UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

MANAGING CONTEXT AND THE CONTEXT OF MANAGEMENT:

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE NATURE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERIAL WORK IN SCOTLAND

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

To date, no single, large scale empirical study has been undertaken on the nature of the public sector management job in Scotland. Instead, accounts of public sector managerial work amount to no more than a personal epitome of skills managers need and roles that they assume, anecdotes preferred to empirical evidence. Where empirical research has been undertaken on managerial work, this is based almost entirely upon senior managers in business and industry, public managers ultimately featuring in studies as 'token gestures'. Consequently, generalisations and typologies emerge about a 'typical' managerial working day from the study of a selective group of predominantly business managers.

Furthermore, the 'New Public Management' (NPM) would appear to be the product of implicit and explicit assumptions about public management rather than the outcome of research. Academics provide an account of the reforms facing public managers based on opinions and conceptions, not on empirical evidence. Moreover, these academics pull together different managerial practices and contexts and lump them under the umbrella term 'NPM'. Given that public managers have been exposed to reform in different ways, a break must surely be made from treating public management and managers as homogenous.

By using a combination of observation and questionnaire research, this Thesis will attempt to redress the main deficit currently inherent in both the managerial work and NPM literatures, namely a complete disregard of the context in which individual managers work. Whilst observation will allow an in-depth examination of the impact of context on the management job, the questionnaires will provide an insight into managers' perceptions of the context in which they work and the values which they draw upon. Only by communicating with the very people who run public sector organisations can a full understanding be grasped of the nature of public sector managerial work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Why examine Managerial Work in the Public Sector?

"The job of a researcher is often that of an observer and each observation is prone to error: therefore, we go out and research to find a better truth" (Ghauri et al, 1995: 6).

1.1 WHY LOOK AT THE NATURE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERIAL WORK ? AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEMATICS UNDERLYING THIS THESIS

1.1.1 The Managerial Work Literature: Generalisations and Typologies

"No one model of management is......readily identifiable within the private sector. Some management writers stress the fragmented, negotiative and intuitive aspects of much managerial activity there. An important corollary is that patterns of work and key managerial skills may indeed significantly depend on organisational context even within the private sector. Thus......the construction of a general management science is as far away as ever" (Ferlie et al, 1997:21).

Given that the public sector plays a large part in most peoples' lives at some stage or another, it is perhaps surprising that existing managerial work research is based almost entirely upon senior managers in business and industry (Stewart, 1967; 1976; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982). Where public managers have featured in managerial work studies, it is ultimately as token gestures, little attention paid to the differing environments public and private sector managers work in. Consequently, generalisations and typologies emerge about a 'typical' managerial working day from the study of a selective group of business managers. Indeed, Mintzberg's(1973) account of managerial work would appear to be no more than a timeless generalisation of the nature of managerial work, no attention paid to cultural, societal, organisational and sectoral differences between individual managers.

Where research has been conducted on public sector managerial work, it has generally been American and focuses on the work of specific types of managers, for example, naval executives (Lau et al, 1980) and education managers (Martinko and Gardner, 1984), hardly conducive to generalising about public sector managerial work as a whole. British accounts of public sector managerial work tend to amount to no more than a personal account of the skills managers need and the roles they assume, anecdotes preferred to empirical evidence.

Finally, a common criticism of all managerial work research, whether conducted in the public or private sector, is the failure to provide an insight into the content of managerial work. Mystery surrounds just what it is managers do between entering and leaving their office.

Concluding, it would seem that there is an empirical gap in the managerial work literature, relatively little known about the actual work undertaken by public managers. The implication of this at a practical level is that typologies based on private sector managerial work are used in the context of training public managers. Only by developing an understanding of public sector managerial work can training programmes be devised which are relevant to the specific context in which public managers work.

> *"Direct studies of the on-line behaviour of managers represent a minuscule proportion of research in leadership and management. Given their small number, the implications are surprisingly broad. Still, the results are more tantalising than complete, more suggestive than prescriptive. Clearly, many important questions remain unanswered"* (McCall et al, 1978:44).

1.1.2 The New Public Management: An Assessment

> *"The management ethos must run through our national life - public and private companies, local government, the health service. By management ethos I mean the process of examining what we are doing, setting realistic budgets, fitting them to the resources available and monitoring performance"* (Heseltine, 1980).

The New Public Management (NPM) is an international movement whose policies have been endorsed as far away as New Zealand and Australia(Hood, 1991). It is used as a shorthand to describe a way of *"reorganising public sector bodies to bring their management, reporting and accounting approaches closer to (a particular perception of) business methods"* (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994:9).

During the 1980s, a vast literature emerged on NPM (Farnham and Horton, 1993; Flynn, 1997; Hood, 1991, 1995; Isaac Henry et al, 1993; Taylor-Gooby and Lawson, 1993), which examined the key changes affecting the public sector : an increase in hands-on professional management; the delegation of management and budgetary responsibilities; an injection of competition into public services via internal markets, Compulsory Competitive Tendering and Market Testing; the introduction of a focus on value-for-money; the emergence of performance measures and indicators; an increasing adoption of private sector management styles.

> *"Sometimes the new public management seems like an empty canvass : you can paint on it whatever you like. There is no clear or agreed definition of what the new public management actually is and not only is there controversy about what is, or what is in the process of becoming, but also what ought to be"* (Ferlie et al, 1997 : 10).

The NPM literature, however, is the product of implicit and explicit assumptions about public management rather than the outcome of research into the nature and pattern of managerial work in the public sector. In other words, the NPM provide no concrete evidence throughout their work to demonstrate what public managers actually do, relying instead on vague and unsubstantiated assertions. It is academics who provide an account of the changes facing public managers, based on opinions and conceptions, rather than managers themselves.

Consequently, the possibility exists that the NPM is merely the product of *"strong fads and fashions in management thought, fanned by fashion-setters, such as professional associations, the specialised media or management consultants"* (ibid: 9). Perhaps public administration academics are to blame for the hysteria and publicity surrounding public sector reforms, those academics keen to examine recent trends in public management to safeguard their livelihood, the term management replacing the out-dated concept of administration.

Thus, only by examining the work actually undertaken by public managers can an insight be gained into whether public sector change has occurred at a fundamental level or whether it is merely rhetorical.

1.1.3 The Effect of the Environment on Managerial Work

> *"Difference had best be assumed until similarity is proven, as opposed to the more traditional approach of assuming similarity until difference is proven"* (Adler, 1984:39).

One of the fundamental weaknesses of existing managerial work research is that environmental influences are generally mentioned in passing rather than being included as part of the research agenda. Instead, researchers have devised typologies of managerial work from a small sample of business managers, assuming these typologies characterise the work of all managers, regardless of the country, sector, organisation and level in which they work. By contending that *"the basic characteristics of managerial work know no national boundaries"* (Mintzberg, 1973:104), existing research ignores the very real possibility that managerial jobs differ according to the context in which individual managers work and the circumstances which pervade them.

Unlike the managerial work literature, however, the NPM is obsessed with the context in which public managers work, outlining key elements of reform which have affected managers, for example, value-for-money initiatives and internal markets. Nevertheless, the NPM fails to show how this context maps onto the actual work undertaken by public managers. Furthermore, it fails to look at the environments in which individual public managers work, assuming all public managers are equally affected by the reforms. Thus, the NPM arguably reproduces

the genericism of private sector studies, neglecting the important point that public management jobs differ. Consequently,

> *"the nature of the organisation may significantly affect the nature of managerial work within the organisation; organisational variables should be considered as research questions and investigated systematically"* (McCall et al, 1978:24).

Rather than give a comprehensive account of the different ways disparate public managers have been exposed to public sector reform, the NPM merely implies that different types of public managerial jobs have been affected by reform to differing degrees. For example, Compulsory Competitive Tendering separates the roles of client and contractor, the NPM assuming that the latter have been forced to adopt business skills to win contracts. Likewise, managers working in quasi-autonomous organisations are deemed to be significantly more likely to network than colleagues managing traditional public organisations. Equally, it can be inferred from the most recent public management literature that the work of central and local government civil servants differs.

Explicit recognition should, however, be given to internal variations within the public sector. Given that public managers have been exposed to reform in different ways, a break must be made from treating public management and public managers as homogenous.

1.1.4 Aim of Research

The aim of this research is, therefore, to redress the deficits currently inherent in both the managerial work and NPM literatures:

1. By replicating existing studies on managerial work, an understanding can begin to be gained of the pattern, characteristics and content of work undertaken by public sector managers;

2. This research will also be used to explore the implications of Conservative government reform on the public sector managerial job, an attempt made to assess whether management is becoming increasingly generic because public and business managers are facing similar problems, constraints and pressures;

3. The NPM makes sweeping statements about public management, overlooking the important point that public management jobs differ. Likewise, managerial work studies generally treat management as a generic whole, disregarding the diverse environments in which managers work. Consequently, the emergent typologies of managerial work are borne out of the work of private sector managers, yet are deemed to apply to all managers, irrespective of sector. Hence this researcher's decision to include the effects of environmental influences on managerial work as an explicit part of the research agenda.

1.2 HOW WILL THE RESEARCH PROGRESS?

> *"The most fruitful path to public management theory is to observe practice closely"* (Altshuler, 1992: xi).

