"I would like to believe that Quality Management is No. 1 - but I believe cost is No. 1 and from now on, always will be" (Benefits worker: *Arun*)

"QM in the form of ISO 9002, has increased the volume of paperwork and not necessarily the quality of service. We are trying to produce a quality service in crumbling buildings caused by budget reductions. In addition we have less staff doing the work." (Leisure worker: *Newcastle*)

"A veneer tacked onto a declining service. Many of the packs were patronising and insulting and the belief that - despite cuts in services (in this case not buying any new books for two years) - all staff had to do was smile and say 'how may I help you?' and customers wouldn't notice, seemed ridiculous." (Librarian: *Brent*)

The third most popular response, at 4.5% of all respondents and 14% of those volunteering an opinion, is that of a qualified acceptance of quality management as a general principle - but with reservations. While the balance of the opinion expressed is sometimes negative and sometimes positive, opinion here is that quality management could potentially be seen as acceptable in some form. This 'mixed' response is prevalent in two authorities (7% in *Wycombe* and 6% in *Newcastle*) and is the most frequent response among regulatory functions (8%). Some examples of responses, here, are:

"On the whole I'm quite happy with QM working practices as they have helped my disorganised nature, although I have reservations on the amount of paperwork it can tend to generate." (Leisure worker: *Newcastle*)

"While there have been casualties in terms of many staff losing jobs or having to re-adjust to pay and conditions, the users of the local authority's services have

gained a much better service (mostly anyway) and better value for money" (Housing worker: Brent)

"Quality Management is a good idea. The problem is that Brent is a CRAP council with power-hungry people at the top who do not give a damn about anybody but themselves." (Social Services worker: Brent)

"Broadly agree with principle of performance appraisal but appraisal is too infrequent. Once or twice a year not enough. Performance related pay does not motivate and often has a demotivating effect - it should be withdrawn." (Planning Officer: Wycombe)

The forth most popular response, representing 3.8% of all respondents (12% of volunteered responses), is that quality management had increased workloads. This response is expressed by 7% of Brent workers (or 20% of unprompted responses at Brent - being the second most frequent response in this case). In contrast, this opinion is expressed by only one person in each of Wycombe and Arun and is not expressed at all in Newcastle. This opinion is also most felt among people working in social/welfare type work (being 9% of all respondents and 21% of unprompted responses). A selection of responses is provided below.

"My grade has been cut and my workload doubled" (Social Services worker: Brent)

"In my opinion quality management is just not working. Things ran more smoothly under the old system as we had more time with individual clients. Under this new system I have to fit in up to four - sometimes five - clients in the same time as I used to do two." (Social Services worker: Brent)

In contrast to much of the above, where approval is only given with qualification, 3.5% of all respondents (or 11% of unprompted responses) feel that quality management in their workplace is unambiguously good. No clear distinction between authorities or job types is apparent here. Responses here included:

"It can only be a good thing." (Outdoor Leisure worker: Newcastle)

"Quality management motivates staff who are allowed to take on additional responsibilities if their achievements are recognised and rewarded - appraisal and PRP are essential for quality management." (Environmental Health Officer: Brent)

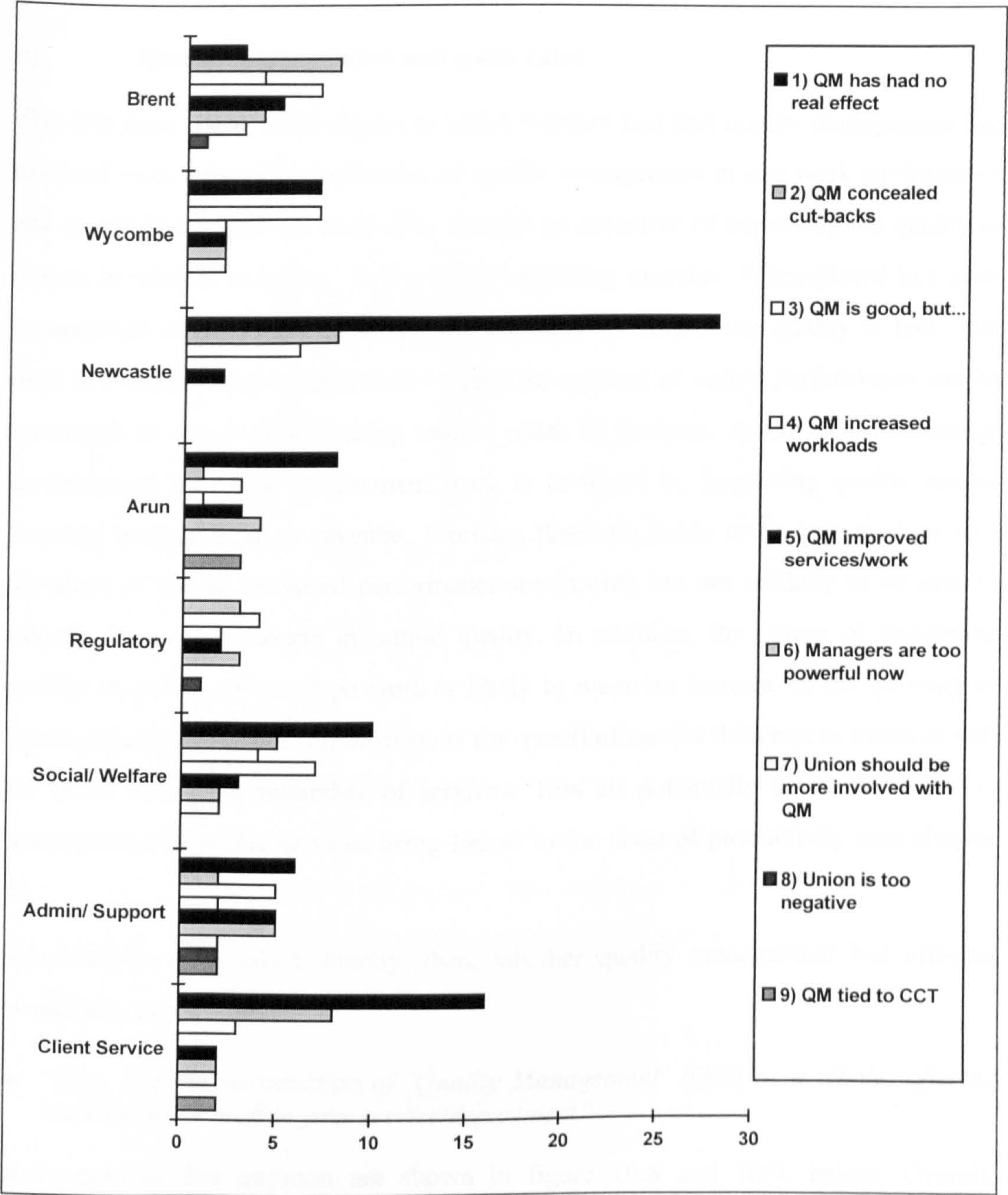
The same number of people giving unqualified approval, however, feel that quality management has been responsible for giving too much power to managers. This is felt by 3.2% of all respondents, or 10% of unprompted opinion:

"Just an excuse to inflate management pay while dismissing long-serving staff on weak reasons and lies." (Corporate Services worker: *Arun*)

"No job description. No job evaluation. If face fits, high salary." (Education Officer: *Brent*)

If these responses are combined with the 12% of unprompted responses stating that quality management had increased workloads, it could be said that 22% of unprompted responses convey the opinion that quality management has led to an increase of 'management by stress'. This issue has been considered separately through the use of specific questions in two sections below. The same is true for the issue of the union's role, where a further 2.2% of respondents feel that the union should be more involved in the process or that the union should be more positive about the 'benefits' of quality management. This opinion, however, is restricted almost exclusively to workers in *Brent* which, when considered with the slightly higher than average unqualified support for quality management by some at *Brent*, suggests a degree of polarisation about quality management at this authority. A final response (2 persons, both at *Arun*) consider that the issue of quality management is intrinsically tied to the issue of CCT.

Figure 10:7: Unprompted Opinions (Recoded) as Per-centage of Total Responses (by Authority and Job Type)



(313: unprompted opinions only. per-centage is per-centage of total responses for each group i.e. 28% bar in Newcastle represents 28% of all Newcastle respondents)

Quality Management and Work Intensification

In addressing ‘general’ perceptions workers have about quality management, above, some of the issues that the questionnaire was specifically targeting have been raised. More detailed - and, perhaps, more representative - opinions on these issues are,

however, better addressed in more specific questions. This is the case for the issue of quality management's effect on work intensification.

a) Quality management and work rates

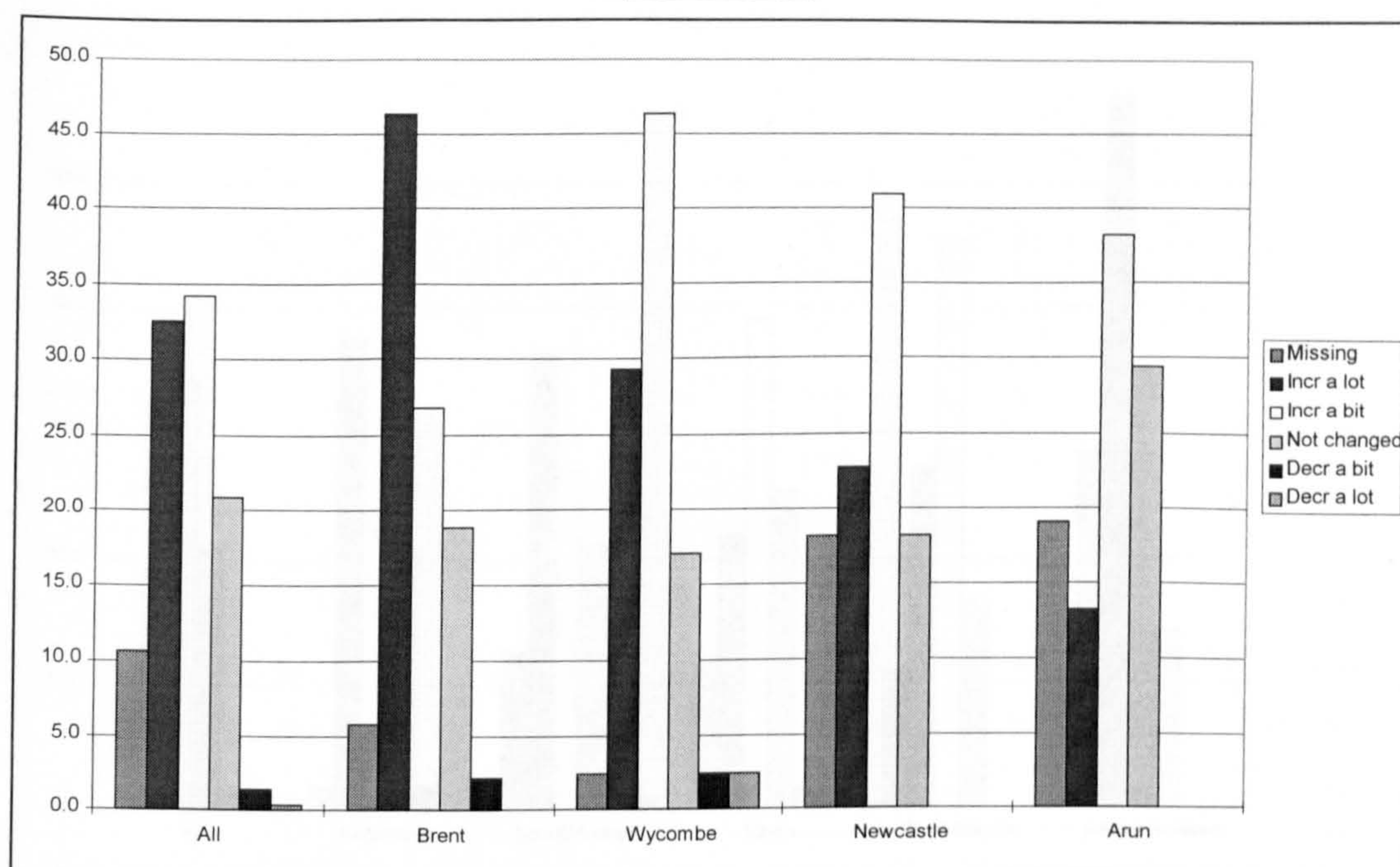
The first issue, here, is the degree to which workers feel that quality management had affected work rates. The application of quality management in any work environment has an implicit impact on work rates through its objective of improving the quality of output in relation to inputs - it is a value enhancing exercise. When placed in a non-commercial environment, however, the potential for improving quality is less clear than in a commercial environment - where the success of output performance can be measured in terms of increasing market share or revenue. In the non-commercial environment that local government work is involved in, improving quality cannot increase market share or revenue. Workers, then, are liable to find themselves in a situation of facing increased performance monitoring but are unlikely to be able to benefit from any increase in output quality. In addition, the nature of improving quality in public service type work is likely to mean an increase in the *quantity* of services being provided, *responsiveness* (or speed) of service delivery, as much as will be about increasing reliability of services. This all potentially amounts to quality management in public services being linked to the issue of productivity (see chapter 5).

Respondents were asked directly, then, whether quality management had affected workloads as a whole:

- *"How has the introduction of 'Quality Management' (QM) as a whole, affected work loads for staff in your service/department"*

Responses to this question are shown in figure 10:8 and 10:9, below. Overall, workloads are perceived to have risen 'a lot' by 31% of respondents and 'a bit' by 34% of respondents. Workloads are perceived to have 'stayed the same' by 21% of respondents. Only 1.5% of respondents perceive workloads to have declined 'a bit' as a result of quality management and a mere 0.3% perceive workloads to have declined 'a lot'. Within these overall figures, however, there is a great deal of differences between authorities (see figure 10:15).

Figure 10:8: Effect of Quality Management on Workloads (per-cent of Authority)

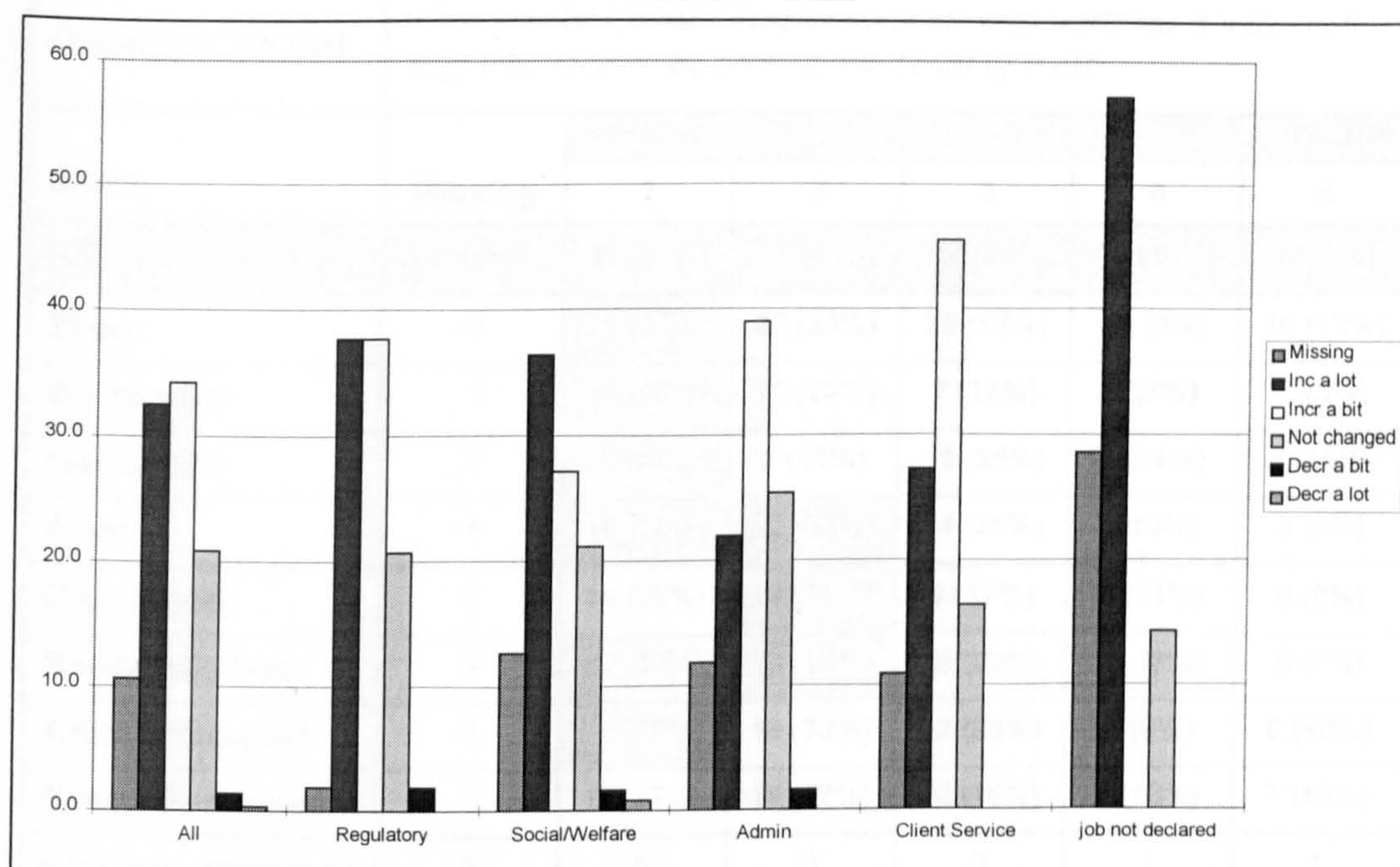


(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 32.62972, significance = 0.00111, cells with expected freq < 5 = 40%)

While no statistical distinctions can be made between authorities - the sample being too small in some cases - leading to a 40% of cells with an expected frequency below 5 on the chi-square test. As can be seen, though, of the four authorities, workers at *Brent* and *Wycombe* perceive the greatest increase in workloads as a result of quality management. In *Brent*, where the quality management policy being pursued was the most holistic and thorough-going of the four authorities, 46.5% perceive workloads to have increased 'a lot' and 27% perceive workloads to have increased 'a bit'. At *Wycombe* - which had a performance-based approach to quality - a smaller number perceive workloads to have increased 'a lot'. However, a higher than average 46.5% of *Wycombe* respondents perceive that workloads had increased 'a bit'. These cases contrast with *Arun* where, despite nominal opinion still suggesting that workloads had increased 'a bit', have a higher rate of responses stating that workloads had stayed the same: only 13% perceive that workloads had increased 'a lot', 38% perceive that workloads had increased 'a bit', but 29% perceive 'no change' to workloads.

Differences between job functions also display some variance - though not as marked as between authorities and, again, not by any statistical importance (see figure 10:9).

Figure 10:9: Effect of Quality Management on Workloads (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 12, Pearson = 11.1434, significance = 0.51667, cells with expected freq < 5 = 40%)

Here, people working in regulatory functions perceive the greatest increase in workloads (37% 'a lot' and 37% 'a bit') compared to those working in administrative/support functions (22% 'a lot' and 39% 'a bit').

b) Quality management and productivity

In addition to the direct question asked about work-rates, the responses to another two *likert-scale* statements may be examined:

- *Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all*
- *'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of staff without an increase in pay'*

Responses to these statements are intended to show how closely workers feel that quality management is associated with general 'productivity' issues (i.e. the quantity or effectiveness of work done in a given timescale and/or wage rate). The responses to the first of these statements, relating to the level of exposure staff feel as a result of quality management, is shown in table 10:9, below. Shaded areas show the more significant figures.

Table 10:9: Quality Management and Productivity (i)

Question 3:6 (iii)	<i>'Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree				
		1	2	3	4	5
All	10	96 (33%)	72 (25%)	57 (20%)	30 (10%)	27 (9%)
Brent	2	51 (37%)	32 (23%)	25 (18%)	12 (9%)	16 (12%)
Wycombe	1	18 (43%)	11 (26%)	7 (17%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)
Newcastle	3	11 (25%)	7 (16%)	11 (25%)	6 (14%)	6 (14%)
Arun	4	16 (24%)	22 (32%)	14 (21%)	9 (13%)	3 (4%)
Regulatory	0	14 (26%)	19 (36%)	9 (17%)	6 (11%)	5 (9%)
Social/Welfare	4	50 (42%)	19 (16%)	26 (22%)	11 (9%)	8 (7%)
Admin/Support	5	12 (20%)	19 (32%)	12 (20%)	5 (9%)	6 (10%)
Client Services	1	15 (27%)	15 (27%)	10 (18%)	7 (13%)	7 (13%)
(job not declared)	0	5	0	0	1	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 15.04847, significance = 0.2388, cells with expected frequency <5 = 20%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 17.413, significance = 0.13472, cells with expected frequency <5 = 5%)

Here, overall responses show a significant skew towards agreement. This suggests that workers may have been feeling 'squeezed' by the various demands made by service users, 'internal customers' and the attainment of performance targets by managers acting as proxy for 'customers'. Differences emerge, however, in the relative strength of agreement between authorities and, to a lesser extent, between job functions. The strongest agreement is found in *Brent* and *Newcastle* and the weakest in *Newcastle* and *Arun*. Agreement is also stronger in social/welfare functions and regulatory functions than in administrative/support functions. As the chi-square figures demonstrate, however, differences between authorities and job function are not statistically significant.

Responses to the second statement, which relates to how closely staff perceive quality management is linked to general productivity issues, are shown in table 10:10, below.

Table 10:10: Quality Management and Productivity (ii)

Question 3:6 (vii)		<i>'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of staff without an increase in pay'</i>				
Scale	Missing	agree			disagree	
		1	2	3	4	5
All	10	95 (33%)	75 (26%)	60 (21%)	36 (12%)	16 (5%)
Brent	1	60 (44%)	33 (24%)	24 (17%)	10 (7%)	10 (7%)
Wycombe	0	12 (29%)	15 (37%)	6 (15%)	9 (22%)	0 (0%)
Newcastle	2	11 (25%)	12 (27%)	8 (18%)	6 (14%)	5 (11%)
Arun	7	12 (18%)	15 (22%)	22 (32%)	11 (16%)	1 (1%)
Regulatory	1	12 (23%)	18 (34%)	13 (25%)	6 (11%)	3 (6%)
Social/Welfare	2	49 (42%)	18 (15%)	24 (20%)	17 (14%)	7 (6%)
Admin/Support	3	20 (34%)	18 (31%)	8 (14%)	8 (14%)	2 (4%)
Client Services	3	10 (18%)	20 (36%)	14 (25%)	5 (9%)	3 (5%)
(job not declared)	0	4	1	1	0	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 33.49534, significance = 0.00081, cells with expected frequency <5 = 15%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 21.01281, significance = 0.05019, cells with expected frequency <5 = 15%)

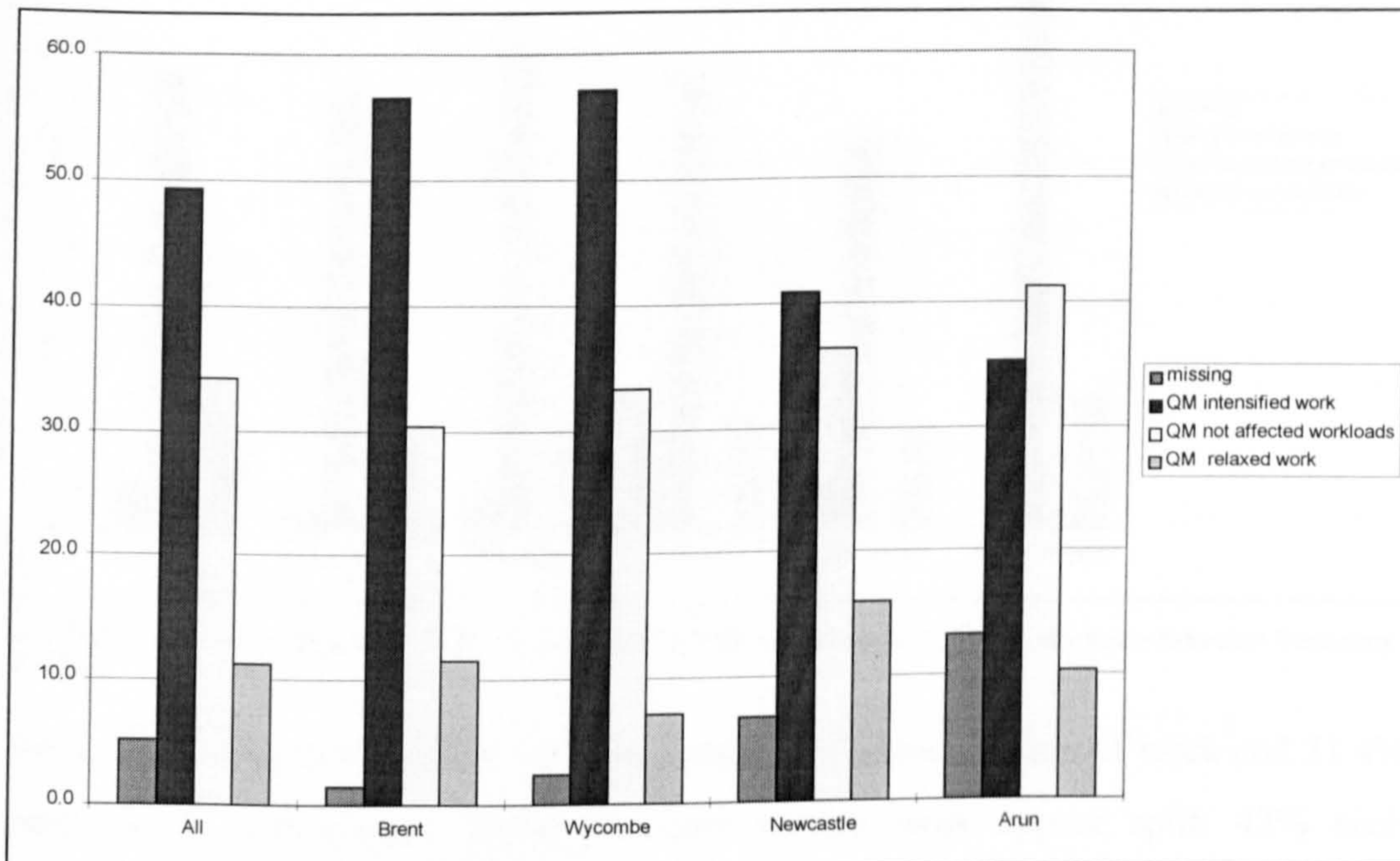
Again, opinion is skewed heavily towards agreement with the statement, suggesting, that workers are perceiving that quality management is being used as an efficiency tool more than as a tool to enhance value-added per se. As in the case of the previous, related, question this perception is highest at *Brent* and at *Wycombe* - where performance monitoring was probably the most developed - and lowest at *Arun* and at *Newcastle*. On this statement, however, there is considerable statistical significance to the differences between authorities: χ^2 , at twelve degrees of freedom, giving a Pearson rating of 33.5 with a significance of 0.00081, with only 15% of cells with a minimum expected frequency of less than 5. No clear differences are apparent between job functions.

c) **Quality management and work intensification**

On the general issue of work-rates and productivity, then, responses suggest that council staff perceived an increase in workloads, productivity and exposure to 'customers' as a result of quality management. This is further illustrated if the responses of the previously mentioned likert-scale questions are combined and the

cumulative scores compressed to provide an indicator of 'work intensification' i.e. the perception of increased impetus to increase or improve work. The responses to this derivative question is shown in figure 10:10, below.

Figure 10:10: Quality Management and the Intensification of Work (percent of Authority)

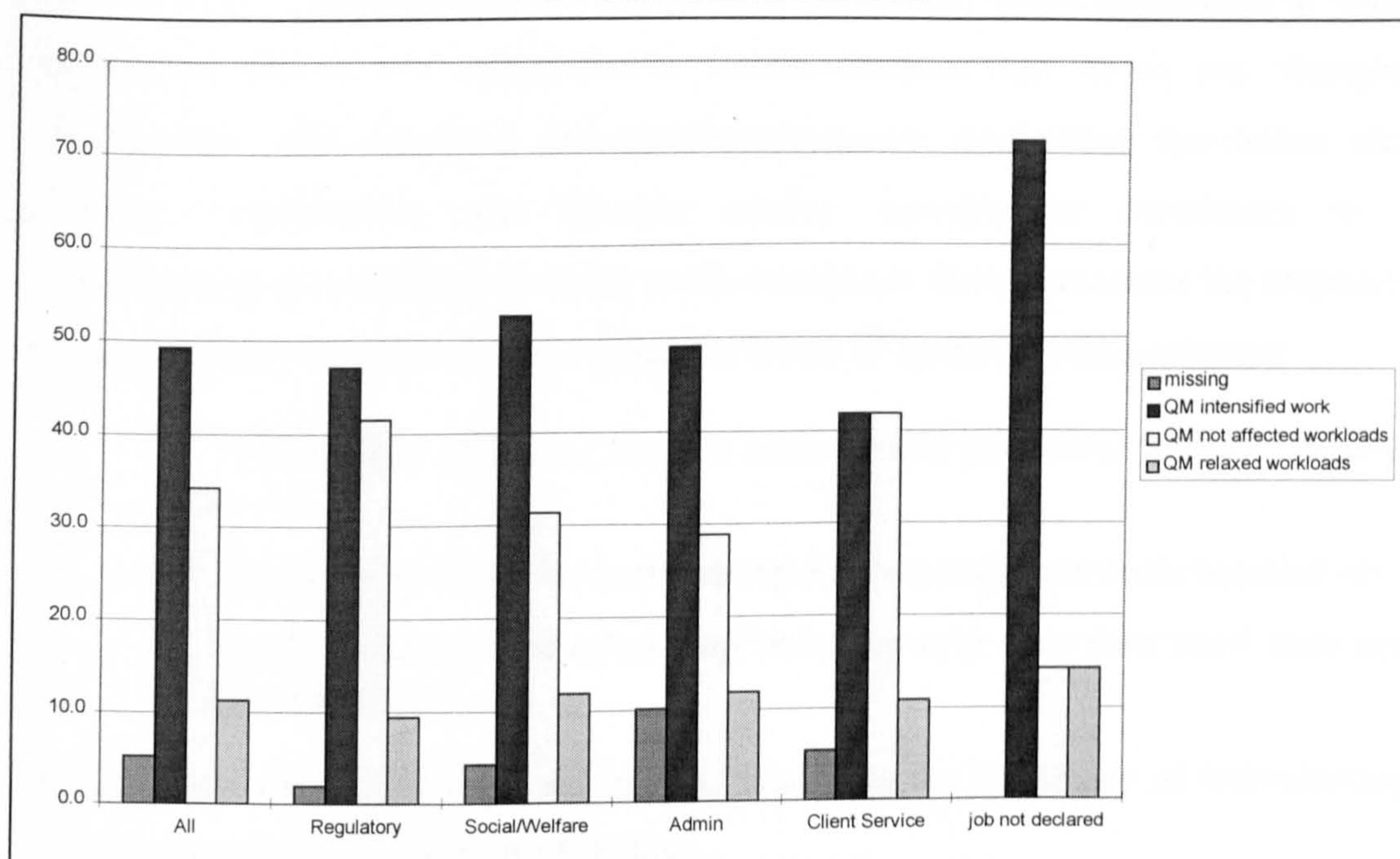


(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 7.979, significance = 0.23966, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 16.7%)

Here, then, the overall perception is of an intensification of work due to quality management (49% in the category suggesting work intensification had taken place; 34% in the category suggesting no difference and 11% in the category suggesting a relaxation of work). However, no systematic statistical significance can be made of the differences between authorities here, although some *apparent* differences emerge. Distinctions between authorities are most notable, again, between *Brent* and *Wycombe* (56.5% and 57% 'intensification' respectively) and *Newcastle* and *Arun* (41% and 35% 'intensification', respectively - and 16% 'relaxation' at *Newcastle*).

Differences between job functions on this issue are shown in figure 10:11, below.

Figure 10:11: Quality Management and the Intensification of Work (percent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 2.9148, significance = 0.81947, minimum expected frequency = 6.044)

Here, 52.5% of social/welfare workers perceive an intensification of work and 31.4% perceive no real change. Those in client service work appear split: 42% each perceiving intensification and no change.

There is an interesting contrast between the responses to this issue and to the issue of workloads, described earlier. While those in regulatory services feel that workloads have increased as a result of quality management, there is no equivalent distinction for this group of workers on the issue of work intensification.

'Public Service', Ideology and Management Legitimacy

The second major issue being directly addressed here concerns the ideological impact of quality management. Quality management is deeply rooted in managerialist assumptions about work organisation, in terms that place a high priority on managers being 'leaders' and 'enablers' of workers and on the importance of cultivating an 'appropriate' work culture. This is in contrast to more 'traditional' assumptions of 'public service ethos' as the key motivating factor - even if this itself tends to manifest itself as paternalistic and is, perhaps, somewhat mythical. An important consideration,

then, has been to assess whether workers accept the legitimacy of quality management in their work - particularly in the adoption of 'customer' based approaches to work. Related to this is how supportive or hostile workers may be to any changing relationships with managers (increased performance monitoring, devolution etc). Another consideration was whether quality management contributes to a reinforcement of a unitarist ideology at the workplace. For these issues the responses to the following statements were offered for levels of agreement/disagreement:

- *'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'*
- *'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'*
- *'Quality Management offers staff more say over their own work than was the case before'*

Responses to the first of these statements, relating to the legitimacy of individuating workers, are shown in table 10:11, below.

Table 10:11: Quality Management and Workplace Ideology (i)

Question 3:6 (iv)	<i>'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'</i>					
	Missing	agree			disagree	
Scale		1	2	3	4	5
All	7	52 (18%)	72 (24%)	70 (24%)	45 (15%)	46 (16%)
Brent	3	25 (18%)	31 (23%)	34 (25%)	16 (12%)	29 (21%)
Wycombe	0	8 (19%)	14 (33%)	10 (24%)	5 (12%)	5 (12%)
Newcastle	2	9 (20%)	11 (25%)	10 (23%)	7 (16%)	5 (11%)
Arun	2	10 (15%)	16 (24%)	16 (24%)	17 (25%)	7 (10%)
Regulatory	0	6 (11%)	19 (36%)	13 (25%)	10 (19%)	5 (9%)
Social/Welfare	3	15 (13%)	29 (25%)	32 (27%)	14 (12%)	25 (21%)
Admin/Support	2	13 (22%)	11 (19%)	15 (25%)	10 (17%)	8 (14%)
Client Services	2	16 (29%)	13 (24%)	9 (16%)	8 (14%)	7 (13%)
(job not declared)	0	2	0	1	3	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 12.52341, significance = 0.40461, minimum expected frequency = 6.632. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 18.74475, significance = 0.09488, minimum expected frequency = 7.856)

Here, the overall opinion is neutral, skewing slightly toward agreement. While there is no statistical support for any systematic difference between authorities or job function, variations between job functions seem stronger than between authorities in this case. At *Wycombe*, where performance appraisal was the basis of quality management, opinion is more strongly 'in agreement' than elsewhere. At *Brent* and *Newcastle*, however, opinion follows the general pattern of 'mild agreement' - though at *Brent*, nearly as many people 'strongly disagree' (score 5) that appraisal makes employees more valued as feel 'neutral' (score 3). At *Arun* opinion is skewed toward disagreement - the most frequent response being 'mild disagreement' (score 4) with the statement. In terms of job functions people in regulatory functions and client services tend to be 'in agreement' whereas those in social/welfare functions tend to be 'in disagreement'.

Table 10:12 shows the response to the second statement - advocating a unitarist approach to quality.

Table 10:12: Quality Management and Workplace Ideology (ii)

Question 3:6 (v)	<i>'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree				disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
All	8	114 (39%)	80 (27%)	57 (20%)	19 (7%)	14 (5%)
Brent	3	61 (44%)	32 (23%)	25 (18%)	11 (8%)	6 (8%)
Wycombe	0	17 (41%)	12 (30%)	9 (22%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Newcastle	2	11 (25%)	15 (34%)	10 (23%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)
Arun	3	25 (37%)	21 (31%)	13 (19%)	2 (3%)	4 (6%)
Regulatory	1	23 (43%)	17 (32%)	7 (13%)	5 (9%)	0 (0%)
Social/Welfare	3	45 (38%)	32 (27%)	23 (19%)	7 (6%)	8 (7%)
Admin/Support	3	26 (44%)	13 (22%)	10 (17%)	3 (5%)	4 (7%)
Client Services	1	18 (33%)	16 (29%)	15 (27%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
(job not declared)	0	2	2	2	0	1

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 8.33606, significance = 0.75835, cells with expected frequency <5 = 30%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 12.29652, significance = 0.42217, cells with expected frequency <5 = 30%)

Here, opinion is skewed significantly towards agreement. This suggests that quality is an issue which has harnessed worker support, at least in principle, and that there is not a great deal of resistance to the legitimacy of (not necessarily unilateral) management decision-making for the organisation of improving service quality. While, again, not statistically significant, agreement is stronger at *Brent* and *Wycombe* than at *Newcastle* and *Arun*; and agreement is stronger in regulatory functions and weaker in client services.

Responses to the third statement on this issue, relating more to the 'empowerment' theme in quality management, is shown in table 10:13.

Table 10:13: Quality Management and workplace Ideology (iii)

Question 3:6 (viii)	<i>'Quality Management offers staff more say over their own work than was the case before'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree				disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
All	9	33 (11%)	54 (18%)	77 (26%)	64 (22%)	55 (19%)
Brent	1	23 (17%)	24 (17%)	28 (20%)	26 (19%)	36 (26%)
Wycombe	0	7 (17%)	9 (21%)	9 (21%)	12 (29%)	5 (12%)
Newcastle	2	2 (5%)	10 (23%)	9 (20%)	14 (32%)	7 (16%)
Arun	6	1 (1%)	11 (16%)	31 (46%)	12 (18%)	7 (10%)
Regulatory	0	10 (19%)	11 (21%)	15 (28%)	13 (22%)	8 (14%)
Social/Welfare	3	7 (6%)	20 (17%)	32 (27%)	23 (19%)	33 (28%)
Admin/Support	3	9 (15%)	12 (20%)	14 (24%)	13 (22%)	8 (14%)
Client Services	3	6 (11%)	10 (18%)	14 (25%)	14 (25%)	8 (15%)
(job not declared)	0	1	1	2	1	2

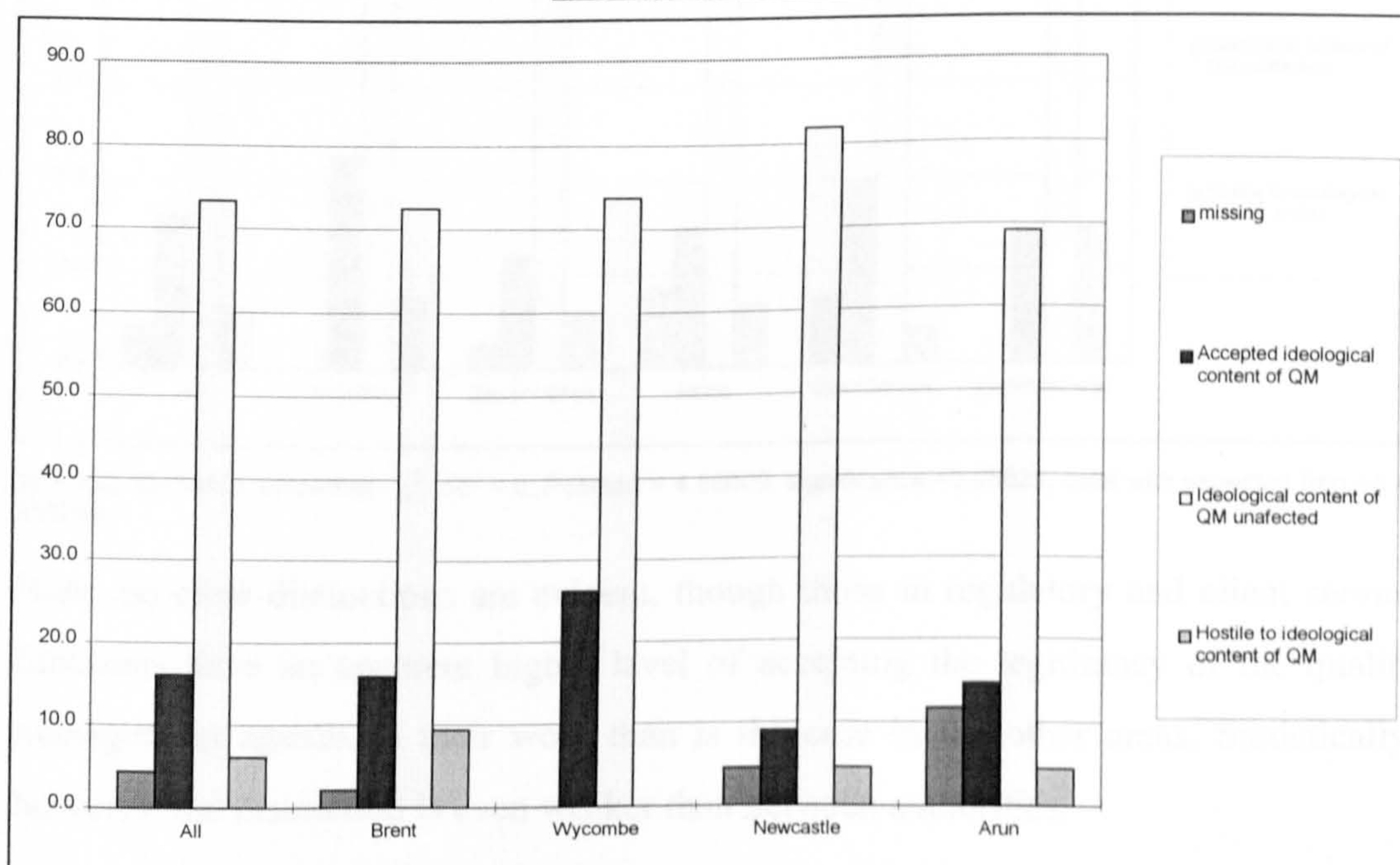
(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 37.78995, significance = 0.00017, cells with expected frequency <5 = 10%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 17.78645, significance = 0.12233, minimum expected frequency 6.029)

Here, overall responses suggests a largely neutral opinion on this issue - though tending towards disagreement. This suggests that workers are not seeing quality management as an 'empowering' exercise. However, there are some statistically significant differences between authorities, here (χ^2 at 12 degrees of freedom giving a Pearson value of 37.8, with a significance of 0.00017 with only 10% of cells with a minimum expected frequency of less than 5). Opinion at *Brent* (where 'empowerment

of managers was a key theme) seems polarised, having a higher than average frequency of responses in the 'strongly agree' and 'strongly disagree' category. At *Wycombe* opinion is more evenly spread. Opinion at *Newcastle*, on the other hand, is skewed towards disagreement, while opinion at *Arun* is - significantly - neutral. Distinctions between job functions are also apparent - though not statistically significant. Both administrative/support functions and client service functions tend to follow the average. However, there is some difference between regulatory functions (agreement) and social/welfare functions (disagreement).