Studies of private sector managers have not only dominated the literature on the nature of managerial work but also largely dictated the research methods to be employed. Given that one of the objectives of this research study is to compare public sector work with existing managerial work studies, it follows that comparable research methods should be adopted.

> *"Qualitative research is an empirical, socially located phenomenon, defined by its own history, not simply a residual grab-bag comprising all things that are 'not quantitative'"* (Kirk and Miller, 1986:10).

In order to gain a realistic insight into the nature of public sector managerial work, seven senior public managers, at director level or above, were observed in their workplace for a period of one week, the researcher learning *"firsthand about a people and a culture"* (Burgess, 1980:23-24). Unlike diary and questionnaire research, observation does not rely on the manager to give an account of their work, thereby eliminating constrained recall and restricted reporting.

However, numerous weaknesses question the suitability of observation as a research method. From the outset, observation inevitably results in a small sample size. Furthermore, the mere presence of an observer may influence the nature and pattern

of managerial work. Finally, difficulties emerge when defining a period for observation which reflects the manager's work as a whole.

Thus, whilst observation would provide a realistic account of the pattern and nature of public sector managerial work, the small sample size would render it near impossible to capture the variety and diversity of the public sector.

Recognising the weaknesses inherent with observation, a relatively lengthy questionnaire was issued to three hundred and forty-seven directors, chief executives and their equivalent working in Scottish local authorities, hospital trusts, the Scottish Office, the water boards, the police and the fire service. Only by issuing questionnaires could a large number of senior public managers working in diverse public organisations be reached.

However, one of the main difficulties with questionnaire research is that a rationalised version of reality will be attained. Respondents may attempt to either guess what the researcher wants to hear or give the researcher a polished version of reality which places them in a favourable light.

Although this researcher attempted to triangulate by combining observation and questionnaire research, ulterior motives also existed for using both methods. Firstly, observation and questionnaires were combined in the one research study because

different types of information were sought. Whilst observation would provide a relatively objective picture of managerial work from the eyes of the observer, questionnaires would provide an insight into managers' perceptions of their jobs.

Secondly, the underlying intention of this research was to provide an understanding of the extent to which public sector managers were increasingly adopting similar working methods to private sector colleagues. Observation would provide detailed factual information about public sector managerial work patterns, enabling comparisons to be drawn with the existing literature on private sector managerial work patterns. Furthermore, the questionnaires could begin to test the NPM's claim that public and private sector managerial work are converging, providing an otherwise neglected insight into managers' opinions about the changing context of public management.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

With the combined aim of firstly, shedding light on the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work and secondly, examining NPM claims that the work of public sector managers has become increasingly like that of private sector colleagues, the following structure was adopted.

With the objective of demonstrating the lack of research undertaken on public sector managerial work, **chapter two** reviews the existing literature on managerial work,

the intention being to demonstrate that relatively little was known about managerial work until the emergence of observation studies. Equally as important, this chapter will argue that one of the main shortfalls of existing managerial work studies is their scant recognition that managerial jobs differ, depending on the particular context in which individual managers work. Consequently, this research will challenge claims that managers' jobs are remarkably alike (Mintzberg, 1973).

Thereafter, the focus turns to studies of public sector managerial work which are noticeable by their absence. Any research that has been undertaken has generally been American and focuses on a specialised group of public managers. In comparison, British research tends to be anecdotal and predominantly local authority based.

This chapter concludes by arguing that there is both empirical and theoretical space in the managerial work literature that warrants research to be conducted into the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work.

The underlying intention behind **chapter three** is to show that the NPM make widespread claims and generalisations about public sector managerial work, yet fail to provide any systematic evidence in support of their theory. This chapter begins by examining the theoretical and ideological background to NPM, encompassing a critique of New Right theory and an examination of international developments in

public management. Thereafter, public management reform is looked at, attention focused on value-for-money, devolved management, business management and practices, markets and networks. Finally, claims are examined that the public sector has a distinct ethos.

Chapter four provides a critique of the direct and indirect research methods most commonly used when studying managerial work. Thus, attention is focused on observation, diary studies, random/activity sampling, protocol analysis and stimulated recall, interviews and questionnaire research. Furthermore, an account is given of the research methods utilised in this study, encompassing an examination of any difficulties encompassed and an assessment of the ways in which these were overcome. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of triangulation are explored, an attempt made to show how triangulation was pursued within this research study.

In an attempt to shed light on the previously neglected area of public sector managerial work, **chapter five** highlights the main findings emerging from the observation of seven senior public managers at work. The initial focus is on the patterns and characteristics of managerial work, followed by an examination of the underlying purposes behind the observed managers' contacts. Thereafter, the main public sector reforms identified by the NPM will be examined in relation to the actual work undertaken by the observed public managers.

Following on from an account of the observation research will be a critique of the research findings. Initially, an attempt will be made to assess the reliability of existing generalisations by comparing and contrasting the work characteristics of these public managers with those of managers already studied. Thereafter, this researcher intends to shed some light on whether management reforms implemented by the Conservative governments have affected managers fundamentally or rhetorically.

Endeavouring to build on the weaknesses of existing managerial research, the observed managers' work will be examined in relation to their own individual contexts, the line of reasoning adopted being that each manager has specialised work patterns tailored to the needs of their organisation, its surrounding environment and the particular circumstances in which they find themselves working during the observational week. This will include a focus on the previously neglected area of periodic work cycles and the impact they have on public sector managerial work.

Finally, this research will identify the main tasks undertaken by the seven public managers, a noticeable attempt made to move away from typifying managerial work.

Whilst chapter five paints a picture of managerial work from the eyes of the observer, **chapter six** examines managers' perceptions of their work by examining the responses given to the questionnaires. Initially, an insight is provided into

managers' perceptions of their work patterns and characteristics. Following on, the work characteristics of the questionnaire managers will be compared with those of managers featuring in earlier research studies. Thereafter, managers' perceptions of their work will be compared and contrasted with what was observed. Like the observation findings, an attempt will also be made to examine the effects of wider environmental influences and periodic work cycles on the questionnaire managers' work.

The final objective of this chapter is to outline the questionnaire managers' opinions on public sector change since 1979, assessing whether public and private sector managerial work are increasingly converging. Only by comparing managers' perceptions of public sector reform with the observation findings, can an insight be gained into whether fundamental management changes have occurred or whether public managers have merely adopted the language of business at a superficial level.

Finally, **chapter seven** attempts to pinpoint the most significant findings emerging from this research into public sector managerial work. Areas are also highlighted where scope exists for further research to be undertaken.

CHAPTER 2

THE MANAGERIAL WORK LITERATURE

A Critique

2.1 INTRODUCTION

> *"If you ask a manager what he does, he will most likely tell you that he plans, organizes, coordinates and controls. Then watch what he does. Don't be surprised if you can't relate what you see to these four words"* (Mintzberg, 1975 : 49).

Planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and commanding first emerged as management functions over eighty years ago, the product of Fayol(1916), otherwise known as the founding father of the classical school of management. Fayol's(1916) theory generated widespread interest in managerial work, to an extent that he could surely not have envisaged.

Diary studies were the first to emerge in the 1950s and early 1960s (Carlson, 1951; Burns, 1954, 1957; Copeman, 1963; Dubin and Spray, 1964; Horne and Lupton, 1965), concerned with examining the characteristics of managerial work. The late 1960s witnessed a movement away from focusing solely on the characteristics of management jobs to a search for similarities and differences in managerial jobs (Stewart, 1967; 1976). By the early 1970s, a distinct change in direction became apparent, researchers ultimately concerned with the processes of managerial work. In order to achieve their objectives, the diary method of research was replaced by direct observation (Mintzberg, 1973).

> *"There has, therefore, been a movement away from a static analytic approach, the results of which were, essentially, snapshots of the managerial job towards a more synthetic approach providing a moving picture of the fluidities of managerial work in its different guises"* (Hales, 1986:93).

The underlying purpose of this chapter is to give a chronological account of managerial work, from the early days of classical theory to the observation research undertaken by Mintzberg(1973), Stewart(1976) and Kotter(1982). By providing an historical account of managerial work research, this chapter intends to highlight the inadequacies of classical theory and diary studies, little known about the nature of managerial work until the emergence of observation as a research method. Thereafter, attention will be focused on managerial research in the public sector, distinctions being made between American and British research.

2.2 THE CLASSICAL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Classical management theorists categorized managerial work as a *"set of composite functions"* (Mintzberg, 1973:9). Based on thirty years experience as Managing Director of a French coal and steel company, Fayol(1916) identified five functions underpinning management (planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, controlling), all of which emphasized the formal aspects of the job.

Building on the work of Fayol(1916), Gulick and Urwick identified seven key management functions in an attempt to answer the question, *"what is the work of the chief executive? What does he do?"* (1937 : 13). Like Fayol's earlier classification, Gulick and Urwick recognized the importance of **planning, organizing** and **coordinating. Staffing** was also identified as a management function, encompassing

the recruitment and training of staff and the provision of favourable employment conditions. Furthermore, managers, as leaders, were responsible for **directing** their organisations, duty-bound to make decisions and oversee their execution. In addition, **reporting** was highlighted, chief executives relaying recent developments to all those within their realm of responsibility. Finally, management had a **budgeting** role to fulfil, incorporating financial planning, accounting and control (ibid).