In combining and compressing the scores for these three related issues, a score for the effect of quality management on workplace ideology can be constructed. Here, a score of 1-3 indicates that the ideological content of quality management ('customers', appraisal, 'empowerment' etc) is accepted; a score of 2-7 indicates a neutral effect; and a score of 7-10 indicates hostility. The results are shown in figure 10:12 and 10:13, below.

Figure 10:12: Legitimacy of the Content of Quality Management (percent of Authority)

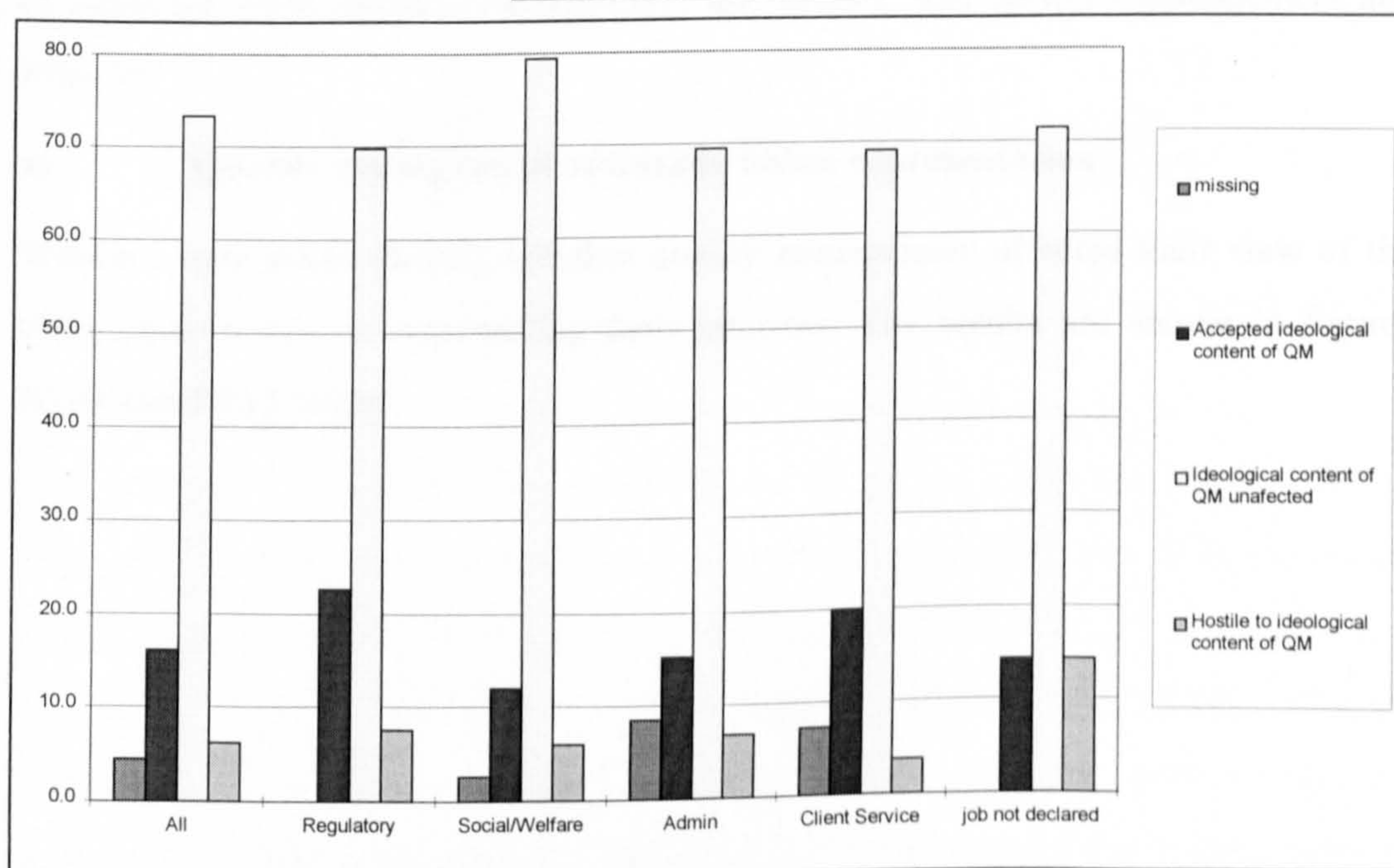


(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 9.37692, significance = 0.15346, cells with expected freq < 5 = 25%)

Overall, then, quality management has had a neutral effect on workers attitudes to the ideological content of quality management: 73% of respondents are categorised as perceiving a neutral effect, compared to 16% showing an acceptance of the agenda and 6% showing hostility. The neutral perception is strongest in *Newcastle* (81%) and the strongest 'acceptance' is at *Wycombe*, at 26% - with no responses in the 'hostility' category. Differences in opinions between authorities are, however, not statistically significant.

Responses to this issue, by job function, are shown in figure 10:13.

Figure 10:13: Legitimacy of the Content of Quality Management (percent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 4.88009, significance = 0.55928, cells with expected freq < 5 = 25%)

Here, no clear distinctions are evident, though those in regulatory and client service functions have an apparent higher level of accepting the legitimacy of the quality management agenda in their work than is the case in the other areas. Statistically, however, the distinction is even weaker than between authorities.

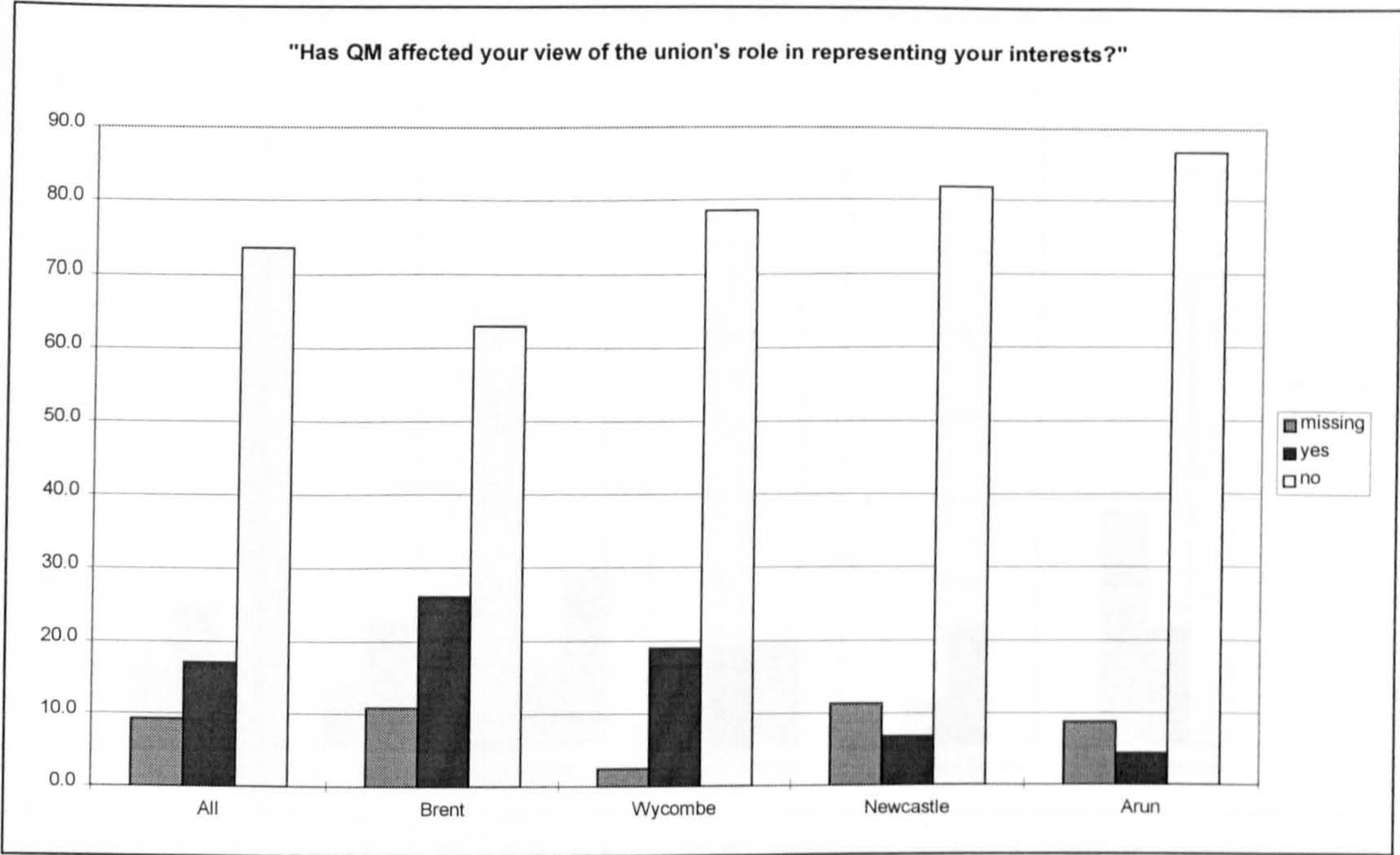
Quality Management and the Effect on *Unison*

The effect that quality management may have on trade union representation is the third major issue to be addressed on the questionnaire. Issues discussed in chapter 4 suggest that trade union activity may be affected by the introduction of quality management through the implicit (and often explicit) unitarist assumptions that underpin it. In addition, the introduction of quality management, on the back of broader managerialist changes within local government, have led to a decentralisation of collective bargaining arrangements away from the focal point of traditional trade union bargaining set-ups in local government. Quality management, therefore, has a potential to undermine trade union activity in the workplace through shifting the lines of communication between management and unions; and between management and workers.

a) Quality management and trade union representation

Workers were asked directly whether quality management affected their view of the trade union's role in representing their interests. The results are shown in figures 10:14 and 10:15 below.

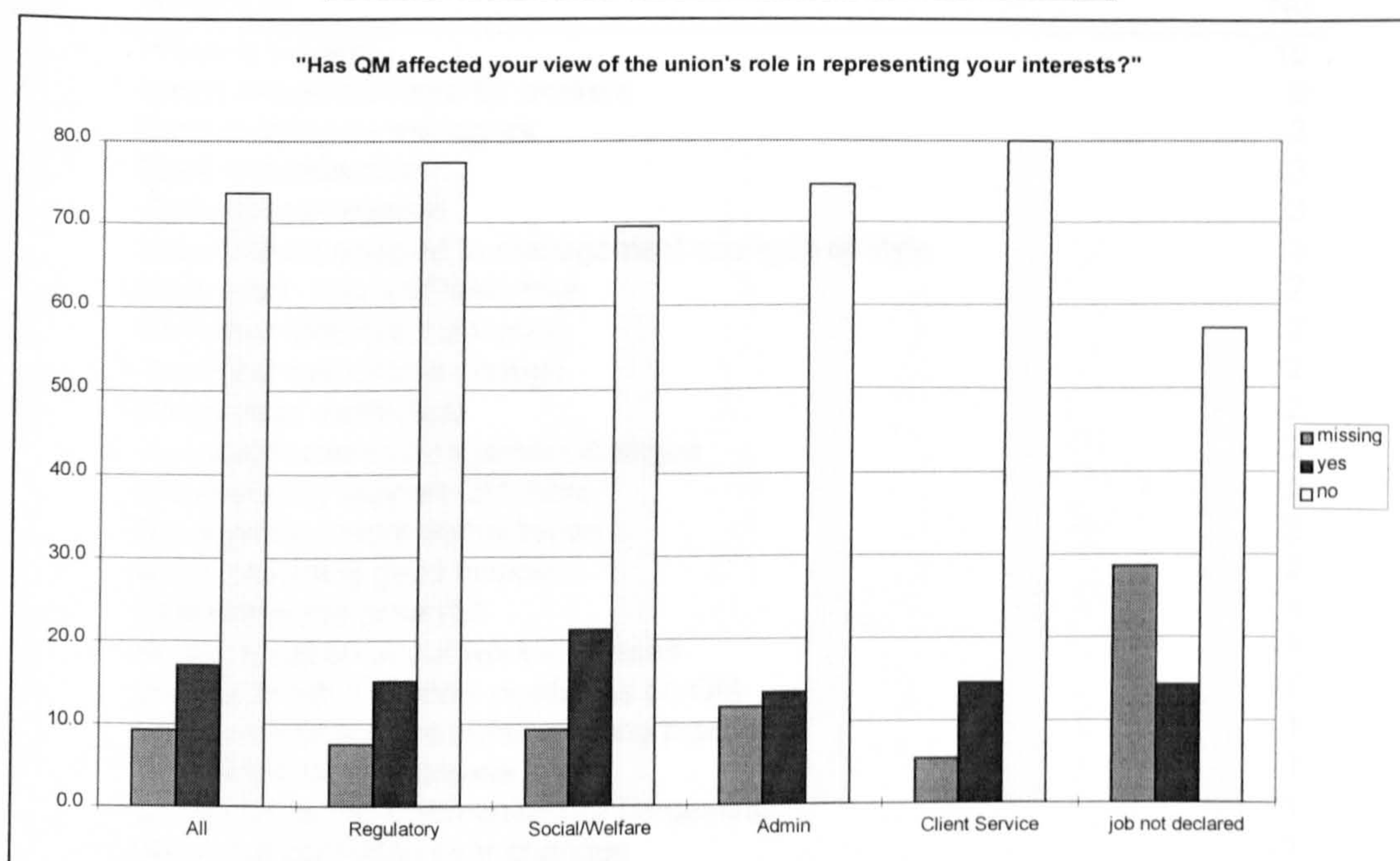
Figure 10:14 Overall Impact of Quality Management on Trade Union Representation (per-cent of Authority)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 3, Pearson = 19.8559, significance =0.00018, minimum expected frequency = 7.358)

The overall response to this question is, perhaps unsurprisingly, that quality management had not affected workers' perceptions of the unions role ('no' responses being 73.6% of the total) although, a significant 17% responded 'yes' to this question. There are statistically significant differences between authorities (χ^2 , at 3 degrees of freedom, gives a Pearson value of 19.8559 with a significance of 0.00018). The most resounding 'no' responses are from *Newcastle* (82%) - where the union was having some involvement in the process - and *Arun* (87%). In contrast, the highest level of 'yes' responses are from *Brent* at the relatively high level of 26%.

Figure 10:15: Overall Impact of Quality Management on Trade Union Representation (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 3, Pearson = 2.27073, significance = 0.51815, minimum expected frequency = 9.046)

In terms of job function, responses seem to be most divided between people working in social/welfare jobs (69.5% 'no'; 21.2% 'yes') and those working in client services (80% 'no'; 14.5% 'yes'). In this case, however, no statistical significance emerges.

Of those that responded 'yes' to this question, it was further asked what changes were perceived to have occurred to the union's position as a result of the introduction of quality management². The results are shown in table 10:14, below.

² There is a slight mismatch between those responding 'yes' to the previous question and those responding to this open question

Table 10:14: Reasons for Change in Perception of Union's Position

Response	No
Union is weaker	10
Union should do more for workers	5
More bullying by managers	3
More redundancies	3
Union is too negative	3
Union hasn't adapted to management changes of style	3
More work; less staff/less time	2
QM more effective than union	2
Union not responsive enough	2
Union been ineffectual	2
Increased union/management dialogue	2
Union should support QM more	2
Management more authoritarian	2
Union providing good advice	2
Customers too powerful	1
No consultation about work increases	1
Unclear of what Union's position is on QM	1
Union cannot assess unfair working practices	1
More work for no increase in pay	1
QM undermining union/collective bargaining	1
Union not consulted over changes	1
Different workplace, different rules	1
Need more QM	1
Union more distant	1
Total	53 (18%)

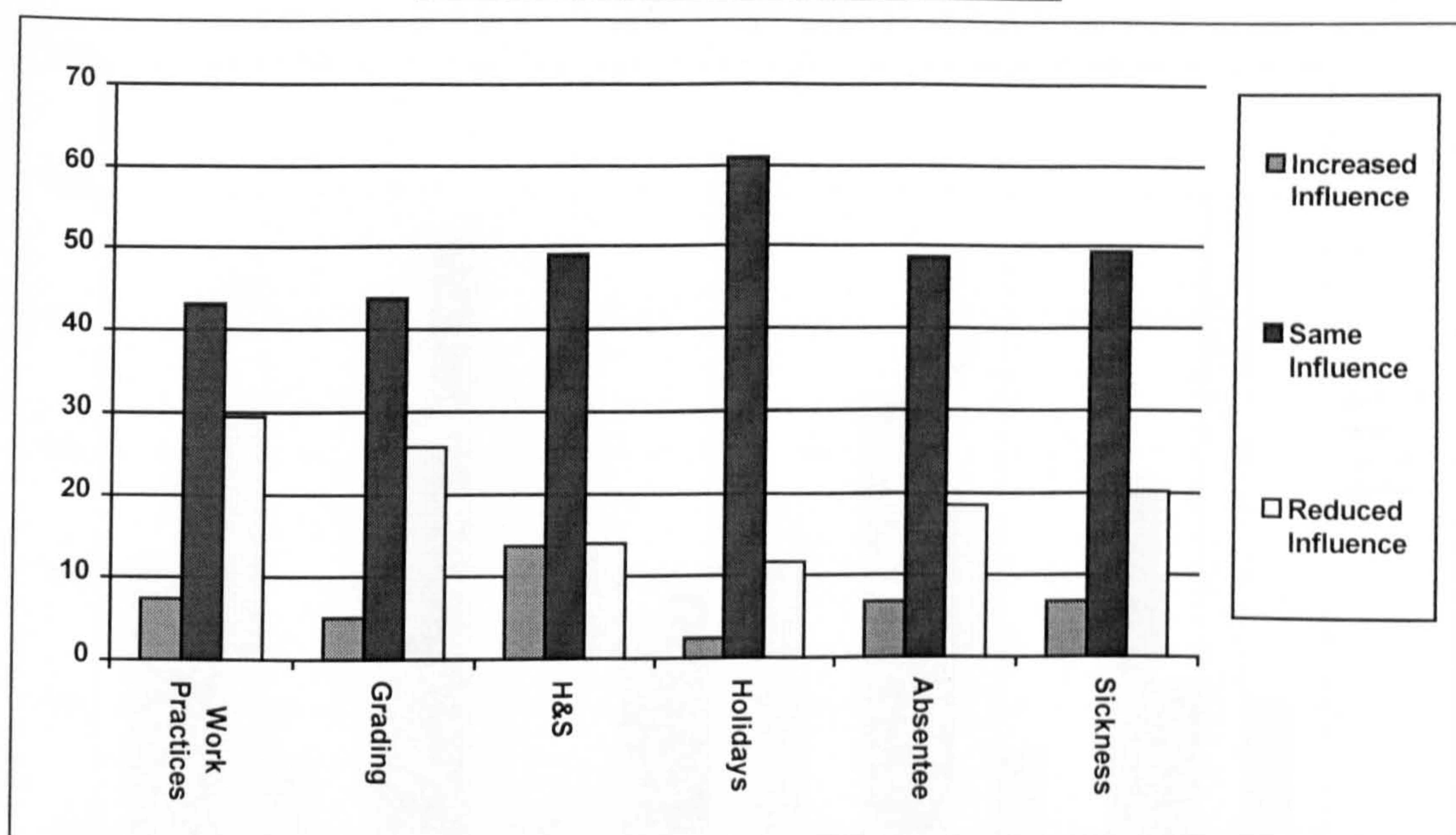
(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares')

While there is a range of responses to the above issue, only three responses could be said to suggest that quality management has been beneficial to the union's position (two for 'increased union/management dialogue' and one for 'union providing good advice'). Other responses suggest, variously, that the union had been undermined, or that that the union had not been involved enough in the process of implementation - either through the union being 'too weak' in the first place, or through the union being too isolated from members' interests.

b) Quality management and *Unison's* influence on specific issues

Respondents were further asked to comment on how quality management had affected the role of union representatives on six specific issues: working practices, grading arrangements, health and safety, holiday entitlement, absenteeism and sickness. The responses are shown in figure 10:16, below.

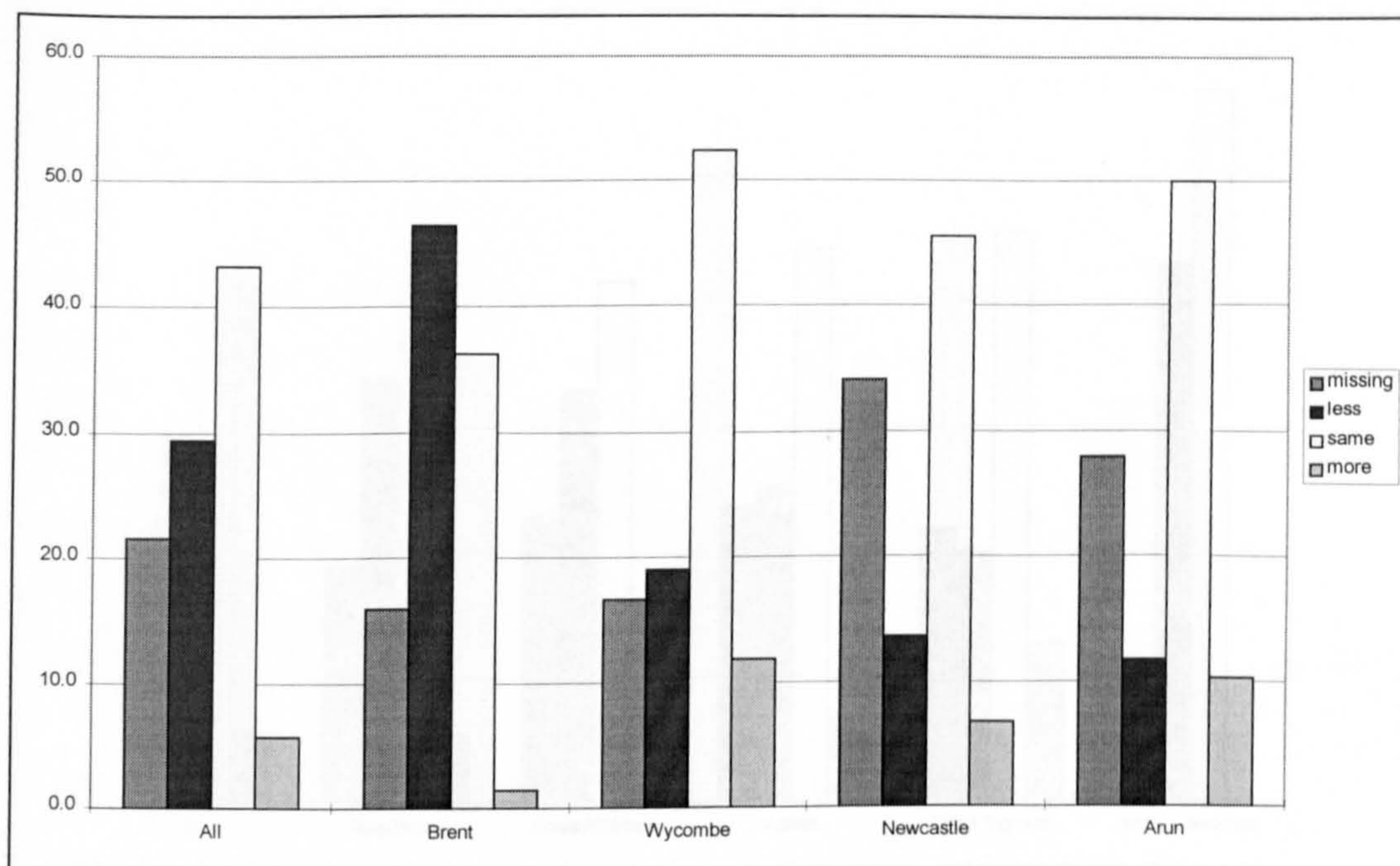
Figure 10:16: The Effect of Quality Management on the Steward's Influence (Six Workplace Issues)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares')

While the number of non-responses is high, here, the actual number of responses suggests that trade union influence has been reduced in these areas - in terms of members' perception. On the average of all the issues combined, only about half perceive no change in the union's influence, whereas nearly three times as many people perceive a reduction in union influence as perceive an increase in its influence. There is some variation according to issue, however. Holiday entitlement appears to be the trade union issue least affected by the introduction of quality management; whereas working practices and grading arrangements appear to be the issues of the most negative change in influence; and health and safety seems to be the issue that saw the most positive change in influence - although even here, opinion is almost exactly divided between those perceiving increased influence and those perceiving a reduced influence. Figures 10:17 - 10:28 show how opinions on union influence on these issues is broken down by authority and job type.

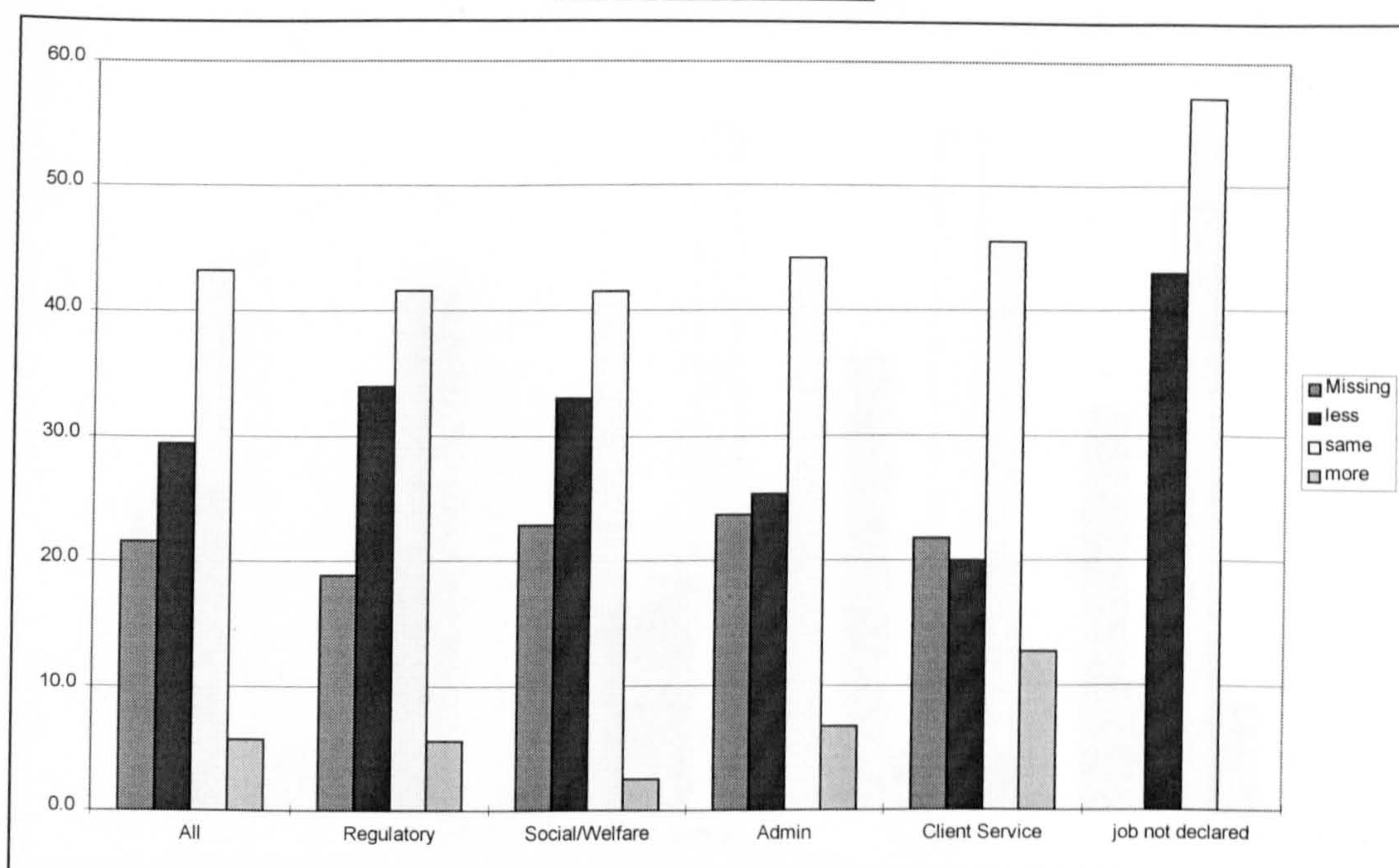
Figure 10:17: Change in Union Influence on Working Practices (per-cent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 36.66202, significance = 0.00000, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 25%)

The negative impact of quality management on the union's influence on working practices is most clearly felt at *Brent*, being the most frequent response at 46.4%. In comparison, the most frequent response in the other three authorities is 'no change'. With 25% of cells with an expected frequency below 5 being 25% for the chi-square test, however, no statistical significance emerges between authorities on this issue.

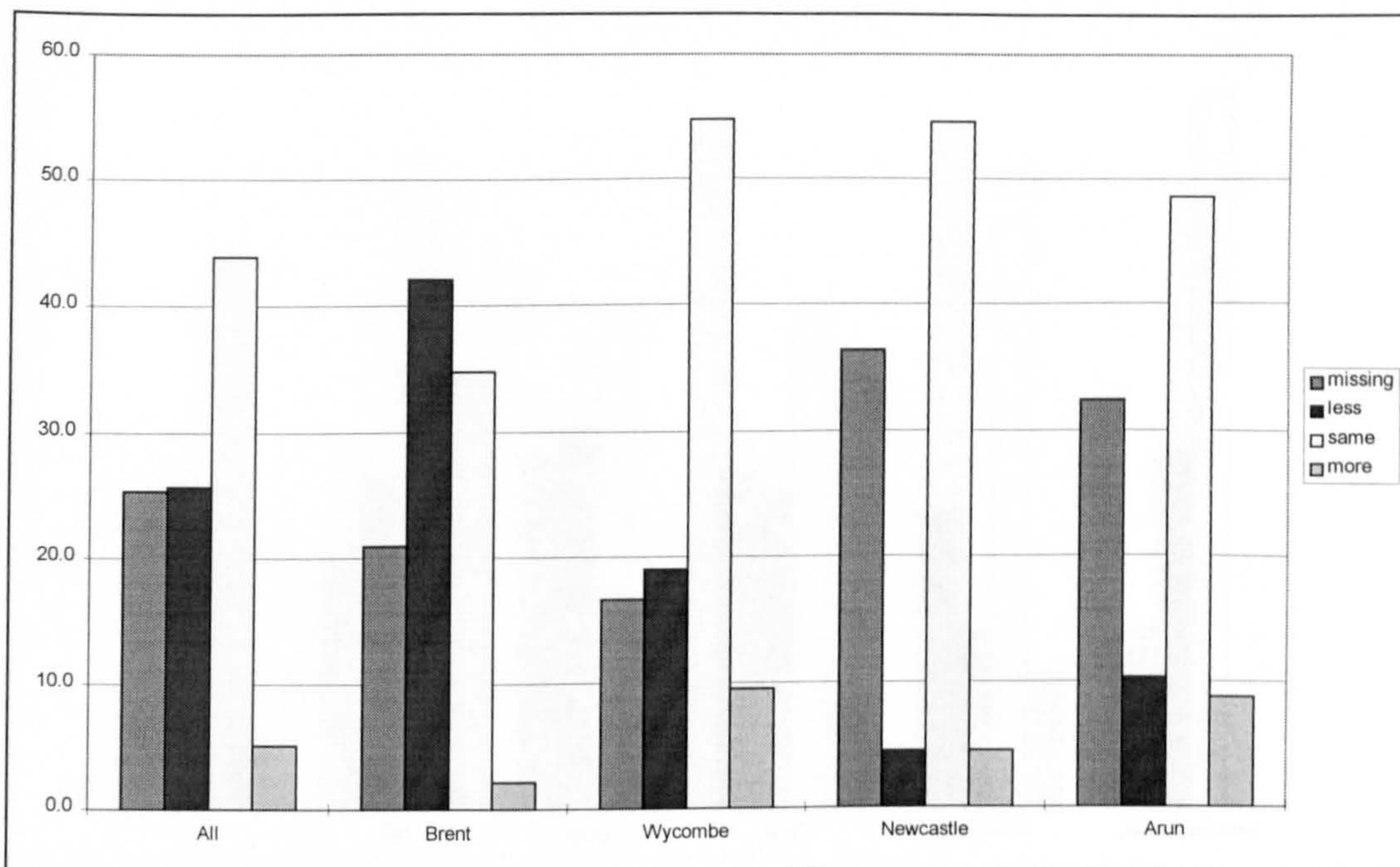
Figure 10:18: Change in Union Influence on Working Practices (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 9.69146, significance = 0.13826, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 25%)

The differences between job functions on this issue is not as evident as between authorities. While people working in regulatory functions seem more prone to perceiving a reduction in union influence (34% 'less'; 5.7% 'more') than in those working in client service type jobs (20% 'less'; 12.7% 'more') there is no statistical significance in these apparent differences.

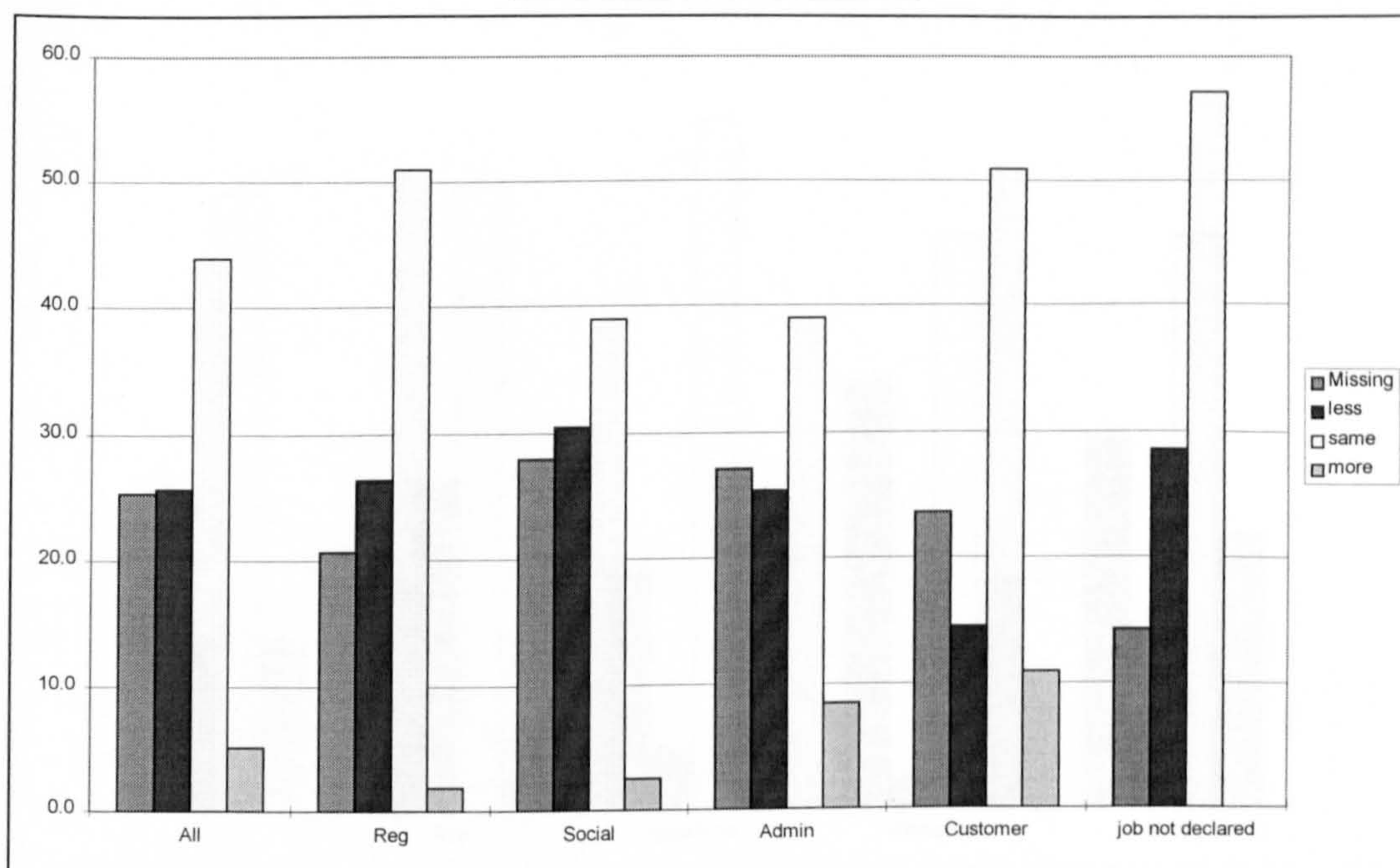
Figure 10:19: Change in Union Influence on Grading Arrangements (percent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 38.92396, significance = 0.00000, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 25%)

Again, negative opinion in *Brent* seems significantly higher than in other authorities (42% - again the most frequent response). In contrast only 4.5% of respondents at *Newcastle* are so pessimistic. Again, however, the low overall response rate has made it impossible to attribute statistical significance to these differences: while a Pearson value of 38.9 with a significance at virtually zero has been obtained from chi-square test, 25% of cells had an expected frequency of less than 5.

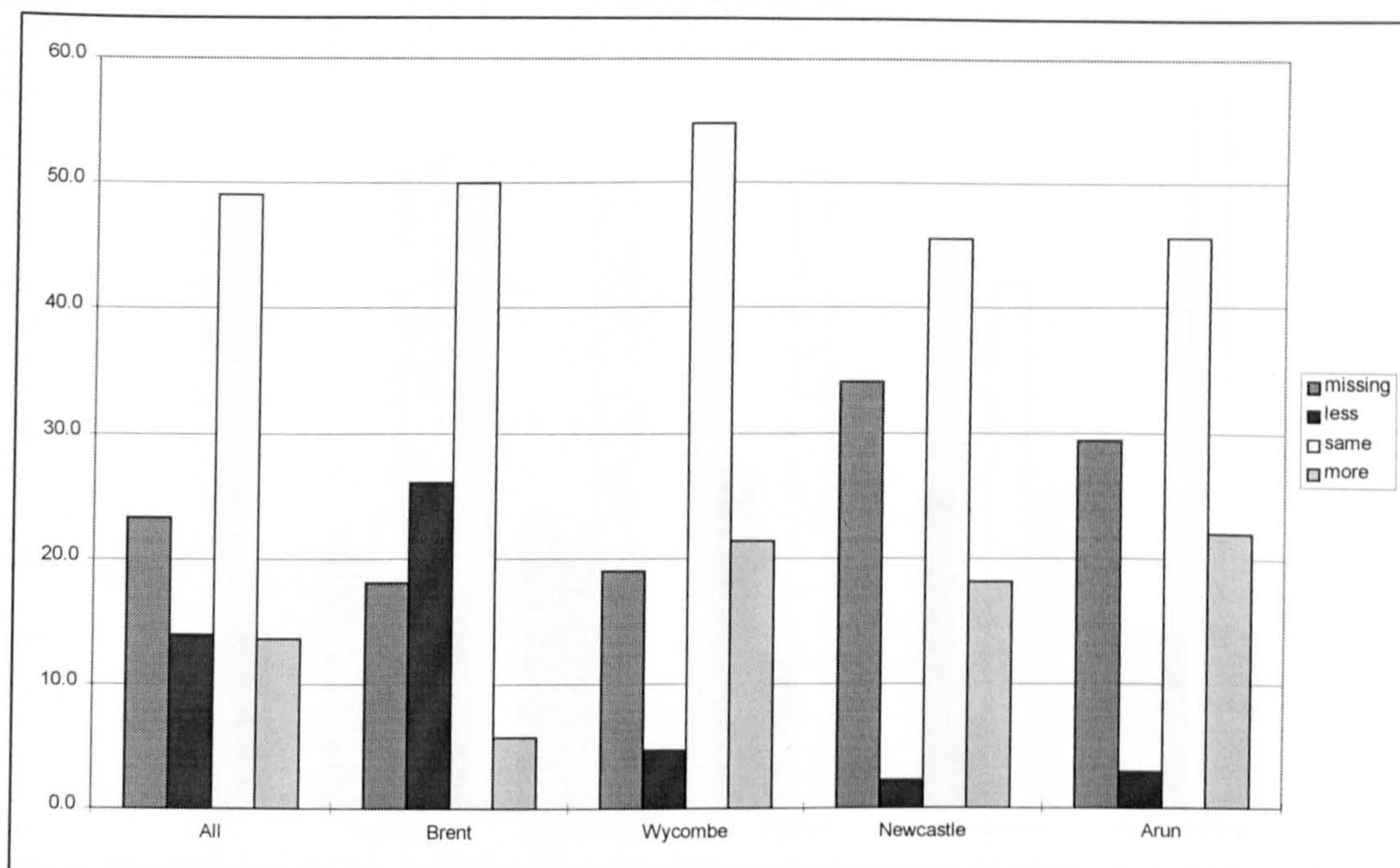
Figure 10:20: Change in Union Influence on Grading Arrangements (percent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 12.47434, significance = 0.05219, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 25%)

There is less distinction between job types, again, here - although, again, more of those working in regulatory functions see a declining influence (30.5% 'less'; 2.5% 'more') than those in client services (14.5% 'less'; 10.9% 'more'). Again, there is no statistical significance in these differences.

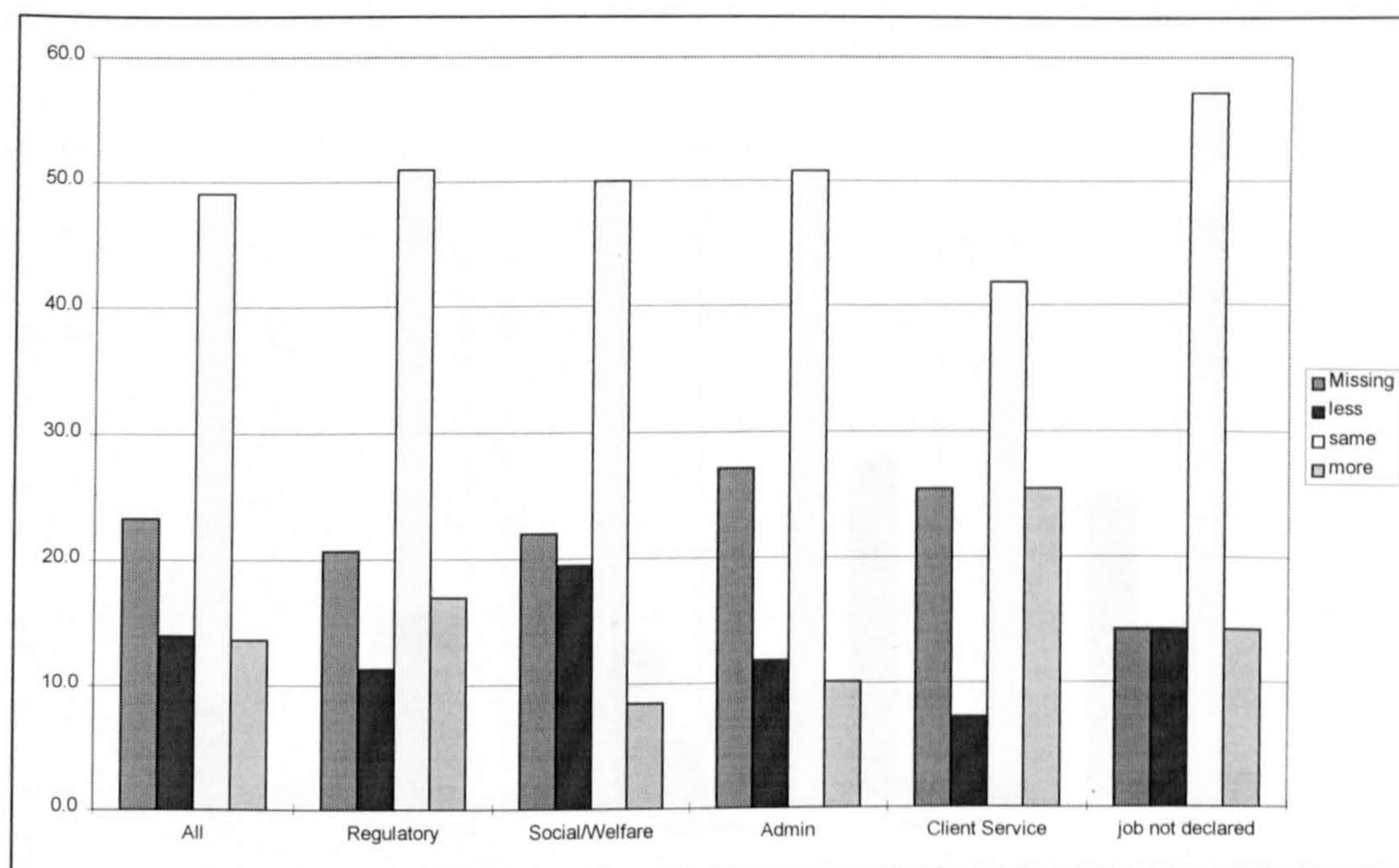
Figure 10:21: Change in Union Influence on Health & Safety (per-cent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 38.40525, significance = 0.00000, minimum expected frequency = 5.179)

On this issue, statistical significance can be drawn from the results (χ^2 , with 6 degrees of freedom, gives a Pearson value of 38.4, with a significance of virtually zero). Opinion is clearly divided between respondents from *Brent* and the other authorities. Without the influence of respondents from *Brent* - who are, again, the most negative in their assessment about the union's position at 26.1% - opinion in the other authorities suggests that health and safety is an issue that unions had increased their influence within the workplace as a result of quality management. At *Wycombe*, this 'positive' effect is the view of 21.4% of respondents (compared to 4.8% 'negative'); at *Newcastle* 'positive' views are at 18.2% (compared to 2.5% 'negative'); and at *Arun* 'positive' views are at 22.1% (compared to 2.9%).

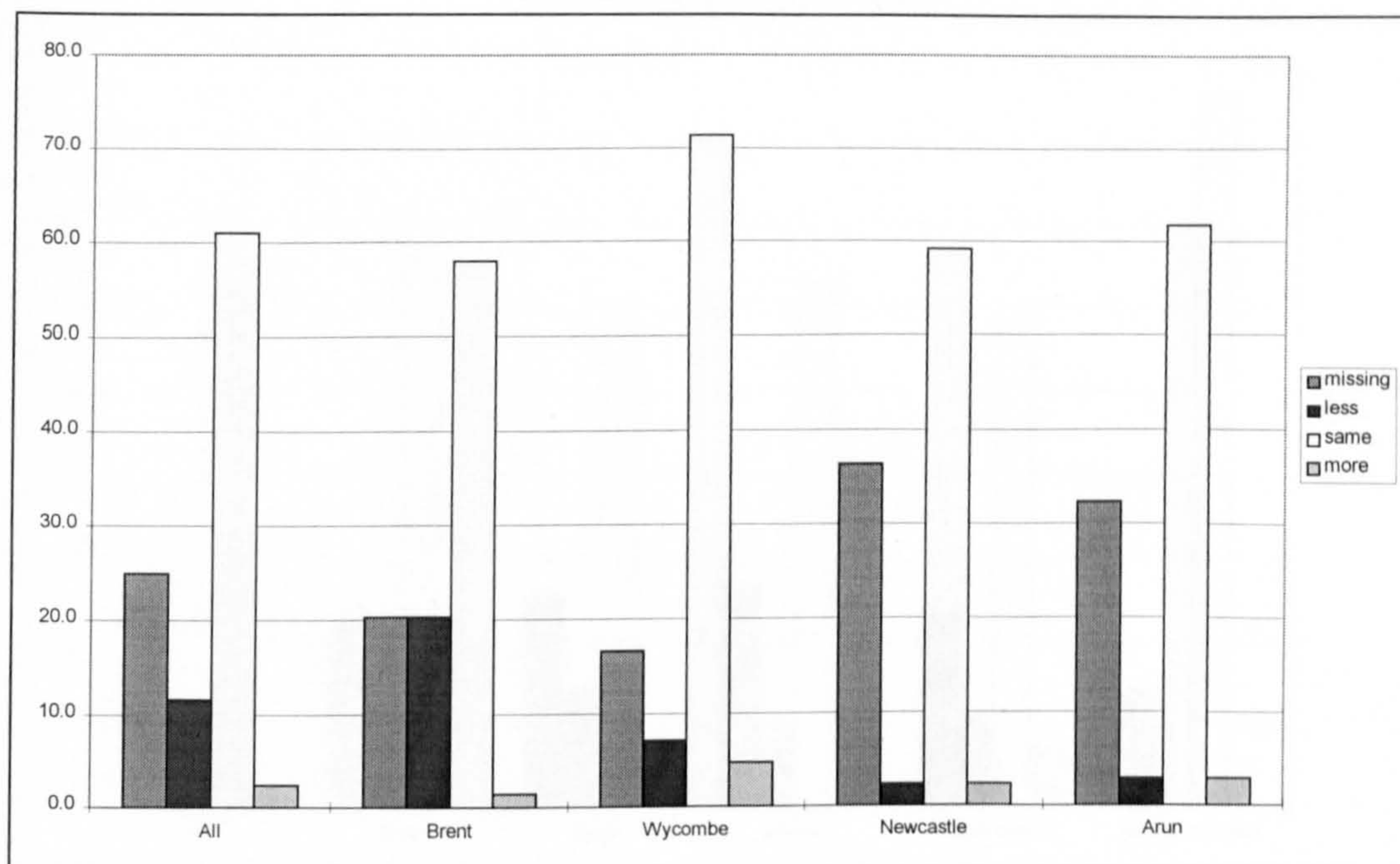
Figure 10:22: Change in Union Influence on Health & Safety (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 13.17341, significance = 0.04036, minimum expected frequency = 7.335)

Differences of opinion on the health and safety issue are also statistically marked between job functions as well (χ^2 , with 6 degrees of freedom, gives a Pearson value of 13.17, with a significance of 0.04). Here, however, opinion seems to polarise between social/welfare workers and administrative/support workers on the one hand (who are more prone to perceive a declining influence); and workers in regulatory functions and client service workers on the other (who are more prone to perceiving an increased influence). In the case of client services 25.5% see the union's influence as increasing, compared to only 7% who see a decline.

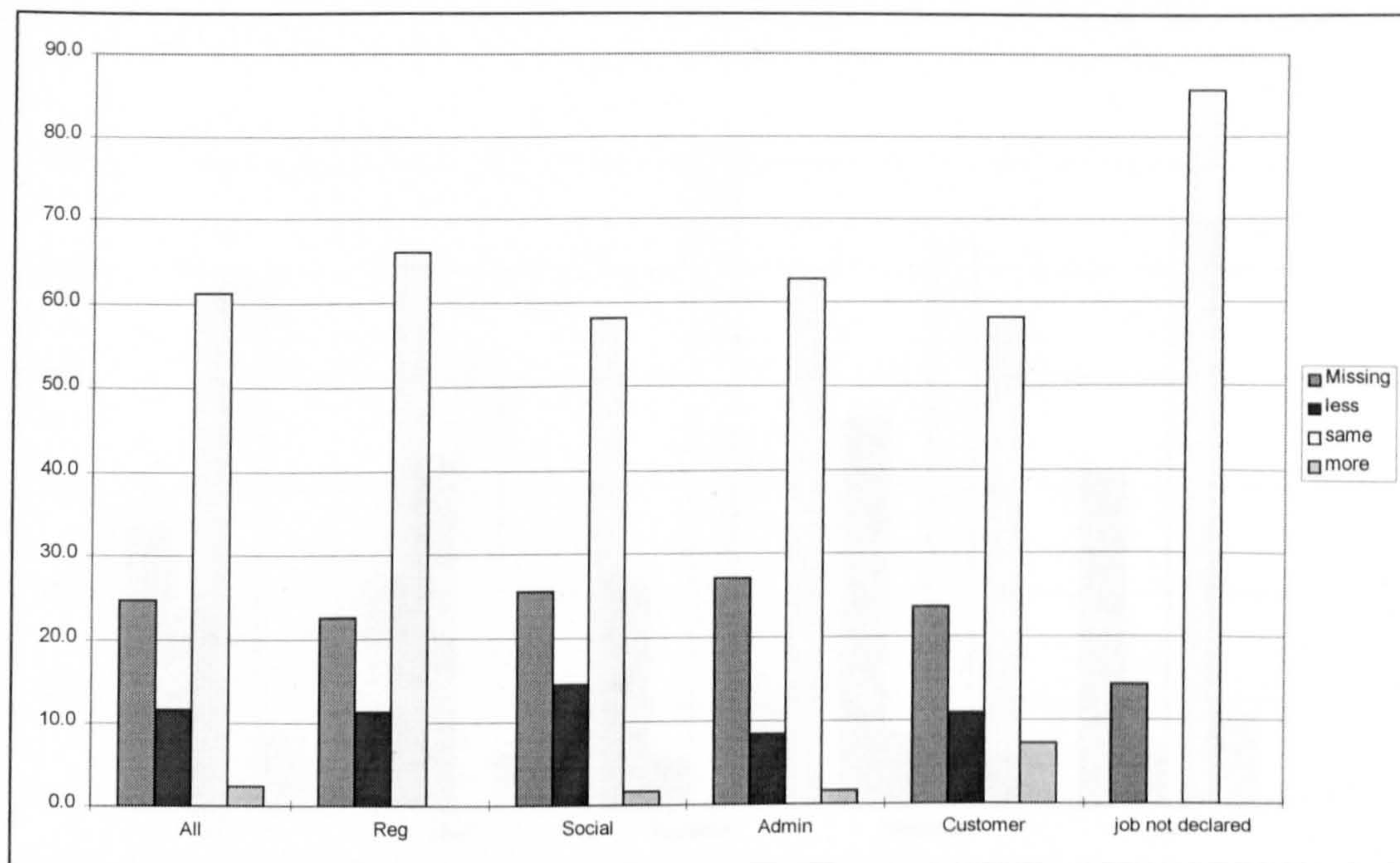
Figure 10:23: Change in Union Influence on Holiday Entitlement (percent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 18.01058, significance = 0.00621, cells with expected frequency < 5 = 41.7%)

On this issue, opinions are not as divided as for the other issues discussed, although the same general pattern emerges. *Brent*, again, has the highest level of respondents perceiving a negative effect on the union although joined here, to a lesser extent, by respondents from *Wycombe*. This compared, to respondents at *Newcastle* and *Arun* who are distinctly neutral about the issue. The sample size, again however, means that no statistical significance can be drawn from these differences.

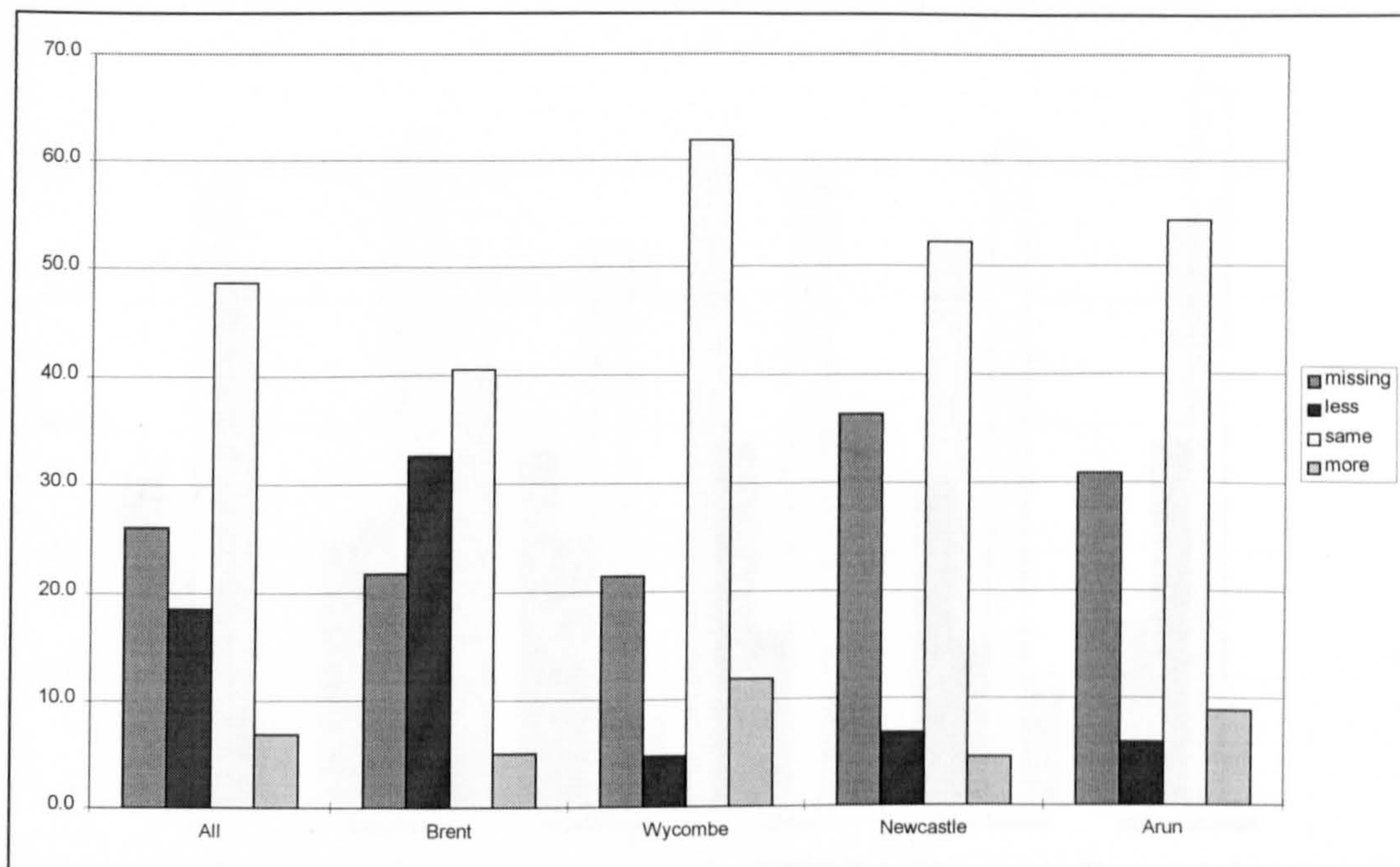
**Figure 10:24: Change in Union Influence on Holiday Entitlement (per-
cent of Job Function)**



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 8.31341, significance = 0.21603, cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 33%)

There is no apparent difference in opinions between job functions on the issue of the union's influence on holiday entitlement.

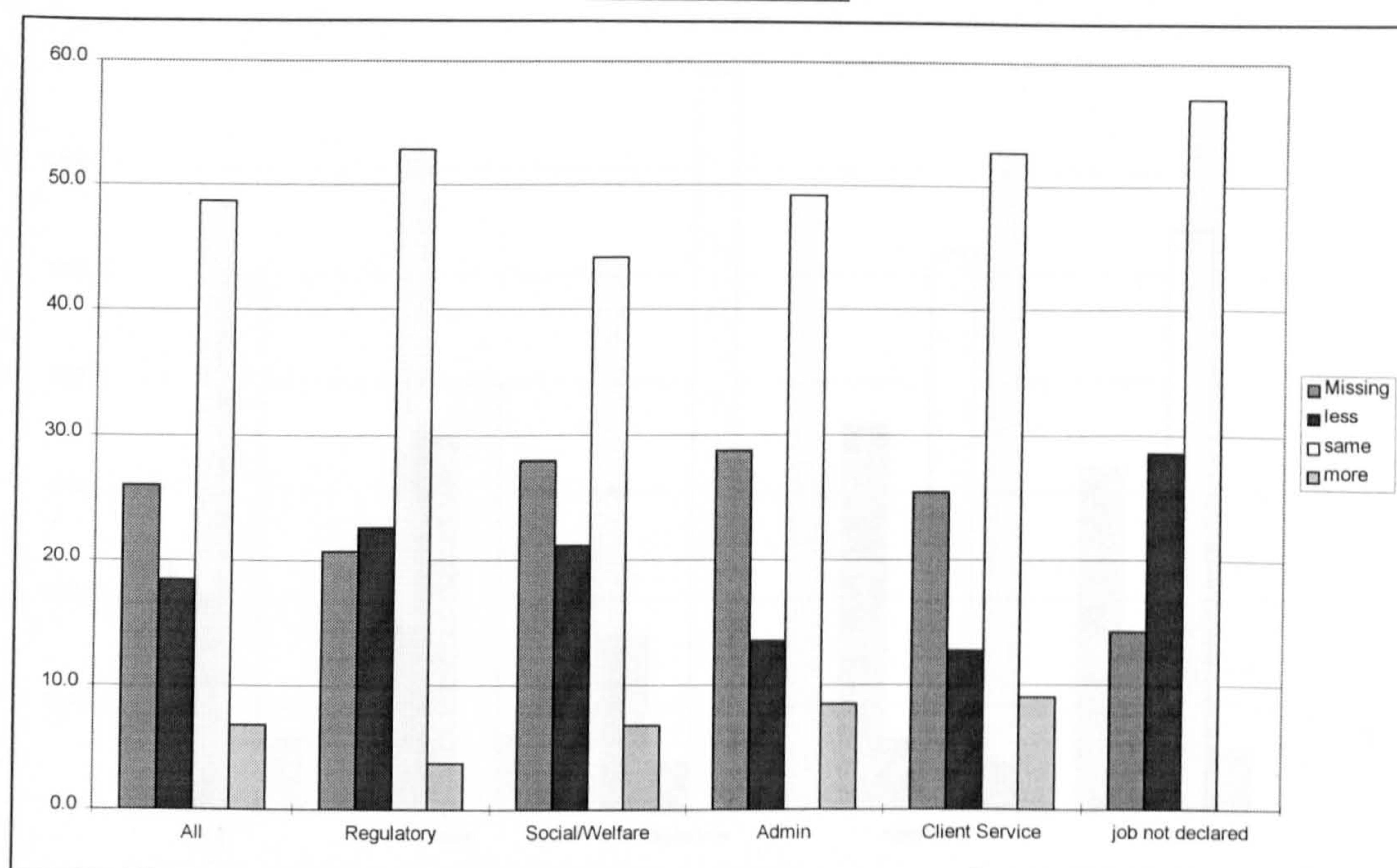
Figure 10:25: Change in Union Influence on Absenteeism (per-cent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 33.40364, significance = 0.00001, cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 25%)

No statistical significance can be made again, here, due to a minimum expected frequency of less than 5 occurring in 25% of cells in the chi-square test. Apparent differences exist between respondents from *Brent*, who are more liable to feel that the union's role is being eroded by quality management on the issue of absenteeism (32.6%). This compares to respondents in *Wycombe* and *Arun*, who - marginally - feel that the union's influence had increased.

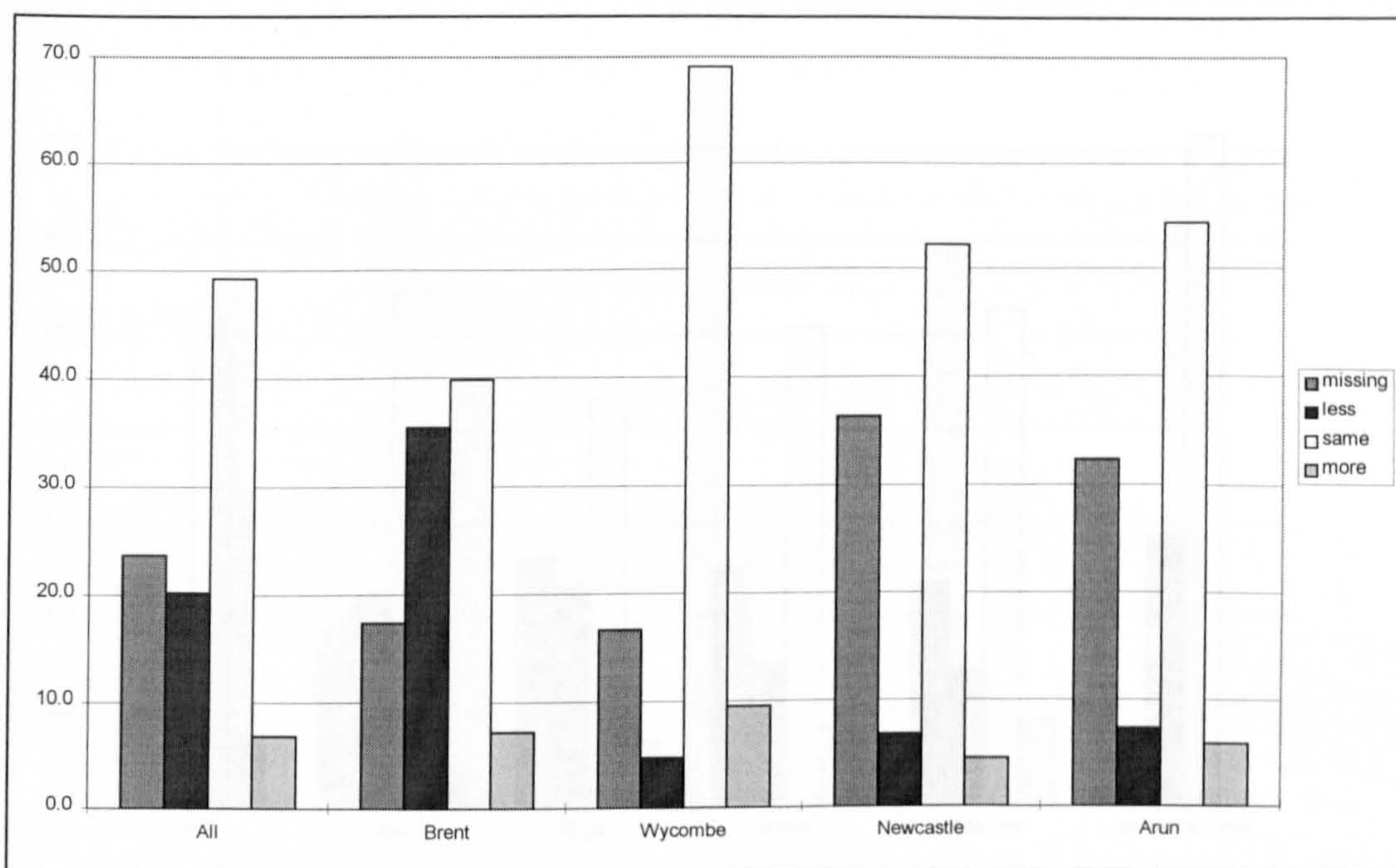
Figure 10:26: Change in Union Influence on Absenteeism (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 5.94168, significance = 0.42976, cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 33%)

The difference between job functions on this issue is not great, again, and no statistical significance is attributable. There is some similarity between responses from regulatory functions and social/welfare functions (who seem more prone to see a declining influence); and administrative support and client service functions (who seem less prone to see a declining influence).

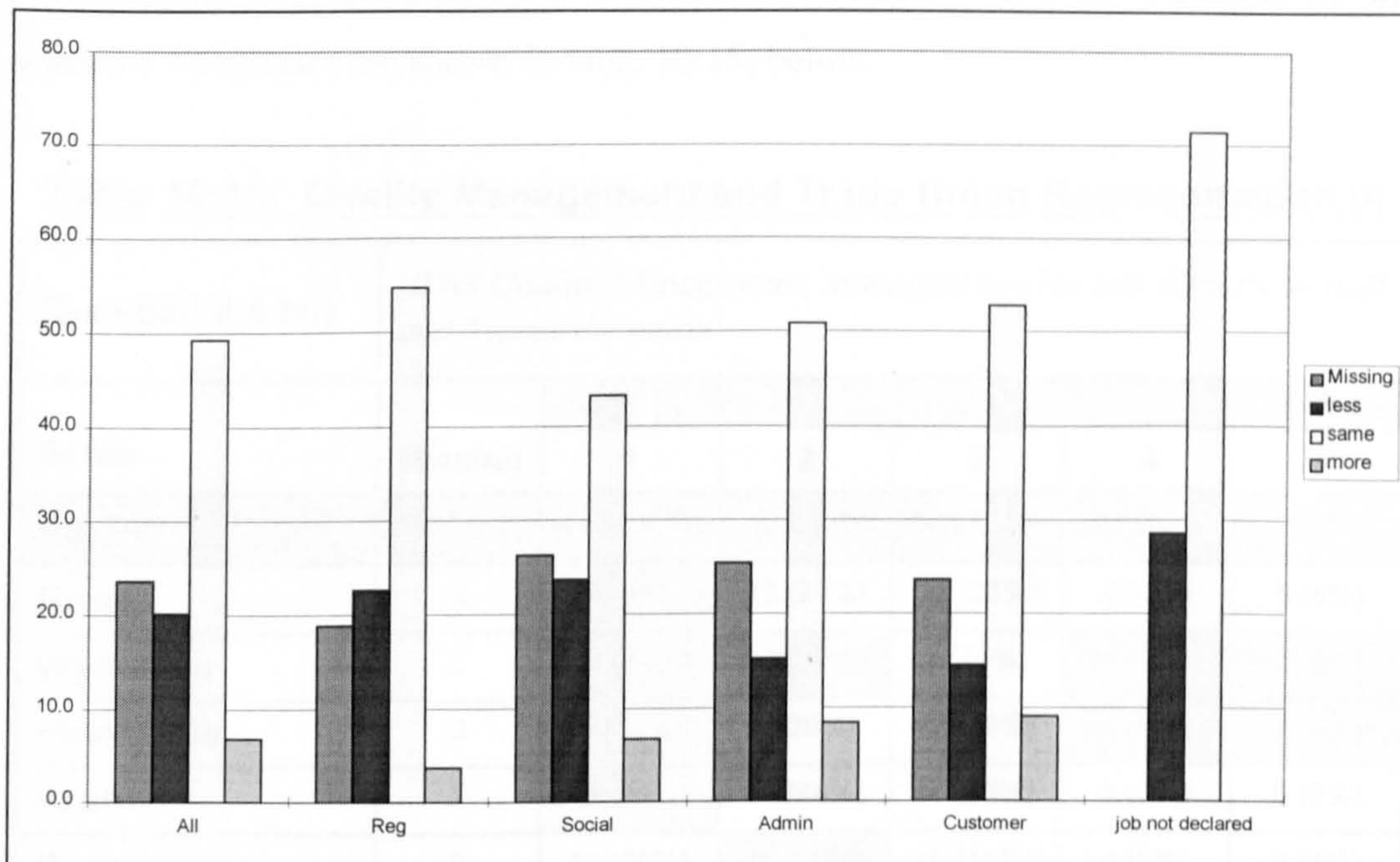
Figure 10:27: Change in Union Influence on Sickness (per-cent of Authorities)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 35.84366, significance = 0.00004, cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 43.8%)

Again, on the issue of sickness, the overall distribution of opinion towards feeling that the union is adversely affected by quality management is skewed by opinion at *Brent* (35.5%: 'negative effect'). The prevailing attitude, outside *Brent*, is that quality management has had little effect, here. In the case of *Wycombe*, opinion tends more towards the feeling that the union has gained influence (9.5% 'more' compared to 4.8% 'less'). Overall statistical significance on this issue is, again, restricted by the sample size.

Figure 10:28: Change in Union Influence on Sickness (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 8.71466, significance = 0.46402, cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 = 43.8%)

Differences between job functions on sickness are statistically insignificant and even apparent differences are small. Again, however, regulatory and social/welfare functions seem slightly more prone to seeing a declining influence of the union than in administrative/support functions and client service functions.

c) Quality management and the union representative

Another major issue, for trade unions, in the setting up of quality management schemes, is the possible effect that shifting decision-making channels may have on the legitimacy of trade union representation at the workplace level (see chapter 4). As an indicator of how the union was affected by the introduction of quality management as a legitimate representative of worker interests, two likert-scale statements were posed:

- *'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'*
- *'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace'*

The first of these statements refers to the axis of communication between workers and the union; between management and the union; and between management and

workers - and to whether quality management has shifted that balance by increasing the channels of communication, in a unitarist fashion, between management and workers. Responses are shown in table 10:15, below.

Table 10:15: Quality Management and Trade Union Representation (i)

Question 3:6 (vi)		<i>'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'</i>				
Scale	Missing	agree			disagree	
		1	2	3	4	5
All	13	105 (36%)	69 (24%)	82 (28%)	16 (5%)	7 (2%)
Brent	2	64 (46%)	29 (21%)	32 (23%)	6 (4%)	5 (4%)
Wycombe	1	18 (44%)	15 (37%)	7 (17%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Newcastle	3	9 (20%)	9 (20%)	17 (39%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)
Arun	7	14 (21%)	16 (24%)	26 (38%)	5 (7%)	0 (0%)
Regulatory	0	16 (30%)	21 (40%)	10 (19%)	4 (8%)	2 (4%)
Social/Welfare	5	48 (41%)	21 (18%)	36 (31%)	5 (4%)	3 (3%)
Admin/Support	4	22 (37%)	13 (22%)	15 (25%)	4 (7%)	1 (2%)
Client Services	4	18 (33%)	13 (24%)	17 (31%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
(job not declared)	0	1	1	4	1	0

(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 29.54479, significance = 0.00327, cells with expected frequency <5 = 35%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 13.42104, significance = 0.33919, cells with expected frequency <5 = 35%)

On this issue overall worker perceptions indicate that management/worker communications have been enhanced at the expense of union/worker communications. Differences between authorities, however, appears quite marked, though statistically not significant, again, due to the sample size. Workers at *Wycombe* - where performance appraisal had been the most systematised - has the strongest levels of agreement. This is followed by workers at *Brent* - where management 'devolution' had been the most developed. In contrast, workers at *Newcastle* - where union involvement on the quality agenda had been relatively high - are the least strong in agreement. Finally, workers at *Arun* - where concerns over quality management seemed tied to workers concerns over CCT, where the union was involved - are also less strong in their agreement. No statistical differences exist between job function on this issue.

The second likert-scale statement directly addresses the issue of the steward's role following the implementation of quality management. In this case the statement was worded so as to suggest that the steward's role may be enhanced. Responses are shown in table 10:16 below.

Table 10:16: Quality Management and Trade Union Representation (ii)

Question 3:6 (ix)	<i>'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace'</i>					
Scale	Missing	agree				disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
All	17	6 (2%)	9 (3%)	91 (31%)	56 (19%)	113 (39%)
Brent	5	4 (3%)	2 (1%)	34 (25%)	22 (16%)	71 (51%)
Wycombe	1	1 (2%)	3 (7%)	15 (35%)	9 (21%)	13 (31%)
Newcastle	4	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	16 (36%)	10 (23%)	13 (30%)
Arun	7	0 (0%)	4 (6%)	26 (38%)	15 (22%)	16 (24%)
Regulatory	0	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	17 (32%)	17 (32%)	14 (26%)
Social/Welfare	7	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	37 (31%)	18 (15%)	52 (44%)
Admin/Support	5	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	20 (34%)	9 (15%)	22 (37%)
Client Services	4	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	15 (27%)	12 (22%)	21 (38%)
(job not declared)	1	0	0	2	0	4

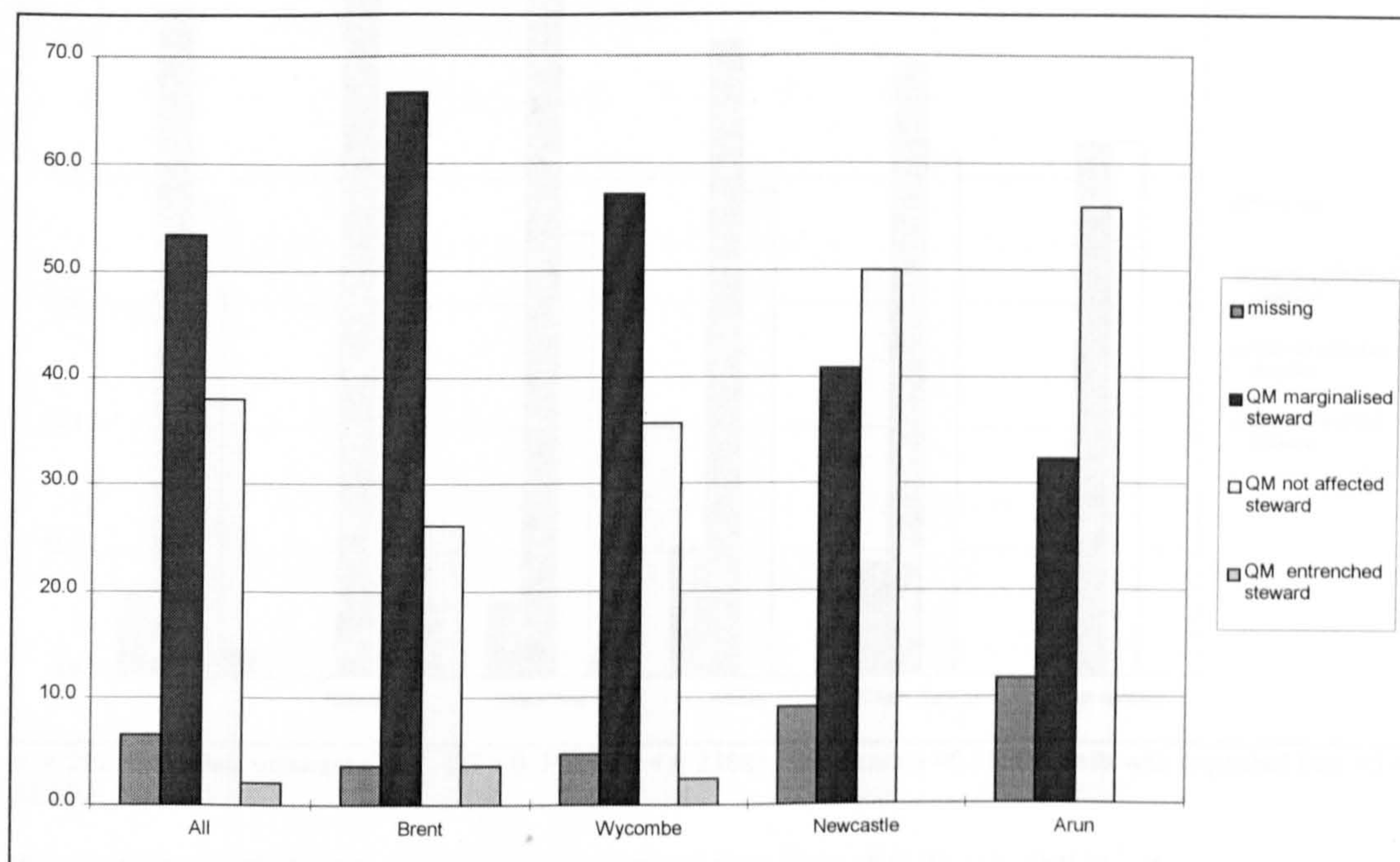
(Total Cases = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. Per-cent = row per-cent. χ^2 for opinion against authority: DF = 12, Pearson = 24.82766, significance = 0.01566, cells with expected frequency <5 = 40%. χ^2 for opinion against job function: DF = 12, Pearson = 13.40477, significance = 0.34032, cells with expected frequency <5 = 40%)

On this issue, opinion is in overall disagreement - though a reasonably high proportion of opinion is 'neutral' (mode averages are shaded for authority and job function sub-groups). A negligible amount of people consider that quality management is likely to empower stewards. As has been the pattern elsewhere, respondents from *Brent* display the most pessimistic view of the steward's position. Elsewhere opinion is fairly uniform between authorities and between job functions. Statistically, however, no significant differences emerge.