These seven management functions, otherwise known by the acronym POSDCORB, formed the basis of management research (Cole Blease and Hays, 1986; Miner, 1973; Mintzberg, 1973). Throughout the 1960s, writers such as Massie(1964), Greenwood (1965), Koontz and O'Donnell(1968) and Dale(1969) devised lists of management functions which, when combined, consisted of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, innovation, representation, decision making and communicating.

Although planning, organizing, controlling and directing attained widespread approval as management functions(Miner, 1973), contemporary writers differed from traditional classical theorists by excluding coordination. Massie(1964) highlighted the limited value of coordination, the consequence of imprecise and vague elucidation.

However, surely definitions of coordination are no more uncertain than those given for planning and organizing. *"Terms , or functions, have not been defined with a sufficient degree of precision.....There is a certain ambiguity, a lack of clearly defined and mutually exclusive concepts, in the functional approach as it has developed"*(Miner, 1973: 50). Thus, there is a real likelihood that theorists will interpret and view the same activity differently.

In addition, contemporary theorists underestimated the importance of coordination as a management function, networks rapidly becoming the management 'buzzword' of the nineties (Gunn, 1995; Moss Kanter, 1989; Thompson et al, 1991).

At the core of criticisms of the classical management school is the assertion that *"functional theory represents a prime example of poorly constructed, ambiguous conceptualization, unsupported by systematic research"* (Miner, 1973: 50). The classical approach *"tends to attribute or ascribe functions to managers on the basis of personal experience....or casual observation or, at worst, mere armchair philosophizing"* (Gunn, 1975 :10).

Indeed, management research challenges Fayol's(1916) portrayal of a manager as someone who plans and controls. *"The pattern of the day (i.e. switching attention) is one reason for doubting the realism of the concept of managerial work provided by Fayol and his followers"* (Stewart, 1984:326). Thus, *"executive work does not*

seem to be of a type readily treated in a scientific manner. It is far too fractured, unpredictable and private" (Fores and Glover, 1976: 105).

Furthermore, classical theorists *"assume that management is the same activity at all times and in all settings"* (Gunn, 1975:10), resulting in overgeneralizations being made (Carlson, 1951; Stewart, 1976). In reality, management functions will dominate certain jobs to differing degrees.

In addition, classical studies are more concerned with what managers ought to do rather than with what they actually do. *"If we want hard information about what managers actually do we cannot rely upon the assumptive and prescriptive methods of the classical approach"* (Gunn, 1975:10). Thus, the acronym POSDCORB reveals *"some vague objectives managers have when they work"* (Mintzberg, 1975:49), failing to give a concise account of what managers actually do. However, *"claims by researchers to have refuted Fayol by finding little or no evidence of his categories in studies of managerial work are wide of the mark since Fayol was concerned not to list observable features of managers' behaviour, but to set out the management functions required by an undertaking"* (Hales, 1993:3).

Although classical management has encountered considerable criticism from contemporary management researchers (Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1988), *"POSDCORB has embedded itself in the minds of managers, teachers and students*

of management" (Mintzberg, 1973: 10), albeit some functions have undergone a change in wording. For example, commanding has become motivating(HMSO, 1975; Stewart, 1976).

It would also appear that employers still give precedence to classical management functions when devising recruitment practices. For example, many graduate management application forms require candidates to provide examples of situations where their planning contributed to the successful completion of a task, or where they led a group, directed its efforts and gained commitment to achieve results.

Perhaps this acceptance of classical management functions is attributable to the relatively simplistic, although highly generalized, description of management tasks given by classical theorists(Carlson, 1951). Furthermore, the fact that planning and directing are frequently mentioned in job application forms implies that classical management functions are perhaps an ideal which employers seek.

> *"The principles are undoubtedly useful.....when they are utilised (as Fayol said his principles should be) as general guides and not as immutable principles"* (Dale, 1988:138).

In spite of its drawbacks, classical theory generated widespread interest in the nature of managerial work, opening the door for further research and debate. Nevertheless, recent management researchers (Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1976; Kotter, 1982)

appear to agree that *"the classical school has for too long served to block our search for a deeper understanding of the work of the manager"* (Mintzberg, 1973 :11).

> *"By and large the criticisms of the new generation have been well founded. In many ways the classical theory was crude, presumptuous, incomplete - wrong in some of its conclusions, naive in its scientific methodology, parochial in its outlook"* (Waldo, 1961 :220).

Hence, the next step in the management chronology was the use of diary studies.

2.3 DIARY STUDIES

> *"If we want hard information about what managers actually do we cannot rely upon the assumptive and prescriptive methods of the classical approach"* (Gunn, 1975:10).

In order to test the validity of claims made by classical theorists, researchers(Carlson, 1951; Burns, 1954, 1957; Copeman, 1963; Dubin and Spray, 1964; Horne and Lupton, 1965; Stewart, 1967) issued diary recording forms to senior managers, in which they entered information about their daily activities under pre-coded categories. Generally speaking, this information included: details of the place of work; the duration of activities; the persons contacted; the initiation of the contact; the method of communication; the division of time between defined activities(Burns, 1954, 1957; Stewart, 1967); the nature of the question handled and the action taken(Carlson, 1951); the content of the activity(Dubin and Spray, 1967); the purpose of the activity and the functional areas with which the activity was associated(Horne and Lupton, 1965).

Carlson's study is undoubtedly the most well known because it was *"the original managerial behaviour study in that it was the first to ask how managers actually (spent) their time"* (Forsblad, 1984 :200). Although Carlson's work has been criticized for being *"more concerned with general speculations regarding the functions of the executives than with the actual description of their work"* (Mintzberg, 1973:23), he was one of the few researchers to recognize the influence of the external environment on the managerial role (Phillips, 1993). Knowledge of the *"local and social environment in which the chief executives worked"* (Carlson, 1951:77) was a prerequisite for understanding the managing director's job.

Burns' (1954:73) study was the first British diary study to be undertaken, the intention being *"to test the use of a standardized schedule, along the lines suggested by Carlson"*. A further time study was undertaken in 1957 and *"two of Burns' main findings were to be verified in virtually all of the subsequent studies - a high proportion of time spent in conversation and much horizontal and lateral communication"* (Mintzberg, 1973:204).

Many of Burns'(1954) findings were confirmed in Dubin and Spray's(1964) study, this latter study recognizing that managerial work was largely determined by the nature of the industry in which the manager was employed, functional differences influencing patterns of interaction(Dubin and Spray, 1964:106).

One of the most significant findings of Copeman's(1963) research was that *"not only were no two executive patterns alike, but there was not any characteristic behaviour for an industry"* (Copeman et al, 1963:101). Thus, *"it cannot be assumed that there is a standardized management job, as the classical school of management proclaimed, since differences do exist with certain managers spending more time on some activities than others"* (ibid: 107). Nevertheless, Copeman's results do lend some support to classical theorists' identification of planning as a management function, his managing directors and departmental heads spending approximately one-quarter of their time planning(ibid).

Based on the work of classical theorists, Horne and Lupton(1965:21-22) contended that each managerial activity could be recorded by referring to FOUR elements: **Formulating,** incorporating the allocation of resources necessary for the attainment of the organisation's objectives; **Organizing,** involving the implementation of plans and policies by creating and maintaining the necessary environment; **Unifying,** managers responsible for coordinating the work in order to facilitate harmonious working relationships; **Regulating,** the means by which managers controlled the use of resources.

Horne and Lupton's managers spent approximately one-quarter of their working time formulating, the remaining three-quarters spent organizing, controlling and regulating. Organisational size, technology in use and the nature of the manager's

job, rather than the manager's ranking, affected the proportion of time spent formulating (ibid: 31-32).

Stewart(1967) set out to *"discover some of the similarities and differences in the ways in which managers spend their time.......to discover differences between jobs rather than between individuals"* (Stewart, 1988:7), identifying the existence of five managerial job types(ibid: 77). **Emissaries** covered managers who were *"in close touch with the world outside"* (ibid: 79), spending the majority of their time externally and conversing with others. **Writers** devoted more time to working alone, spending considerably less time with other people. **Discussers** spent the most time conversing with one other person and with their boss. **Trouble Shooters** had to cope with crises more than other managers, resulting in a more fragmented work pattern. Finally, **Committee Men** had the most comprehensive range of internal contacts, spending the least time with people external to their organisation.

Stewart(1967:98) concluded that *"a manager's job is a varied one......in the place of work, in the contacts, in its activities and in its content".* Considerable differences emerged in the way managers spent their time, the main differences stemming from the type of job the manager had and the functions they undertook. *"These variations were so great that it is misleading to talk about THE MANAGERIAL job or about how the AVERAGE manager spends his time"* (ibid: 107).

Although the significance of Stewart's work lies in its attempt to break away from past thinking by changing the focus of attention from similarities in managerial work to variations, *"the main thrust of Stewart's study is simply to note, document would be a better word, the extent and dimension of variation"* (Elliot and Lawrence, 1985:43).

Furthermore, as Stewart herself noted in the 1988 edition of 'Managers and their Jobs', *"not enough importance was attached to the influence of individual variations as an explanation of differences in the way that the sample managers spent their time"* (Stewart, 1988: xi). Instead, managers' different work characteristics were attributed to differences in organisations or in individual jobs.