Responses to these two related statements can be combined to provide a general indicator of worker's feeling about the steward's relative position in the workplace, as

a result of the introduction of quality management³ (score 1-3 indicating a marginalisation of the steward, score 4-6 indicating a neutral effect, and score 7-10 indicating an entrenchment of the steward). The results are shown in figures 10:29 and 10:30, below.

Figure 10:29: The Effect of Quality Management on the Position of the Steward (per-cent of Authority)



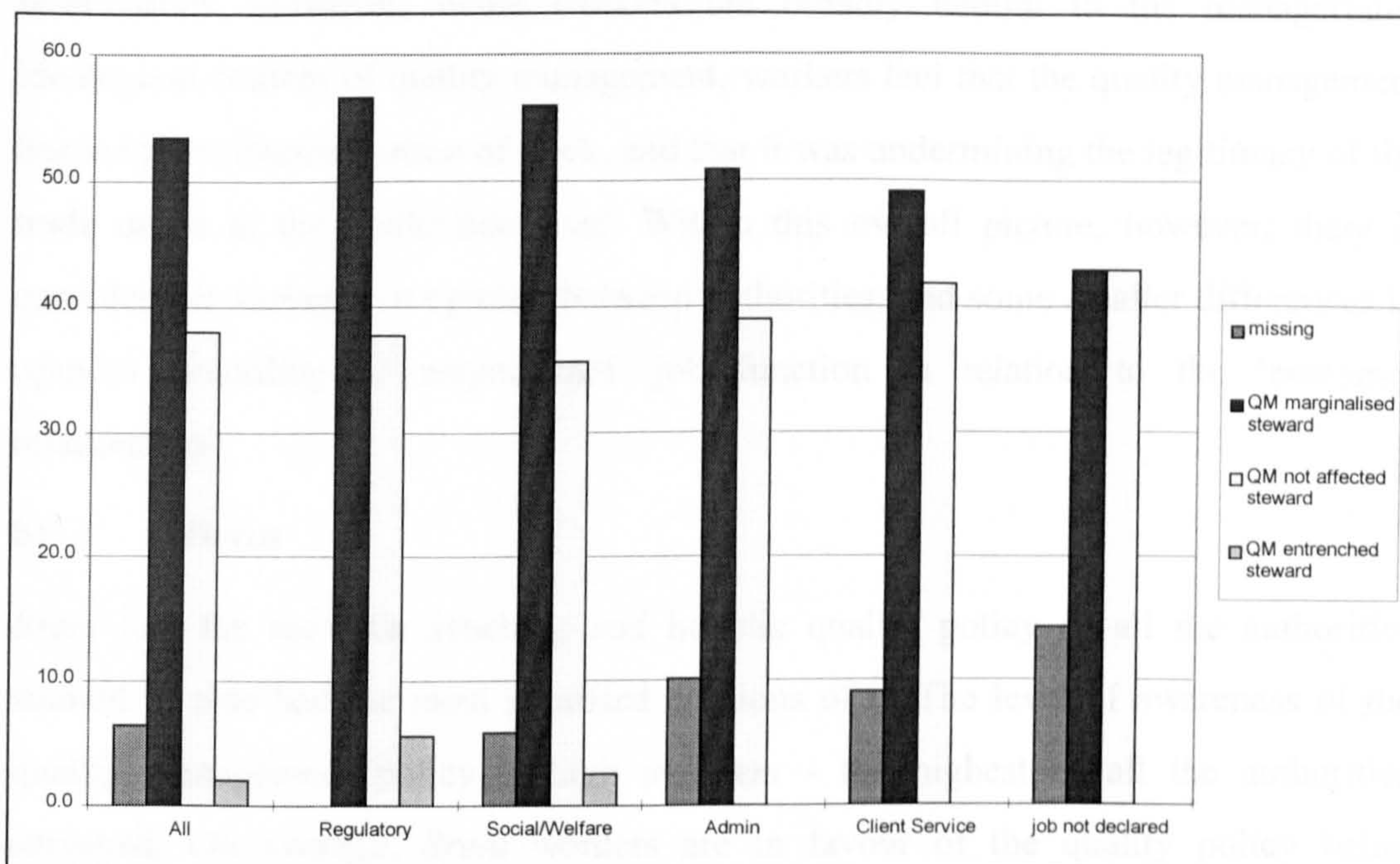
(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 28.30099, significance = 0.00008, cells with expected freq < 5 = 33.3%)

As expected, overall responses indicate that quality management had undermined the position of the union representative at the workplace (53.4% 'marginalised'; 38% 'unaffected'; 2.1% 'entrenched'). While opinion suggesting that quality management had entrenched the steward is negligible in all cases, however, there is some apparent -though not statistically significant - differences between authorities on whether quality management has marginalised, or not affected, the steward. At *Brent* and *Wycombe* the most frequent response is that quality management had marginalised the union (*Brent*: 66.7% 'marginalised'; 26.1% 'unaffected'. *Wycombe*: 57.1% 'marginalised'; 35.7% 'unaffected'). At *Newcastle* and *Arun*, on the other hand, the most frequent opinion is that the role of the steward had been unaffected (*Arun*:

³ Responses of the second statement were recoded to reverse the score to match the logic of the coding in the first statement

55.9% 'unaffected'; 32.4% 'marginalised'. *Newcastle*: 50% 'unaffected'; 40.9% 'marginalised').

Figure 10:30: The Effect of Quality Management on the Position of the Steward (per-cent of Job Function)



(n = 292. Excludes 'unawares'. χ^2 : DF = 6, Pearson = 6.23891, significance = 0.39697, cells with expected freq < 5 = 33.3%)

There is less distinction between job functions, on this issue. While the gap between 'neutral' and 'marginalised' opinions is smaller for administrative/support workers and client service workers than for regulatory and social/welfare workers, this is compensated for by the formers' lack of any opinion for 'entrenchment'. Differences here are, again, statistically insignificant.

Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of a survey conducted to find out the opinions of trade union members in four authorities. In particular the views were sought on the impact that quality management had on work-rates and productivity; on workplace ideology and management legitimacy; and on the marginalisation of trade union activity.

a) General findings

Overall, responses indicate that workers have a high level of awareness of quality management, feel that it has had a 'nominal' impact on their work, but they are broadly in favour of the particular policy being pursued - with some important reservations. However, while workers are broadly neutral to the managerialist ideological content of quality management, workers feel that the quality management has led to an intensification of work, and that it was undermining the legitimacy of the trade union at the workplace level. Within this overall picture, however, there is considerable variance in opinion between authorities, and some smaller differences in opinion according to respondents' job function in relation to the 'customer relationship'.

b) Brent

Brent had the most far reaching and holistic quality policy of all the authorities studied. It also had the most polarised opinions of it. The level of awareness of the quality management policy is high at *Brent* - the highest of all the authorities surveyed. On average, *Brent* workers are in favour of the quality policy being pursued, at a level equal to the average for all the authorities combined. On the issue of quality management and work intensification, *Brent* workers perceive a higher level of work intensification than the average for all the authorities. Quality management does not seem to have a great deal of effect on workplace ideology, although there does seem to be slightly more polarisation than is the case in the other authorities. While quality management is thought not to have had an effect on the union as a whole, a higher level than average thought that it has had some effect. On a range of specific union issues, however, the union at *Brent* is perceived to have been negatively affected by quality management - more so than in any other authority. Workers at *Brent* also perceived that quality management has had a negative effect on the position of the union representative at work, to a stronger degree than in any other authority.

c) Wycombe

Awareness of the quality management policy is, again, high at *Wycombe*, though no higher than the average level of awareness for all the authorities combined. The quality management policy at *Wycombe*, however, is the one which has had the highest effect on work as a whole. The overall approval rating of the quality policy at *Wycombe* is divided - showing the lowest level of popularity in any of the authorities. Work intensification, as a result of quality management, is perceived as being high at *Wycombe*. On the issue of workplace ideology, quality management does not seem to have a strong effect on attitudes, although more people's attitudes seem to be effected at *Wycombe* than in the other authorities. Quality management is, like *Brent*, not thought to have affected the overall position of the union. On a range of specific union issues, workers also perceive little change as a result of quality management - although the balance of opinion, in some cases, indicates an increase in union influence, here.

d) Newcastle (CLS)

At *Newcastle*, the level of awareness of the quality management policy is comparatively low, as is the perceived affects of the policy. Perception of work intensification, as a result of quality management is, again, high - though lower than the perception of work intensification over the four authorities as a whole. On workplace ideology, workers at *Newcastle* seem unaffected by quality management. On quality management's effect on the union in general, the overwhelming perception is that there has been no effect. On the range of specific union issues raised, the overall perception is, again, that the union had not been greatly affected.

e) Arun

At *Arun* there is a high general awareness of the quality management policy, although the general affect on work as a whole is comparatively low. The approval rating of quality management is high - having the highest levels of approval among the four authorities. Work intensification is perceived as lower at *Arun*, then in the other three authorities - with a higher level of respondents perceiving no change - although there are still more who perceive an intensification of work than perceive a relaxation of

work. As in the other authorities, quality management do not have a great influence on the issue of workplace ideology. The effect of quality management on the union as a whole is the lowest of all the authorities at *Arun*, and on a number of specific union issues, the overall perception is that little had been affected.

f) Differences in perceptions by job functions

There are some differences in opinions when dividing respondents according to job-function rather than by authority - although the differences are smaller, on most issues, than the differences that exist between authorities.

In terms of the awareness of the corporate quality management policy there is no great distinction overall, although those working in regulatory functions seem to be the most aware. People working in regulatory functions also seem to feel the effects of quality management slightly more than people in other job functions. These people also give the highest approval rating for quality management, with those working in social/welfare functions giving the lowest - although the balance of opinion is still in approval, even here. While all job functions report increases in workloads as a result of quality management, people in regulatory functions are the most likely to perceive an increase in workloads and people in client-service work, the least. Despite this, there is no real differences between job functions from the consensus that quality management has intensified work. On the ideological impact of quality management at work, no real distinctions are apparent, again, although those in regulatory functions and client services have higher levels of accepting the quality management agenda than elsewhere. There are no real distinctions between how people in different job functions perceive the effect of quality management on the union in general - although people in social/welfare functions perceive more of a change than others. On a range of specific union issues, however, there appear to be some differences. Those in regulatory and social/welfare functions seem more pessimistic about the effect on union influences than those in administrative/support functions and client services.

CHAPTER 11

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN FOUR AUTHORITIES: SUMMARY AND THEMES

The previous three chapters described how quality management was implemented in four local authorities, the background to these policies and their outcomes – both intended and unintended – to the reorganisation of work and of union-management relations. This chapter will summarise these findings and draw together some of the *common* features present in all of the authorities, thereby identifying aspects which may be more generalisable in other local authority workplaces. In doing this, contingent factors common to all the authorities will be considered in order to identify common determining influences. These common influences include, (1) managerialism and the presence of a public service labour process and (2) managerialism and the presence of particular forms of employment relations practice in local government. More detailed discussion of the important aspect of how the labour process and employment relations relate to each other is the subject of detailed discussion in the concluding two chapters.

Accounting for Differences

The four authorities studied were chosen to reflect the differences that exist between local authorities. Differences, here, included geographical location, demography, authority status and the associated differences in the composition of the workforces in each case. Significant differences, however, were found primarily in management and trade union policy and the perceptions of workers. Because quality management was the focus of research, differences in management policy determined union policy and worker perceptions in each case. However, management policy on quality in each case was contingent upon management's perception, either explicitly or implicitly, of the likely union and worker response. Anticipated union response was based upon the latent strength of the union branch in each case and, in turn, union strength was itself based upon the assumed propensity of union members to take action of one sort or another.

a) Differences in quality management policy

Nominally, all four authorities claimed to be operating a quality management system based upon the principles of total quality management (TQM). The differences in the actual quality management practices being implemented was, however, marked. In part these differences could be accounted for by the inherent difficulties in applying prescribed models to real scenarios and by the variations in managers' understanding of what constitutes 'pure' TQM. Such factors could not account for all the differences encountered, however. *Brent's* quality management policy was characterised by its integration into the political project of the Conservative administration (i.e. transferring political decision-making processes into managerial decision-making processes and curtailing the power of the union). Here, quality management was inseparable from the quasi-market structures of the reconstituted authority; by its unwitting participation in legitimising the policies that undermined the union through membership attrition; and through its role – given this background – in increasing the demands on effort from workers. In marked contrast, *Newcastle's* quality management policy was based around management's assumption that the union had to be appeased. In contrast to *Brent*, where quality management was used to reinforce the internal market, quality management was being promoted as a means to prevent the break-up of in-house service provision. Management faced a different situation at *Wycombe* and *Arun* – where union strength was low and had no history of confrontation. Here, quality management was introduced as part of a continuation of management policy, based upon the assumption of low levels of union opposition.

b) Differences in union branch policy

Union policy, in each case, was based upon the perception of branch strength, of the current state of management-union relations and of the union branch's understanding of what quality management entailed. At *Brent* and *Newcastle*, both branches had a history of activism and relative strength. At *Brent*, however, the branch had been affected by political and managerial challenges to its ability to defend its members' interests – particularly through redundancy and outsourcing, whereas at *Newcastle* the union's position was not under political challenge. Quality management, then, was (accurately) identified as being part of an implicitly anti-union strategy at *Brent*, while

being identified as being a tool to prevent outsourcing at *Newcastle*. In *Arun* and *Wycombe*, the branches had had a low level of activism prior to the introduction of quality management and expectations were lower. In both cases, the branches did not have a formal policy towards quality management and accepted quality as being a legitimate managerial concern. Political changes at *Wycombe*, had enabled greater union consultation of managerial issues (including quality) In contrast, at *Arun* quality management seemed to have further isolated the union from dialogue with management as the primary focus of management-employee consultation.

c) Differences in policy outcomes

Quality management reduces 'quality' to indicators relevant to market relationships, yet the performance of public services is not readily converted to such criteria. For management to approximate such performance criteria, then, some discretion is possible and policy outcomes are liable to vary according to the choices made. In the four authorities studied, policy outcomes did not only vary as a result of the different agendas being pursued in each case, but also as a result of the unexpected outcomes of policy implementation.

At *Brent*, devolving managerial decision-making led to the perception by some senior managers of a loss of coherence and consistency in the management of quality. Managerial quality policies are also liable to change as a result of overt or tacit resistance by workers. While there was little evidence of overt resistance leading to changes in quality management policy at the four authorities studied, there were indications that workers opposed aspects of quality management when it affected their work and, in some cases, that management modified its policy in order to deflect such opposition. At *Wycombe*, for example, opposition to performance related pay was resulting in an increased profile for the union. Conversely at *Newcastle* management withdrew their initial intention to allow staff members to formalise their own work routines when progress was thought to be too slow.

Such unexpected outcomes were the result of the contingent nature of managers' understanding of quality management and of the necessary adaptation required to implement prescribed quality management models to 'real world' public service workplaces. This was liable to vary by the policy agenda (i.e. by authority) and by the

nature of the service affected, particularly in relation to the existence - or lack of existence – of ‘real customers’. This is discussed further, below.

d) Differences between occupations and job functions

Finally, differences in perceptions and behaviour could also be attributed to differences in the nature of work between different groups of workers. In chapter 10 these differences were crudely defined by their relationship to metaphorical customers: being either involved in regulatory work, welfare service provision, in administrative work or in direct contact with service users. While significant differences emerge in terms of the nature of work involved here, though, very little differences emerged between these different groups in relation to how they perceived the effect of quality management on their work and on their union. Differences in perceptions, on these two issues, were consistently more significant between authorities than between job functions.

Common Factors: Managerialism in Four Local Authorities

Notwithstanding the number of distinctions that existed between the four authorities, the research conducted for this thesis has highlighted a number of common themes. More detailed discussion of the outcomes of quality management on the labour process and on trade unions is made in the concluding chapters. Here, though, some of the common determining factors for these outcomes will be highlighted. Common underlying factors affecting the outcomes of quality management in the four authorities were discussed in chapters 2-5, in terms of their significance. Subsequent research, however, has proven these factors to be of significance in all authorities. The common factors that have underlined the implementation of quality management in all four authorities were all due to the pervasive influence of managerialism. That is, the pervasive tendency to transfer all decision-making processes into the domain of managers – who, because of their party political neutrality, are assumed to be neutral within the context of organisational political processes. This managerialist trend, described in chapter 2, was effected in all the authorities studied by common structural and ideological determinants. Structurally, managerialism was effected by the legacy of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) while ideologically it was effected by the attempt to invoke some kind of ‘customer-supplier’ relationship into the public service workplace.

a) **Managerialism and the legacy of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT)**

The legacy of CCT proved to be a consistent factor in shaping the outcome of quality management policy in the local authorities studied. It did this structurally and coercively.

First, prior experience of CCT, in all cases, had ensured that certain structural changes had taken place within the organisations. As a mandatory prerequisite for the tendering process, local authority organisations were required to separate policy and contract specification roles from the operational aspects of service provision (the client-contractor split'). The effect of this was to make managerial definitions of quality (as opposed to political or professional definitions) more appropriate to the contract-based structures of public services. Consequently, while making some overtures to the compatibility of bespoke quality management packages to public service environments, the ultimate appeal of quality management was in its commercial kudos. It is this that made it appealing for authority leaders, branch trade union leaders and individual managers who were keen to ensure in-house provision.

CCT's role in legitimising quality management was also achieved coercively. A common feature in all authorities was managers' consistent use of CCT as an external threat by which to impose various forms of self-discipline on workers, in accordance with the new demands required by quality management. Whether or not managers approved of outsourcing public service – and most did not – managers reported that the tendering process had allowed them to make changes to workplace organisation that would otherwise have proven problematic.

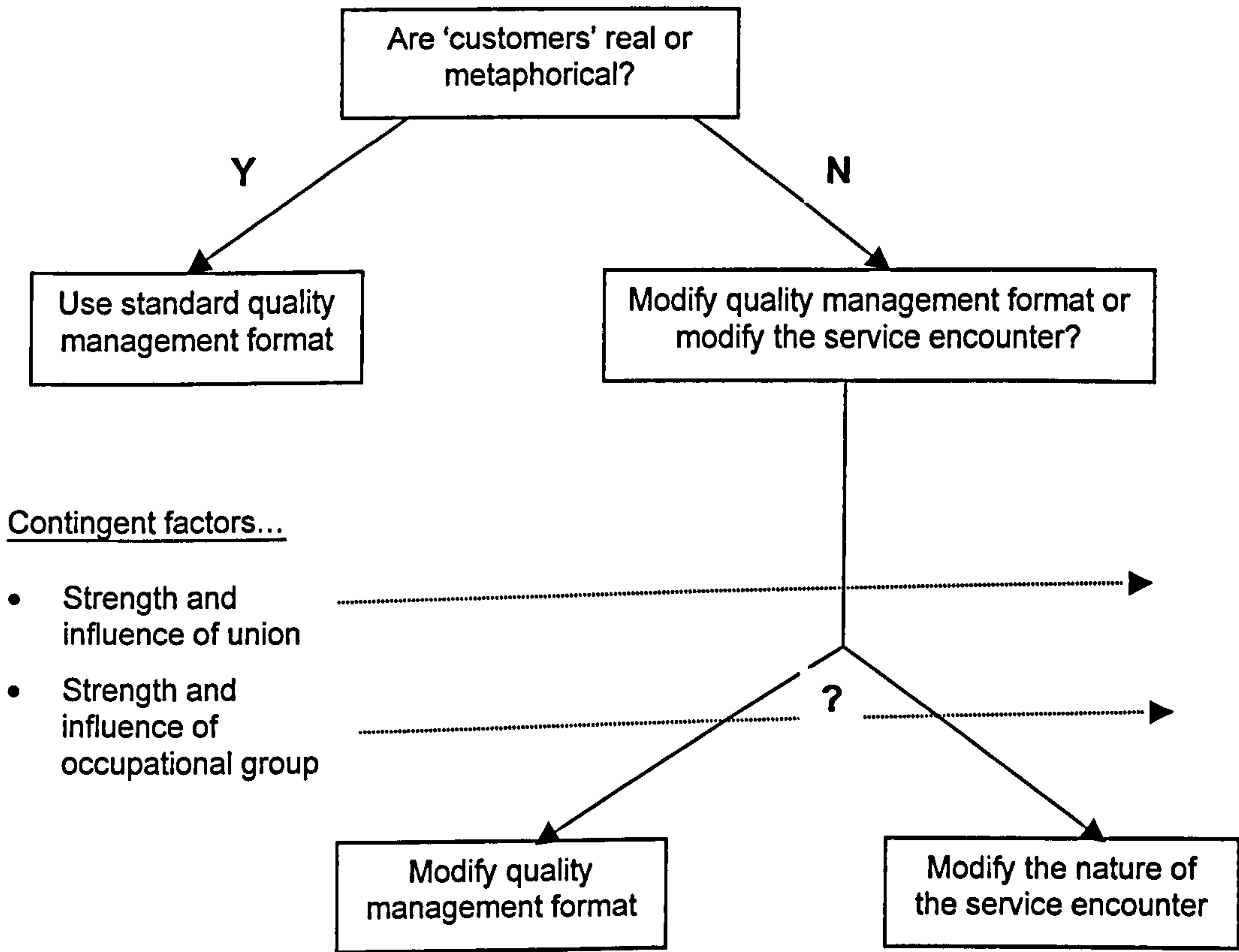
Through its effect on organisational structure and through its creation of an external threat, then, CCT legitimised the importation of commercial quality management practices into the public service arena. It remains to be seen whether this relationship may reciprocate: that quality management may entrench the structural changes imposed as part of CCT – though the logic, here, suggests that this would be the case. Such a situation may have a parallel at *Brent*, where the structural disaggregation of the organisation enabled a contract-based approach to quality; but where this contract culture, once instigated, then entrenched the disaggregated structure of the Council.

b) Managerialism and the ideology of the customer

In a number of ways, quality management formalised a change in the relationship between workers and service users. In some cases this relationship was tangible and structural – at *Brent*, customer-supplier relationships were imposed through contracts and internal markets – but in all cases the ideology of ‘the customer’ was imported as part of the quality management package. There were some distinctions – at *Newcastle*, managers were careful not to use the rhetoric of ‘the customer’ – but in all cases the quality management had the explicit function of *promoting* the greater interdependency of individual work routines through the implicit creation of customer-supplier chains. The success of this varied according to how insulated workers were (or could make themselves) from external ‘customers’. Nevertheless, the intent to create such changes was explicit and, most importantly, workers were made aware of their relationship to external and/or internal ‘customers’.

The differences in the outcomes of these policies varied by the policy agenda being pursued and by the nature of the service affected. In the latter case, the quality management agenda was affected by how ‘real’ customers were in different public service encounters. Where customers were more metaphorical than real – such as in the case of regulatory functions such as environmental health, trading standards, weights and measures etc. - there was a need to modify either the ‘pure’ definition of quality relating to customers, or the need to modify the service encounter itself in order to make it applicable to the prescribed quality management format. In turn, this tended to be determined by an assessment of how quality management would be seen as being complementary to, or subversive of, professional autonomy and the ‘public service ethos’. Where conflict of interest is still present, the decision as to whether the quality management format or the public service encounter is to be compromised was likely to be based upon the assumed power and influence of the specific groups of workers involved. These issues are further elaborated in figure 11:1, below.

Figure 11:1 Changing Quality Management or Changing Service Relationships



Of course, the above reflects the likely choices affecting management *policy*, rather than practice. In the case of management practice, outcomes are further affected by patterns of acceptance, deflection and resistance, regardless of the relationship to the metaphorical customer. In all cases, then, differences in the choices management make on the direction of quality management, are tied in with the nature of quality management's relationship to the labour process in public services – which is discussed in more detail in chapter 12.

The 'Public Service Labour Process' in Four Local Authorities

The existence of a public service labour process is, perhaps, problematic, given that the basic tenets of labour process analysis relate to the operation of markets. However, research conducted for this thesis has identified a number of consistent effects on the organisation of work in a transformed public service environment. The theoretical justification for including this in the wider debate about the labour process is made in

chapter 12. Here, however, empirical findings on the effects of quality management methods on the labour process will be summarised.

Broadly, quality management had increased the workloads of workers in the authorities studied, though the extent of this increase varied in scope and scale according to authority (and hence the nature of the policy being pursued) and the service area. These effects will be discussed more fully in chapter 12.

a) Quality management and organisational transformation

One finding, consistent in all authorities, was that quality management was being used as the basis for some form of organisational transformation. At its base level, quality management is *intended* to transform workplace relationships (DuGay 1996), so it was no surprise to find some changes as a result of quality management. The transformations that took place were based upon structural changes – attempting to change workplace relationships through the regulation of working practices – and upon ‘ideological’ changes – attempting to structurally change working relationships through imposing ‘customer awareness’ onto workers. In practice, both of these strategies were being attempted in support of each other, although the balance and the degree of success varied. At *Brent*, for example, ‘attitudes’ were deemed to be very important, but it was unclear whether attitudes towards customers were being changed independently of the structural changes that forced a greater awareness of contract relationships between services. At *Newcastle*, however, the formalisation of work activities through a quality manual was the means by which workplace relationships were intended to be transformed.

b) Limits to the transformation of the labour process

While quality management had a direct impact on the labour process, its effects were uneven. Because of the problems associated with applying market-based definitions of quality to public goods, the effects on the labour process varied. The effects also varied according to the depth of management commitment to imposing such methods and according to how much workers’ perceived these changes were compatible with their own ‘public service’ values.

Even where workers were deemed to be sympathetic to quality management in principle – as indicated by the overall approval ratings in chapter 10 – workers were often hostile to certain aspects of quality management in practice. This was evident particularly where management attempted to regulate and standardise worker discretion – for example the reported hostility, in all cases, to standardising telephone answering procedures, reported in chapter 8.

Quality Management and Trade Unions in Four Local Authorities

While pre-existing relationships shaped the nature of quality policies being pursued, as noted at the outset of this chapter, the outcomes of these various agendas were shaped by the dynamics of conflict and consent in each case. Workers' expectations, based upon their prior experiences, determined patterns of conflict and consent. These differences were partly due to differences in the nature of work and the relationship to 'real' customers (regulatory functions being relatively isolated; front-of-house reception staff being relatively exposed). Differences by work type were not great, however. Workers in social/welfare type work did not seem to be significantly more or less hostile to quality management than those in administrative work, despite the reputation of relative militancy associated with the former (Heery 1987; Miller 1986). Again, where significant differences emerged, it was between union branches: that is between union-management relations in each case – which affected union branch policy - and between union members' perceptions of quality management and its effect on their respective unions.

a) Union-management relations

In all cases, trade unions were recognised by management and management in all cases noted that the union was considered legitimate and that generally co-operative relationships existed between management and unions. However, some strong differences emerged beneath these claims. At *Brent*, for example, an unsuccessful attempt was made by the political leadership – probably against senior management advice – to derecognise Unison at the authority. Even before this, however, Unison branch officials commented that the union was being bypassed and business unit managers acknowledged that the restructuring of the authority, combined with the drive to achieve performance targets, was marginalising the union at the workplace level. At

Newcastle the union negotiated with management and management was keen to co-opt union support for its quality policy. As noted, however, management needed the external threat of CCT to legitimise quality management, and so quality management could not really be said to have been the product of equal distributive bargaining per se. The situation at *Arun* and at *Wycombe* were based upon weak bargaining positions on the part of the union in each case. At *Wycombe* the union was beginning to see increased management consultation after years of inaction and was becoming more involved in grievance issues relating to quality management. At *Arun*, however, the union was relatively inactive – to such an extent that management felt able to set up an alternative for management-staff communications.

b) Union members' perceptions of quality management their union

On face value, based upon the broad question posed in the questionnaire, union members' perception of quality management, in all authorities, was generally approving and did not see quality management as seriously affecting their union's ability in representing their interests at work. If this broad approval were accepted, however, what implications could there be for trade union strategy, given that union branches responded in different ways to different policies under different conditions?

The 'face value' approval, then, should be treated with some caution. First, given the differences in quality policy, union-management relations and union branch policies, what did 'approval' amount to? Second, was 'approval' the approval of the *principle* of 'quality' – with its associated honorific status – rather than quality management? Third, was 'approval' the approval of the principle of what workers *understood* to be *quality management in its wider sense* – rather than their own experience (as was intimated by one interviewee at *Newcastle*)? Upon closer examination, then, opinion was more complex. While the majority of opinion saw quality management as not affecting the union branch, more saw quality management as adversely affecting their union, than saw quality management as positively affecting their union. This balance was consistent in all authorities and in all occupation groups – although it was particularly strong at *Brent*.

Summary

Quality management was a prominent policy in all four of the authorities studied. It was designed specifically to make some changes to the way in which work was conducted. In this sense it was wholly in line with the 'new public management' agenda for public service provision. In all essential characteristics, then, it was driven by a managerialist agenda which sees public professional autonomy as being inconsistent with efficient managerial decision-making; itself assumed to be the only efficient means of making decisions. In this scenario, public service trade unions are in an unusual position. Challenging the unions' legitimacy could prove costly for management – particularly where many management grades are, themselves, members. On the other hand, the logic of fully implemented quality management will tend to reinforce the managerial prerogative at the workplace level through the changes in the labour process, potentially distancing the union from their members at this level. Conversely, however, where the changes tend to affect the labour process at the workplace level, there remains the possibility of the workplace-based union representative to increase the profile and legitimacy of the union as a means of resistance to work intensification, work standardisation and 'management by stress'.

The remaining two chapters of this thesis will explore these themes more closely, relating the empirical data presented in this section to the overall discussion about the public service labour process and employment relations in local government..

Section VI

Conclusions

CHAPTER 12

QUALITY, MANAGERIALISM AND WORK IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In these concluding chapters, the effects of quality management on work and collective bargaining will be summarised and related to theoretical concerns about the labour process in public service scenarios, and to the issues facing local government trade unions. While the issues of collective bargaining and the labour process are clearly interlinked, the two issues will be summarised separately. This chapter will define the issues relating to how quality management affects work and the final chapter will define how these issues relate to trade unions and collective bargaining arrangements.

Quality Management and Work in Local Government

This thesis has been concerned with the effects that quality management practices have when introduced into the local government workplace environment. A number of inter-related research issues emerge as a result. First, the attempt to meet the apparently opposing objectives of (market oriented) efficiency and (public-service oriented) commitment in public service delivery creates a series of unique labour process characteristics. Quality in this scenario is intrinsically tied to the issue of productivity because enhancing the non-price 'value' of a public service often means increasing the quantity of service outputs; and, conversely, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of a service simultaneously enhances the output 'value' of a service in relation to cost.

The second issue to emerge is that while quality management methods are underpinned by specific managerial assumptions, they are not usefully defined as being part of a single unified project. Neither is quality management appropriately conceptualised as being within some Taylorian/Post-Fordist dichotomy; or within some Bravermanian/Foucauldian continuum. Quality management operates on different levels of control - often simultaneously - and the rationale for what is trying to be controlled in each case, determines the effects on the labour process. Quality management methods aim variously to change work practices through work standardisation, the integration of processes or the cultivation of 'customer awareness'. In turn these objectives could

equally be termed, respectively, as deskilling, work intensification and 'management by stress'.

The third issue is that while quality management attempts the degradation of work at these different levels, resistance is possible - and inevitable. The awareness of workers of their relative bargaining power within the workplace - which is variable over time - affects the limits of managerial authority at the three levels where quality management operates. Work-based knowledge and the tacit skills that workers possess are important factors here. First, quality management affects, say, professionals differently to semi-skilled workers. Second, The viability of the 'customer relationship' to a particular workplace scenario affects some workers more than others - so workers in a leisure centre are affected differently by quality management than workers in a regulatory service. Finally, the perception of employment security in any workplace is important - so workers in a 'discretionary' service with declining morale, such as a public library, are more likely to be affected than workers who are relatively unmotivated by career prospects.

While the general intentions of quality management may be identifiable, the reality of the local authority workplace setting creates significant deviations from the prescribed management agenda. Most importantly this is because the actions and reactions of workers, as conscious participants, cannot be assumed to comply with a given managerial agenda.

A Public Service Labour Process?

An important outcome of this research has been in identifying key attributes of the labour process in public service work, despite the fact that the very notion of the existence of a 'public service labour process' could be considered problematic in the first place. The labour process debate, from Braverman through to recent disputes about Foucauldian subjectivism, has primarily been concerned with the management of work in a commercial environment and, considering that the market imperative provides the driving mechanism for managerial regulation and re-regulation of work in labour process analysis, this is not surprising. However, despite the apparent legitimacy of

applying the logic of labour process analysis to work in the public sector (e.g. Walsh 1995b) the nature of a 'state sector labour process' has not been directly addressed.

In the initial debate, following Braverman (1974), the labour process is defined as being the application of technology to deskill workers in order to satisfy commercial ends. Here, the process of deskilling permanently transfers worker discretion into the hands of management, affecting the effort bargain through increasing management's ability to dictate the rate of work while simultaneously undermining workers' bargaining power in the labour market. Rather than being a particular managerial paradigm, then, Taylorism is identified as being the essence of all managerial logic within the process of capital accumulation. In the Foucauldian reconstitution of labour process theory, while any driving logic of capital accumulation is rejected *per se*, managerial attempts to harness worker subjectivity are still based upon coherent strategies (or narratives) based upon the interests of the organisation as perceived by managers. In all definitions, though, the labour process is initiated by management and is driven by the motive of profit; be this commercial success or commercial survival.

If it is assumed that the organisation of public services in the 1990s was completely isolated from this imperative, then labour process analysis could be considered irrelevant. However, work in public services is not only affected by the broader mechanisms of the market, but the reconstitution of public services throughout the previous two decades has explicitly attempted to introduce market principles into public service work.

Yet the fact that the nature of public services essentially remains public means that marketisation of public service labour ultimately cannot be achieved. So it is reasonable to assume that there is a labour process in public service employment, but that it will have some distinctions from the labour process in the private sector. That labour process analysis is of relevance in the public sector is not new. Braverman, in the latter stages of his work, is concerned with the effects of deskilling in administrative and clerical work - a theme that has been pursued by others (Crompton & Jones 1984). Indeed, the growth of the state in the twentieth century - and the subsequent growth of workers therein - is identified as being of prime importance to the increasing degradation of clerical work in the twentieth century.

While there is considerable variety in the constitution of 'work' in different public services, the coexistence of two counterposing imperatives create common underpinnings which differentiate work, here, from work in the private sector. First, 'the market' cannot determine the quantity and quality of work required. Therefore, instead of the ultimate indicators of 'efficiency' being measured in relation to increased revenue, market share and/or profit, the production and distribution of 'public goods' remains inherently 'political' and discretionary. Second, and conversely, central government policy from the 1980s onwards has been geared to reining-in what was seen as over-employment in local government by transforming it into a pseudo-private sector. Driven by a mixture of new right populism and public choice theory, government policy aimed to impose the discipline of the market into a wide range of public services, while simultaneously cutting expenditure. Where privatisation was seen as inappropriate - as in public services - the emphasis shifted to introducing various forms of 'quasi-markets' (LeGrand 1990).

While these changes were met with (anticipated) resistance from public service trade unions, the process was further complicated in local government by the obstruction of the local authorities themselves - the majority of which were controlled by political opponents. In some key authorities obstruction extended to some organised political resistance by the 'new urban left' (NUL) (Lansley et al 1989). To combat this, the vehicle for imposing markets in local authorities was driven by proxy through the imposition of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT). Here, workplaces were redefined as being 'purchasers' and 'providers' of services made transparent through specifications; providers then being required to 'compete' for contracts with external contractors under strict rules to prevent 'anti-competitive behaviour'. The vacuum created by the defeat of the NUL project by central government was the hegemonic domination of managerialism in public services; 'post-NUL' and 'New Labour' has variously accommodated and embraced this agenda.

The combined effect of introducing quasi-markets with the ever-increasing financial constraints centrally imposed on local authorities has created unique - and lasting - effects on the organisation of work in local authorities. Work organisation is neither fully determined by political decision-making normally associated with public sector

management; nor, however, is it determined by any 'natural' consumer demand for public services. Instead, workers are expected to adapt their behaviour according to arbitrarily determined indicators of success, monitored and administered by local managers, despite there being no perceptible relation to the nature and amount of work imposed and the actual 'demand' by service users. While such mechanisms may provide some form of negative incentive for workers - i.e. the need to be seen *not* failing to meet minimum targets - the positive incentive associated with market definitions of success - financial reward - is not present. In this sense, the perceived failings of the performance related pay (PRP) system noted at Wycombe, were more to do with the inappropriateness of PRP per se, than of the particular manner in which it was implemented in this case.

A labour process can – and does – exist in the operation of public services, then.

Quality Management in Local Government

An important outcome of the research conducted for this thesis has been the confirmation of the importance of organisational context to the study of employment relations. Critical to how quality management was received in the organisations studied here, was the set of contingent factors brought about by the developments in local government in the 1980s and 1990s. Such factors determined the expectations of those involved. The pre-eminent background issue here has been managerialism.

a) Managerialism, quality and public service

The presence of management has always been a feature of local government. The work and employment issues involved with management in local government are not new. Since the 1980s, however, the agenda for the organisation of public services in local government has been shifted significantly by the advent of a new managerialism (Pollitt 1990a; Walsh 1995a; Clarke & Newman 1997). Managerialism could be defined as the doctrine that resource allocation is most efficiently organised through commercial management practices. Despite rhetorical claims to the contrary in many of the 'new wave' managerial theories, managerial decision-making is a hierarchical process in all important aspects. The rhetorical difference in new wave theories is that managerial authority is claimed through such discourses as 'leadership' or 'entrepreneurship' rather

than through legal-rational terms. Managers are still, however, assumed to be neutral and to have no vested sectional interests.

The origins of managerialism are found in New Right ideological and economic beliefs that informed Conservative central government thinking during the 1980s - coupled with purely partisan motives in a situation where Labour councils were controlling a large proportion of local government. At the core of the managerialist agenda has been the imposition of a more commercial approach to local government services - through legislation concerning local government financing and financial accountability and, via CCT of local government services, of a new contract culture within local government.

Managerialism has increasingly become political consensus in the 1990s. For electoral and ideological reasons, official Labour Party policy has come to embrace the managerialist agenda. The re-evaluation of Labour Party strategy, away from the NUL agenda toward the language of partnership and consumer rights has meant a shift away from opposing CCT, to one of accommodation. Here, the emphasis is on 'best value' assessment of service provision and a strengthening of central government monitoring of local government service provision - increasingly in the area of quality.

The managerialist agenda has directly affected employment relationships within local government. First, it has shifted the decision-making process away from political issues about resources toward managerial decision-making processes about economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This shift has changed the emphasis from 'what' services are offered - and in what quantity - to one of 'how' the predetermined services are run - service delivery; a shift in emphasis from 'products' to 'processes'. This shifts the focus directly onto the workforce because the priority has moved from the resourcing of local services to how well staff can meet the demands of the local tax-payer/consumer.

The second, and equally important impact on employment, is that the imposition of quasi-market mechanisms in local government, as elsewhere, is chiefly about *disciplining* managers' and workers' expectations. This is not straightforward, however, because public services remain, in essence, divorced from any real market mechanisms and the imposition of quasi-markets is necessarily artificial. As was shown in chapter 4, the drive to make local government more efficient by making it 'more like the private sector' has most visibly been through shedding jobs. This does not motivate staff. An

additional problem for managers in this new environment is that - in contrast to commercial environments where improved organisational performance increases revenue, whereby some reward may be offered to workers - the linkage between output and revenue is not usually possible in public service provision. The 'traditional' motivation, here, has been through a - perhaps over-stated - 'public service ethos'. Though criticised by the New Right as being grounded in the preservation of restrictive practices; and by the NUL as an elitist preservation of status through bureau-professionalism, a 'public service ethos' remains a key motivation for working in a public service environment. Faced with such dilemmas, the quality management model would seem to offer local authority managers a useful means of a resolution to a central dilemma: the quality management agenda combines the issue of efficiency and effectiveness with that of service, making it attractive within local government in the 1990s.

Quality, as a concept, is inherently value-laden and, in the public sphere, this should make specific definitions an issue to be contested politically. The manner in which quality has been co-opted into the managerialist agenda, however, merely reflects the increasing marginalisation of political decision-making at the local state level (Pfeffer & Cote 1991; Kirkpatrick & Martinez-Lucio 1995b). Where the allocation of local services may previously have centred around choosing a balance between levels of local taxation and levels of local services; or between prioritising the levels of service in different areas, the managerialist political consensus now only values the attainment of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity of service delivery. Managers operating 'sound, customer-focused business practices' are assumed to be inherently neutral and untainted by the 'vested producer interests' that are associated with professionals; or by the short term agendas of elected politicians operating within a 'political business cycle'. Elected political interests may officially set priorities but now local party policy is narrowly constrained by parameters set by central government and by the political consensus that exists to maintain this arrangement.

In a public service environment, divorced from the usual indicators of success in a commercial environment (market share, profitability), quality management becomes intertwined within the broader issues of productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. Here

then, in a climate where pressure is permanently being placed upon local authority finances, where services have been subject to the commercial pressures of CCT - and now 'best value', quality management is inexorably tied up with the general managerial drive to reduce costs. This may be manifested as managing with fewer staff (where a high level of the 'costs' are to be found) or as increasing the output of existing staff.

b) Quality management and the public service labour process

Quality management, as a generic concept, is variously concerned with improving the efficiency, reliability, or effectiveness of organisational output - in relation to external customer demand. To do this, quality management explicitly aims to change, in some form, the way work is organised within an organisation. 'Quality management', however, can take a myriad of forms. Many critical examinations of the effects on the labour process of total quality management (TQM) and the like neglect this through taking prescriptive managerial texts and official corporate quality policy statements at their word. Here the tendency is to assume that such prescribed practices represent some unified rational project, able to co-opt potential worker resistance and turn it into compliance.

There has been considerable critical examination of quality management methods over the 1990s. While this is welcome, there has been a tendency to treat methods such as TQM as representing some type of paradigm shift in the organisation of work. Too much credence has often been given to the claims made by the protagonists of such management approaches - particularly on the issue that they represent some form of post-Fordist departure from Taylorian management. While it is important to recognise the significance of a shift in managerial discourse, from an emphasis on routinisation and regulation of work, towards a greater emphasis on 'empowerment' and 'employee commitment', such claims should not be assumed to be true in either their outcomes or even in their own underlying logic. A closer examination of the content of different quality management methods reveals a number of conflicting objectives in the approaches to work organisation. Some of these objectives are seemingly anti-Taylorian in their approach, but others are fully consistent with Taylorist principles - yet such contradictory principles sometimes coexist within single quality management methods. The typology of quality management methods adopted as a result of the

research conducted here, is one which - without ignoring the issue - does not use the rhetorical relationship with Taylorism as its reference point. The approach, instead, is of assessing the intent of a particular quality management method with reference to the particular aspect of 'quality' it attempts to control. This is the basis by which the implications for work organisation can better be judged.

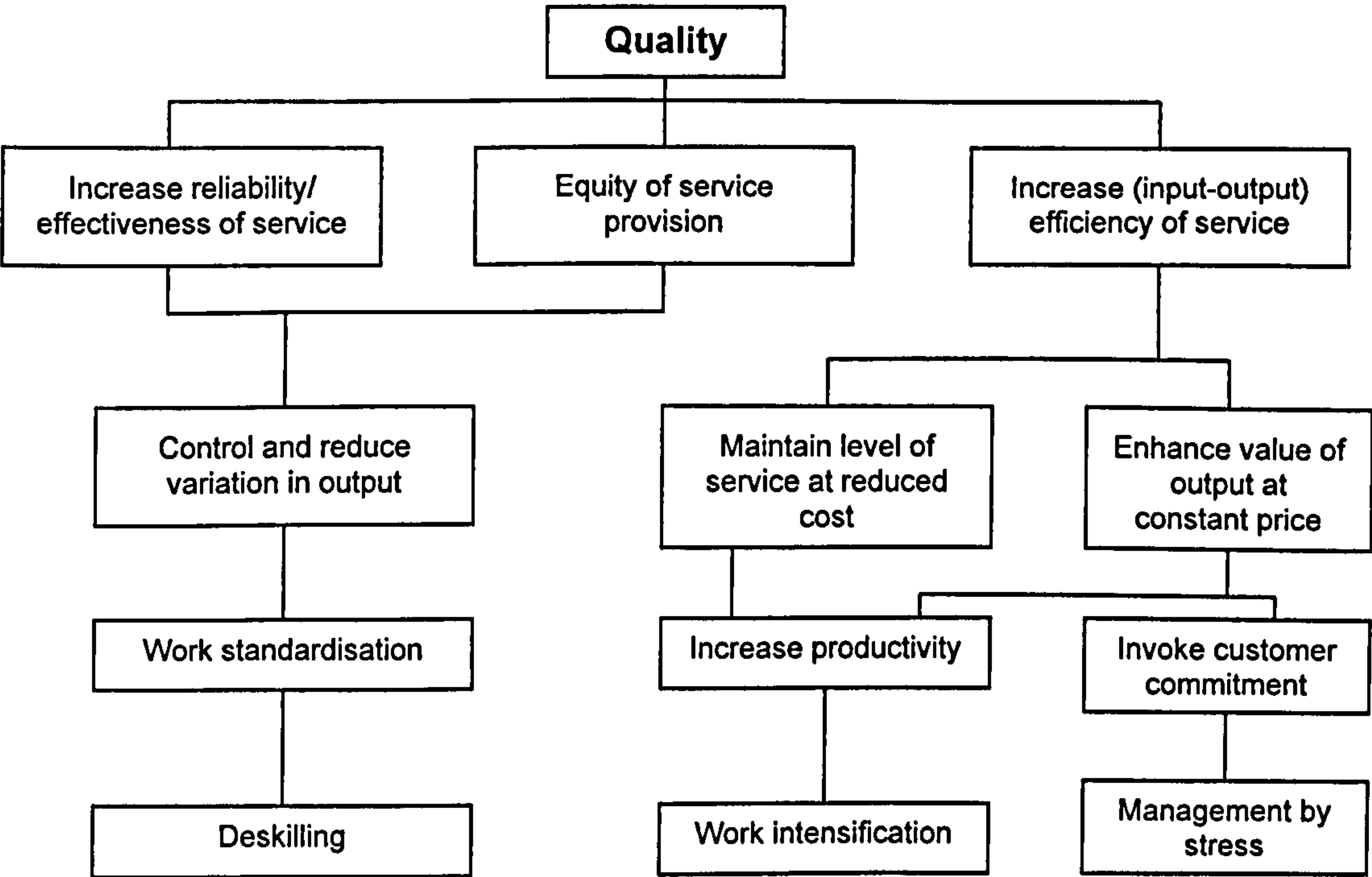
At its base level all quality management methods, regardless of whether they claim to be Taylorist or anti-Taylorist, aim to ensure the consistency, reliability and predictability of output. The objective of ensuring consistency of output requires, *a priori*, the regulation and standardisation of processes. The implication here, then, is that quality management has a basic tendency to standardise work and the related labour process issue of deskilling is raised. This issue is most explicitly identifiable in quality system approaches such as *ISO 9000* - where the stated objective is to codify work routines in a manner that can be audited by managers controlling the quality system. While the advent of quality 'cultural' approaches to management such as TQM aim to do more than this, they nevertheless aim to simplify and codify work routines in order to make them more visible to management scrutiny. This is justified by a desire to increase reliability and consistency of output which in a public service context is based around the principle of equity. In a neutral environment this could be seen as entirely legitimate. But no workplace environment is neutral. The standardisation of work routines implicitly empowers managers over workers through a tacit process of deskilling.

The second level in which quality management operates is through the aim of enhancing the value of output in relation to cost. This brings the issue of productivity into the quality agenda and is associated with the integration of processes. Increasing the interdependency of processes makes it more possible to focus on inefficient practices and bottlenecks. This is the essence of *kanban* manufacturing (Oliver 1991; Wood 1989). It is also, in essence, the intensification of work: the attempt to permanently remove buffers (material, or time) from processes is, essentially, the process of permanently increasing the exposure of workers to end-consumer demand. This form of quality management is implicit in TQM, in the variety of approaches focusing on 'teams', and in performance-based quality management methods.

The third level in which quality management operates is through its attempt to 'mandate' worker enthusiasm. Here, quality management takes on an ideological form whereby it attempts to engender commitment. This form of quality management has emerged, in one form, as a progression from the holistic forms of work intensification noted above - the rationale being that while quality and productivity gains can be forced onto the workforce through the design of the production process, further gains can be made by making workers participate in further increases. This can be seen in *kaizen* type continuous improvement schemes. It is also particularly relevant in the management of service type work. Value, in the consumption of services, is derived from the service encounter itself and so enhancing output value, here, presupposes the regulation of the service encounter itself. Clearly this may well involve previously mentioned work standardisation and work intensification as part of this process, but it is more concerned with the regulation of attitudes. Here the implication is of management by stress - whereby workers may feel pressurised to display 'appropriate attitudes' as the basis of their work. Relevant quality management methods, here, include 'customer care' schemes, *Investors in People* (IiP) and the *Charter Mark* initiative - where management is assessed through its ability to prove how committed its procedures and workers are to customers.

These three principal labour process objectives, then, are the foundation of quality management methods within a public service environment – although they should not be seen as operating in a mutually exclusive fashion. In any particular service or authority the emphasis may change and a combination of methods may be employed in any quality strategy - particularly where holistic methods such as TQM are being implemented - but these three elements remain at the core. Figure 10:1 provides a summary.

Figure 12:1: Managing Quality in Public Services: Implications for the Labour Process



c) The use of quality management policies in local government

Overall, take-up of quality management schemes has been rapid in the 1990s. In chapter 3, it was shown that between 1994 and 1996, nearly all authorities operated some form of complaints procedure; around 70% of authorities operated some form of service charter; over 60% claimed to practice ‘customer involvement’; over 60% operated, or were planning to operate *ISO 9000* at some level; and about 50% were using some form of ‘teamwork’ based work organisation. In addition, the uptake of *Charter Mark* increased from 19% in 1994, to 31% in 1996; and the take-up of *Investors in People* (IiP) increased from 39% in 1994 to 69% in 1996. *TQM* - the most holistic of all the quality management practices - was being taken-up by 75% of counties (11% corporately); 30% of districts (16% corporately); 81% of metropolitan boroughs (19% corporately); and 40 of London Boroughs (20% corporately).

Local authorities, notwithstanding the equalising effect of managerialism, vary from each other and, significantly, from the organisational norms associated with quality management in the private sector.

First, the local authority setting provides a number of organisational complexities: the somewhat unfamiliar territory of the non-commercial operation creates some difficulty in making the seamless connection between customer, manager and worker; and the political decision-making process - although greatly diminished - still provides an important 'variable' in management choice. A quality management package offers possibilities that satisfy partisan political ends within the parameters of the managerialist mindset. It complies with the financial and policy-discretion constraints faced by a local authority; it can meet the increasing demands of central government monitoring of local government performance; it can offer managerial solutions to the threat of CCT; it is based upon the 'politically sound' practice of adopting commercial business practice; and it complies with the ideological fixation with redefining citizenship as an issue of 'consumer rights'. Second, pre-existing workplace relations between workers, management and trade unions affect management style and choice of quality policy. Third, local authorities vary by structure, services provided and, importantly, the demographic composition of the community that they serve.

The choice of quality management policy could be expected to be influenced, then, by partisan priorities. While the 1980s NUL project failed *politically*, some legacies remain into the 1990s - particularly where compatible with the managerialist mainstream. Anti discrimination policies have seen widespread managerial adoption in the format of equal opportunities monitoring - this being compatible with managerial decision-making processes. Where positive anti-discrimination is pursued in the *New Labour* format, the emphasis is on the protection of the consumers of local services.

Thus, where an ex-NUL interpretation of quality outcomes may have been aiming to retain high levels of local services, provided directly, with consultation with trade unions; a *New Right* interpretation may be one of contracting-out efficient targeted services for a low rate of local taxation; finally a *New Labour* emphasis may be on providing good value, efficient services - with partnerships between users, providers, the private sector and the voluntary sector. There are likely to be many permutations in between.

While the influence of managerialism has had the effect of creating some convergence between authorities, then, there are clearly significant problems in any assumption that

such an organisational setting may be comparable to the commercial environment that quality management was developed. While these circumstances provide the general context in which local government as an organisational setting for quality management is 'different', it also points to the variety that exists between local authorities themselves; differences between urban and town councils; differences between district and metropolitan authority functions; differences between Labour and Conservative administrations; and differences between strongly unionised councils and less strongly unionised councils. This study has confirmed the existence of such differences, which are summarised below.

- *Brent's* quality management policy was at the forefront of a large scale transformation of the authority. Consciously tied to a politicised management attempt to totally overhaul the organisational structure, the quality management strategy was a holistic, thorough-going strategy involving the creation of an internal market, contract relationships and selective outsourcing of services. The quality policy was oriented around a 'customer' ethos, was TQM inspired and was systematically geared around *ISO 9000*, *Charter Mark* and *IiP*. In the process of these changes, the workforce was nearly halved over a period of six years. At *Brent*, 'empowered' local managers - with their devolved budgets - were happy with their situation. The pressure for them to perform to targets and their discretion over local staffing decisions allowed them to bypass previously applied principles of promotion through length of service in favour of 'fast tracking' the newly favoured members of staff displaying more 'appropriate' customer friendly attitudes. There were constraints however. The re-organisation of the Council into a series of contractor business units further encouraged the NSR political leadership to force year-on-year budget cuts and outsourcing - leading to a pronounced drop in staff morale through fear of further forced redundancies.
- At *Wycombe*, the political leadership was more stable - although at the time of research control had switched away from long term *Conservative* control. The quality policy was one which evolved from its broad priority of *Performance Management*, which was based on the re-definition of employment contracts. This involved layering the hierarchical structure of the organisation through

simplifying grading structures, the adoption of employment contracts which included performance targets, more 'open-ended' job descriptions and the partial use of PRP. While *Wycombe* were pursuing the attainment of certain award schemes and accreditations (*JiP* and *Charter Mark* - but not *ISO 9000*) the relationship between these various schemes was not seen as being part of a fully integrated strategy. The basis for quality was firmly rooted in *Performance Management*.

- *Newcastle* was a strongly entrenched Labour administration. It had not been influenced, significantly, by the NUL agenda of the 1980s but had a track record of relatively successful retention of direct services up till the 1990s - where the financial squeeze from central government began to bite. Quality management at *Newcastle* was piecemeal, due to the weakness of the corporate centre, and the strength and entrenchment of the union within the authority. While all departments officially had a quality policy, then, only one fully pursued the agenda pro-actively. In this department - *Community and Leisure Services* (CLS) - quality was being approached in a procedural, systemic manner. The basis for quality was through *ISO 9000* and, within the department, this was approached in a piecemeal fashion.
- At *Arun* the council had been piloting a number of *Audit Commission* schemes for a number of years. An entrenched *Conservative* administration with an ageing population - which affected the nature of services being provided, *Arun's* quality management policy was based upon a 'customer care' model. Here, there was a rhetorical attachment to the notion of 'permanent change' and the customer care policy was backed up with programmes of re-education and staff awareness.

The Effects of Quality Management on Work in Local Government

The different quality management policies adopted in the four authorities studied were all intended to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of work output in one way or another. The outcome of these policies, though, was dependent upon local priorities and worker and union reactions. Local priorities were themselves determined by the anticipated reactions of workers and unions in each case. Because of these differences, then, the priorities, perceptions and expectations of workers also differed in each case.

Workers' and managers' perception of the effects on working arrangements was determined mainly by the authority worked at - and thus by the nature of the specific quality policy being pursued. Here, then, the opinion of a professional worker in a regulatory function was closer to the opinion of a librarian in the same authority than to a professional in a similar job function in a different authority.

This is not to say that there were not significant differences between job functions, however. In addition to the nature of the management policy being pursued differences also emerged which were workplace related e.g. differences between 'professional' workers; and differences between workers in regulatory functions and in quasi-commercial functions. Because pre-existing circumstances determined quality policy, the effects of quality management on work regimes were different for each case. In short the effects that quality management had on work differed according to the quality objective (work standardisation, work process integration or managing commitment) according to the strength of the policy being pursued, and according to the relationship of a particular service - with the related status and power of workers within the service - to external managerial scrutiny.

a) Quality and work standardisation

In terms of applicability to service areas, work standardisation is applied most frequently in services where equity of service provision is deemed important (e.g. regulatory services), where health and safety issues are considered important (e.g. sport centres and day centres) and where staffing is based upon low paid, relatively unskilled work in a quasi-commercial environment (e.g. sports centres).

In the case of regulatory services, much of the increase in managerial control was through the standardisation of administrative procedures for reasons of service equity and improved administrative efficiency. While this was partly tied up with an emphasis on 'customer care' - through a determination to improve communications with clients - the main manifestation for 'professionals', here, was the standardisation of administrative accountability. Among a broad range of regulatory functions (environmental health officers, trading standards officers, building control officers) across the four authorities this was pushed through via increased scrutiny required for customer feedback, the introduction of quality systems (*IiP*, *ISO 9000*, *Charter Mark*)

and the use of IT to monitor administrative throughput. While this entailed a loss of autonomy over work organisation, it did not seriously restrict the professional worker's decision-making capacity in their core work activity: it did not fundamentally deskill professional workers in regulatory functions.

The status of the professional has not been undermined by the overall managerialist process. The demystification - and hence the deskilling - of the professional's work is explicitly advocated by the protagonists of managerialism in order to wrest control from professional sectional interests. This was stated to be the case at *Arun*, where professionals' who had, in the past, occupied the most senior officer positions had been replaced by generalist managers. While quality management has been advocated to achieve this (Morgan & Murgatroyd 1994), the attempt to standardise the professional's work through quality management could be seen more as a symptom of this trend than a catalyst.

In the case of sports centres - where workers were exposed to customers in a commercial sense (Clarke 1995) - regulation of work routines was based upon issues of safety. Many of the tasks involved - maintenance of equipment, checking of pool temperatures and chemical composition, and pool-side supervision - were mandatory functions, they were, nonetheless further regulated by the introduction of more detailed procedures. The profile of the people encountered working in sports centres was somewhat unique to the job. *Leisure Assistants* (LAs) were, by a large majority, young, with short service records, relatively unskilled, low paid, but strongly motivated by the fringe benefits associated with the work - i.e. their main motivation was through participation in sport. For managers this made it difficult to motivate staff. They were unable to motivate through making the job less routine; despite attempts to make jobs more varied through job rotation, managers conceded that the core activities involved in *LA* work was inherently boring. They seemed unable to motivate through career incentive; the age profile and turnover of staff indicated that *LAs* identified the job as a temporary phase in their careers. These factors make the other approaches to quality management less appropriate: as a 'service encounter' there is little scope for utilise the integration of inter-related processes to enhance value, and there is limited scope for using implied threats to job security and career progression through enforcing

customer-centred enthusiasm. Similarly formalising response (times and opening statements) for telephone answering in administrative functions, while outwardly concerned with 'customer- friendly attitudes', is in reality the standardisation of tasks. Workers who were affected by such initiatives resented the implied assumption that they were unable to conduct such a task according to their own discretion.

While quality through work standardisation was applied in all authorities studied, the emphasis varied. At *CLS in Newcastle*, *ISO 9000* was initially deemed appropriate for the use in leisure centres - for reasons articulated above - but was then further pursued in the operation of youth work day centres. While this was justified on the basis of providing greater service equity and ensuring health and safety procedures, it is likely that the pursuit of such a quality management strategy - rather than the use of more 'cultural' approach - was based upon the desire of management to apply some universal methods of control in the vastly different workplace scenarios under its authority. As in the case of regulatory functions, standardising work routines for youth workers was restricted to peripheral areas of the main work activity - administrative, health and safety and maintenance procedures - rather than the intangible and wide ranging nature of the experience and skills involved in youth work itself.

While the base logic of work standardisation as a means of controlling output quality is one of deskilling, in practice this method of control simultaneously increases exposure of managerial authority to the scrutiny of workers. By standardising formal procedures for all workers, workers are exposed to increased monitoring. But workers were able, in a number of cases, to use these procedures to formally highlight causes of problems. Rather than this being within the managerialist framework of quality - providing information that could be used to improve efficiency or value - it was often on broader issues - the lack of facilities/funding, bad working conditions, lack of political /managerial will etc. This had implications for the activities of the trade union - which is discussed further in chapter 13.

b) Quality management and work intensification

Quality management methods associated with the intensification of work have been enabled by CCT through the required structural reorganisation of local government departments as a prerequisite for contracting. Whether or not contracts were won in-

house or not, re-organisation increased the visibility of individual work processes to managers. While there remained a reasonable degree of variation between the councils studied who wished to outsource as a matter of policy (*Brent*), those who had been selective about which services would be outsourced (*Wycombe* and *Arun*), and those who were comfortably able to retain in-house service provision (*Newcastle*), managers in all cases acknowledged that the CCT process was seen as a positive catalyst for increasing managerial control over the labour process. Appropriate quality management methods involved, here, included TQM, performance-based quality management and the use of team-based working practices to meet work targets. The importation of quality management to supplement this tended to formalise and legitimise this process, the focus being one of increasing worker exposure to customers. Customer needs, however, are channelled exclusively through management. The sub-dividing of services into more identifiable cost-centres has, then, increased exposure of workers to managerial scrutiny.

Quality through work intensification was central to the quality programme being operated throughout *Brent*. *Brent's* policy went beyond the organisational requirements of CCT and pursued quality vigorously through its devolved internal market structure. While there were notable differences between how this affected work in different services, all services at *Brent* were affected. Quality was defined and monitored centrally through contracts and while technology was deployed, according to the discretion of budget-holding managers, the catalyst for increased productivity was the awareness of performance targets, rather than the means by which monitoring was conducted. Large numbers of jobs had been shed as part of the wider managerial campaign and quality management was identified as being intrinsically tied to this. Quality 'management became a key tool in identifying 'good' and 'bad' performers. Both workers' and managers' perceptions were sharply polarised about the legitimacy of quality management as a result of this - though many of the 'survivors' in favour had benefited from the removal of colleagues in 'fast tracking' promotions.

Wycombe, while not pursuing devolved management, pursued the integration of work processes through the use of performance monitoring, work targets and the use of teams - although the use of teams was uneven. The effects, here, did not result in such an

intensive work regime and did rely on a Taylorian rationale for some of the control of work (relating performance to bonus schemes). Despite this regime not being intensive as *Brent's*, however, perceptions that quality management increased workloads were less ambiguous, here, than in *Brent* - although not as strongly felt.

The integration of work processes in the four authorities varied according to the nature of work involved in different services and this was most distinguishable in the relationship of work to external customers. This was exemplified by a senior *Wycombe* manager relating how those furthest from external customers were the least responsive to quality management initiatives. Conversely, however, integrating processes did have the effect of changing the content of jobs that were previously isolated from external customers. Where workers in central administrative/support functions would historically have been relatively insulated from external pressures, the creation of internal contract structures had some effects on removing such buffers. This was exemplified in *Arun* where the *Working for the Public Group* had a remit to engender a greater awareness of internal customers on the part of staff.

Professional workers, while not the most exposed to customer and managerial scrutiny, saw the greatest increase in the integration of work processes as a result of quality management. The deployment of team-based working in conjunction with the use of performance targets for Environmental Health Officers was a case in point. Here, workers felt a tangible increase in demand combined with an increase in monitoring. Integrating work processes for professionals reaches its most holistic form in the creation of One Stop Shops. This is partly based upon the principle that administrative workers can be placed in direct contact with customers to be an identifiable conduit between members of the public and the wide variety of professional functionaries operating at a council. Exposure to external customers for those working *directly* on the One Stop Shops, of course, is total.

c) Quality management, commitment and customer care

Supplanting traditional assumptions of a 'public service ethos' with 'customer awareness' as the guiding motivation for workers in local government is problematic, although the intent is clear for the following rationale: public service ethos - as an ideal - is incompatible with managerialism because it allows professional discretion that may

be used to the workers advantage at the expense of managerial objectives; customer care provides a rationale whereby 'serving the public' can be conducted in a format that places management at the apex of decision-making. In general, customer care policies are used where paying 'customers' can be identified. It is paradoxical, then, that such policies seem to be increasingly popular with managers of public services where customers are an abstraction, aside from at a conceptual level whereby workers are intended to identify service users as individual members of the public able to make discernible choices about using the service in question.

Not surprisingly, then, while the rhetoric of the 'customer' was adopted by managers in all cases bar *Newcastle*, its practical effects on worker behaviour were greater in those areas where services were discretionary. Such services were leisure - where service users were identifiable and where increasing the number of users increased revenue - and libraries - where service users were identifiable, but where increasing the numbers of users had no impact on revenue. In both cases, effort was made on superficial issues - dress codes and the appearance of buildings. Here, then, the impact on the 'emotional labour' of workers was restricted to the outward displays of commitment (Taylor 1997) and, while displaying an increased capacity, on the part of managers, to dictate attitudes to workers, this did not seriously affect worker autonomy. Controlling attitudes was more sinister where the important extra-managerial factors determined workers perception of security at work. The marketisation of the council structure at *Brent*, combined with the discretionary nature of the Library service as a whole, provided a combined effect of introducing a high level of fear within the workplace, which was used by the manager in question to display outward signs of 'commitment' - manifested, among other signs, through the reluctance of staff to take sick leave,

In contrast to this, staff at the sports centre at *Wycombe* - with a more acute relationship to customers - did not suffer the same levels of stress. The significant difference here was that the work of *Leisure Assistants* had low prospects - aside from the fringe benefits associated with sport. Here, then, implied threats - even with CCT - could not motivate staff - which was why work standardisation was adopted in its place.

While the work of regulatory functions seemed more affected by the effects of work intensification than through the manipulation of 'attitudes', there was evidence to

suggest that professionals in this area are susceptible to some degree of stress - particularly where the issue of customer-oriented attitudes is tied to performance management, such as in customer complaints procedures. At *Wycombe*, for example, assessing commitment for *IiP* in one regulatory function involved “...*trying to tease-out any signs of reluctance to give everything to the Customer*”, and a manager in another noted that “...*the balance of interests between the customer and staff... is too weighted toward the customer*”.

The managerialist pre-occupation with worker commitment has not occurred in a vacuum. Enforcing commitment upon workers is often legitimised through the ‘empowerment’ of workers - encouraging workers to show increased initiative through increased delegation of decision-making. In theory, such delegation avoids loss of managerial control through management maintaining control of the decision-making processes themselves (e.g. *kaizen*, quality circles, suggestion schemes etc.). In the context of public services, however, this becomes more difficult for management as operational decisions could become blurred with political issues (e.g. resources). In this event, delegation of decision-making was limited in the four cases studied. Devolved decision making at *Brent*, for example, was based upon devolved *managers* being given increased autonomy within pre-determined budgets. Such an arrangement legitimised hierarchical control through proxy of the contract by which services were performed. The intention, here, is to deflect attention from output quality, in terms of the quantity of services, to one of quality as effectiveness. Even here, though, such emphasis ignores the impact that background issues have in underpinning such ‘commitment’. Showing ‘commitment’ in the insecure local government working environment of declining job security and increased managerial scrutiny of performance is not ‘empowerment’ as much as management by fear: it belies the adage that ‘you cannot mandate enthusiasm’.

The emphasis on customer awareness was probably strongest at *Arun*. Here, though, while workers were constantly subjected to re-orienting their work as being only of value through a customer-supplier relationship, there was no real evidence to show how this actually affected work - *Arun* had been pursuing policies for a number of years and there was a higher degree of continuity here than at *Brent*. While there was an emphasis

on ‘permanent change’ at *Arun*, there was continuity - unlike *Brent* where quality management was based upon constant upheaval.

In the case of *Newcastle*, the effect this situation was reversed. Quality was addressed through work standardisation - as previously noted. Decision-making was not delegated, but work processes were codified through ISO 9000. Because commitment was not enforced through the contract mechanisms utilised at *Brent*, workers still felt able to express concerns about quality in a wider context - unconstrained by the managerial definitions of quality-as-effectiveness. This is not to say that workers at *Brent* could not - and did not do so; or that workers at *Newcastle* were able realise their concerns. Rather, it is greater scope existed at *Newcastle* to address issues relating to quality that were outside a managerialist agenda.

Increasing pressure on workers to display increased commitment to customers and the organisation is intertwined with the general morale of staff in a given situation. Increasing pressure to perform in a relatively insulated job function, or in a more exposed job function, but where the expectations of that job are low, is unlikely to be as successful then where a job function is relatively exposed to external ‘customers’, where the job carries higher expectations and where jobs are threatened with funding cuts. Hence, libraries were more affected than, say, trading standards.

A summary of the effects of quality management mechanisms on various services in relation to customers is shown in table 12:1, below.

Table 12:1: Potential Effects of Quality Management on the Labour Process in Local Government Service Functions

	Relationship to 'Customer'	Quality Management's Effect on Work in Relation to...		
		Work Standardisation	Work Intensification	Management by Stress
Professional Regulatory	<u>Ambiguous.</u> Work entails mediating conflicting 'customer' interests (general public-vs-those being regulated)	<u>Peripheral.</u> Affects admin. functions of job; formalises chains of accountability.	<u>Partial.</u> Some intensification where team working arrangements used in conjunction with increased performance targets.	<u>Peripheral.</u> Some increase in exposure to external clients and some increase in personal exposure to individual clients.
Social/Welfare	<u>Ambiguous.</u> Work entails mediating and/or rationing interests of 'customers' (service users/ general public/ service users' families)	<u>Peripheral.</u> Affects health & safety procedures and equity issues.	<u>None Apparent.</u> Increase in inter-agency relationships - related more to social/welfare related legislation than quality management.	<u>None Apparent.</u> Tacit resistance to managerialist co-option of professional autonomy and 'public service ethos'.
Administrative/ Support Functions	<u>Removed.</u> Only contact with service users is in gatekeeper role.	<u>High.</u> Increased standardisation of response times and formats (telephone and written)	<u>High.</u> CCT increased exposure. High exposure where functions transferred to 'One Stop Shop'.	<u>Limited.</u> Some areas of increased monitoring of 'commitment': telephone responses etc.
Client Service: Non-Commercial (e.g. Libraries)	<u>Exposed.</u> Permanent contact with public, but with no connection to revenue.	<u>Limited.</u> Certain routine tasks formalised.	<u>Limited.</u> Work tasks largely affected by direct service-user contact. Work separated from other Council activities.	<u>High.</u> Combination of job insecurity (low political priority service) and devolved management increases fear.
Client Service: Quasi-Commercial (e.g. Leisure Centre)	<u>Exposed.</u> Permanent contact with public, with direct connection to revenue.	<u>High.</u> Increased formalisation of low paid routinised work - issues of health & safety.	<u>Limited.</u> As above. CCT had some integrating effect between work processes, but generally activities seen as autonomous.	<u>Ambiguous.</u> Schemes' attempts to motivate fail in jobs where prospects seen as non existent.

Implications

In the public service organisation, quality management affects attempts to regulate work in three ways, all of which are based upon the intention to increase the accountability of workers to managerial scrutiny: work standardisation, work intensification and managing commitment. In all three forms quality is related directly to the issue of productivity, through the explicit connection made between service quality and efficiency, effectiveness and value for money. The difference between straightforward productivity and quality is that quality is imbued with unambiguously positive connotations and is more likely to be perceived as legitimate in a workplace environment where tight fiscal constraints are combined with a workplace culture motivated, at least partly, by a 'public service ethos' not found in the commercial sector. With these factors in mind, quality management in local government is tied to the broad issues of simply increasing work rates and with an ideological function of legitimising such increases in work.

a) Quality management, the labour process and Taylorism

Discussions about the impact that quality management methods have on the labour process have been unduly linked to assumptions about paradigm shifts in management. Quality management, as a generic set of practices, however, do not fit with such assumptions. First, rather than representing its antithesis, the core elements of Taylorism are comfortably embraced within nearly all the prescribed quality management methods. Moreover, contrary to Post-Fordist assertions, this Taylorian association cannot be dismissed as some historically anachronistic 'baggage' left over from Fordist organisational forms because the adoption of such Taylorist methods (e.g. the rapid take-up of ISO 9000) has been enabled by so-called Post-Fordist developments in local government. Second, a similar lack of dualism is absent from the way quality management deals with subjectivity, as compared to its predecessors. Foucauldian definitions place the managerial preoccupation with quality management methods as a move away from Taylorian control mechanisms toward subjectivist means of control - whereby workers are co-opted into a process of subjugation. Where worker subjectivity is attempted to be co-opted by management - in customer care practices, for example - worker compliance is strongest where external background issues are

mobilised to create fear within the workplace (e.g. a real threat to long-term job prospects). Moreover, the 'mandating of enthusiasm' in such circumstances, cannot be assumed to be any more than the outward displays of *compliance* - given the increased use of 'objective' performance indicators to assess *commitment*. In essence, the presence or absence of Taylorism is not a significant issue in the development of quality management in local government. Taylorism only seems to be of use as a rhetorical reference point by which managerialist proponents of quality management methods can claim a break from the past while simultaneously adhering, *fundamentally*, to the core elements Taylor prescribed for management.

b) Quality and power relations in the workplace

The manner in which quality management is deployed in the local government workplace is dependent upon an implicit recognition of the implied strengths that workers hold in particular work environments. First, the relative weakness of management is implied where workers may be able to deflect certain attempts at work regulation. Here, the workplace scenario determines what method *cannot* be implemented (e.g. the attempt to invoke 'commitment' in *Leisure Assistants*). Second, a recognition of how certain techniques may enhance managerial control over a previously autonomous labour process determines what *is* implemented (e.g. the introduction of teams and performance monitoring for *Environmental Health Officers*). Finally, the implementation of a policy that fails to enhance managerial authority has the potential of empowering workers and/or undermining management legitimacy (e.g. the formalising work procedures among youth workers at *Newcastle* and the antagonisms surrounding PRP at *Wycombe*). This last issue is taken up further in the following chapter.

c) Quality, legitimacy and ideology

The most distinguishing feature of quality management as a vehicle for managerialism, is its ideological content. In addition to the direct effect on work, quality management represents an attempt to redefine workers' conception of their work. At the general level, managerialism is underpinned by consumerist ideological assumptions whereby the effort bargain is shifted away from the workplace: rather than workers being motivated by an assumed psychological trade-off between effort and wages at work

(exemplified in Taylorism), the assumption in the new managerialism is that workers are trading-off rights at work, in place of a perception of enhanced rights as consumer outside work. While this assumption of enhanced consumer rights is itself empirically unfounded, it is significant in the fact that it assists in the managerial re-definition of work (DuGay 1996).

Introducing the 'customer' to the centre of the workplace is not only an issue of changing relationships, methods and functions, it is also about re-defining the nature of public service work for local government employees. In front-line work, the 'empowerment' metaphor is ambiguously used to champion greater discretion for the frontline worker in decision-making simultaneously with greater 'choice' and redress by service users. This is ideological because the two are mutually exclusive: what is *actually* being advocated here is that the interaction of public service users and providers requires the external intervention of management to ensure probity, equity and efficiency. There is a paradox about the managerial conception of customer care. The customer care model of quality management represents, perhaps, Marx's concept of alienation in its ultimate form. Here, it is not enough for the market to separate the worker from his or her work. The customer care model requires the worker to *consciously* define the output of labour exclusively in terms of the customer's needs: work has no intrinsic value outside that end. Of course this aim remains an ideal-type, but it is more than a mere rhetorical concern about motivating staff - it is not merely the exhortation that 'the customer is always right', prevalent for many years as a slogan in many organisations. As a management model this ideological re-definition of work is expressed systematically through the hierarchical functions and procedures or management. It is paradoxical that this form of management should find itself being articulated in the operation of public services where customers are not readily identifiable. Where they are identifiable by some re-definition of the concept of 'customer', their interests are often countervailed by other 'customers' - making the job of satisfying customer interests one of balancing between competing needs. In this sense, then, the use of the term 'customer' would seem to have more importance in disciplining workers than in satisfying the needs of the recipients of local services.

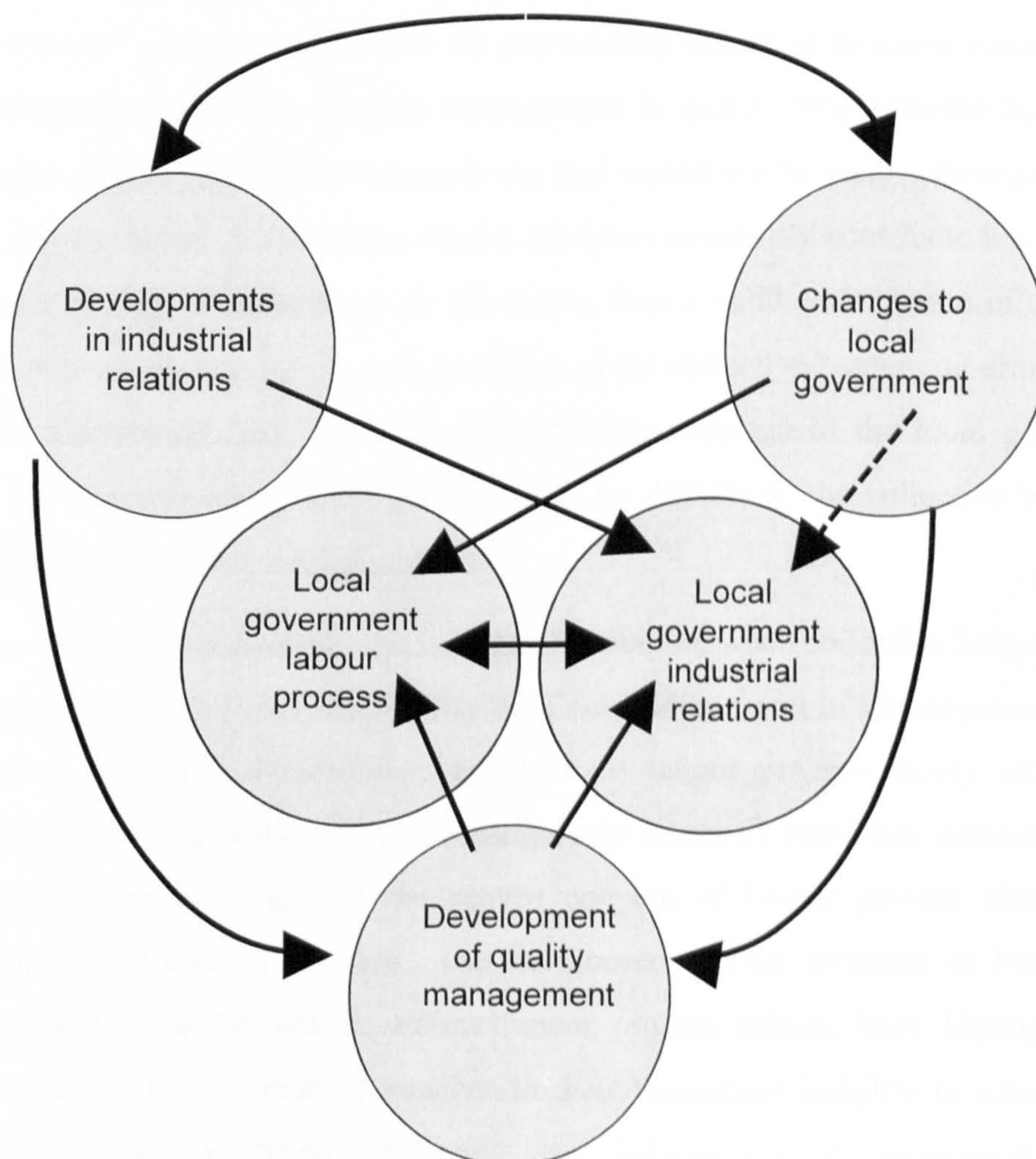
Recent studies indicate that quality management policies seem to be perceived as legitimate by workers (Edwards et al 1998) - whether or not such practices are associated with an increase in effort. To some extent, this is supported here - for the present. It would seem that managers are careful to associate quality management with the public service ethos that is more likely to motivate workers in this field. Legitimacy is also, perhaps, granted purely on the notion that quality management methods are being offered as something new. However, workers are conscious of an increased workload that accompanies quality management. The legitimacy of quality management in the longer term will rest upon how closely it will become associated with productivity in general and how long it can maintain its role as a catalyst for organisational renewal.