Although the managerial work characteristics emerging from the preceding diary studies display innumerable commonalties, two implications must be borne in mind:

1. It must be remembered that management jobs differ from one another, even within the same organisation and with comparable jobs in other organisations. The organisation and it's wider environment affect how the manager approaches their job, as does the personality of the manager themselves. Thus, *"asking two people in similar jobs to describe what they do is likely to produce at least somewhat different answers"* (Stewart, 1988:113);

2. The underlying reasons behind research and the diary recording forms themselves differ from study to study. *"Statistical comparisons...may present difficulties. The categories used by other researchers may not be the same"* (Stacey, 1969:139).

Nevertheless, sufficient similarities appear throughout the studies to suggest that management is characterized by certain features:

2.3.1 Workload

With the exception of Horne and Lupton(1965), the studies demonstrated that managers were overworked, the consequence of the considerable demands made on them. Carlson's(1951:75) managing directors worked between eight and one-half and eleven and one-half hours a day, excluding weekend work. Likewise, Copeman's(1963:6-7) managing directors averaged fifty-three hours per week, the corresponding figure for his departmental heads being forty-two and three-quarter hours per week, a similar picture emerging for Stewart's (1967) senior and middle managers. However, whilst Stewart's managers averaged a forty-two and one-half hour week, variations were prevalent, the consequence of *"differences in the type of job than.......differences between companies"* (Stewart, 1967:17).

Furthermore, managers were *"slaves to their appointment diaries"* (Carlson, 1951:71), their working day governed by the activities inserted into their diaries. In addition, managers performed a wide variety of tasks, the time devoted to these

tasks generally characterized by brevity and fragmentation. Carlson(1951:73), for example, found that his managing directors worked alone in their office for periods of at least twenty-three minutes only twelve times in thirty-five days. Consequently, managers invariably took work home with them, both in the evenings and at weekends, the average time spent working at home amounting to one and one-half hours per day (ibid: 74). Thus, Carlson's managing directors exercised relatively little control over the design of their working day, their day dictated by the needs of others.

Furthermore, Stewart(1988:56) found that managers averaged twelve fleeting contacts per day, that is, telephone or face-to-face conversations lasting less than five minutes. Moreover, her managers averaged only nine periods of thirty minutes or more without interruption(ibid: 54).

Nevertheless, whilst Copeman's(1963:11) departmental heads spent less than one hour without interruptions, his managing directors could spend over an hour on an activity without interruption. In contrast, however, the executives in Dubin and Spray's(1964) study claimed to have a steady workload.

2.3.2 Communication Patterns

Dubin and Spray(1964:103) contended that managers were either verbalists or loners. The former covered managers who spent between six and nine-tenths of total

working time in conversation or on the telephone, whilst loners were managers who favoured working alone or using written material to communicate. It soon became clear from the studies reviewed that the majority of managers were verbalists.

Carlson's(1951) managing directors spent only ten percent of their total working time alone, reading and writing, the corresponding figures for the managers in Horne and Lupton's(1965) and Burns'(1954) studies being fourteen and twenty percent respectively. The greatest amount of time spent alone was thirty-six percent (Stewart, 1988). More importantly, the amount of time spent on paperwork and inspections *"depended upon what else the manager had to do"* (ibid: 27), whilst variations in periods spent alone were attributable to *"the way in which the individual organised his work"* (ibid: 55). Furthermore, Dubin and Spray(1964:105) found that patterns of interaction were influenced by functional differences, accountants spending a greater proportion of time working alone.

"The picture of the chief executive as a man who is busy dictating and signing letters was not borne out by any of our studies" (Carlson, 1951: 83). Managing directors signed a maximum of two to three letters per day, some only signing one or two per week. Thus, *"the vast majority of written communications used by the chief executives were of the incoming kind"* (ibid: 89).

"Senior management encourage communicating by talk rather than by writing, and conversation, or informal meeting, is the regular manner of interaction" (Burns, 1954:84). Burns(1957) found that managers spent eighty percent of their time in conversation, significantly more than the managers in Copeman's(1963) and Stewart's(1967) studies, who spent one-quarter and one-half of their time respectively in discussion. Of greater interest is the finding that informal face-to-face discussion dominated(Dubin and Spray, 1964), consuming forty-three percent of total working time in Stewart's(1988:29) study and forty-four percent in Horne and Lupton's(1965:26) study.

Time spent communicating by telephone ranged from five percent of the manager's total working time(Copeman, 1963) to nine percent (Horne and Lupton, 1965).

Evidence from the studies overwhelmingly demonstrated that managers spent considerably more time with their subordinates than with peers and superiors. Stewart's(1967) managers spent twenty-six percent of their total working time with subordinates, the corresponding figures being thirty-three and one-third percent for the managing directors in Copeman's(1963) study and between one-third and two-thirds of the working time of the executives in Dubin and Spray's(1964) study. *"Immediate subordinates took up more than twice as much of the manager's time on average than any other type of contact"* (Stewart, 1988:39).

Carlson(1951:96) found that his managing directors spent approximately three and one-half hours per day with their subordinates, the time spent with subordinates depending on *"the chief executives' personal interests and preferences (which) may....influence the communication patterns, personal likes and dislikes etc. After all, chief executives are only human".*

It would appear that managers spent the least amount of time with superiors, the most likely explanation being that the managers have few people above them. For example, Copeman's(1963:10) department heads spent fourteen and one-half percent of their time with superiors, the comparative figure for managing directors being one and one-half percent.

However, Burns'(1954) and Dubin and Spray's(1964) results disagreed in respect of horizontal relationships. Contrary to the findings of the former, the latter failed to find an increasing tendency at higher levels to spend time in horizontal relationships, managers at all levels spending considerable time in these relationships(Dubin and Spray, 1964: 106). However, Dubin and Spray's findings were congruent with Burns' in respect of contact with peers. *"We now have substantial evidence.......that executives spend a great deal of time with their peers"* (ibid).

Finally, both Burns(1954) and Dubin and Spray(1964) contended that contacts were initiated more frequently than they were received, there being a higher probability that managers would initiate contacts with their subordinates than with superiors.

2.3.3 External Relationships

Generally speaking, the studies reveal that managers prefer working within their organisation than outside it. Whilst Stewart's(1967) managers spent seventy-five percent of total working time in their own establishment, the comparative figure for Carlson's(1951) managers was fifty-six percent. In addition, when managers did work within their organisation, they spent more than one-half of this time in their own office (Carlson, 1951; Horne and Lupton, 1965; Stewart, 1967). More importantly, and not surprisingly, the more senior managers spent a greater percentage of their time outside the organisation (Dubin and Spray, 1964; Horne and Lupton, 1965).

2.3.4 Managers are under illusions as to how they actually spend their time

Several of the studies demonstrated that managers misunderstood their work activities. For example, numerous managers in Carlson's(1951:70) study claimed to partake in a tour of the plant every two to three weeks, the reality of the situation being that these managers had not inspected their plants for several months.

The managers in Burns'(1954) and Horne and Lupton's(1965) studies were asked to estimate the proportion of time spent on certain activities, the estimates differing from what was recorded. Thus, *"managers own estimates cannot on the whole safely be used in place of direct observation or self recording"* (Horne and Lupton, 1965:31). Indeed, *"it is possible that their estimates related more to their expenditure of effort, deriving from demands made on their energy and capacity rather than on their time"* (Burns, 1954:82-83).

2.3.5 Work Content

Although diary studies provide details of the characteristics of the management job, they have been criticized for disregarding content(Mintzberg, 1973; Kurke and Aldrich, 1983). Carlson's(1951) study was *"more concerned with general speculations regarding the functions of the executives than with the actual description of their work"* (Mintzberg, 1973 : 23). Furthermore, each managing director had unique 'field of activity' headings, prohibiting a comprehensive comparison of the content of questions handled(ibid: 98).

Like Carlson's study, conclusions on work content remain unsubstantiated in Burns'(1954) study. Although Burns acknowledged that activities may be examined in respect of content, he admitted that *"here we are on less sure ground"* (1954:75). Finally, Stewart(1967) was criticized for her inability to detail the content of work performed by managers in her study(Kurke and Aldrich, 1983).

Summing up, *"what comes across very strongly"* (Stewart, 1988:113-114) from a review of diary studies, *"is how different....the reality of the working day (is) from that suggested by the traditional description of a manager as someone who plans, organises, coordinates, motivates and controls"* (ibid).

2.4 OBSERVATION

An historical account of classical management theory and diary research provides a limited insight into the daily work undertaken by managers. The former proved to be no more than a generalized description of the management functions of executives in the organisation, rather than a coherent account of the nature of the executive job.

> *"Classical management theory is characterized by a plethora of rules, principles, hints, hunches and tips. Some of the principles are descriptive and prescriptive while others are exhortative......Some of Fayol's writings contain recommendations for managerial behaviour based on his personal opinion, while others are too abstract for application to practical situations"* (Huczynski and Buchanan, 1991:435-436).

Likewise, although diary research studies describe the patterns and characteristics of managerial work, the later studies beginning to identify similarities and differences between management jobs, diary research as a whole fails to throw any light on the actual content of managerial work.

Observation therefore replaced the diary as the dominant method of management research in the early 1970s, the aim being to correct the two principal deficiencies of the diary approach:

1. Diaries neglect the content of the management job;
2. Reliance is placed on the manager to record their activities accurately.

2.4.1 Henry Mintzberg (1973)

> *"Managerial work is enormously complex, far more so than a reading of the traditional literature would suggest"* (Mintzberg, 1973 :5).