CHAPTER 13

QUALITY, MANAGERIALISM AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This chapter will discuss the collective bargaining implications of quality management in local government. As has been argued throughout, developments in collective bargaining are inter-related with labour process issues and both these issues have been determined by the wider developments in industrial relations and local government 'reform' from the 1980s onwards. In addition, trades unions' experiences of quality management in other sectors also provides a background from which the overall context of this thesis can be drawn. Figure 13:1 provides a pictorial reference.

Figure 13:1: Quality Management, Work and Collective Bargaining in Local Government - Themes.



It is possible that local government unions can learn from the experiences of trade unions in dealing with quality management in other sectors (and, indeed, of the experiences where quality management has been introduced without the presence of a recognised trade union). The differences in organisational context, however, dictates that many of the issues must be derived from public service trade unions' specific experiences in local government. Because quality management is relatively new to local government, this means that experience of local government trade union responses to quality management is, at present, very little.

Quality Management, the Labour Process and Collective Bargaining

Research for this thesis has been consciously conducted to incorporate the theoretical issues addressed in both 'labour process' and 'industrial relations' approaches to employment. The apparent gulf that exists between these approaches in many studies is considered inappropriate here. The organisation and control of work - i.e. 'the labour process issues' - is contingent upon the pre-existing industrial relations climate within the workplace in question. Quality management is qualitatively affected by, and has qualitative effects on, collective bargaining that would not be visible through a purely labour process focus. Such effects would, however, eventually contribute to changes in the labour process at some stage. In this sense, then a valid examination of the labour process necessarily requires an understanding of the collective bargaining arrangements at work. Conversely, the outcome of an attempted change to the local government labour process will affect the workplace and, by definition, the collective bargaining relationships within that workplace.

The importance of recognising the inter-relationship between collective bargaining and labour process issues is the reason why the Foucauldian trend in labour process theory is rejected here. The Foucauldian approach to labour process theory attempts to theoretically atomise workplace relationships into issues of individual discourses. This does not, however, mean that the central concern of labour process theory - the organisation and control of work - can be ignored. Recent critiques of Foucauldian analysis, within the boundaries of the labour process debate, have highlighted the inadequacies of Foucauldian approaches in their theoretical inability to conceptualise worker resistance as being pro-active and independent of managerial strategy

(Thompson & Ackroyd 1995). Additional critiques have gone further in re-stating the importance of theoretically understanding the labour process as necessarily affecting workers in a collectivist manner:

...we need to locate the debate on the nature of individualism and collectivism not only in terms of the contradictory developments emerging within the labour process but also with respect to a wider, engaging view of collectivism. (Martinez-Lucio & Stewart 1997 p51)

Implementing quality management into local government, then, is both affected by, and has an effect on, the nature of collective bargaining. Implementing any managerial strategy necessarily involves the anticipation of worker reaction and in a unionised workplace managerial strategy is based around the anticipated reaction of the union - officially and unofficially. Conversely, because quality management has qualitative affects on the labour process, some effect on collective bargaining are also inevitable.

a) The union's effect on quality management policy

The pre-existing relationships between management, workers and trade unions influence the nature and manner of quality management policy being introduced. While this could be considered to be a truism in the general sense, there were clear indications of this in the four authorities studied. The power resources - or anticipated power resources - of workers could be said to be based upon the following (Batstone 1988): (a) the mobilising capacity of the union, (b) the willingness of members to act, (c) workers capacity to disrupt production (d) the scarcity of particular workers' skills and (e) their political influence. In each case, these power resources varied.

At *Brent*, management-union relations were conflictual and based on low trust. The new right political administration saw the established trade unions as 'part of the problem' that afflicted the borough in its previous 'new urban left' guise. Even if management considered the '*Quality Council*' policy as neutral, it was at the vanguard of its decentralising, market-led approach to reforming the organisation. The swift re-organisation of the *Authority* involved job-cuts and contracting-out and the union was faced with an uphill task of resisting the changes - especially where management were actively attempting to create a new vanguard of devolved managers with increased power over local staffing issues. Here the union, while agreeing with the general principle of enhancing service quality, were antagonistic toward the actual policy.

In *Newcastle* the situation was different. Here management were implementing a quality policy in a piecemeal fashion due to the relative weakness of the centre. Here, management required the support of the political administration - Labour - and union support. Here, the quality policy was less holistic and was legitimised through its being tied to an overall strategy of improving the competitiveness of services subject to compulsory competitive tendering.

At both *Wycombe* and *Arun* union strength - in terms of membership - was lower than in the urban boroughs. Here, management and the political leaderships had imposed their quality management policies incrementally and in a paternalist fashion. Unions were consulted - but not negotiated with - from a position of relative strength on the part of management.

The prior industrial relations set-up, then, determines the manner in which a quality management policy - or any management policy - is going to be implemented. The actual operation of quality management, however, sets about a new dynamic into the workplace which can further affect industrial relations.

b) Quality Management, unitarism and union legitimacy

Prescribed quality management methods challenge collective bargaining in the workplace through their unitarist organisational assumptions. Based upon the evidence and experiences in the four case studies, it is proposed here that quality management is capable of undermining the legitimacy of trade unions in the workplace in three major ways, described here as being *overt*, *implicit*, and *covert* challenges.

First, and most crudely, the quality management agenda may be attempted to be used to co-opt worker commitment engendered through quality management to marginalise the union's role. Here, the union is seen as being an alien presence in the managerial imperative to 'give customers what they want', as the president elect of the CBI has recently commented:

'We pride ourselves on our ability to recruit, train and educate our staff to offer customers a higher quality of service. A third party that comes between employer and employee can only interfere with that and harm our drive for quality' Clive Thompson, Chief Executive of *Rentokil Initial* and President Elect of the CBI (quoted in *Observer* 31/5/98)

This could be described as being the *overt ideological* challenge to union legitimacy. This was perhaps best seen at *Brent*, where the quality management process was, despite its rhetorical espousal of decentralisation, centrally directed and did not involve bargaining with *Unison*. At the latter stages the lack of management communication with *Unison* reached a point where the union was threatened with derecognition. While this was a political decision and quality management was not the issue of contention, the quality management agenda was at the forefront of *Brent's* image in terms of how it ran services and how it treated its staff. The overly aggressive stance toward the union, however, was largely unsuccessful. While a change of political leadership removed many of the protagonists from the confrontation, the local *Unison* branch also managed to use the derecognition issue to bolster its weakening steward organisation. While the use of quality management as part of an overt challenge to union involvement in the workplace is an issue in private sector service organisations to *prevent* union entry, in the already unionised local government workplace this would be liable to produce counter-productive consequences for management.

The second challenge to unions through quality management is more subtle and is based upon structural changes that take place in decision-making channels, and is referred to here as an *implicit* challenge to union-worker-management lines of communications. The operation of quality management implicitly involves shifting decision-making processes and lines of communication. This is to be found in the rhetoric of 'devolved management', 'delaying' and 'teamwork'. This challenges pre-existing union-worker-management lines of communication to the detriment of the union. Despite the language of partnership, teamwork and worker empowerment within the prescriptive quality management literature, quality management methods are essentially unitarist in their organisational assumptions. At the highest level local government bargaining structures have been affected by a gradual shift from national Whitley-based structures to an increased use of localised agreements, opt-out, and localised flexibility add-ons. This has shifted the focal point of negotiation machinery away from where *Unison's* bargaining structures (and NALGO and NUPE before it) have been based for (Fairbrother 1996). While many of these shifts have been more as a result of CCT and increasing financial constraints placed upon local authorities by central government, there is a symbiotic relationship with these decentralising

tendencies and the direct applicability of human resource management and quality management methods being introduced more recently: quality management is made feasible by decentralisation and is likely to entrench such structures. In *Brent*, for example, the devolution of services was legitimised by the increased ability to deliver quality services through enabling local managers increased discretion over personnel decisions, while at *Wycombe* the drive for improving service quality was also tied to the need to 'delayer' - even if not uniformly applied in practice.

At the workplace level, quality management's challenging of union-worker communications is more subtle and tied to work processes themselves. Evidence from other unionised sectors has shown how this has raised concerns about the undermining of steward autonomy. In the motor industry, spurred by the highly publicised competitive threat from Japan, UK motor producers sought to introduce what were considered to be the essence of Japanese management methods. Initially this was resisted, as in the case of Ford Motor Company's aborted attempt to introduce quality circles under the *After Japan* initiative in the mid 1980s. Here, trade unions successfully resisted what was considered to be a challenge to shop-floor communications between stewards and workers (Starkey & MacKinlay 1989; Wilkinson & Oliver 1990). In 1991 Ford workers were even capable of using the pan-European just-in-time system to maximum advantage in the 1991 strike. However, by the 1990s the overall balance had shifted in favour of employers. In 1991 unions representing Rover workers - considered to be the most militant in the 1970s - agreed to a 'new deal' whereby job security was traded for comprehensive 'flexible' employment conditions (IDS 1991). The effects of quality management on steward organisation at the four authorities studied was mixed. At *Brent*, devolution and externalisation created some problems for the *Unison* branch. Externalisation created logistical problems for the branch maintaining communications with stewards in outsourced units and devolution seemed to be creating a new vanguard of local managers with increased decision-making powers over staffing issues. It is unclear how the re-invigorated steward organisation following the de-recognition dispute bolstered local steward organisation in the medium term following the 'normalisation' of industrial relations. At *Newcastle*, steward organisation was relatively strong. Perhaps partly to do with this - and the relative weakness of the centre in relation to corporate departments - was an

inability to force a holistic quality management package uniformly throughout the authority here. Where *ISO 9000* was being pursued in *Leisure Services*, however, the *Unison* branch actively involved stewards in discussing the issues raised. While the perceived impact of *ISO 9000* was low among workers and stewards alike, there were signs that stewards were becoming involved in the process. Steward organisation at *Wycombe* and *Arun* was weak at the outset and so localisation of managerial decision-making - while having an effect on working conditions, did not affect steward organisation as such.

The third effect quality management may have on union-worker-management combinations at work is tied directly to the effect of quality management on the labour process. This is termed, here, as being the *covert undermining of the trade union's instrumentalist appeal*. This is somewhat tentative. A loss of union legitimacy, here, could be caused by the combined effects of (a) a successful attempt to co-opt worker 'loyalty' through linking quality management to the public service ethos, and (b) the general perception of declining union power in the workplace through its diminishing visibility. The logic is that the appeal for worker commitment and the structural reorganisation to accommodate quality management practices, combined with various practices themselves - teamwork, performance appraisal, customer feedback etc. - may have an effect of marginalising the union if steward organisation is weak. With a labour process that attempts to expose work visibility and performance monitoring, the trade union representative who is not locked into this process in some way is in danger of being excluded from the most critical aspects of workers' concerns at work. The logic of many of the quality management methods being pursued in local government is for workers to feel increasing stress over the expectations placed upon them. If the union is isolated from the workplace then the legitimacy of the union could lose instrumentalist appeal. Conversely if the steward does become involved in the process of quality management at the workplace level without support from the union branch on an authority-wide basis, the steward could be in danger of becoming 'captured' by management interests, counter to the interests of members, as Fairbrother (ibid) has noted.

Some of these issues were being raised in the authorities studied. At *Arun*, where steward organisation was weak, management were operating a staff feedback forum to address issues raised by the customer care policy being operated there. By management admission, this forum - which was ostensibly a forum for staff grievances - was being used as suggestion scheme for improving service quality. At *Brent*, this process was more a product of the increasing isolation of individual workplaces from each other, with the development of separate work regimes. While the union branch had reported improved steward representation following on from the de-recognition dispute, a number of comments from staff on returned questionnaires suggested that some staff felt abandoned by the union in the face of workplace related grievances. In addition, opinion of the quality management policy at *Brent* was more strongly polarised than in the other authorities studied. On the other hand, evidence from *Wycombe* and *Newcastle* suggested a different outcome to similar agendas. At *Wycombe*, despite its relatively weak steward organisation, the union branch appeared to be increasing its legitimacy as a result of management's policy of performance related pay (PRP). PRP, it seemed, was an issue that members felt that they required the support of independent advice - suggesting an enhancement of the union's instrumentalist appeal. At *Newcastle*, steward involvement in the process of implementing *ISO 9000* indicated a perception that the union may have a legitimate bargaining role in the entrenchment of work practices required by the system.

Union Strategy

Trade union strategy in dealing with quality management in local government necessarily occurs at four levels. First, the strategy adopted at the broad trade union movement level determines the general climate in which industrial relations are conducted: second, national union policy (*Unison*, in particular) provides the basis upon which branch activity can take a lead: third, strategy at branch level is grounded upon specific managerial policy at the authority-wide level; finally - though not properly 'strategic' the policies adopted at workplace level are grounded in specific labour processes involved. Strategy, or tactics, used at any of these levels are inter-dependent. Clearly the broad 'industrial relations climate' is determined by activities occurring at workplaces throughout the economy and successful branch policy could ideally be

transferred to other branches through national or regional networks in the form of 'best practice'.

a) Labour movement renewal

The general spread of quality management practices occurred during a period of trade union decline and this reciprocal relationship is not coincidental - not least because the introduction of such a unitarist management methodology into the workplace has been made possible by weakened trade unions. Explanations of membership decline have been as numerous as suggested solutions throughout the 1980s and 1990s: from cyclical explanations and the need to be able to demonstrate union bargaining power through industrial conflict, through to consumerist notions of worker fragmentation and the need to market unions as 'partners in industry' offering fringe benefits to members. In the meantime, membership has continued to decline. There are signs, however, that trade unions may be about to witness a resurgence. An obvious reason for this is the election, in 1997, of a Labour government, replacing the series of pro-actively hostile Conservative administrations that preceded it. The re-launch of the TUC, in the form of the 'new unionism' project is a sign of this renewed optimism. Based, largely, on the recruitment methods successfully adopted by the AFL-CIO in the US, 'new unionism' aims to reinvigorate trade unionism by becoming more inclusive and pro-active. While the general principle is welcome, some of the underlying assumptions within the strategy appear to embrace a 'social partnership' model of industrial relations:

Inherent in the social partnership model... is the need to minimise industrial disputes; in this way employers and trade unions can help provide the basis for steady and sound economic growth by limiting any damage to other sectors of the economy. Those employers who inform, consult, and listen to employees and their trade union representatives, provide for good and fair conditions, including job security, are less likely to have disputes than those who see unions as an irritant. (TUC nd p19)

This approach may be an attempt to reassure employers in cases of recognition scenarios. It is also possible that the rhetorical embracing of a social partnership/stakeholder model may be political pragmatism on the part of the TUC in a period where a Labour government with an unprecedented parliamentary majority has been eager to distance itself from its associations with the trades union movement. However, the influences that have formed the basis of Labour Party thinking - particularly that of Post Fordism - have also been influencing the upper echelons of

trade union thinking. The flaws in Post Fordist definitions of current socio-economic trends have been discussed in chapter 2 and 4. A danger in trying to apply the logic of the Post Fordist vision for trade unions is that by abandoning collectivist definitions of work organisation in favour of a multi-agency 'partnership' model trade unions could, at a point where revival is quite possible, undermine the legitimacy of trade unions at the workplace. While the 'managerialist' drift in trade union strategy (Heery & Kelly 1994) may be appealing to trade union members in a climate where conflict is perceived as futile, trade unions exist at the core to protect workers - through collective strength - from employers. The *principle* of collective bargaining challenges the assumptions of pure managerial decision-making and the underlying relationship remains conflictual for this reason. A broad union strategy that attempts to act as a conduit for managerial decision-making in the implementation of quality management is in danger of undermining its own legitimacy. Where 'managerialist' trade union approaches to membership decline may succeed in the short term, the tacit focus away from the workplace may ultimately undermine trade unions fundamental rationale as being able to defend the interests of workers through collective bargaining power, against the interests of (scrupulous or unscrupulous) employers.

b) National union strategy on quality management

Dealing with quality management on a national basis is possible only in as much as unions can offer broad outlines as to the dangers and opportunities that can be faced by local branches as a reaction to local managerial strategy. For good reason, *Unison* has focused much of its attention, nationally, to CCT. While the threat of CCT has been real, national government enthusiasm for CCT had been declining throughout the 1990's. After the big impact CCT had on direct labour organisations, CCT for white collar services seemed less attractive to commercial contractors and the impact of the policy seemed to be offering diminishing returns of success. In this time however, union policy had developed into one of accommodating managerial strategy that offered increased chances of retaining direct local authority service provision on the part of its members. Further to this *Unison* has also been relatively active in seeking to retain membership and recognition deals with contractors. Here, again, the message has been one of co-operation and of providing a 'quality service':

“If they [local government service contractors] are going to be able to provide a good, quality service, they will need a good relationship with their employees. It also makes them more attractive in the competition for contracts, because the workforce is likely to favour a company that waves an agreement with Unison at them.” Keith Sonnet, Unison’s head of local government (Guardian Society April 1998)

With the change of government, however, the emphasis has shifted from CCT to ‘best value’. This has effectively removed the ‘compulsory’ element from CCT but retained a principle of market testing and ‘value for money’. With this there is likely to be a shift in emphasis away from merely reducing labour costs - though it does not preclude this - to one of increasing output efficiency. In removing the reductionist concern with cost-only basis of contract relations in favour of a more general ‘value-added’ basis of assessment, quality management comes further to the fore. *Unison* must respond accordingly if, as is being suggested here, an uncritical acceptance of quality management practices pose threats to the legitimacy of the trade union in local government at the local level.

One possibility for trade unions, nationally, is to challenge the managerialist appropriation of ‘quality’. In representing workers in public services, *Unison* should be able to offer an agenda on public service provision outside the agenda and language of consumerism and ‘value for money’.

One of the ‘unseen’ dangers that quality management poses to trade union legitimacy is the ideological undermining of trade union legitimacy in the workplace - described in its various forms above. Nationally, public service trade unions need to move away from the implicit backing given to managerialist reorganisation of workplace relations in the name of ‘quality’ in order to win CCT contracts. With the threat of CCT now diminishing, it is now possible for unions to challenge managerialist definitions of ‘quality’; to recognise the inherently political nature of ‘quality’ in public services. In this, public service trade unions legitimately use their position as representatives of the providers of public services.

c) **Quality management and local branch strategy**

In chapter 4 the possibility of trade union renewal based upon localised responses was noted. Fairbrother (op cit) notes that while the decentralising tendencies of contemporary public management have shifted the locus of collective bargaining away

from national and regional union set-ups, simultaneous challenges by trade union activists have also been made to the legitimacy of union branch structures. It is possible, then, to see where patterns of resistance to managerialism may emerge. Allowing union branches to develop strength at the workplace level - where members face the labour process consequences of quality management - may re-invigorate union branches. While recognising that the fragmentation to union branch structures should be avoided in order to ensure that localised union responses do not become co-opted into the management process itself, union branches can learn from workplace trade union responses to quality management. Because quality management methods vary, it is at the union branch level and at the workplace level where union strategy in dealing with quality management is grounded.

While responding to specific managerial quality management policies makes union branch policy reactive, in addressing the 'political' issues of quality - noted above - the union branch can be proactive. Adopting a political stance on 'quality' provides an opportunity to link issues relating to levels of service provision and public safety with the issue of the working conditions of public employees - an issue excluded by the agenda of quality management. However, just as the managerialist use of quality management has been realised, ideologically, through its identification with the 'public service ethos' - i.e. that through quality management, managers are attempting to be identified as the sole guardians of the public interest - so the union is in a position to co-opt the public service ethos' s representatives of the self same 'public servants'. As Miller (1996) notes, public service workers' concerns at work include not only their own working conditions, but also their perception of service users' experiences:

...whilst public service workers consider changes in the work place in relation to the impact on the labour process, they will have additional concerns arising from the nature of their work and their relation to it. Thus, because many are committed to collectively provided public services based on need, and to their human product, they are necessarily concerned, in a way that other white-collar workers may not be, in the detailed nature of any new policy, its impact on the service user, and the resultant quality of service delivery, along with managements' approach to other valued policies. (ibid p196)

Here there are opportunities for trade union branches to forge alliances with organised local service user groups. This allows the local branch to maintain a critical distance from managerially defined quality programmes. But the opposite is also true: if trade unions concede unqualified legitimacy to consumerist redefinitions of quality in public

service - particularly in 'customer care' models of quality management - the union would be contributing to the degradation of their members' work, because the 'value' of any work in such models, is only definable by the 'customer'. Within the context of public services - and particularly with local government - there is a real possibility of the trade union adopting a 'political' stance on the issue of quality. This adds a further dimension to the scope of union involvement. Here, the value-basis upon which 'quality' is used to co-opt worker commitment to managerial objectives can equally be used by the union. The contradiction in utilising quality management as a bulwark against the public service worker's assumed self-seeking activities, while simultaneously deploying the same quality management to staff within the format of 'public service ethos', can be challenged.

Local trade union policy on quality management must be based upon a recognition of local realities. It would be futile to suggest that a local branch with low membership and weak steward organisation, facing a relatively mild form of quality monitoring by a paternalist management, should opt to oppose management based upon ideological objections to management's conception of quality. Local branch policy, though, should be able to base an approach upon a recognition of the fact that quality management, if ignored or passively accepted by the union branch, is likely to harm the longer term legitimacy of trade union representation in the workplace. Based upon the ICTU (nd) categorisations of trade union responses to new wave management - summarised in chapter 4 - and on the scenarios and approaches adopted by local branches in this research, the following approaches to local quality management initiatives are offered (see summary table 12:1).

i. Outright opposition

This could be considered to be a proactive stance on quality management. Where union organisation is strong and management legitimacy is weak, the union could unambiguously oppose the managerialist content of quality management initiatives. In practice, however, it is unlikely that any local authority trade union would find itself in this position at the present time. No authority studied came even close. A stance of total opposition to - even the concept of - quality management in any other than the scenario

described above, then, would hold real dangers of isolating the union from decision-making processes involving the implementation of quality initiatives by management.

ii. Sceptical involvement

This stance could, again, be described as being proactive. Here, local union policy would be to promote the issue of quality but based upon a view of quality that is not tied to a consumer-centred approach that seeks to relocate the value of public service away from the public service worker. In taking an overtly (as opposed to implicitly) 'political' view of quality, the union could endorse only those elements of quality management that meet with its own agenda. In this scenario the union could use its quality agenda within the general collective bargaining. While no authority branch studied followed this agenda, at *Newcastle*, there were indications that stewards and lay members in one section saw how introducing a quality system into the workplace raised issues for service users and for working conditions - and of the legitimacy of trade union involvement in such issues.

This approach to quality management could be employed where union organisation is strong and where time resources allow for branch policy to be developed. This is largely likely only where the union branch is supported by full-time/part-time officials and staff.

iii. Critical support

This approach is the one that best describes the policies adopted at branch level at *Brent* and *Newcastle* though for different reasons. Being slightly proactive, although mainly reactive, this approach is one of adapting to managerial initiatives in light of more general issues facing the union and its members. This approach takes an agnostic view of quality management, approving of its use where presented as satisfying broader goals - principally this being co-operation with management against the external threat posed by CCT. As noted, however, future threats may come in the form of 'best value' - which would make more explicit use of 'quality'. In this case union branches adopting a policy of 'critical support' may need to adapt quickly to more proactive approaches such as that of scepticism, above.

At *Brent*, though sceptical about the intentions behind the various quality management approaches being pursued - for good reason - branch officials were being excluded from the decision-making process in implementation, leading to the branch being unable to discern what quality management practices could be accepted and which could be resisted. This was leading to stewards being outmanoeuvred at the workplace level. At *Newcastle*, a more proactive stance was possible at branch level through management wishing to keep the union on-side, integrating quality with CCT. At *Newcastle*, however, there were signs that, at the workplace level, a stance approaching sceptical involvement was developing, whereby stewards were becoming involved with the process of *ISO 9000*.

iv. Passive support

A policy of passive support could be described as being a reactive approach which accepts the legitimacy of managerial decision making - conceding 'quality' as not being a bargaining issue, in order to retain union legitimacy overall. The branches at *Wycombe* and *Arun* adopted this approach, stating the desire to be 'progressive' and 'non-militant' about management initiatives. This approach may be 'realistic' in cases where union membership density is relatively low and where steward organisation is weak - particularly where there are no full time union officials - but there are dangers of the union losing legitimacy at workplace level. In these circumstances a union would need to consider the opposing dangers of (a) losing legitimacy at the workplace level if the union is seen to be passively supporting managerial policies which were responsible for declining working conditions, against (b) the danger of attempting to oppose managerial policy where involvement in the union was low. As quality management practices are becoming more widespread, union branches may need to consider taking a less passive view of managerial intentions in the use of quality management - as was beginning to be the case in *Wycombe* on the issue, in sporadic individual cases, of the use of performance related pay.

v. No involvement

A final approach, not found at any branch level here, is one of ignoring the issue completely. While this approach would not lead the union to be liable to become accused of endorsing management policy, it would - if the quality policy had real

effects at workplace level, lead to a divergence of workplace-level union reactions threatening the overall branch coherence.

Table 13:1: Local Government Trade Union Responses to Quality Management

Union Strategy	Definition, Opportunities & Dangers	Example at Authority - Wide Level	Example at Workplace Level
Outright Opposition	Proactive. Theoretically viable where union legitimacy is total and hostility to quality management is total. Danger of becoming marginalised if union cannot bargain at local level on issues relating to quality management.	None.	None
Sceptical Involvement	Proactive. Involvement in wider quality agenda, but with own agenda possible. At workplace level, may be able to entrench legitimacy of steward. Danger of legitimising managerial strategy.	None.	Newcastle: Stewards/ workers in Youth work sceptical about <i>ISO 9000</i> , but able to highlight wider 'quality' issues and saw possibility of making quality an issue for negotiation with union.
Critical Support	Proactive. Support of managerial quality policy, but with full bargaining of terms/conditions. Danger of being co-opted into managerial agenda by assisting in implementation.	Brent: were sceptical, but not against 'quality'. Management consulted but not bargained on quality. Maintained 'political' stance and strengthened steward organisation. Newcastle: supported policy as part of strategy to retain CCT contracts. Consulted in negotiations.	Wycombe: union became involved with PRP issues tied to quality management policy.
Passive Support	Reactive. Consultation with management. Where union is weak, offers possibility of union involvement. Danger of 'capture' and undermining legitimacy of union presence.	Arun: union consulted/ advised of managerial decisions. Union organisation weak. Wycombe: union consulted but no bargaining.	None
No Involvement	Reactive. Ability to disclaim support/opposition if policy fails succeeds. Danger of total marginalisation if policy is fully adopted.	None	Brent: No involvement. Some alienation of members who felt abandoned by union. Arun: No involvement

Final Comments

While the overall focus of this thesis is critical in nature, there are a number of implications that arise that could be of practical use to the labour movement within the public sector. The election, in 1997, of a Labour government provides opportunities for both the labour movement as a whole and public sector workers in particular. While concerns have been raised within this thesis about the content of the 'New Labour' package, in relation to public sector reform and the re-appraisal of the Party's links with the trade union movement, strong links with both remain. While the 'New Labour' agenda is implicitly pluralist in its 'partnership' models of industrial relations, it is likely to provide a more favourable environment for trade unions than the pro-actively anti public sector and union-hostile approach of the previous Conservative governments. This in itself is an opportunity. The labour movement should be able to take advantage of some of the good will generated, here, though retaining a strong independent and critical capacity to proactively promote the interests of working people.

In the rush to promote themselves to employers as 'responsible partners', trade unions should not take managerial good will for granted. Unions should take advantage of 'partnership' where offered but should not assume that all employers will gravitate towards 'partnership/stakeholding'. Some of most financially successful companies have taken an explicitly unitarist line on employment relations (Dixons and Rentokil) without any adverse affects to their long term financial prospects, so it should not be assumed that the rhetoric of partnership will remain 'best practice' any longer than 'corporatism' was in the 1970s or than the current vogue for 'empowering staff', 'entrepreneurial management' are likely to in the individualistic approaches to managing staff.

Unions' attitudes to quality management practices should be based upon this principle. Where an employer is consulting with a trade union about a quality management policy, the union is likely to find benefits in being involved. Providing that the union can maintain some distance from actively supporting the implementation of management policy, union involvement can enable the union to learn about the processes involved and be able to develop its own quality agenda. Within the public

service environment, the trade union also has an opportunity to develop its own quality agenda based upon increased membership participation - itself informed by concerns experienced by the recipients and users of public services.

Reflections

In many ways the format of this thesis is constrained by the formal expectations of how theses are laid out. While empiricism has been explicitly been rejected as an epistemological approach here, the formal presentation may imply differently. The implied assumption, in the formal chapter structure, may appear to be an empiricist approach to research, being of the format; literature review, hypothesis development, methodology, empirical testing of hypothesis and conclusion formula. However, in the 'real world' of research such a chapter structure makes for a logical means of presenting work in a relatively accessible and readable manner and could thus be considered legitimate. This is so because it is not being claimed that the actual process of research has followed the linear pattern that the chapter structure suggests. As noted in section IV, the theory, method and data used in this thesis developed over time: partly developed mid-range theory, informed by meta-theory, was used at initial empirical stages to inform more developed mid-range theory, in turn used to develop the tools, questions and scope of further empirical investigation.

As an example of this, at the outset of this research an interest in assessing the impact of quality management in local government was informed by the apparent increased interest in these practices as a result of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) in local government. However, while further research *more* than confirmed the level of growth in quality management, a wider spread of influences seemed to be the cause. While one of these issues was undoubtedly CCT, further reading revealed that 'managerialism' - as defined by Pollitt and others - seemed to be a more appropriate concept to define the whole range of issues facing local government changes. If the empiricist model of research was to *honestly* adhered to, then the structure of the thesis - as in, no doubt, most real research - would legitimately have to follow this line of hypothesis/assessment of hypothesis/antithesis structure.

Some opportunities were missed in this research. It is regretted that - due to local government re-organisation - none of the full case-studies could be conducted in Scotland - given that the research was being directed from *Glasgow*, and where the largest local authority in Europe was based. It is also regretted that the research in *Hackney* could not be completed to a satisfactory level to report as a full case-study. Some rich interview data was effectively lost as a result. Other regrets are, perhaps, more minor, though not insignificant. Given hindsight, certain aspects of questionnaire design would have been reconsidered. In particular it is considered, now, that omitting 'grade' from coding information made it impossible to separate managers' views from workers views. Judging, anecdotally, by comments on returned questionnaires, there appeared to be a strong correlation between 'managers' and 'very strongly pro quality management' sentiments. Evidence of polarisation between managers and staff on these issues could have made very interesting additional survey findings.

A vital contribution to this thesis was made by those people willing to be interviewed, by those people who responded to questionnaires and by the union branches that enabled me to conduct the survey of their members. While grateful acknowledgement is made, here, to those people, I additionally intend to 'give back' some of this research to (at least some) of those who contributed. For practical reasons, this feedback will be to the union branches involved, in the form of providing reports and summaries of the surveys.

There are, as would be expected, opportunities for further research on the issues covered in this thesis. At the fundamental level the themes of managerialism, employment relations and local government are themselves dynamic - subject to the competing forces of historical precedent, shifting power relations and political trends. More specifically, however, some changes are likely to have occurred in the actual case studies involved in this research. It is known, for example, that a new chief executive has been appointed at *Newcastle* who has prioritised organisational restructuring under the theme of quality. It is possible that important changes will occur in contrast to those reported here. It may be interesting to revisit this - and other - authorities - to see what changes have occurred. Will a more centrally directed management quality strategy affect work in this scenario? How will management involve the highly entrenched

union? How will the union respond? How will workers respond to more 'cultural' approaches to quality?

In any case, the events, attitudes and opinions reported here, *remain* valid testimonies of the situations in four authorities between 1995 and 1997, however situations may change in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix No	Description
i	<i>"Quality and public service: motivating local government staff in an era of job insecurity."</i> Paper presented to 12th annual conference of the Employment Research Unit, University of Cardiff, Sept 1997
ii	Questionnaire version 1 (Stewards)
iii	Questionnaire version 2 (Lay membership)
iv	Questionnaire version 3 (Newcastle CLS Stewards)
v	Questionnaire version 4 (Newcastle CLS lay membership)
vi	Interview schedule (sample)
vii	Transcribed interview (sample)
viii	Local authority database (quality initiatives)
ix	Survey recodes

APPENDIX i

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QUALITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE: MOTIVATING
LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF IN AN ERA OF JOB
INSECURITY

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Note: preliminary draft. Please do not cite without consulting the author.

Background

This paper presents some of the findings of research conducted in local government. It is concerned with the role being played by quality programmes in an environment of diminishing resources, declining job security and a political/managerial consensus that has sought to displace a *public service ethos* with a customer-led managerialist agenda (Pollitt 1990).

a) Managerialism

Managerialism is a set of beliefs and practices, at the core of which burns the seldom-tested assumption that better management will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills (Pollitt 1990)

Managerialism has been driven by successive post-1979 governments inspired by new right beliefs about the nature of the public sector. While much of this has been inconsistent, one trend has been constant; the desire to constrain public spending by the use of financial management initiatives underpinned by a 'three E's' philosophy (Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness). In the case of local authorities, Central Government had to rely on a number of proxy measures to impose its agenda where authorities were controlled by political opponents (e.g. Audit Commission monitoring, capping, compulsory competitive tendering Citizen's Charter performance evaluation etc). This has all been designed to impose a cost-reducing ethos into the *structure* of local government and move the focus of decision-making away from the discretionary and political, towards the operational and managerialist.

Underpinning the managerialist agenda at the outset was the assertion that public sector organisations were overly subject to coercion by organised labour and a major part of central government's managerialist agenda for local government was to impose 'flexible' labour-market conditions, the intention being to undermine the bargaining power of organised labour. Most significant in this has been CCT, which has forced councils to re-structure services and functions into cost-centres in order to be directly comparable to commercial competitors. The CCT process was fine-tuned over a number of years to ensure that factors other than cost could not be used to award a contract. In labour intensive services such as the direct service organisations this meant downward pressure on wages and conditions, despite some protection being latterly available through TUPE (Rainnie 1994; Vincent-Jones & Harries 1996).

With the collapse of the *new urban left* (NUL) challenge to Government policy in the late 1980's, the rump of the policy agenda that remained with the 'post' NUL has been one that has converged with the new-right managerialist vision: the pursuit of customer value for money in public services. Concerted efforts have been made to lose the 'loony-left' image associated with the NUL and *New Labour* wishes to be seen, primarily, as financially responsible:

...residents will receive customer contracts setting out the standard of service to expect; when and how the service will be delivered; meaningful figures on how much the service costs; what to do and who to contact if things go wrong; a firm timetable and procedure for dealing with complaints and, where appropriate, paying compensation. (The Quality Commission - Labour Party Policy Directorate 1991)

Table i shows the effect that changes have had on total employment; rising between 1985 and 1990. This rise between 1985-90 is high in the Metropolitan and London Boroughs due to the effect of the abolition of the Metropolitan Counties in 1986 and

Appendices

the subsequent transfer of responsibilities (and personnel) to these Boroughs. Between 1990 and 1995, however, employment has fallen back sharply.

Table i: Change in Total Employment 1985 - 95

		1985-90	1990-95
% difference in number of Council employees (mean)	All	+6.9	-9.3
	County	+5.1	-9.4
	District	+6.5	-8.4
	Met's	+30.2#	-12.4
	LBC's	+10.5#	-18.6

figures include displaced staff from transfer of services from GLC and Metropolitan Councils 1986.
Source Data: Local Government Yearbook 1985, 1990, 1995; Joint Staffing Watch 1985, 1990, 1995 (Dep't of Environment/Welsh Office)

Table ii shows how the distribution of total employment has consistently being moved from full-time to part-time employment.

Table ii: Full-Time Employment 1985 - 95

			1985	1990	1995
% of all employees at Council who are full-time (median)	All Councils		82%	80%	75.5%
	County	(All)	50%	49%	47.5%
		(Labour)	54.5%	52%	51%
		(Other)	50%	48%	45.5%
	District	(All)	84%	82%	79%
		(Cons)	84%	81%	75%
		(Labour)	86%	84%	80%
		(Other)	86%	84%	79%
	Met's	(All)	61%	59%	56%
		(Labour)	63.5%	60%	57%
		(Other)	58%	54%	54%
	LBC's	(All)	67%	62%	59%
		(Labour)	76%	65%	59.5%
		(Others)	64%	60%	57%

Source Data: Local Government Yearbook 1985, 1990, 1995; Joint Staffing Watch 1985, 1990, 1995 (Dep't of Environment/Welsh Office)

b) Quality Management

Local government's interest in quality management has been due to a number of factors;

- it is derived from private sector management methodology
- it fits well with a 3E's approach to public administration
- it is officially endorsed by central government; either directly in the case of the Charter Mark award scheme; as 'best practice' in the case of TQM; or as government sponsored as in the case of IiP and ISO 9000
- it is 'customer' oriented
- quality is seen as universally desirable
- it is seen as being capable of 'empowering' managers over 'unaccountable' professionals

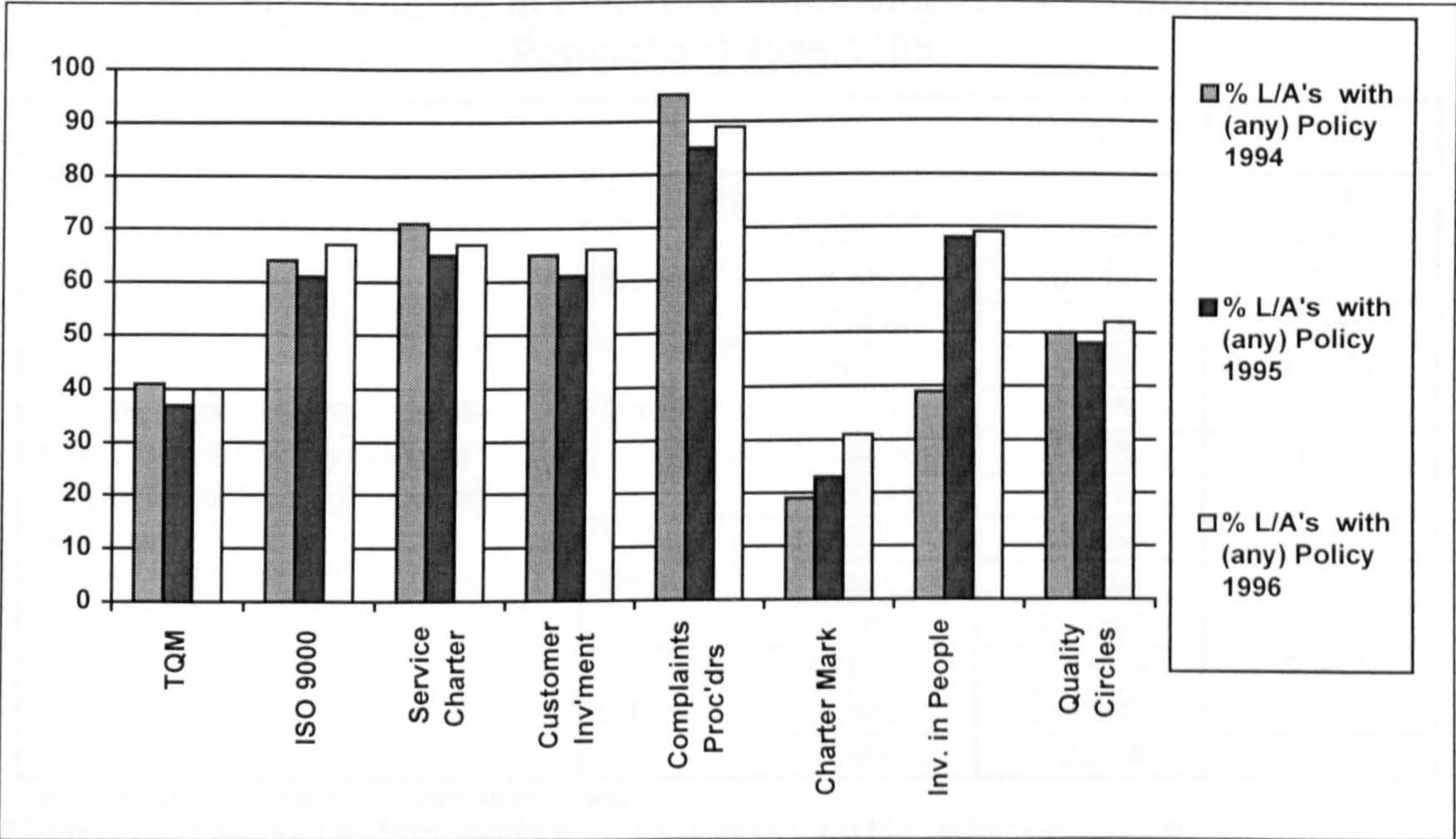
Appendices

- it is compatible with ‘new public management’, currently in vogue

Definitions of quality in managerialist methodologies such as total quality management (TQM) are based upon specific criteria developed for the private-sector in the post-war period. The basic definition of *quality* here is that of a product’s non-price value characteristics. The enhancement of quality within a product or service could be seen as an enhancement of its *value for money* and is defined as its ‘fitness for purpose’ as perceived by the customer (Deming 1982).