Dissatisfied with previous managerial work studies, which failed to give any insight into what managers actually did, Mintzberg undertook a study of five American chief executives, designed to focus *"on the job rather than the man, on basic similarities in managers' work rather than on differences and on the essential content of the work rather than its peripheral characteristics"* (ibid : 230).

Similarities were found to exist in the work of the five managers, enabling the identification of six common characteristics of managerial work. Firstly, **much of the manager's work proceeds at an unrelenting pace.** Mintzberg's chief executives averaged thirty-six pieces of mail, eight meetings and five telephone calls per day, the consequence of the infinite nature of their jobs(ibid: 30). The chief executive was a person with a *"perpetual preoccupation. He (could) never be free to*

forget his job, and he never (had) the pleasure of knowing......there (was) nothing else he (could) do" (ibid).

Secondly, **the manager's activity is characterized by brevity, variety and fragmentation.** The chief executives in Mintzberg's study averaged sixteen verbal and thirty-six written contacts per day, the majority of which addressed separate issues (ibid: 31). Furthermore, managers spent, on average, sixty-eight minutes in scheduled meetings, fifteen minutes on desk work, twelve minutes in unscheduled meetings, eleven minutes conducting tours and six minutes in telephone conversations(ibid: 33). Thus, *"half of the observed activities were completed in less than nine minutes, and only one-tenth took more than an hour"* (ibid). The important point to note is that *"there was evidence that (the managers) chose not to free themselves of interruption or to give themselves much free time. To a large extent, it was the chief executives themselves who determined the duration of their activities"* (ibid: 34).

Thirdly, **managers have a preference for live action,** that is, a preference for *"activities that are current, specific, and well-defined, and those that are non-routine"* (ibid). Thus, *"only one verbal contact in fourteen was held on a regular or 'clocked' basis, the other thirteen being ad hoc"* (ibid). Consequently, *"the classic view of the manager as a planner is not in accord with reality"* (ibid: 37).

Fourthly, **managers are attracted to the verbal media,** verbal action accounting for seventy-eight percent of the manager's total working time and sixty-seven percent of total activities performed. Mintzberg's managers used five basic media : mail, the telephone, the unscheduled meeting, the scheduled meeting and the tour(ibid: 38). *"Unlike other workers, the manager does not leave the telephone or the meeting to get back to work. Rather, these contacts are his work"* (ibid: 44). Together, telephone calls and unscheduled meetings accounted for two-thirds of the chief executives' verbal contacts(ibid: 41).

Fifthly, **managers maintain communication relationships with superiors, outsiders and subordinates and maintain a network of contacts with people outside their organisation.** Approximately forty-eight per cent of Mintzberg's chief executives' contact time was with subordinates, seven per cent with superiors and forty-four per cent with outsiders(ibid: 45). Consequently, the chief executive job can be described as the *"neck of an hourglass. Information and requests flow to him from a wide variety of outside contacts. He sits between this network of contacts and his organisation, sifting what is received from the outside and sending much of it into his organisation"* (ibid: 48).

Finally, **the manager's job reflects a blend of duties and rights.** Whilst it would seem that managers have little control over their working day, initiating only thirty-two percent of their activities (ibid: 49), the reality is that managers do have a

limited degree of control over their work. *"The manager is responsible for many initial commitments, which then lock him into a set of ongoing activities"* (ibid: 53).

After outlining the characteristics of managerial work, Mintzberg came to the essence of his study, *"the theory of what managers do"* (ibid: 54). This theory emerged as a statement of ten roles , common to the work of all managers. These roles are divided into interpersonal, informational and decisional roles which *"form a GESTALT - an integrated whole"* (ibid: 96).

1. Interpersonal Roles

The manager has a **figurehead** role to perform, providing formal representation of the organisation. Furthermore, the manager's status requires them to be available at all times to anyone wishing to contact them(ibid: 58-60). As **leader** of the organisation, the manager *"concentrates his efforts so as to bring subordinate and organisational needs into a common accord in order to promote efficient operations"* (ibid: 62). Finally, networking with people external to the organisation, the underlying intention being to gain information and favours, constitutes the **liaison** role. This role *"represents the beginning of a key part of the manager's job - the linking of the environment with his organisation"* (ibid: 64).

2. Informational Roles

The manager undertakes the role of **monitor,** searching for information which will allow them to *"detect changes, to identify problems and opportunities, to build up knowledge about his milieu, to be informed when information must be disseminated and decisions made"* (ibid: 67). The manager can also be described as a **disseminator** of information, the consequence of their access to both factual and value information. As well as communicating external information to their organisation, the manager can also transfer internal information between subordinates (ibid: 71). Finally, as **spokesman** of the organisation, the manager is *"required to act as expert in those activities in which his organisation engages"*(ibid: 76), diffusing information into the organisational environment.

3. Decisional Roles

Adopting the role of **entrepreneur,** the manager *"initiates and designs much of the controlled change in the organisation"* (ibid: 98). The role of **disturbance handler** requires managers to react to general disturbances and crises, ordinarily beyond their control(ibid: 82). These disturbances usually stem from conflicts between subordinates and between organisations and resource constraints (ibid: 98). The manager also performs the function of **resource allocator,** allotting organisational resources such as money, manpower, equipment and time(ibid: 85). Finally, as **negotiator,** the manager leads the organisation in important negotiations with both organisations and individuals (ibid: 90).

Thus,

> *"the ten roles suggest that managers, while generalists when viewed within their organisations, are in fact specialists required to perform a particular set of specialised roles"* (ibid: 99).

This examination of managerial roles was followed by a discussion of a contingency theory of managerial work, based on the *"enormous number of variables that can influence the work that managers do"* (ibid: 101). Mintzberg contended that *"the work of a particular manager at a particular point in time is determined by the influence that four 'nested' sets of variables have on the basic role requirements and work characteristics"* (ibid: 102). In other words, managerial work can be defined as a function of environmental, job, person and situational variables.

Environmental variables, including *"the culture of the milieu; the nature of the industry; various dynamic factors such as competition, rate of change, and type of technology; and the characteristics of the organisation itself, including its age and size"* (ibid: 103), influence managerial work. For example, Mintzberg(1973) recognized that the sector in which a manager worked may determine the tasks they perform. From his own research, Mintzberg claimed that public chief executives:

> *"spent more time in formal activity and more time meeting with outside groups, clients and directors. Decisions taken in public organisations are more sensitive politically......The liaison, spokesman and negotiator roles are presumably more important for the chief executives of public organisations"* (ibid: 108).

Given that the public and private sectors arguably have unique characteristics, these characteristics perhaps more evident when Mintzberg conducted his research, it would not have been unreasonable to have expected slightly more than one paragraph on the roles public sector chief executives adopted. Instead, Mintzberg merely *presumed* that public managers gave prominence to liaison, spokesman and negotiator roles, no concrete evidence being put forward to support his contentions.

Job variables also account for variations in managerial work, the job's hierarchical standing and function accounting *"for more of the variation in managers' work than any other variables"* (ibid: 109). Furthermore, the work performed by managers also depends on the personality, values and style of the managers themselves(ibid : 118).

Finally, situational factors influence the nature of the manager's job. *"A given person in a given environment does not continually engage in the same work"* (ibid: 122). Thus, managers may be affected by the periodicity of their work. For example, *"the year-end work of the school superintendent was characterized by a high incidence of social functions..and little incoming mail"* (ibid: 123).

Although Mintzberg claimed variations existed between managerial jobs, he identified eight managerial job types, stemming from *"natural groupings among the variations"* (ibid: 126).

Managers who spent the majority of their time working externally were categorized as **contact men**. Adopting the liaison and figurehead roles, these managers invested time both building up their own and their organisation's credibility and conversing with people who could benefit their work(ibid: 126-127).

Acting as spokesmen and negotiators, **political managers** were required to *"reconcile a great many diverse political forces acting on (their) organisation"* (ibid: 127). This involved holding frequent meetings with superiors or directors, bargaining with pressure groups and accounting for the organisation's actions(ibid). *"This description is probably typical of managers at the top of most governments and institutions, including hospitals and universities, where the political pressures from below are as great as those from outside"* (ibid).

The **entrepreneur,** generally found in small, developing organisations, adopts the role of negotiator and entrepreneur, continually looking for opportunities to implement change to increase efficiency (ibid: 128).

Many managers are **insiders,** who *"spend their time building up structure, developing and training their subordinates and overseeing the operations they develop"* (ibid). To do this they adopt the resource allocator and leader roles.

Adopting the role of disturbance handler, the **real-time manager** manages for today, pursuing the ideal of smooth, uninterrupted day-to-day functioning of the organisation(ibid). *"The work of the real time manager exhibits all the regular characteristics in the extreme"* (ibid), for example, brevity, fragmentation and excessive workload.

Primarily concerned with the leader role, the **team manager** is responsible for establishing a team, overseeing its effective functioning as a *"cohesive whole"* (ibid: 129).

Using the monitor and spokesperson roles, the **expert manager** advises colleagues about issues relating to his speciality(ibid). *"Because much of his work is associated with his speciality function, the usual managerial work characteristics appear less pronounced for him"* (ibid). For example, he spends more time working alone, reading and writing.