Data from an LGMB survey indicates that the prevalence of quality methods has increased (see figure i). Upon this evidence, both Conservative and Labour controlled councils seem equally likely to adopt such policies principally due to a convergence in party ideology on this issue.

Figure i: Local Government Use of Quality Methods



Source data: LGMB: 1994, 1995, 1996

b) Quality, Productivity and Local Government

In an environment where success cannot be judged by increased revenue through increased market share, quality management works on different performance criteria. If the essential nature of such methodologies is to enhance value added, however, quality management methods could be seen as being used to either enhance the output of a service at no additional cost, or to maintain the level of a given service at a reduced cost. This, essentially, is now the nature of the policy distinction between the two main political parties on local government. Both positions, however, have implications for the issue of work intensification. In both cases work conducted by council staff is intended to be able to deliver better value for money. Given that most of the work involved in local government is labour intensive, and that productivity gains will not, in the current environment, be rewarded financially (because increasing productivity will not deliver increased revenue) quality management in a public service environment could be equated with work intensification.

TQM seeks to transform the aims and foci of an organisation. The key factor in this, in terms of transforming working practices, is the creation of customer-supplier chains within the organisation (Oakland 1993; Tuckman 1995). The creation of ‘purchaser-provider splits’ in local authorities, as part of CCT, has achieved much of this (Painter 1991; Shaw et al 1994). Walsh (1995) notes that, as a result of the pursuit of quality in local government, the burden of work has shifted through a greater emphasis on front line staff ‘empowerment’. Linked to this there have been drastic reductions in staffing through increased ‘flexibility’ and a tighter control of absenteeism. This implies an increased ‘management by stress’ in local government.

Table iii provides some tentative evidence of how these changes to full-time employment in local government could be seen in terms of productivity. Full-time employment as a proportion of the borough population (which could crudely be equated to the work-rate required) has consistently fallen, particularly from 1985 onwards.

Table iii: % Change in Full-Time Employment (as Proportion of Population) 1985:1995

			1985-90	1990-95
% difference in number of full-time Council employees as a proportion of Borough population (median)	All Councils		-0.1%	-14%
	County	(All)	-2.8%	-14.5%
		(Labour)	-0.4%*	-12%*
		(Other)	-3.5%	-16%
	District	(All)	-0.2%	-12.5%
		(Cons)	-0.55%	-15%
		(Labour)	-1.15%	-10%
		(Other)	0.76%	-14%
	Met's	(All)	2.75%#	-16%
		(Labour)	1.79%#	-16%
		(Other)	4.72%#	-16%
	LBC's	(All)	6.73%#	-25%*
		(Labour)	5.44%#*	-19%*
		(Others)	7.28%#	-25%*

* sample less than 10/missing cases>sample cases.
figures include displaced staff from transfer of services from GLC and Metropolitan Councils 1986.
Source Data: Local Government Yearbook 1985, 1990, 1995; Joint Staffing Watch 1985, 1990, 1995 (Dep't of Environment/Welsh Office)

c) Quality, Commitment and Legitimacy

TQM-type approaches differ to classic Taylorist approaches in their more sophisticated approach to employee attitudes. Whereas Taylor asserts that instrumentalism (i.e. financial incentives) is the only means by which management can deter ‘soldiering’, in TQM, the management of ‘culture’ requires a greater ideological significance in that management legitimacy is seen as a function of ‘leadership’ and of its capacity to be able to generate employee loyalty (Tuckman 1995; Legge 1995). Deming (op cit.), notably, asserts how peer pressure and ‘pride of workmanship’ can be used to bring dissent into line. All of this potentially challenges the more traditional motivational forms within local government - the ‘public service ethos’, which is based upon ‘professional loyalties. Morgan and Murgatroyd state:

TQM is clearly subversive (i.e. its pyramid of status control) and its adoption would call for radical revision in these regards in its implementation in the public sector. Of course, it is in any case true that the status or rank differentials of yesteryear have been considerably

modified, TQM or no TQM, but the point to be made here is that TQM application would call for modification to be designed-in, so that working relations recognise the needs of customer-supplier chains with full reciprocity of input to the quest for quality improvement. (Morgan and Murgatroyd 1994)

d) Structural Re-organisation and Collective Bargaining

The uptake of TQM in the 1980's occurred simultaneously with the attempted emasculation of trade union collective bargaining power. The introduction of similar methods into the highly unionised local government sector could be expected, then, to witness a number of tensions.

Implementing TQM successfully into a local authority implies structural re-organisation of some sort. Through its focus on performance appraisal and devolved decision-making, TQM tends to shift the focus of collective bargaining to the local level. This may have serious implications for the bargaining structures that trade unions operate under in local government, which is based overwhelmingly, on Whitley-based national structures. Related to this is that TQM requires the 'delayering' of the organisation, possibly causing a by-passing of established lines of communications in a highly unionised set-up. Where stewards are by-passed on shop-floor decision-making issues, unions could find themselves isolated and could face legitimacy problems. For example, the attempt to introduce quality circles into Ford Motor Co. in the 1980's was largely a failure because of the perceived threat that this posed for steward organisation (Starkey & McKinlay 1989)

Methodology

Research was primarily based on four detailed case study authorities¹. Research methods included the interviewing of managers, UNISON officials and on questionnaire surveys on the UNISON memberships in each authority. The authorities chosen were selected because of their (stated) high use of quality management methods and TQM (based upon LGMB Quality Initiatives Survey 1994). From these authorities, four were selected to represent differing political and organisational types.

1. *London Borough Council*. Conservative 'new suburban right'. High profile quality policy linked to devolved cost-centre based management structure separating 'commissioning' functions from 'contractor' functions. Large scale job losses. Relations between Council and UNISON have been hostile and membership has been falling.
2. *South East District Council*. Hung council (Labour/Liberal-Democrat), though historically this has always been a Conservative borough. Operate quality policy based on 'Performance Management', which involves work appraisal, performance related pay and some use of team-work. UNISON has picked up new members following Council's new policy of direct consultation.
3. *South Coast District Council*. Conservative. Approach to quality is a 'Customer Care' approach. Council has been long-term 'test-bed' for Audit Commission. Demography of borough contains one of the highest proportion of elderly citizens in the UK which has shaped some of the quality policy agenda (e.g. disability issues).

¹ A further two authorities were initially included but could not be considered as comparable here: one was subject to the 'reorganisation' in Scotland in 1996 and the other became problematic due to loss of access at latter stages - preventing the staff survey.

UNISON is low profile but has been recruiting new members through white collar CCT bids.

- Northern Metropolitan Borough Council*. Labour stronghold and has been defined as an archetypal ‘Fordist’ council in its outlook to public service provision (centralised, all in-house provision). Quality policy pursued (Community and Leisure Department only) is quality manual based (ISO 9000). UNISON has high membership and density, has full-time officials with support staff. Full consultation with ruling Labour group on Council. Quality seen as means by which to maintain in-house services subject to CCT.

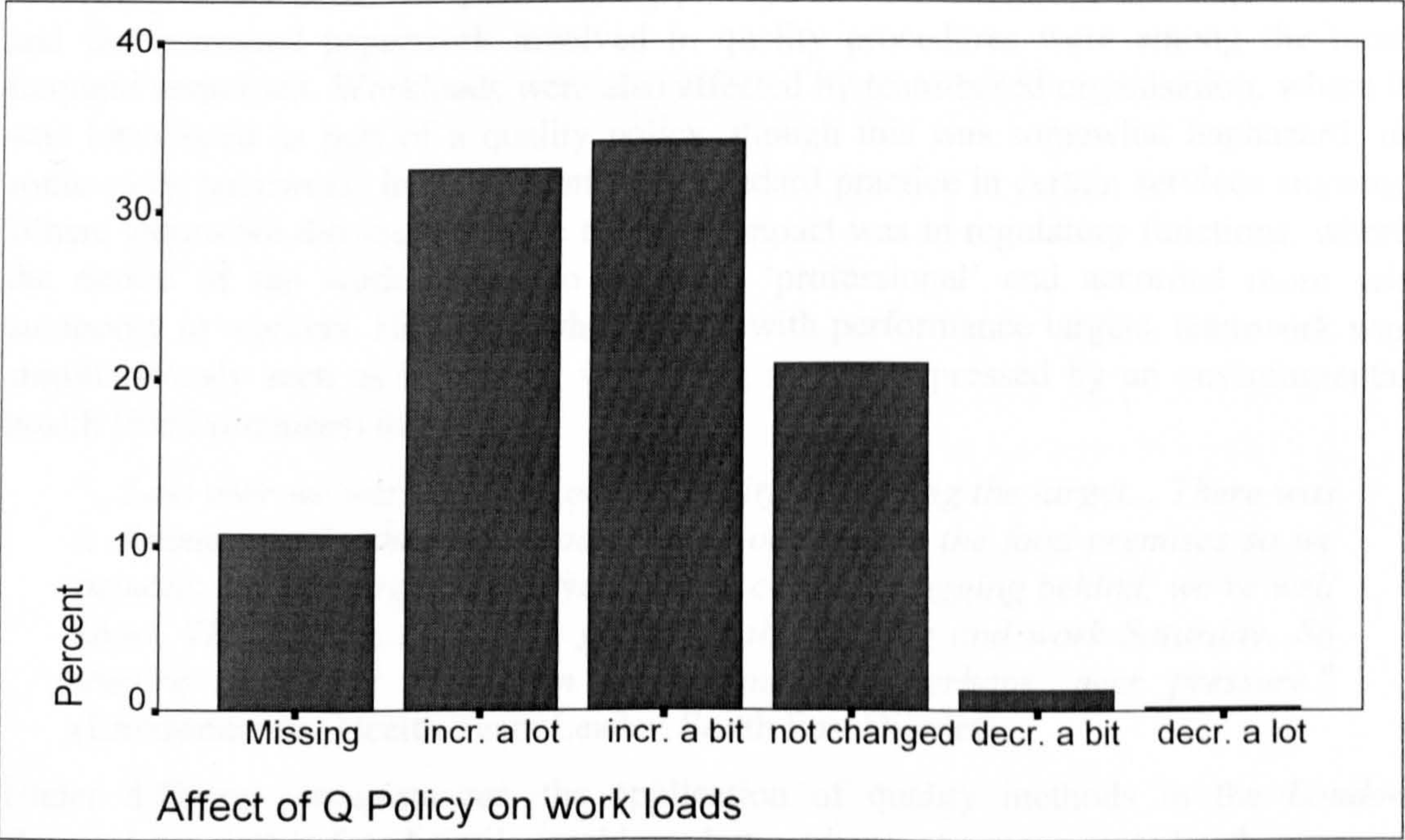
Findings

Some issues were perceived universally, particularly on overall perceptions of the quality policy, work intensification, and the likely effect on union organisation. In most cases, however, perceptions were dependent upon the context of the particular situation into which the quality policy was implemented: the recent employment and out-sourcing histories of the authorities, the position of the union within the authority, the nature and type of quality policy being pursued, and the response of the union to the above factors.

a) **The Effect on Employment Practices**

Workers at the four authorities felt overwhelmingly that the introduction of the quality policy into their workplace had increased workloads (see figure ii)

Figure ii: The effect of the quality policy on workloads



On the related issues of increased staff exposure to ‘customer’ demands and perception of quality management methods as general productivity tools, questions were set in the form of statements and asked to respond on a five-point likert-scale as to whether or not they agreed. Tables i and ii shows a high level of agreement to the assertions that

quality management methods are being used to over-expose staff to customers and as a tool to increase work in relation to wages (productivity).

Table i

Question 6(iii)	‘Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it’s Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all’				
Scale	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses (No)	96	72	57	30	27

Missing cases = 10

Table ii

Question 6 (vii)	‘Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of staff without an increase in pay’				
Scale	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses (No)	95	75	60	36	16

Missing cases = 13

The cause of this overall perception (increased workloads/management by stress) varied according to the particular policy being pursued in each authority, but staff cutbacks and the increased paperwork involved in quality procedures were among the most frequent responses. Workloads were also affected by team-based organisation, where it was introduced as part of a quality policy, though this was somewhat haphazard: in some cases teamwork, in some form, was standard practice in certain services anyway. Where teamwork did seem to have the most impact was in regulatory functions, where the nature of the work tended to be more ‘professional’ and accorded more self autonomy to workers. However, when linked with performance targets, teamwork was simultaneously seen as increasing workloads, as was expressed by an environmental health (food premises) inspector:

“...Last year we were having some difficulty in meeting the target... There was a commitment by the staff to actually go out and do the food premises so we actually met the target...[This year] we’re certainly lagging behind; we’re well short. The officers...agreed to go out in the evening and work Saturday...So they’re improving their own performance by, perhaps, peer pressure.”
(Environmental Health Team Leader: South East District)

Under different circumstances, the application of quality methods in the London Borough case-study faced similar problems but, perhaps, at a more acute level:

“...the degree, now, of the reduction of the work-force and the extra work we’re expected to do - the demand that’s placed on us - is such that there comes a point where actual quality of service, now, will reduce. We’ve soaked-up lots of work - lots of extra demands being placed on us. We managed to

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take on extra work...but they don't seem to accept there is a limit to how far you can go with that." (Environmental Health Manager: London Borough)

b) Commitment and Public Service

The above findings hints at how work rates can be tied in with aspects of 'loyalty' and to 'public service ethos'. This issue proved a somewhat more difficult area. Provisional findings indicate that workers surveyed have tended to be in favour of the introduction of quality methods and, narrowly, feel more valued as a result of appraisal. In terms of the broad issue of commitment and loyalty to the goals and legitimacy of management, results were ambiguous. For this the responses to the following likert-scale statements were used as indicators and the responses are shown in tables iii - v.

Table iii

Question 6 (iv)	<i>'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'</i>				
Scale	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	52	72	70	45	46

Missing cases = 7

Table iv

Question 6 (v)	<i>'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'</i>				
Scale	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	114	80	57	19	14

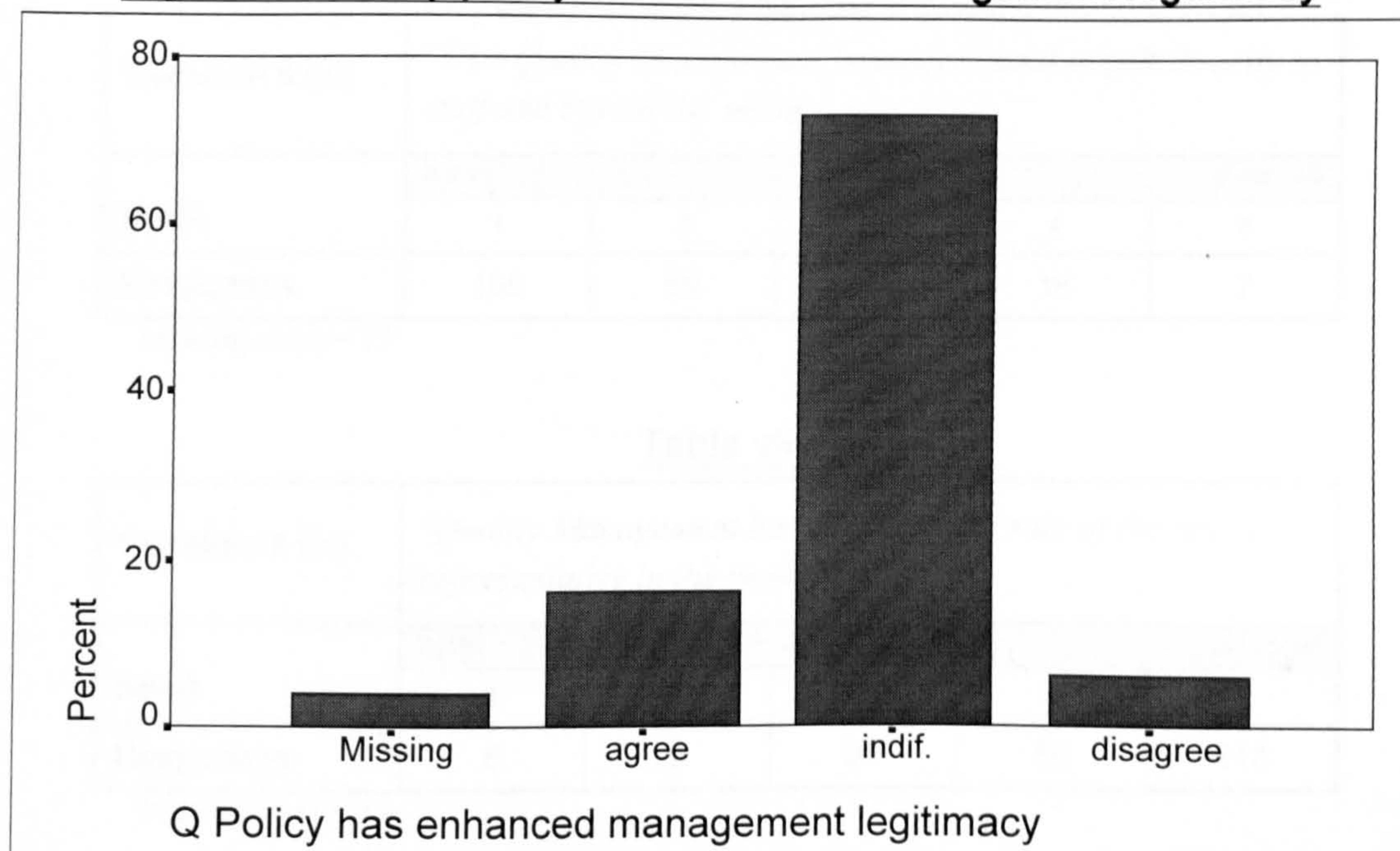
Missing cases = 8

Table v

Question 6 (viii)	<i>'Quality Management offers staff more say over their own work than was the case before'</i>				
Scale	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	33	54	77	64	58

Missing cases = 9

In combining and compressing these responses a broadly indifferent response is implied (see figure iii)

Figure iii: Quality policy has reinforced management legitimacy

Arguably this is not an easy issue to address clearly on a questionnaire. Responses from interviews, and individual responses indicated that the context of particular issues shaped workers opinions to the broad issue of 'commitment' and of management legitimacy. This was most apparent at the *London Borough* case-study, where 'commitment' was often related directly to a culture of fear within the devolved workplace: 'empowered' managers even found this difficult at times:

"Unfortunately there is an element of fear in it. I sometimes have to really work on people to persuade them, when they've been ill, that they shouldn't take it as annual leave... Fundamentally it is to do with changing work culture. When I first joined [this authority] I almost had the received wisdom that I could be sick several times a year without it becoming an issue and I almost saw it as untouchable...It's to do with work culture change; it's to do with the idea of Quality Management - that people are no longer going to be allowed to get away with this sort of thing. I think commitment is part of it as well - getting people to actually work together as a team and to understand the impact of absenteeism for the rest of the team." (Library Manager: London Borough)

c) Union Responses

Trade union involvement has varied according to the historical relationship that the union has had in each authority. This has ranged from full negotiation, at senior political and chief officer level, on all council-wide quality initiatives (*Northern Borough*); to the marginalising of the union (through a lack of consultation) - and a subsequent attempt at derecognition. Survey results have strongly indicated that the role of the union representative/shop steward has not been enhanced as a result of the quality initiatives (see table vi and vii; and figure iv for compressed results).

Table vi

Question 6 (vi)	<i>'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'</i>				
Scale	agree			disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	105	69	82	16	7

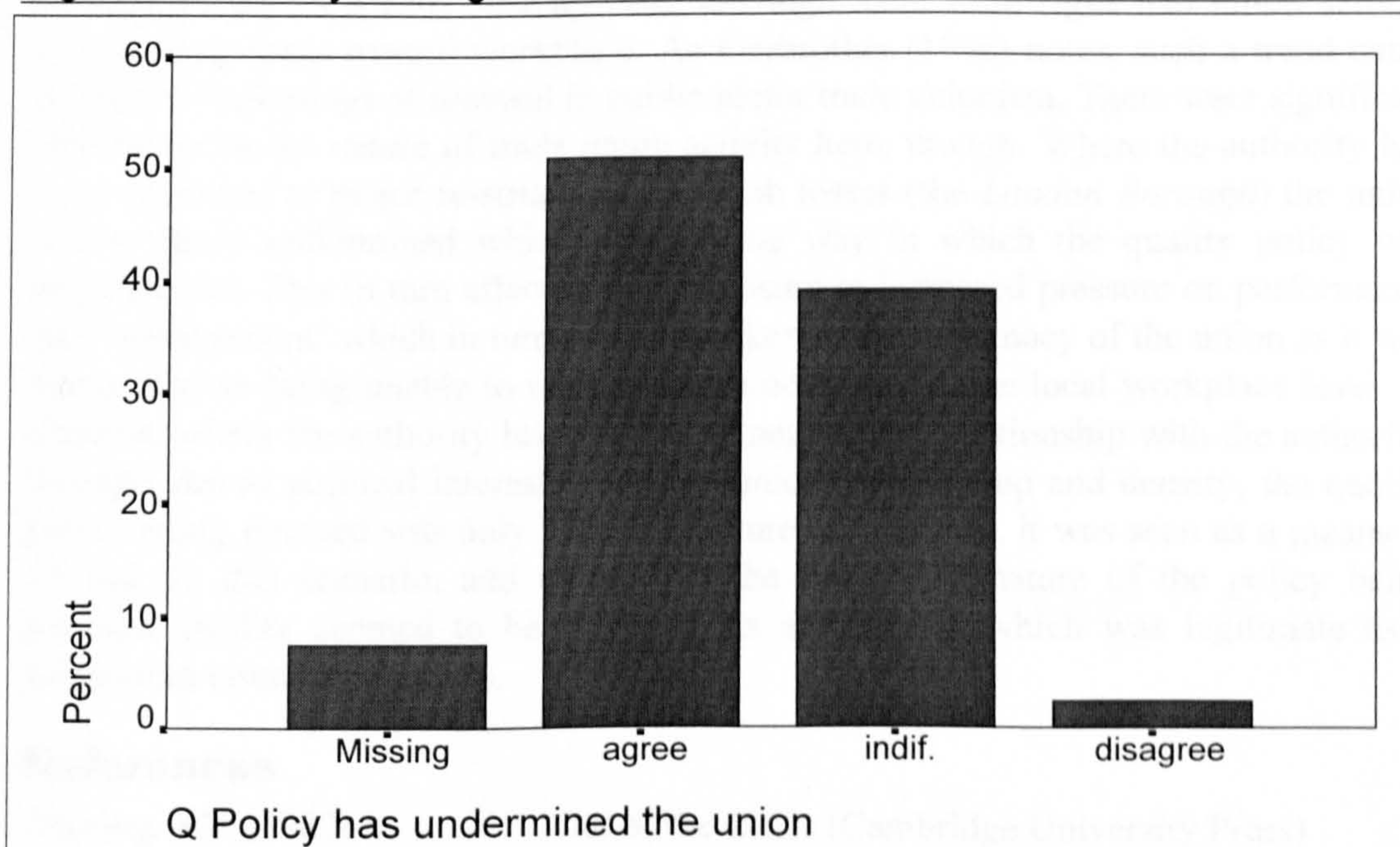
Missing cases = 13

Table vii

Question 6 (ix)	<i>'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace'</i>				
Scale	agree			disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	6	9	91	56	113

Missing cases = 17

Figure iv: Quality Management has Undermined the Position of the Union



In terms of local variations out-sourcing policy, union-management-councillor relations, union membership as well as the nature of the actual quality policy being pursued were of great importance. In the *London Borough* case-study the union had been under serious pressure for a number of years. A council hostile to the union, which had been out-sourcing and breaking up the structure of the authority and been making large cuts to the workforce (approximately 50% over five years) had had the effect of marginalising the union. In this case, the introduction of the quality policy was done with little or no consultation with the union. Possibly as a result of this, some UNISON members' responses to open-ended questions on the survey indicated that staff were

Appendices

liable to feel more exposed to bullying by managers and felt that the union was perceived to have lost touch with workplace issues.

In contrast to the above case, the union branch at the Northern Metropolitan Borough had a wholly different relationship with the quality policy. The quality policy, here was being notionally supported by the union in that it was intended to ensure successful in-house CCT bids. Interestingly, though, because of the formalised nature of ISO 9000, there were some indications that the *quality manual* could be drawn into the broad collective bargaining environment. This was because formal *quality manual* revisions were required when working practices were changed and this involved some form of negotiation with staff and or stewards.

Conclusions

On the three broad issues discussed - the way that quality management affects work intensification, commitment, and union legitimacy - there were some elements that were strongly affected by local conditions, but also some issues that were commonly felt.

Overall, the introduction of quality management has led to greater work intensification (by workload) but with ambiguous results on an increased sense of 'commitment'. The position of the union was universally seen as being likely to be undermined by the widespread use of quality management, although there were signs that union activity was shifting focus toward workplace. As Fairbrother (1996) notes, such a trend could signal the beginnings of renewal in public sector trade unionism. There were significant differences in the nature of trade union activity here, though. Where the authority had been subjected to major re-structuring and job losses (the *London Borough*) the union was severely undermined which affected the way in which the quality policy was implemented. This in turn affected staff exposure to increased pressure on performance and 'commitment' which in turn further weakened the legitimacy of the union as it was being seen as being unable to resist changes occurring at the local workplace level. In contrast, where the authority had had a long negotiating relationship with the authority, through shared political interests and high union membership and density, the quality policy being pursued was only partial in nature and, in part, it was seen as a means to an end. In this scenario, and because of the formalised nature of the policy being pursued, quality seemed to be emerging as an issue in which was legitimate as a bargaining issue for stewards.

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APPENDIX ii

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 1 (STEWARDS)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND QUALITY

Questionnaire on the opinions of trade unionists to 'Quality Management'

(1)

This questionnaire is part of some research about the use of *Quality Management* in local government. So far this research has involved assessing managers' opinions about the staffing issues raised by 'quality management'. This questionnaire is designed to find out what staff who are members of a trade union think.

I am using the term '*Quality Management*' as a broad term because Councils use their own terms for this (e.g. '*The Quality Council*'; '*Quality Services*'; '*Performance Management*'; '*Customer Care*'). I would therefore ask that when a question refers to '*Quality Management*', that you 'translate' that into whatever the local term is at your workplace.

This research is completely independent of the Council and of the Union and all your answers will be anonymous. Please be as frank as you like with your answers. While approval has been given by your union branch for this survey, none of the answers that you give will be traced back to you by either the Council or the Union.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the addressed envelope provided and return it, sealed, either to your UNISON office or post it directly to me (the addressed envelope is freepost).

Ian Roper

Dept of Social & Economic Research
University of Glasgow

Section 1: Background Information

(office use)

1) What Council department/service are you based? (e.g. ‘Social Services’; ‘Leisure’ etc.)

.....

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2) How long have you worked for the Council? (please tick box)

under 1 year	
1 - 5 years	
5 - 10 years	
10 - 20 years	
over 20 years	

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3) How long have you been a Union Representative? (years/months)

.....

☐

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4) How many members do you represent?

.....

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5) How aware are you of the Council management’s quality policy?
(please tick one box only)

Fully aware of management’s Council-wide quality policy	
Aware that the Council has got a quality policy	
Only aware of management’s quality policy in my service	
Only vaguely aware of any management quality policy	
Unaware of any management quality policy	

☐

11

6) What do you think about the Council’s quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Happy with the policy in general	
Indifferent to the policy	
Unhappy with the policy in general	
Don’t know	

☐

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(please turn over)

Section 2: Quality and working practices

(office use)

1) In your service/department, has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ been combined with changes to employment contracts or working practices in any of the following areas? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Introduced more ‘flexible’ working hours	
Simplified grading structures	
Introduced more ‘flexible’ employment contracts	
Introduced performance related pay	
Introduced work appraisal	
Introduced ‘team-working’	
Other (please note below)	

.....
.....

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<input type="checkbox"/>	15
<input type="checkbox"/>	16
<input type="checkbox"/>	17
<input type="checkbox"/>	18
<input type="checkbox"/>	19
<input type="checkbox"/>	20
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	21

2) How much are you in favour of these changes? (please tick box: 1 = strongly in favour; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly hostile etc. If you have no opinion do not tick any box)

	in favour					hostile				
Flexible working hours	1	2	3	4	5					
Simplified grading structures	1	2	3	4	5					
Performance related pay	1	2	3	4	5					
Work appraisal	1	2	3	4	5					
Team working	1	2	3	4	5					
‘Other’ changes	1	2	3	4	5					

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<input type="checkbox"/>	23
<input type="checkbox"/>	24
<input type="checkbox"/>	25
<input type="checkbox"/>	26
<input type="checkbox"/>	27

(please turn over)

3) If ‘teams’ are used at your workplace...

(a) ...how has it affected workloads for staff? (please tick one box only)

On balance, team-work has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, team-work has increased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has not increased work loads	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a lot	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(b) ...has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by teams? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by ‘teams’	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘team-work’, if applicable)

4) How has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ (QM) as a whole, affected work loads for staff in your service/department?
(please tick one box only)

On balance, QM has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, QM has increased work loads a little	
On balance, QM has not increased work loads	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a little	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a lot	

(please turn over)

(office use)

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5) Has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by ‘Quality Management’ (QM)? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by QM	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Unsure/No opinion	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘Quality Management’, if applicable)

.....

.....

(office use)

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Section 3: Quality and the Union

1) Has ‘Quality Management’ affected the role of union representatives in consultation between management and staff? (please tick box)

yes	no
-----	----

(if ‘yes’, please state in what way they have changed)

.....

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2) Has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ affected the role and influence of union representatives in any of the following areas? (please tick appropriate box for each category)

	reduced influence	same influence	increased influence
Working practices			
Grading arrangements			
Health and Safety			
Holiday entitlement			
Absenteeism			
Sickness			

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(please turn over)

3) In your capacity as a trade union representative, have you been involved in any dispute on behalf of a member, about any aspects of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick one box only)

Yes, more than 10 times	
Yes, less than 10 times	
Yes once or twice	
No	

(if yes, please state the general issue involved)

.....

.....

4) In what forms have managers communicated their ‘Quality Management’ programme to employees? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Staff presentation	
Video	
Newsletters	
Team briefings	
Through the union	
Haven’t communicated	

5) What backup/support have you required from the union on the issue of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Advice from full-time official	
Information pack from the union	
Advice/discussion from other colleagues in the union	
Haven’t required any support	
No support available	

6) In your capacity as a trade union representative, have you been involved in general discussions/meetings etc, about aspects of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick box)

(a) ...with management

yes

no

(b) ...with members

yes

no

(please turn over)

(office use)

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7) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 (please tick box: 1 = strongly agree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly disagree etc. Do not tick a box for any statements that are not applicable to your own experience)

(i) 'The quality policy has not affected members' concerns about day to day issues'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
66

(ii) 'All this Quality Management stuff is just a fad'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
68

(iii) 'Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
69

(iv) 'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
70

(v) 'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
71

(vi) 'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
72

(vii) 'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of employees without an increase in pay'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
73

(viii) 'Quality Management offers employees more say over their own work than was the case before'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

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(ix) 'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐
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(please turn over)

(office use)

8) Please feel free to write down any other comments that you may have about the operation of 'Quality Management' in your workplace

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX iii

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 2 (LAY MEMBERSHIP)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND QUALITY

Questionnaire on the opinions of union members to 'Quality Management'

(2)

This questionnaire is part of a wider research project about the use of '*Quality Management*' in local government. Some jargon is used in this questionnaire, but please don't be put off. Here is a brief explanation of some of the terms you will come across:

1) 'Quality Management': this questionnaire is being used in a number of councils. In each council a different term is used for various quality and customer care policies (e.g. sometimes it is 'Customer Care', sometimes it is 'Quality Services', sometimes it is 'The Quality Council'). Therefore, where you see the term '*Quality Management*', the questionnaire is referring to the particular policy relating to quality or customer care *at your council*.

2) Other jargon: where other jargon is used (e.g. 'flexible working practices', 'performance related pay', 'work appraisal', etc.) please just answer honestly. If you are not familiar with a term, it is probably because that practice is not being used in your council.

While approval has been given by your union branch for this survey, none of the answers that you give will be traced back to you by either the Council or the Union. This research is completely independent.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the addressed envelope provided and post it, internal mail, to the address shown.

Ian Roper

**Dept of Social & Economic Research
University of Glasgow**

Section 1: Background Information

(office use)

1) What Council department/service are you based? (e.g. ‘Social Services’; ‘Leisure’ etc)

.....

.....

3

2) How long have you worked for the Council? (please tick box)

under 1 year	
1 - 5 years	
5 - 10 years	
10 - 20 years	
over 20 years	

5

3) How long have you been a member of the Union? (months/years)

.....

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4) How often do you attend Union meetings? (please tick one box only)

I attend all meetings	
I attend most meetings	
I attend some meetings	
I rarely attend meetings	
I do not attend any meetings	

10

5) How aware are you of the Council management’s quality policy?
(please tick one box only)

Fully aware of management’s Council-wide quality policy	
Aware that the Council has got a quality policy	
Only aware of management’s quality policy in my service	
Only vaguely aware of any management quality policy	
Unaware of any management quality policy	

11

(please turn over)

6) What do you think about the Council’s quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Happy with the policy in general	
Indifferent to the policy	
Unhappy with the policy in general	
Don't know	

(office use)

13

Section 2: Quality and working practices

1) In your service/department, has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ been combined with changes to employment contracts or working practices in any of the following areas? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Introduced more ‘flexible’ working hours	
Simplified grading structures	
Introduced more ‘flexible’ employment contracts	
Introduced performance related pay	
Introduced work appraisal	
Introduced ‘team-working’	
Other (please note below)	

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(please turn over)

2) How much are you in favour of these changes? (please tick box: 1 = strongly in favour; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly hostile etc. If you do not have an opinion do not tick any box)

	in favour					hostile				
Flexible working hours	1	2	3	4	5					
Simplified grading structures	1	2	3	4	5					
Performance related pay	1	2	3	4	5					
Work appraisal	1	2	3	4	5					
Team working	1	2	3	4	5					
'Other' changes	1	2	3	4	5					

3) If 'teams' are used at your workplace...

(a) ...how has it affected workloads for staff? (please tick one box only)

On balance, team-work has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, team-work has increased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has not increased work loads	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a lot	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(b) ...has everyone's workloads been affected the same as a result of teams? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by 'teams'	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by 'team-work', if applicable)

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.....

(please turn over)

(office use)

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4) How has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ (QM) as a whole, affected work loads for staff in your service/department?
(please tick one box only)

On balance, QM has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, QM has increased work loads a little	
On balance, QM has not increased work loads	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a little	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a lot	

5) Has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by ‘Quality Management’ (QM)? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by QM	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Unsure/No opinion	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘Quality Management’, if applicable)

.....

.....

(office use)

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Section 3: Quality and the Union

1) Has ‘Quality Management’ affected your view of the union’s role in representing your interests? (please tick box)

yes

no

(if ‘yes’, please state in what way they have changed)

.....

.....

.....

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(please turn over)

2) Has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ affected the role and influence of union representatives in any of the following areas?
 (please tick appropriate box for each category)

	reduced influence	same influence	increased influence
Working practices			
Grading arrangements			
Health and Safety			
Holiday entitlement			
Absenteeism			
Sickness			

3) In what forms have managers communicated their ‘Quality Management’ programme to you? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Staff presentation	
Video	
Newsletters	
Team briefings	
Through the union	
Haven’t communicated	

4) What backup/support have you required from the union on the issue of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Advice from full-time official	
Information pack from the union	
Advice/discussion from other colleagues in the union	
Haven’t required any support	
No support available	

(please turn over)

(office use)

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5) Have you been involved in general discussions/meetings etc, about aspects of 'Quality Management'? (please tick box)

(a) ...with management

yes	no
-----	----

(b) ...with the Union

yes	no
-----	----

(office use)

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☐

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6) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(please tick box: 1 = strongly agree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly disagree etc. Do not tick a box for any statements that are not applicable to your own experience)

(i) 'The quality policy has not affected my concerns about day to day issues'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

67

(ii) 'All this Quality Management stuff is just a fad'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

68

(iii) 'Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

69

(iv) 'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

70

(v) 'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

71

(vi) 'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

72

(vii) 'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of employees without an increase in pay'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

73

(please turn over)

(viii) ‘Quality Management offers employees more say over their own work than was the case before’

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(ix) ‘Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace’

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(office use)

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8)

Please feel free to write down any other comments that you may have about the operation of ‘Quality Management’ in your workplace

Thank you for your time

Please put this form in the pre-addressed envelope provided and return (internal mail)

APPENDIX iv

**QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 3 (NEWCASTLE CLS
STEWARDS)**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND QUALITY

**Questionnaire on the opinions of trade
unionists to 'Quality Management'**

(3)

This questionnaire is part of some research about the use of *Quality Management* in Local Government. So far this research has involved assessing managers opinions about the staffing issues raised by 'quality management'. This questionnaire is designed to find out what staff who are trade union representatives think.

This research is completely independent of the Council and of the Union and all your answers will be anonymous. Please be as frank as you like with your answers. While approval has been given by your union branch for this survey, none of the answers that you give will be traced back to you by either the Council or the Union.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the addressed envelope provided and return it, sealed, to your UNISON office via internal mail.

Ian Roper

**Dept of Social & Economic Research
University of Glasgow**

Section 1: Background Information

(office use)

1) What part of Leisure Services do you work? (e.g. 'Leisure Newcastle'; 'Children's Services' etc.)

.....

.....

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2) How long have you worked for Leisure Services? (please tick box)

under 1 year	
1 - 5 years	
5 - 10 years	
10 - 20 years	
over 20 years	

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3) How long have you been a Union Representative? (months/years)

.....

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4) How many members do you represent?

.....

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5) How aware are you of Leisure Services' quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Fully aware of management's quality policy	
Aware that Leisure Services has got a quality policy	
Only aware of the quality policy in my service area	
Only vaguely aware of any quality policy	
Unaware of Leisure Services' quality policy	

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6) What do you think about Leisure Services' quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Happy with the policy in general	
Indifferent to the policy	
Unhappy with the policy in general	
Don't know	

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(please turn over)

Section 2: Quality and working practices

(office use)

1) Has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ into Leisure Services been combined with changes to employment contracts or working practices in any of the following areas? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Introduced more ‘flexible’ working hours	
Simplified grading structures	
Introduced more ‘flexible’ employment contracts	
Introduced performance related pay	
Introduced work appraisal	
Introduced ‘team-working’	
Other (please note below)	

.....

.....

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<input type="checkbox"/>	15
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<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	21

2) How much are you in favour of these changes? (please tick box: 1 = strongly in favour; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly hostile etc. If you have no opinion do not tick any boxes)

	in favour					hostile				
Flexible working hours	1	2	3	4	5					
Simplified grading structures	1	2	3	4	5					
Performance related pay	1	2	3	4	5					
Work appraisal	1	2	3	4	5					
Team working	1	2	3	4	5					
‘Other’ changes	1	2	3	4	5					

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<input type="checkbox"/>	23
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<input type="checkbox"/>	25
<input type="checkbox"/>	26
<input type="checkbox"/>	27

(please turn over)

3) If 'teams' are used at your workplace...

(a) ...how has it affected workloads for staff? (please tick one box only)

On balance, team-work has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, team-work has increased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has not increased work loads	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a lot	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(b) ...has everyone's workloads been affected the same as a result of teams? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by 'teams'	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by 'team-work', if applicable)

.....

.....

4) How has the introduction of 'Quality Management' (QM) as a whole, affected work loads for staff in your service/department? (please tick one box only)

On balance, QM has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, QM has increased work loads a little	
On balance, QM has not increased work loads	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a little	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a lot	

(please turn over)

(office use)

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5) Has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by ‘Quality Management’ (QM)? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by QM	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Unsure/No opinion	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘Quality Management’, if applicable)

.....

.....

(office use)

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Section 3: Quality and the Union

1) Has ‘Quality Management’ affected the role of union representatives in consultation between management and staff? (please tick box)

yes

no

(if ‘yes’, please state in what way they have changed)

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2) Has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ affected the role and influence of union representatives in any of the following areas? (please tick appropriate box for each category)

	reduced influence	same influence	increased influence
Working practices			
Grading arrangements			
Health and Safety			
Holiday entitlement			
Absenteeism			
Sickness			

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(please turn over)

3) In your capacity as a trade union representative, have you been involved in any dispute on behalf of a member, about any aspects of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick one box only)

Yes, more than 10 times	
Yes, less than 10 times	
Yes once or twice	
No	

(if yes, please state the general issue involved)

.....

4) In what forms have managers communicated their ‘Quality Management’ programme to employees? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Staff presentation	
Video	
Newsletters	
Team briefings	
Through the union	
Haven’t communicated	

5) What backup/support have you required from the union on the issue of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Advice from full-time official	
Information pack from the union	
Advice/discussion from other colleagues in the union	
Haven’t required any support	
No support available	

6) In your capacity as a trade union representative, have you been involved in general discussions/meetings etc, about aspects of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick box)

(a) ...with management

yes

no

(b) ...with members

yes

no

(please turn over)

(office use)

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Appendices

7) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(please tick box: 1 = strongly agree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly disagree etc. Do not tick a box for any statements that are not applicable to your own experience)

- (i) 'The quality policy has not affected members' concerns about day to day issues'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

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- (ii) 'All this Quality Management stuff is just a fad'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (iii) 'Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (iv) 'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (v) 'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

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- (vi) 'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (vii) 'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of employees without an increase in pay'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (viii) 'Quality Management offers employees more say over their own work than was the case before'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

☐

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- (ix) 'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

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(office use)

(please turn over)

8) Please feel free to write down any other comments that you may have about the operation of 'Quality Management' in your workplace

.....

.....

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.....

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX V

**QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION 4 (NEWCASTLE LAY
MEMBERSHIP)**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND QUALITY

**Questionnaire on the opinions of union
members to 'Quality Management'**

(4)

This questionnaire is part of some research about the use of *Quality Management* in Local Government. So far this research has involved assessing managers' opinions about the staffing issues raised by 'quality management'. This questionnaire is designed to find out what staff who are members of a trade union think.

This research is completely independent of the Council and of the Union and all your answers will be anonymous. Please be as frank as you like about your answers. While approval has been given by your union branch for this survey, none of the answers that you give will be traced back to you by either the Council or the Union.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the addressed envelope provided and return it, sealed, to your UNISON office via internal mail.

Ian Roper

**Dept of Social & Economic Research
University of Glasgow**

Section 1: Background Information

(office use)

1) What part of Leisure Services do you work? (e.g. 'Leisure Newcastle'; 'Children's Services' etc.)

.....

.....

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2) How long have you worked for Leisure Services? (please tick box)

under 1 year	
1 - 5 years	
5 - 10 years	
10 - 20 years	
over 20 years	

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3) How long have you been a member of the Union? (months/years)

.....

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4) How often do you attend Union meetings? (please tick one box only)

I attend all meetings	
I attend most meetings	
I attend some meetings	
I rarely attend meetings	
I do not attend any meetings	

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5) How aware are you of Leisure Services' quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Fully aware of management's quality policy	
Aware that Leisure Services has got a quality policy	
Only aware of the quality policy in my service area	
Only vaguely aware of any quality policy	
Unaware of Leisure Services' quality policy	

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(please turn over)

6) What do you think about the Leisure Services' quality policy? (please tick one box only)

Happy with the policy in general	
Indifferent to the policy	
Unhappy with the policy in general	
Don't know	

(office use)

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Section 2: Quality and working practices

1) Has the introduction of 'Quality Management' into Leisure Services been combined with changes to employment contracts or working practices in any of the following areas? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Introduced more 'flexible' working hours	
Simplified grading structures	
Introduced more 'flexible' employment contracts	
Introduced performance related pay	
Introduced work appraisal	
Introduced 'team-working'	
Other (please note below)	

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2) How much are you in favour of these changes? (tick box: 1 = strongly in favour; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly hostile etc. If you have no opinion do not tick any box)

	in favour	hostile			
Flexible working hours	1	2	3	4	5
Simplified grading structures	1	2	3	4	5
Performance related pay	1	2	3	4	5
Work appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
Team working	1	2	3	4	5
'Other' changes	1	2	3	4	5

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(please turn over)

3) If ‘teams’ are used at your workplace...

(a) ...how has it affected workloads for staff? (please tick one box only)

On balance, team-work has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, team-work has increased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has not increased work loads	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a little	
On balance, team-work has decreased work loads a lot	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(b) ...has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by teams? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by ‘teams’	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Not applicable: team-work not used	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘team-work’, if applicable)

.....

.....

4) How has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ (QM) as a whole, affected work loads for staff in your service/department?
(please tick one box only)

On balance, QM has increased work loads a lot	
On balance, QM has increased work loads a little	
On balance, QM has not increased work loads	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a little	
On balance, QM has reduced work loads a lot	

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(office use)

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5) Has everyone’s workloads been affected the same by ‘Quality Management’ (QM)? (please tick one box only)

Yes, everyone has been affected the same by QM	
No, some have been more affected than others	
Unsure/No opinion	

(please state what types of work have been more affected by ‘Quality Management’, if applicable)

.....

.....

(office use)

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Section 3: Quality and the Union

1) Has ‘Quality Management’ affected your view of the union’s role in representing your interests? (please tick box)

yes	no
-----	----

(if ‘yes’, please state in what way they have changed)

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(please turn over)

- 2) Has the introduction of ‘Quality Management’ affected the role and influence of union representatives in any of the following areas?
(please tick appropriate box for each category)

	reduced influence	same influence	increased influence
Working practices			
Grading arrangements			
Health and Safety			
Holiday entitlement			
Absenteeism			
Sickness			

- 3) In what forms have managers communicated their ‘Quality Management’ programme to you? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Staff presentation	
Video	
Newsletters	
Team briefings	
Through the union	
Haven’t communicated	

- 4) What backup/support have you required from the union on the issue of ‘Quality Management’? (please tick all boxes that apply)

Advice from full-time official	
Information pack from the union	
Advice/discussion from other colleagues in the union	
Haven't required any support	
No support available	

(please turn over)

(office use)

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Appendices

5) Have you been involved in general discussions/meetings etc, about aspects of 'Quality Management'? (please tick box)

(a) ...with management

yes	no
-----	----

(b) ...with the Union

yes	no
-----	----

6) How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (please tick box: 1 = strongly agree; 3 = neutral; 5 = strongly disagree etc. Do not tick a box for any statements that are not applicable to your own experience)

(i) 'The quality policy has not affected my concerns about day to day issues'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(ii) 'All this Quality Management stuff is just a fad'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(iii) 'Concern for Council customers is all very well, but it's Council staff who seem to be bearing the brunt of it all'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(iv) 'Performance appraisal tends to make people feel more "valued" in their work'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(v) 'Quality is an issue that both management and staff can come together on'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(vi) 'With Quality Management, managers tend to talk directly to staff and bypass the union'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(vii) 'Quality Management seems to be a means by which to get more work out of employees without an increase in pay'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(please turn over)

(office use)

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Appendices

(viii) 'Quality Management offers employees more say over their own work than was the case before'

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(ix) 'Quality Management has enhanced the role of the union representative in the workplace

agree			disagree	
1	2	3	4	5

(office use)

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8) Please feel free to write down any other comments that you may have about the operation of 'Quality Management' in your workplace

[illegible]

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX vi

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (SAMPLE)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION...

Union/Branch:	
Address:	
Contact:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
e-mail:	

Date:	
--------------	--

ABOUT THE UNION...

Local Authority Represented	
Union Membership	

ABOUT UNION POLICY...

Local Union Policy on CCT	
Local Union Policy on Quality	
How did the quality strategy develop? (what influenced policy: National Union policy, consultation with employers, political influences etc.)	

ABOUT EMPLOYERS AND 'QUALITY'...

Has the Union been involved in discussions with employers on issue of 'quality'?	
What level of consultation has the Union had on the issue of 'quality'?	
Have there been any disputes with employers in relation to the issue of 'quality'?	

ABOUT CCT...	
<p>Has the issue of quality been linked with the issue of contract tendering?</p>	

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

APPENDIX vii

TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW (SAMPLE)

<u>At:</u>	Brent LB Council
<u>Date:</u>	28/3/96
<u>With:</u>	xxxxx

<u>Background:</u>	Interview conducted as part of session interviews arranged by Brent QDU. Basic Structure formed around formal interview schedule.
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Interview

[First section of interview affected by recording errors]

IR: [...] What sort of problems or obstacles have been encountered along the way?

XX: *"There is a fundamental one, which is the cynicism people feel when they look at a council - which doesn't appear to value staff; which seems more concerned with keeping council tax down - but still professes to be concerned with quality. And so that's hard: it's hard to sell a corporate model of quality when people feel that way...."*

"...it's very easy to turn round and say 'well if we're [over-stretched that's] even more reason to have Quality Time: you don't need money' - you know, it's quite easy to counter some of these arguments but it also can be quite evasive and self-serving to counter these arguments and there's a fundamental point there which is that you need to support people - you need resourcing..."

IR: Will that cynicism decline or will it remain?

XX: "It's residual - because there's always the fact that this [*Chartermark*] is another medal; another gong, and of course it's a John-Majorism...so - what can you do?..."

"All I can do is to cultivate a culture - an ethos - which is about allowing people the opportunity to invest in values - which is to do with quality; which is to do with the London Borough of Brent - but which is not a Brent thing that people cannot respect." [...]

[I wasn't managing here when the *Quality Council* policy was launched.] I can chart the progress over the last two years and I know what I inherited - it was a mess. Why it was a mess, and whether that is something to do with the corporate approach to quality, I'm not sure.

IR: Is there a danger that with Devolution a manager will be able to get away with mistakes or bad management?

Appendices

XX: [Sure - although some of it, here, was deliberate. It was a mixture of incompetence and mistakes. It's true that with a devolved structure there is more scope for a maverick to mess things up.]

IR: What happened?

XX: It's a long story, but there's still an element, unfortunately, of sectarian politics around race *"and the sad thing is, it doesn't matter whether it's Labour or Tory...at the end of the day people are looking after their own...power-base and - as has been evidenced over the last five years - these people are quite happy to change sides when it suits them. And so...it's really [about getting] a fair share - which is fair enough - in a way which is quite exclusive. For him, basically, the question is, you can't get rid of him - so he's moved around a lot"*

IR: What has happened to working practices and working conditions?

XX: [In terms of then and now.]

"Fundamentally, there isn't the same sort of contempt towards customers because there was - no doubt about it. In the '80's libraries would have a lot of ad-hoc closures and there was a load of contempt and it was the idea that 'we're in the public sector; we're under siege; we're under-resourced'... It's a lot easier to just sink back into this sort-of defeatist approach about how understaffed we are; how under-resourced we are and not really make the connection...surrounding the customer. And people, now, have a greater awareness in terms of communications and [flexibility]" [interruption]

Casualisation; flexible working patterns; reduced absenteeism...

IR: ...Is reduced absenteeism due to motivation or fear?

XX: *"Unfortunately there is an element of fear in it. I sometimes have to really work on people to persuade them, when they've been ill, that they shouldn't take it as annual leave. People say 'I want to take it as leave - I don't want it to be recorded as sick'. Fundamentally it is to do with changing work culture. When I first joined Brent I almost had the received wisdom that I could be sick several times a year without it becoming an issue and I almost saw it as untouchable [...] It's to do with work culture change; it's to do with the idea of quality management - that people are no longer going to be allowed to get away with this sort of thing. I think commitment is part of it as well - getting people to actually work together as a team and to understand the impact of absenteeism for the rest of the team."*

So...we wear uniforms and the interesting thing is - as much as everyone hated the idea - I think there would be bit of disappointment by a lot of people if the uniforms were abolished...The ratio of those people who turn-up looking smart and wear the uniform almost with pride and those people who really hate it [is] well in favour of the people who wear it with pride. [There are some practical advantages with the uniform too - a lot of library work is physical].

...Arts and Libraries had...and annual staff awards-thing and it's really about employee-of-the-year; library-of-the-year; customer-service-of-the-year. Everyone hated it, but everyone went - and everyone wanted to win. It struck a chord, whether it was recognition; whether it was just competition - because,

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certainly, competition between libraries was very, very deliberately introduced as a way of motivating library managers - and, unfortunately, once we got onto the market testing situation there was just no value in competing against each other. And now that we're *Devolved Business Units* the residue that we're in competition against is antithetical; it's actually counter-productive. We need to co-operate with each other, not compete with each other... So what does this say? People take pride. That's what it's got to be about and I think that's fundamental to the whole quality programme in *Brent* - that we move away from being ashamed to work for *Brent*, to being proud to work for Brent. And, unfortunately, we haven't got to the stage where people here feel proud to work for Brent - but, hopefully, within the *Library Service*, people here feel proud to work for this library.

IR: ...PRP isn't used here. How is that worked, given that the *Human Resources Unit* suggest that it is policy to move towards PRP: would PRP work against the 'team-spirit' you are trying to foster?

XX: It's *Council* policy for *Business Directors* to get PRP... It will be *Council* policy to encourage PRP in line with *Business Units* but the fundamental bottom-line is they all have to be paid for out of existing budgets - simple as that. So in a sense it's a joke... I feel a bit embarrassed by it... [I work weekends and overtime because I'm expected to do that for my salary. I leave when the work is done - that is the difference]. and people who've got that corporate, sort-of old-fashioned 'this-is-what-I-do; this-is-what-I-don't-do' [attitude] - either they won't succeed in the job, they won't be able to stay employed in the job or they'll just be seen to be an inflexible person who is not prepared to put themselves out... If you've got a fair, meaningful [means of assessment] you can get a blanket assessment of everybody or, unfortunately, you do have to say 'you deserved it and you don't' and perceptions of fairness will come out like that...

I would like to be in a position to make those decisions, actually, because just as I am glad that I've been in a position, as a Devolved Business Unit Manager, to negotiate pay terms with people [...]

There's one member of staff here who's been here, now, a year-and-a-half. Part of the whole culture [with] new members of staff, in my opinion, are exceptional; they represent the future here - not just in the libraries, but in the Service - and they've brought to the place a vitality; a new enthusiasm; a freshness which has transformed the place along with people who...have been here a while, who are experienced and committed...

She has been offered three times, by three different authorities, jobs; jobs which you could say, from a purely professional point of view, she would be wise to take. What has happened is that she's gone to them and she's... asked them basic questions that she would ask here and I would give an answer. Because of their structure...[i.e. having no devolved decision-making] the person taking the interview hasn't known the answers. Possibly, if [she'd] accepted one of the jobs, she'd have been working in a library where nobody in the library would have had nothing to do with the recruitment process [...]. She's had me over a barrel three times, because she's an exceptional member of staff and what I've

Appendices

been able to do is negotiate - and it's a problem [...because I judge her on her outputs rather than her seniority or grade etc.]. What I've been able to do is motivate, reward and promote.

"And for those people who aren't up to it, either they're gone, or they're on less money and there's always a problem with that - I'd prefer it if they were gone, but usually there's a choice...and, yeah, there's a few people who aren't going to be happy about it, because they're being paid what they're worth"

and "the only time it gets tricky is when you realise that the overall quality of staff in this place has improved so much that that you've got a few historical situations of people who are basically a bit dim; who are trying their best are being underpaid - and that's not nice because these people are trying their best; it's not their fault, but the world has changed. The issue, in terms of working for a job in the private sector, is such that there are practically none that they are capable of doing and it's a rough old world - and that's not nice." [...]

IR: ...Is that due to budget constraints?

XX: Oh, yeah. It's not through a matter of principle for me - it's to do with [reducing costs based upon a business plan].

IR: Could [budgetary pressure to reduce staff] cause problems in the future?

XX: It'll get harder and harder.

IR: Do you think that will make it harder to motivate staff?

XX: [...The budget constraints will stop me being able to implement changes proposed by staff] Sooner or later they'll stop having ideas. [...] As long as the right decisions are made and the people who stay are rewarded [it will be all right].

"I've got into the situation where it's panic. If I got in the situation where the decision is not based on ability but based on what would be the redundancy costs - what is the cheapest person to get rid of - then I've got a big problem. Because, obviously, if we've moved away from the situation in the '80's - where the overall quality of staff was poor...we're going to be under pressure to get rid of some of the best people...and that is something that I'm determined to avoid. And the only way that I can avoid that is by being a really hard bastard...and pre-empt and try and stay one step ahead."

It's just a grow-up time. None of us likes that. And anyone who does...is sick in the head. To see fear in people sickens me in the stomach [...] I had the situation where I had to brief the staff about reorganisation and I had to leave the room...and that was just the saddest thing that has ever happened to me, working in this job. I just could not believe it - and that is it: *"it's all very well being a Business Director and having devolved powers, but you're fucking-up people's lives...having to accept the difference between some hard and cold reality and just doing the job, as you understand it, to the best of your abilities - and doing it professionally. But at the same time you must keep something of yourself which feels that pain and which feels that frustration and anger because I'm sure when you stop - I feel angry a lot of the time, and frustrated..."* [Interview ends]

APPENDIX viii

LOCAL AUTHORITY DATABASE (QUALITY INITIATIVES)

(Source LGMB 1994, 1995, 1996)

		Type	(1)TQM 1994	(2)TQM 1995	(3)TQM 1996	(4)ISO 9000 1994	(5)ISO 9000 1995	(6)ISO 9000 1996	(7) Service Charter 1994	(8) Service Charter 1995	(9) Service Charter 1996	(10) Customer Inv'tment	(11) Customer Inv'tment	(12) Customer Inv'tment	(13) Complaints Proc'ds	(14) Complaints Proc'ds	(15) Complaints Proc'ds	(16) CharterMark 1994	(17) CharterMark 1995	(18) CharterMark 1996	(19) Inv. in People 1994	(20) Inv. in People 1995	(21) Inv. in People 1996	(22) Quality Circles 1994	(23) Quality Circles 1995	(24) Quality Circles 1996	Cum. Score 1994	Cum. Score 1995	Cum. Score 1996	Change (1995 - 1994)	Change (1996 - 1995)	Change (1996 - 1994)			
1	Bedfordshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	0	12	10	9	0	-1	-1		
2	Berkshire	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	10	7	7	0	-1	0			
3	Bucks	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	7	7	6	0	0	0			
4	Caerphilly#	5			2			0			0			0			2			0			0			2			14			3			
5	Cambs	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	11	14	14	3	0	3			
6	Cheshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	10	10	1	0	1			
7	Cleveland#	1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		2	2		0	2		0	0		1	1		7	9		2					
8	Clwyd#	1	2	2		1	1		0	0		0	0		2	2		2	2		0	0		2	2		9	9		0					
9	Clwyd#	5			2			1			0			0			2			2			0			2			9						
10	Cornwall	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	6	7	0	2	2			
11	Cumbria	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	7	0	1	1			
12	Derbyshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	9	9	9	0	0	0			
13	Devon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	7	7	0	0	0			
14	Dorset	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	9	9	9	0	0	0			
15	Co.Durham	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	7	1	3	4			
16	Dyfed#	1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		2	2		0	0					8	8		0					
17	Dyfed#	5			1			1			1			1			1			2			0			1			8						
18	E.Sussex	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	7	8	8	1	0	1			
19	Essex	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	9	7	7	-2	0	-2			
20	Gwent#	1		0			0			1			0			1			0			0				0			2						
21	Gwent#	5			0			0			1			0			1			0		2	2	2	0	0	0	9	11	10	2	-1	1		
22	Gloucs	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	2	2	0	1		8	9		1					
23	Gwynedd#	1	0	0		1	1		2	2		2	2		2	2		0	0		0	1				1			9						
24	Gwynedd#	5			0			1			2			2			1			0		2	2			1			8	10		2			
25	Hampshire	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		2	2		2	2			1			2	2		0			
26	Hertfordshire	1		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		2	2			0	0		0			2	2					
27	Kent	1			0			0			0			0			0			2		2	0			1			9	9		0			
28	Lancashire	1		1	1		1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	14	10	13	-4	3	-1			
29	Leicestershire	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14	10	13	-4	3	-1		
30	Lincs	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	4	7	2	3	5			
31	Mid-Glamorgan#	1	1	1		1	1		0	1		1	1		2	2		2	2		1	2		1	1		9	11		2					
32	Mid-Glamorgan#	5			1			1			1			1			2			2			2			1			11						
33	Norfolk	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	5	8	0	3	3			
34	North Yorks	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	11	13	12	-2	-1	1			
35	Northants	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	5	12	12	7	0	7			
36	Northumberland	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	5	12	12	7	0	7		
37	Nottinghamshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	7	6	9	-1	3	2			
38	Oxon	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	5	7	9	2	2	4			
39	Pembrokeshire#	5			0			0			0			2			2			0			2			0			6						
40	Powys#	1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		2	2		0	0		0	0		1	1		7	7		0					
41	Powys#	5			2			1			1			1			2			0		0				1			8						
42	Shropshire	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	7	9	8	2	-1	1			
43	Somerset	1		0	0		1	1		0	2		1	2		1	2		0	0		0	1			0	1		3	9		6			
44	South Glamorgan#	1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		0	0		0	1		1	1		6	7		1					
45	South Glamorgan#	5			1			1			1			1			1			0			1			1			7						

Appendices

		Type	(1)TQM 1994	(2)TQM 1995	(3)TQM 1996	(4)ISO 9000 1994	(5)ISO 9000 1995	(6)ISO 9000 1996	(7) Service Charter 1994	(8) Service Charter 1995	(9) Service Charter 1996	(10) Customer Inv'ment	(11) Customer Inv'ment	(12) Customer Inv'ment	(13) Complaints Proc'drs	(14) Complaints Proc'drs	(15) Complaints Proc'drs	(16) CharterMark 1994	(17) CharterMark 1995	(18) CharterMark 1996	(19) Inv. in People 1994	(20) Inv. in People 1995	(21) Inv. in People 1996	(22) Quality Circles 1994	(23) Quality Circles 1995	(24) Quality Circles 1996	Cum. Score 1994	Cum. Score 1995	Cum. Score 1996	Change (1995 - 1994)	Change (1996 - 1995)	Change (1996 - 1994)		
46	Staffs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	1	2	2	11	12	12	1	0	1			
47	Suffolk	1		0	0		0	1	0	0	2		0	1		0	2		0	0		2	2			2	2	9	7		7	0		
48	Surrey	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	7	7	0	0	0			
49	Warwickshire	1		0	1		1	1	1	1	1		0	1		1			0	0		0	0		0		3	5		2				
50	West Glamorgan#	1	1	1		1	1		0	0		0	0		2	2		0	0		1	1		2	2		7	7		0				
51	West Glamorgan#	5			1			1			1			1			2			0			1			2			9					
52	West Sussex	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	10	12	12	2	0	2			
53	Wiltshire	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1		2	2		0	0		0	0		1	1	7	7		0				
54	Allerdale	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4	6	5	2	-1	1		
55	Alnwick	2		0	0		0	0		0	0		1	1		2	2		0	0		2	2		0	0		5	5		0			
56	Alyn & Deeside#	2	0	0		1	1		0	0		0	0		2	2		0	0		2	2		2	2		7	7		0				
57	Alyn & Deeside#	5			0			1			0			0			2			0			2			2			7					
58	Amber Valley	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	6	9	10	3	1	4		
59	Anglesey#	5			0			1			0			0			2			0			0		0			3						
60	Arun	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	11	9	10	-2	1	-1		
61	Ashfield	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	10	5	8	-5	3	3	
62	Ashford	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	5	6	3	1	4	4	
63	Aylesbury Vale	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	4	6	2	2	4	4	
64	Babergh	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	6	-6	5	-1		
65	Barrow in Furness	2		0	0		1	1		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		2	2		0	0		3	3		0			
66	Basildon	2		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0		2	2	2	0	0	0		
67	Basingstoke & Deane	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	9	12	15	3	3	6		
68	Bassetlaw	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	10	10	11	0	1	1		
69	Bath#	2	1	1		1	1		0	1		1	1		2	2		0	0		0	1		1	1		6	8		2				
70	Berwick upon Tweed	2		0	0		0	0		2	2		1	1		0	2		0	0		0	0		0	0		3	5		2			
71	Beverley#	2		0			0		0			0			2			0			2			0				4						
72	Blaby	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	6	7	2	1	3	3	
73	Blackburn	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	11	13	14	2	1	3	3	
74	Blackpool	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	
75	Blaneau Gwent#	5			0			1			1			1						0			0		1				4					
76	Blyth Valley	2		0	0		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		2	2		0	0		1	1		0	0		6	6		0			
77	Bolsover	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	5	-1	2	1	1	
78	Boothferry	2	0	0		0	0		2	2		0	0		2	2		0	0		2	0		0	0		6	4		-2				
79	Boston	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	
80	Bournemouth	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	9	10	10	1	0	1	1	
81	Bracknell	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	13	12	13	-1	1	0	0	
82	Braintree	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14	16	16	2	0	2	2	
83	Breckland	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	1	1	-2	0	-2	-2	
84	Brecknock#	2	0	0		0	0		1	1		1	1		2	2		0	0		0	0		2	0		6	4						
85	Brecknock#	5			0			0			1			1			2			0			0			0			4					
86	Bridgnorth	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	
87	Brighton	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	8	8	1	0	1	1	
88	Bristol#	2	0	0		0	0		2	2		2	2		2	2		0	0		2	2		2	2		10	10		0				
89	Broadland	2		2	2		1	1		2	2		1	1		2	2		0	2		2	2		2	2		12	14		2			
90	Bromsgrove	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	5	2	0	2	2	
91	Broxtowe	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	

Appendices

		Change (1996 - 1994)	Change (1996 - 1995)	Change (1995 - 1994)	Cum. Score 1996	Cum. Score 1995	Cum. Score 1994	(24) Quality Circles 1996	(23) Quality Circles 1995	(22) Quality Circles 1994	(21) Inv. in People 1996	(20) Inv. in People 1995	(19) Inv. in People 1994	(18) CharterMark 1996	(17) CharterMark 1995	(16) CharterMark 1994	(15) Complaints Procd's	(14) Complaints Procd's	(13) Complaints Procd's	(12) Customer Invment	(11) Customer Invment	(10) Customer Invment	(9) Service Charter 1996	(8) Service Charter 1995	(7) Service Charter 1994	(6) ISO 9000 1996	(5) ISO 9000 1995	(4) ISO 9000 1994	(3)TQM 1996	(2)TQM 1995	(1)TQM 1994	Type	Authority		
95	Chase	1	1	0	7	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	Chase		
96	Canterbury	2	2	0	6	4	4	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	Canterbury		
97	Cardiff#			-2		8	10		1	1		0	1			0		2	2	2		1		1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	Cardiff#		
98	Cardiff#				9						1						2			1			1			1			2			5	Cardiff#		
99	Carlisle	3	0	3	7	7	4	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	Carlisle	
100	Carrick	1	0	1	12	12	11	1	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	Carrick	
101	Castle		5		7	2				0	2	2	2		0		2	0	0		2	0	0	0	0		1	0		0	0	2	2	Castle	
	Morpeth																																	Morpeth	
102	Ceredigion#					2				0		2			0				0		0			0			0				0	0	2	Ceredigion#	
103	Ceredigion#				7						2			0			2			1			1				1			0			5	Ceredigion#	
104	Charnwood	3	0	3	11	11	8	3	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Charnwood	
105	Cheltenham	3	1	2	13	12	10	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	Cheltenham	
106	Cherwell	1	2	1	8	6	7	-1	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Cherwell	
107	Chester			2	4	2			2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	Chester	
108	Chester-le-Street	5	1	4	6	4	1	4	1		2	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	Chester-le-Street
109	Chesterfield	3	0	3	9	9	6	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	0	2	Chesterfield	
110	Chichester	1	1	0	7	6	6	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Chichester	
111	Chiltern	0	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	Chiltern	
112	Christchurch	4	2	2	9	7	5	2	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	Christchurch	
113	Colchester	2	2	0	10	10	8	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Colchester	
114	Colwyn#		0		2	2	2			0			0		0	0	0	0	2	2		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Colwyn#	
115	Colwyn#				2						0						2			0			0				0						5	Colwyn#	
116	Congleton	3	0	3	9	9	6	3	0	1	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	Congleton	
117	Copeland	0	0	0	9	9	9	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	Copeland
118	Corby	1	0	1	4	4	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Corby	
119	Cotswold	2	0	2	7	6	5	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	Cotswold	
120	Craven	6	0	6	10	10	4	6	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Craven	
121	Crawley	-1	1	0	7	6	7	-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	Crawley	
122	Crewe & Nantwich	0	0	0	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	Crewe & Nantwich	
123	Dacorum			6	8	2				0	2	2	2		0	0	2		0		2	0	1	0	0		0	0		0	0	0	2	Dacorum	
124	Darlington	2	0	2	10	10	8	2	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	0	2	Darlington	
125	Dartford			0	9	9				1	2	2	2		0	0	2	2	2		1		1	1	1		1	1					2	Dartford	
126	Daventry	2	0	2	8	8	6	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	Daventry	
127	Delyn#		1		8		6			1			2				0		1			1							1				2	Delyn#	
128	Delyn#										2						1						1				1							5	Delyn#
129	Derby	1	3	4	13	10	4	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	Derby
130	Derbyshire	-2	-2	0	2	4	4	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Derbyshire
	Dales																																		Dales
131	Derwentside	2	0	2	10	10	8	2	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	Derwentside	
132	Dover	-2	-4	0	4	8	6	2	-4	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Dover	
133	Easington	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	Easington	
134	East Cambs	1	0	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	East Cambs	
135	East Devon	1	1	0	8	7	7	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	East Devon	
136	East Dorset			0	2	2			0	0	2	2	2		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	East Dorset	
137	East Hampshire	0	0	0	13	13	13	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	East Hampshire
138	East Herts			4		8					2	2		2	2	2			1		0		2	1	2		0	0					2	East Herts	
139	East Lindsey						2			0			2		0				0			0		0	0		0	0						2	East Lindsey
140	East Riding of Yorks#					12				2	1						2			2			2				1							5	East Riding of Yorks#
141	East Staffs	-2	2	0	9	7	9	-2	2	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	East Staffs	
142	East Yorks#			4													0		0			0	0				0	0						2	East Yorks#
143	Eastbourne	4	0	4	11	11	7	4	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	Eastbourne
144	Eastleigh	1	1	0	12	12	12	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	Eastleigh
145	Eden			0	2	2			0	0	2	2	2		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Eden	
146	Ellesmere			0	2	2					2	2	2		0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Ellesmere	
	Port																																		Port
147	Elmbridge	2	1	1	10	10	8	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	Elmbridge	

Appendices

		Type	(1)TQM 1994	(2)TQM 1995	(3)TQM 1996	(4)ISO 9000 1994	(5)ISO 9000 1995	(6)ISO 9000 1996	(7) Service Charter 1994	(8) Service Charter 1995	(9) Service Charter 1996	(10) Customer Inv'ment	(11) Customer Inv'ment	(12) Customer Inv'ment	(13) Complaints Proc'ds	(14) Complaints Proc'ds	(15) Complaints Proc'ds	(16) CharterMark 1994	(17) CharterMark 1995	(18) CharterMark 1996	(19) Inv. in People 1994	(20) Inv. in People 1995	(21) Inv. in People 1996	(22) Quality Circles 1994	(23) Quality Circles 1995	(24) Quality Circles 1996	Cum. Score 1994	Cum. Score 1995	Cum. Score 1996	Change (1995 - 1994)	Change (1996 - 1995)	Change (1996 - 1994)	
148	Epping Forest	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	1	5	6	12	1	6	7	
149	Epsom & Ewell	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	10	11	10	1	-1	0	
150	Erewash	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	3	5	7	2	2	4	
151	Fareham	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	5	5	0	0	2	
152	Fenland	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	2	
153	Forest Heath	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	6	8	8	2	0	2	
154	Forest of Dean	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	6	4	2	-2	0	
155	Gedling	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	5	4	4	-1	0	-1	
156	Gillingham	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	2	0	0	0	
157	Glanford#	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	7	7	8	0	1	1	
158	Gloucester	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	7	9	9	1	0	1	
159	Gosport	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	8	9	9	0	0	0	
160	Gravesham	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6	1	2	0	0	0	
161	Great Grimsby#	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	5	-5	0	0	
162	Great Yarmouth	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	5	0	1	1	
163	Guildford	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	1	6	6	7	0	1	1	
164	Halton	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	
165	Hambleton	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	
166	Harborough	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	
167	Harlow	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	8	8	8	0	0	0	
168	Harrogate	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	8	8	8	0	0	0	
169	Hart	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	8	8	8	0	0	0	
170	Hartlepool#	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	5	10	2	0	0	
171	Hastings	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	12	13	13	1	0	1	
172	Havant	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	6	6	2	2	0	
173	Hereford	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	7	9	9	2	0	2	
174	Hertsmere	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	6	6	7	0	1	1	
175	High Peak	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	6	6	7	0	1	1	
176	Holderness#	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	0	
177	Horsham	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	6	5	2	-1	1	
178	Hove	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	3	4	-1	1	0	
179	Hyndburn	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	11	11	11	0	0	0	
180	Ipswich	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	9	9	1	0	1	
181	Islwyn#	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	
182	Islwyn#	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	0	0	0	
183	Kennet	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	6	5	4	-1	3	0
184	Kerrier	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	9	0	4	4
185	Kettering	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	5	5	9	0	4	4	
186	Kings Lynn & W Norfolk	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	13	13	1				

Appendices

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Appendices

		Change (1996 - 1994)		Change (1996 - 1995)		Change (1995 - 1994)		Cum. Score 1996		Cum. Score 1995		Cum. Score 1994		(24) Quality Circles 1996		(23) Quality Circles 1995		(22) Quality Circles 1994		(21) Inv. in People 1996		(20) Inv. in People 1995		(19) Inv. in People 1994		(18) CharterMark 1996		(17) CharterMark 1995		(16) CharterMark 1994		(15) Complaints Proc'ds		(14) Complaints Proc'ds		(13) Complaints Proc'ds		(12) Customer Inv'tment		(11) Customer Inv'tment		(10) Customer Inv'tment		(9) Service Charter 1996		(8) Service Charter 1995		(7) Service Charter 1994		(6) ISO 9000 1996		(5) ISO 9000 1995		(4) ISO 9000 1994		(3) TQM 1996		(2) TQM 1995		(1) TQM 1994		Type		Authority
431	Newham	-3		-3		0	9	12		12		12		1		1		1		0		0		2		0		1		1		1		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		1		1		1		1		4		Newham				
432	Redbridge	1		1		0	10	9		9		9		2		2		2		0		0		0		0		1		1		1		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		4		Redbridge				
433	Richmond-u-Thames	4		4		2	12	10		10		8		2		1		1		2		2		2		1		2		2		0		0		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		4		Richmond-u-Thames				
434	Southwark			1		1	3	2		2		2		0		0		0		1		1		2		2		2		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		4		Southwark				
435	Sutton	2		-1		-1	8	8		9		6		2		2		1		3		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		4		Sutton				
436	Tower Hamlets	0		0		1	8	7		7		8		1		1		1		-1		0		0		0		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		1		4		Tower Hamlets				
437	Waltham Forest	-1		-1		0	8	13		14		14		2		2		2		2		2		1		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		4		Waltham Forest				
438	Wandsworth	-1		-1		0	15	15		11		12		2		2		2		-1		2		0		0		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		4		Wandsworth				
439	Westminster	3		4		-1	15	15		11		12		2		2		2		2		2		0		0		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		2		4		Westminster				

APPENDIX ix

SURVEY RECODES

Code box ref 3 & 4 ('Department/Service')

Code	Response	Recode
1	Planning/Corp Services	(3) Admin/Support
2	Housing	(2) Social/Welfare
3	Leisure	(4) Customer Service
4	Welfare	(2) Social/Welfare
5	Finance/Tax	(3) Admin/Support
6	Building Regs	(1) Regulatory
7	Highways	(1) Regulatory
8	Environmental Services/Environmental Health	(1) Regulatory
9	Community Development	(2) Social/Welfare
10	Env, Tourism & Leisure	(4) Customer Service
11	Education	(2) Social/Welfare
12	Social Services	(2) Social/Welfare
13	Corporate	(3) Admin/Support
14	Legal	(1) Regulatory
15	Regeneration	(1) Regulatory
16	Trading Standards	(1) Regulatory
17	Housing Maintenance	(3) Admin/Support
18	Art/Culture/Museums	(4) Customer Service
19	Libraries	(4) Customer Service
20	Misc. Manual/Office (support functions etc)	(3) Admin/Support
21	One Stop Shop/Customer Services	(4) Customer Service
22	Children & YP	(2) Social/Welfare
23	Outdoor	(2) Social/Welfare
24	Staff Development	(3) Admin/Support
25	Print/Reprographics	(3) Admin/Support
26	IT/Tech. Support	(3) Admin/Support
27	Tourism	(4) Customer Service
28	Benefits	(2) Social/Welfare
29	Payroll	(3) Admin/Support
30	Engineering	(3) Admin/Support

Appendices

Code box ref 21 ('...other changes to employment thro' QM')

Code	Response
1	Skill/competence assesment
2	Increased paperwork
3	Introduced fixed-term contracts
4	CCT related changes
5	More empowerment
6	Introduced group bonus scheme
7	Reduced flexi-time
8	Made staff more customer aware
9	Private sector approach
10	Changed work objectives
11	Increased work loads/time
12	Performance management
13	More training
14	More casual labour
15	More competitive between staff
16	Reduced Staff
17	Improved communications

Code box ref 30 & 33 ('please state what type of work has been affected...')

Code	Response
1	Project work/corporate work
2	Front-line services
3	Middle managers/supervisor
4	Professional work (e.g. specific to work)
5	Delegated work (from managers)
6	(Less time for) own work
7	(Increased) paperwork
8	Admin. work
9	Customer response work
10	More data collecting
11	More telephone work
12	Compensate for other team members
13	Increased workload
14	Personal care affected
15	More efficiency
16	More performance targets
17	Monitoring work by managers
18	Less time
19	Those involved with ISO 9002
20	Created new quality function
21	Less meritocratic
22	More meetings
23	More planning
24	Lower level staff more accountable
25	Outside working hours
26	Problem solving
27	Fairer redistribution of work
28	Misc. job related

Appendices

Code box ref 36 ('please state what way (union role) has changed')

Code	Response
1	More work; less staff/less time
2	Stricter job description
3	Union disputing definition of QM
4	Union is weaker
5	Customers too powerfull
6	No consultation about work increases
7	Union should support QM more
8	Management more authoritarian
9	More bullying by managers
10	More redundancies
11	Union is too negative
12	Unclear of what Union's position is on QM
13	Union hasn't adapted to management changes of style
14	Union cannot assess unfair working practices
15	Union should do more for workers
16	More work for no increase in pay
17	Increased union/management dialogue
18	QM undermining union/collective bargaining
19	Union not consulted over changes
20	QM more effective than union
21	Union not responsive enough
22	Union been ineffectual
23	Different workplace, different ruelles
24	Union providing good advice
25	Need more QM
26	Union more distant

Code box ref 44 (Unions involvement in Q')

Code	Response
1	Changing request into order
2	PRP dispute
3	Disciplinary dispute