Managers who have just begun a new job fall under the category of **new managers.** Faced with the task of developing a series of contacts, these managers employ the liaison, monitor and entrepreneurial roles(ibid).

i. Strengths of Mintzberg

> *"The greatest contribution comes from (Mintzberg's) direct observations of real managers in real organisations, which provide insights into how*

managers actually behave" (Luthans, Rosenkrantz and Hennessey, 1985: 256).

Although Mintzberg's categorization of management activities appears to have materialized *"partly from the eclectic set of management science/organisational behaviour in Mintzberg's head"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984:164-165) and partly from his data, his conclusions emanate from direct observations of managerial behaviour and are *"recognized by some managers as at least a better description of what they actually do"* (ibid). Indeed, Mintzberg's account of managerial work highlights the inadequacies of existing research, diary studies unable to paint a comprehensive picture of just what it is public managers actually do during the working day. Consequently, Glover(1979:95) described Mintzberg's work as the *"most comprehensive....summary of available 'hard' evidence on the character of managerial work"*.

Furthermore, *"Mintzberg offers a brilliantly perceptive account of the distinctive commonalties of managerial activity"* (Elliot and Lawrence, 1985:39). Not only does he look at similarities between his own chief executives, he compares his findings with those of other researchers.

Using Mintzberg's original method of structured observation, analysis of mail records and his coding categories for the chronology and contact records, Kurke and Aldrich(1983) observed four top executives for a period of one week. *"The results of*

Mintzberg's field study (were) replicated in all important aspects by our field study of four managers" (Kurke and Aldrich, 1983:977). There was an *"amazing degree of similarity in managerial behaviour"* (ibid) across the organisations used in both studies. However, some doubt is cast on Mintzberg's claim that public managers invested more time in formal activities such as scheduled meetings, the hospital administrator and the bank president spending similar proportions of time in such meetings(ibid).

Nevertheless, Kurke and Aldrich's(1983:983) research *"demonstrated that Mintzberg's tentative generalizations from his original study (were) surprisingly robust"*, especially since their observations were made on *"different organisations a decade after Mintzberg's in a different region, and by a different observer"*. However, Phillips(1993) questioned the robustness of Kurke and Aldrich's conclusions since they failed to test the validity and usefulness of Mintzberg's ten roles for classifying managerial work activities.

ii. Weaknesses of Mintzberg

Mintzberg *"effectively disregards the SOCIAL or RELATIONAL nature of managerial work"* (Willmott, 1987: 251). He typified managerial work as *"a set of discreet, observable activities"* (ibid), failing *"to provide an understanding of and explanation for the complex link between forms of managerial action and the organisational settings in which they occur"* (Reed, 1984:275). Although Mintzberg

attempted to look at environmental influences, demonstrating that the type of organisation and the nature of the industry did influence the way managers approached their work, this aspect of his research was dealt with very briefly. Whilst he recognized other environmental factors(the culture of the milieu and dynamic features such as competition, rate of change and technology) affected managerial work, he failed to look at these influences in any great detail. Thus, rather than look at the work of each individual manager in relation to his own specific working environment, Mintzberg merely mentioned environmental influences in passing.

Interestingly, Mintzberg acknowledged that differences existed between the nature of the work undertaken by managers in public and business organisations. However, these differences received superficial treatment, no concrete empirical evidence provided to demonstrate the ways in which public and private sector management jobs differed.

This ignorance of the effect of environmental influences on the managerial job led to Mintzberg's unsubstantiated belief that the five chief executives in his study were representative of all chief executives. He claimed that *"the basic characteristics of managerial work know no national boundaries"*, managers being *"remarkably alike"* (Mintzberg, 1973:104). However, it is difficult to believe that a sample of five chief executives typifies the many thousands of American chief executives

working in organisations differing in kind and size, let alone chief executives working in organisations worldwide.

Furthermore, the chief executives in Mintzberg's study were all managing successful organisations. Thus, these five chief executives were not managing typical American organisations, raising considerable doubts as to the transferability of Mintzberg's results to all chief executives.

In addition, Mintzberg *"developed structural-functionalist analyses of management which are poorly equipped to cope with the actual range and diversity of managerial forms"* (Reed, 1984:276). Ignoring the possibility that managerial jobs vary according to the context in which the individual manager works and the circumstances which pervade them, Mintzberg devised a set of six working characteristics, ten roles and eight job types, claiming these applied to all managers, regardless of the country, sector, industry and organisation in which they worked. Attempting to pigeon-hole managers into one of these specific job types surely means that a wealth of information about the actual work undertaken by managers is neglected. In other words,

> *"in his structured observational method, where work content is equated with common-sense description, and also in his theory, which involves the unproblematic identification of roles and variables, all appreciation of the social formulation and maintenance of the 'content' of managerial work is excluded"* (Reed, 1984:275).

Subsequent studies have been highly critical of Mintzberg's work for a variety of reasons. Using a promotion index to measure success, McCall and Segrist(1980) devised questionnaires based on Mintzberg's ten roles, the underlying intention being to test the validity of Mintzberg's roles in actual operating situations.

The activities observed in four of Mintzberg's ten roles (figurehead, disseminator, disturbance handler and negotiator) were found to overlap significantly with activities found in other roles, the consequence being that these four roles could not be considered in isolation. Furthermore, an inverse relationship was found to exist with Mintzberg's leader role and very weak positive relationships surfaced with five of Mintzberg's roles. However, these differences may be attributable to the disparate methodology used in both studies, McCall and Segrist employing factor analysis rather than direct observation.

Likewise, Lau, Newman and Broedling(1980) adopted Mintzberg's framework and managerial work characteristics when they issued questionnaires to senior American Navy civilians. They found that four roles(supervision, information gathering and dissemination, technical problem solving and executive decision making), as opposed to Mintzberg's(1973) ten roles, more accurately described managerial work(Lau et al, 1980:518-519).

Luthans, Rosenkrantz and Hennessey(1985:257) attempted to answer the question *"what do successful managers really do?"* by examining the work of fifty-two American managers (ibid: 255). Unlike Mintzberg(1973), the researchers used the Leader Observation System, a one page form which outlines *"broad behavioural categories of managerial activities"* (ibid: 258). This form was completed by a trained observer eighty times in a period of two weeks(ibid: 261). *"In analyzing the data collected, the authors measured success by using a promotion index of level over tenure and by considering the top managers of each organisation to be successful"* (ibid: 255).

Despite inconsistencies in methodology, conclusions drawn by Luthans et al(1985) generally supported Mintzberg's findings. Nevertheless, uncertainty surrounded the universality of Mintzberg's ten managerial work roles. Although the majority of Mintzberg's roles were adopted by Luthans et al's managers, distinctions in behaviour emerged between successful and less successful managers(ibid: 269).

Finally, contrary to Mintzberg's findings, Luthans et al identified planning/ coordinating as a *"relatively frequently observed managerial activity of the top managers"* (ibid).

2.4.2 Rosemary Stewart(1976)

> *"Most management writers have concentrated upon the common features of managers' jobs rather than on their differences. This traditional approach is useful, but it gives an oversimplified picture of what managers do. To*

remedy this we need to look at differences as well as similarities" (Stewart, 1976 : 1).

In order to gain an understanding of the differences between managerial jobs attention must be paid to: the **demands** made by the job, that is, duties the manager must perform and the pressures which confront him; the **choices** provided by the job, in other words, the activities which the manager can either undertake or not undertake; the **constraints** within the job's environment which restrict what the manager can actually do(ibid). Thus, *"the focus of the research was on the job rather than the individual"* (ibid : 3).

Stewart initially intended to include public service managers in her study. However, experience at the pilot stage quickly changed her mind, it becoming clear that supplementary interview questions would be needed if the *"particular characteristics of these jobs"* (ibid) were to be satisfactorily covered. Thus, Stewart's reluctance to use identical questions to study public and private managers implies that these managers work in diverse environments which place different demands on them.

Using diaries, interviews and observation, Stewart identified twelve distinct job categories, *"according to the pattern of contacts required"* (ibid: 6). Based on the pattern of relationship contacts characterizing particular managerial jobs, *"the sample of managers was....divided into three divisions according to whether the job*

involved contacts with people outside the organisation and the extent to which it did so" (ibid: 8).

The jobs were then grouped under four main job types. The **Hub** group was the most common type of management job, involving the creation of adequate working relations with a diverse range of people internal to the organisation(ibid: 10). Members of the **Peer Dependent** group preferred to spend time with colleagues of equal standing than with their subordinates (ibid). The key feature of the **Man Management** group was the minimal contact levels with peers. Finally, the majority of the **Solo Manager** group's time was spent meeting deadlines, this job type exhibiting the relatively unique characteristics of certainty and undemanding relationships (ibid: 11).

Stewart then proceeded by defining work patterns which the managerial jobs imposed. *"The pattern (of work) that one sees if one observes a manager's work will be partly a result of that imposed by the job and partly a result of choice"* (ibid: 37). The pattern of work was composed of six elements: the duration of activities associated with each job, encompassing fragmentation and unremitting attention; the time span of problems or decisions; periodicity and recurrent work; the unexpected, urgent and crises; time deadlines; whether the manager's job was responding or self generating (ibid: 38-43). Stewart endeavoured to unmask and describe the degree to which these activity patterns were dictated by the job or the

manager, leading to a discussion of differences in activity patterns between jobs. Stewart concluded that there were four distinct types of work patterns.

Work pattern one was **Systems Maintenance**, covering junior and middle management jobs(ibid: 45). Jobs in this category revolved around meeting targets, handling any disturbances and problems which threatened to debilitate the targets. Such jobs were characterized by a repetitive work pattern, a fragmented working day and frequent troubleshooting(ibid: 44).

Work pattern 2, **Systems Administration**, described jobs which were mainly concerned with the meticulous processing of information. These jobs also displayed recurrent work activities, the majority of which were done to deadlines (ibid: 45).

The fundamental attribute of work pattern 3, **Project**, was the focus on long term work. This focus required sustained attention, much of which was self generated (ibid).

Finally, work pattern four, **Mixed**, characterized senior management jobs, where the managers themselves played a large part in determining their work pattern (ibid: 46).

As well as identifying the variety of demands placed on managers by all their potential contacts, Stewart(1967:85) contended that *"the choices that managers make, consciously or unconsciously, by action or by default, influence the effectiveness with which they do their jobs".* Subject to a number of constraints, managers could exercise choice in four areas of their work. *"One of the most surprising results...is the extent to which.....managers tend both to exaggerate the amount of choice that they have while failing to appreciate the nature of some of the choices that are available to them"* (ibid).

Firstly, the content of the manager's job could be influenced by choices made by the manager. However, although the manager had a certain amount of discretion to delegate, their decision to delegate could be confined by: the expertise of their subordinates and boss; the nature of the task to be delegated; the disposition of their boss; whether the material was of a confidential nature; the extent of status differentiation ; whether or not the manager allotted the subordinate's work (ibid: 86-87).

Secondly, managers had an element of choice in the working methods they employed. *"All managers have some freedom to use their own personal style in relationships; how much freedom will depend upon how strongly developed are the codes of behaviour in their organisation"* (ibid : 91). Thus, the choice of working

methods was severely limited for managers working in highly formalized organisations(ibid).

Thirdly, the manager had some choice about when they undertook their work, deciding whether to work additional hours or attend evening engagements. In general, however, the manager's freedom was limited except when they worked flexitime(ibid).

Finally, most jobs entailed a degree of choice about the contacts made, although all managers had more control over the percentage of time spent in conversation rather than the people contacted. However, *"the wider the range of contacts the more choice the manager is likely to have in whom he sees and how long he spends with them"* (ibid: 93), choice increasing with seniority.

Concluding, Stewart contended that:

> *"many managers could be more effective if they analyzed the nature of the choices that their jobs offer.......The main lesson is the need to think analytically about the different ways in which the job can be done and which are the most appropriate at a particular time"* (ibid: 95).

By contrasting contact patterns and work characteristics, Stewart's greatest contribution to management research was the realization that managerial jobs vary in nature. Previous researchers(Carlson, 1951; Stewart, 1967; Mintzberg, 1973)

examined similarities between management jobs, and although they acknowledged that differences existed between jobs, they were unable to identify these differences.

Furthermore, Stewart approached the study of management by examining the managerial job, rather than looking at the manager themselves. *"Her demands, constraints and choices provides a more encompassing way of learning about managerial work......(this framework) recognizes variations between jobs and captures the dynamic and flexible character of jobs, missed by so many other methods"* (Phillips, 1993: 111 - 114).

However, Stewart completely disregarded the content of managerial work. Although she asked the 'why?' question, it was used as a tool for elucidating work patterns and contact relationships, rather than as a tool to begin to examine what managers actually did.

Finally, Stewart failed to examine the social environment in which the manager worked, limiting her study of the environment to organisational influences(Phillips, 1993:112-114). Even then, her analysis of the impact of organisational influences on the managerial job was limited to the size of the organisation in which the manager worked and their job level. Consequently, Stewart provides a theory of managerial work which recognizes the differences between management jobs, yet claims that

there are twelve distinctive job types and four work patterns which characterize the work of all managers, regardless of the environment in which they work.

2.4.3 John Kotter(1982)

> *"An attractively simple approach to defining the core behaviour of managers has been provided by Kotter"*(Torrington and Weightman, 1985:70).

Between 1976 and 1981, Kotter studied fifteen American general managers working in nine corporations. Kotter's research was *"first and foremost a study of people in certain kinds of jobs. It was not, strictly speaking, a study of management or general management"* (ibid: 155). He devised a multi-purpose research methodology encompassing observation, interviews, questionnaires and the accumulation of appropriate documents.

Kotter began his analysis of the general management job by identifying six sets of demands, challenges and dilemmas, arising from the wider business, organisational and societal environments. Whilst all management jobs had these demands placed on them, *"it is the **diversity** of complex demands that makes the job a **general** management job, that makes it different and that makes it particularly difficult"* (ibid: 22).

Firstly, general managers must establish goals, policies and strategies in the face of uncertainty. Secondly, there needs to be an equilibrium between the allotment of

insufficient resources and functional and business needs. Thirdly, the general manager must remain in control of a wide range of divergent activities, particularly recognizing and resolving problems. Fourthly, it is important that the manager enlists the support and cooperation of their boss, making demands yet being cooperative. Fifthly, managers must secure cooperation from staff, other departments and external groups, whom they have no formal authority over. Finally, general managers must stimulate and direct a large, disparate group of subordinates, addressing issues such as unacceptable performance and interdepartmental unrest(ibid: 12-18).

Although these six basic demands characterized all the general management jobs, they affected the general managers to differing degrees. This variation could be attributed to differences in *"overall intensity of those demands, the relative importance of the six problem areas and the exact nature of each demand"* (ibid: 22). Of greater importance was Kotter's explanation for the differences associated with the general manager jobs, namely differences in the job itself and in the business and corporate contexts.

Although Kotter's fifteen general managers worked in diverse organisations, considerable similarities in behaviour emerged(ibid: 59). In the initial period of the job, the general managers *"focused simultaneously on developing agendas for their businesses and on developing the networks of resources needed to accomplish those*

agendas" (ibid : 60). These agendas consisted of *"a set of loosely connected goals and plans which addressed (the general managers') long, medium and short term responsibilities"* (ibid). They encompassed a wide range of business issues, were largely unwritten and, although related, differed from the formal written plans.

The general managers also developed a *"network of cooperative relationships to and among those people they felt were actually needed to accomplish their emerging agendas"* (ibid : 67). These networks of cooperative relationships generally emanated from face-to-face contact; by encouraging others to relate to the managers; by promoting the managers' professional standing; by inducing dependency for resources and career development on the general manager; by hiring, firing or moving subordinates (ibid: 69-70).

"After they had largely developed their networks and agendas, the general managers........tended to shift their attention toward using their networks to implement their agendas" (ibid : 71). The better performing general managers tended to delegate authority to get more things done, adopting much more varied methods of persuasion(ibid: 75).

The underlying reason for setting agendas, creating networks and then using these networks to implement agendas was one of management survival. General managers are required to make decisions in the face of uncertainty and diversity, as well as get

work done through a vast and disparate population of workers, most of whom the manager has limited control over (ibid: 76). Although a plan is necessary *"for reasons well recognized by traditional management thought"* (ibid), the complex nature of the job makes it difficult to create explicit plans.

This approach of agenda setting and network building was evident in the daily behaviour of managers, resulting in common work patterns. The managers typically spent most of their time with a large number of people, averaging only twenty-four percent of their working time alone, most of which was accounted for by travelling and working at home. Conversations covered a wide range of topics and, although managers usually asked a great deal of questions, they rarely appeared to make any important decisions. Furthermore, a substantial amount of hoodwinking and discussion of non-work related issues occurred in these conversations.

In addition, most of the conversations were both brief and disjointed and the managers tended to allot the time spent with others on a reactive basis. Finally, whilst managers rarely gave orders, they did endeavour to influence others (ibid: 80-81).

Although Kotter identified significant similarities inherent in the general management job, he also acknowledged the existence of several differences, surrounding whom the managers contacted, the range of issues covered when interacting with others and the time spent working with others. These differences

were *"the product of the same set of forces that created the similarities"* (ibid: 97), namely: differences in personal attributes; differences in the behaviour of the managers, arising from contrasting approaches to agenda setting and network building; differences in job demands, influenced by differences in the type of job, organisational differences and key business factors (ibid: 97-98).

Kotter can be commended for concluding that *"sound theories of managerial behaviour"* (ibid : 147) must include at least four variables: individual variables, encompassing personal and background characteristics; contextual variables, relating to the job itself, the business and the organisation; behavioural variables; effectiveness variables(ibid: 148-149). By overlooking the context in which the manager worked, *"studies that tried to identify the individual characteristics of managers, to correlate individual characteristics and performance and to correlate behaviour (style) and performance, achieved very little"* (ibid : 148).

Thus, Kotter's research:

> *"goes beyond a mere description of managerial behaviours or an analysis of factors influencing a manager's behaviour.....Out of the various behaviours observed he has attempted to draw the various strands together and explain the rationale behind them such that they no longer stand alone, but are seen to be inter-connected and with a purpose"* (Phillips, 1993 : 166).

Furthermore, Kotter acknowledged that the organisational and societal environment influenced the demands faced by managers(Phillips, 1993). The general manager's ability to plan and set objectives was severely curtailed by the effects of potential

demographic changes, competition, the introduction of new technology, rates of inflation and United States leadership change. Kotter's work was therefore effective in demonstrating that the general manager *"copes with the responsibilities and relationships inherent in the environment he is operating within by creating agendas and building networks"* (ibid: 169).

"Kotter's study goes further than most of its predecessors in acknowledging and stressing the central importance of social relationships and power in the routine accomplishment of managerial work" (Willmott, 1987 :253). He demonstrated that effective managers both directed people and built political affiliations through their access to organisational resources.

Thus, Kotter gave prominence to the

> *"building and maintaining of networks of relationships in a sine qua non of general managerial work.......the power that is exercised and replenished through the successful management of inter-personal networks should not be regarded as peripheral to managerial activity nor be treated as a deviation from formally or officially defined roles"* (Willmott 1987:253).

2.4.5 Environmental Neglect

> *"One of the key reasons that the vast amount of leadership research....adds up to so little is probably because it has been guided by theories that, even when context is taken into account, treat context in incredibly simplistic ways"* (Kotter, 1982:148).

Although managerial work studies employing observational research methods are to be commended for providing a previously neglected account of the nature of

managerial work, Mintzberg(1973) and Stewart(1976) can be criticized for skimming over the effects of environmental influences on managerial work. Wherever the environment is mentioned in these studies, it is generally restricted to an examination of the organisational environment, rather than wider societal and environmental influences. Thus, managers' jobs are shown to differ depending on the size of the organisation in which they are employed, the nature of the industry in which they work and the level of job they undertake. Moreover, Mintzberg and Stewart tend to mention organisational influences in passing, rather than explicitly examining the work of individual managers in relation to the particular context in which they work.

Building on Mintzberg's and Stewart's research, Kotter(1982) *"set his study within the societal environment, showing how it influences and impinges on the work of the general manager"* (Phillips, 1993: 150). Kotter appreciated from the outset that his six sets of demands, challenges and dilemmas arose from wider business, organisational and societal environments. *"The coverage of the societal environment, however, could be greater and richer still and not limited to just a few variables"* (ibid: 184).

Unlike Mintzberg, Stewart and Kotter appreciated that merely examining the similarities between management jobs provided a rather limited insight into managerial work. Hence, they specifically set out to highlight the differences

between a variety of management jobs. Nevertheless, all three researchers devised typologies of managerial work which were held to represent the work of all managers, irrespective of the contexts in which they worked. Subsequently, it would not be unreasonable to expect public sector managerial work to consist of Mintzberg's ten basic roles and six sets of work characteristics. Likewise, public managers may equally fit under one of Stewart's twelve distinct job types, whilst their work may be characterised by one of four distinct work patterns. Finally, like Kotter's general managers, public managers might set agendas, create networks and then use these networks to implement the agendas in the preliminary period of their jobs. In other words,

> *"failure to recognize the real influences of the larger society on managerial work, jobs, behaviour, effectiveness or success...raises questions about the validity and reliability of the research findings and their applicability in countries with entirely different economic, political and cultural environmental"* (Phillips, 1994: 147).

2.5 PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERIAL WORK RESEARCH

> *"There exists no ready data on what public managers do. Case research from the perspective of a public manager is just beginning......leaving the field to a mixture of reflection on personal experience and speculation"* (Allison, 1979:28).

One of the main criticisms of the leading managerial work studies outlined above, is the almost total exclusion of public managers as research subjects. Even when public managers have been included in studies(Mintzberg, 1973; Kurke and Aldrich, 1983)

it is arguably as token gestures, little attention paid to the differing environments public and private sector managers work in.

Studies which do focus exclusively on the work of public sector managers(Bussom et al, 1982; Larson et al, 1981; Lau et al, 1980; Martinko and Gardner, 1984) are generally American and focus on specific types of public sector managers. Subsequently, these studies cannot be used to make generalizations for all British public sector managers.

2.5.1 American Research

Larson et al(1981) studied the nature of American school superintendents' work whilst Bussom et al(1982) examined managerial work in the American police force. Although the findings of both studies generally replicated Mintzberg's research, the researchers concluded that public sector managerial work frequently diverged from that of colleagues in the private sector.

Likewise, Morris et al(1981) conducted an ethnomethodological study of the behaviour of sixteen American school principals working in urban areas. They discovered that Mintzberg's framework of roles was of limited use when characterizing the behaviour of educational managers. Two of the better documented studies of American public sector managerial work will be examined below.

i. Martinko and Gardner(1984)

With the aim of identifying the *"behaviours, attributions and competencies of high performing educational managers"* (Martinko and Gardner, 1984:142), Martinko and Gardner observed the work of fourteen high and seven moderate performing educational managers for one day.

A 'social learning theory' model was adopted in Martinko and Gardner's quest to describe the behaviour of high performing educational managers, this model indicating that *"the changing external environment and the specific school environment (were) major determinants of the behaviours that generate(d) effective school performance"* (ibid: 145).

Martinko and Gardner's results were highly comparable with Mintzberg's(1973) findings. The educational managers spent: approximately seventeen percent of their time on desk work; eighty percent of their working time was taken up by face-to-face discussion; they averaged six percent of working time on the telephone; approximately fifty percent of their time was spent with subordinates; they executed between eighty and two hundred activities per day, which generally lasted five minutes (ibid: 151).

However, whilst Mintzberg's(1973) chief executives spent fifty-nine percent of their time in scheduled meetings and ten percent in unscheduled meetings, the

comparative figures for Martinko and Gardner's educational managers were eighteen and twenty-three percent respectively. Furthermore, Mintzberg's chief executives spent approximately three percent of their working time conducting tours, contrasting sharply with the educational managers, who spent fifteen percent of their time on this activity. Thus, *"the principal's job appears to be less structured and more spontaneous than that of a chief executive"* (Martinko and Gardner, 1984: 151).

ii. Lau, Newman and Broedling (1980)

> *"Much of the management literature has developed with the private sector in mind. Executive activity has received considerably less systematic attention in the public sector"* (Lau et al, 1980 :513).

Combined with the belief that managerial work studies succeeding POSDCORB *"consist of speculation regarding what managers and their subordinates say they do, could do, or should do"* (ibid), Lau et al(1980) attempted to examine 'The Nature of Managerial Work in the Public Sector'.

Using Mintzberg's(1973) characterization of managerial jobs, Lau et al(1980) examined the content and characteristics of the work of senior American naval executives. The methodology employed was a mixture of interviews, observations, work activity diaries and structured questionnaires. Based on Mintzberg's(1973) characterization of managerial roles, the questionnaire outlined fifty items depicting work content and the executives had to identify both the percentage of time they

spent on each activity and the importance of each activity to them in the efficacious performance of their work.

A. Job content

Using factor analysis, a technique which *"investigates the underlying pattern of relationships within a set of responses by combining similar items into a minimum number of factors"* (ibid: 515), four factors emerged which *"accounted for 76 per cent of the differences in responses to the fifty items"* (ibid).

Factor 1 was characterized as **leadership and supervision,** accounting for fifty-four percent of the differences in the content of the naval executive's job. The executive must lead, train and develop subordinates and filter the appropriate information down. Furthermore, executives are responsible for staffing issues, handling planned change, planning work for their department and combining individual and organisational goals (ibid: 518).

Information gathering and dissemination was identified as the second factor, explaining a further ten percent of differences in the content of the executive's job. This category included a host of *"interrelated interpersonal and informational roles concerning the ability to deal with the external environment"* (ibid), corresponding with Mintzberg's(1973) figurehead, liaison, monitor and spokesman roles.

Factor 3, **technical problem solving,** accounted for a mere seven percent of the differences. Finally, **executive decision making, planning and resource allocation,** accounted for five percent of the differences in the job content of executives. Activities featuring under this factor generally involved *"command strategies and policies or decisions on expansion of organisational efforts"* (ibid). Of greater importance is the finding that this factor encompassed Mintzberg's(1973) entrepreneurial, disturbance handler and resource allocator roles.

Like Mintzberg's chief executives, Lau et al's executive jobs displayed more similarities than unique characteristics, allowing activities performed by the naval executives to be grouped under five headings: leadership, supervision and personnel administration; resource allocation; monitoring and disseminating of internal and external information; technical consultation; planning, decision making and influencing policy(ibid: 517).

Thus, the findings differed from those of Mintzberg, Lau et al condensing Mintzberg's ten management roles into four factors. *"When executive activities...were categorized under the 10 Mintzberg roles, it was found that 30 percent of the work diary activities and 35 percent of the observed activities involved two or more interrelated roles"* (ibid). Furthermore, an examination of Lau et al's work diaries found that thirty-four percent of the executives' time was spent in Mintzberg's interpersonal roles, twenty-two percent in informational roles and

thirteen percent in decisional roles, the remaining time spent in combinations of the various roles. Thus, Lau et al were unable to make clear-cut differentiations between Mintzberg's ten roles.

B. Job Characteristics

Lau et al recognized that the environment influenced the behaviour of their executives, four important environmental variables emerging from the interviews: the complex nature of the Navy shore organisation which has ramifications for executive activities, selection and development; escalating centralization of decision making and extension of controls; personnel cutbacks and bureaucratic civilian personnel administration; the large proportion of job sharing between civilian executives and their military counterparts (ibid).

Furthermore, the findings from Lau et al's questionnaire supported Mintzberg's contention that the executive job is characterized by brevity and fragmentation. Averaging a fifty-two hour week, with an additional eight hours per week working at home, seventy-two percent of Lau et al's executives claimed their daily work routine was fragmented with interruptions and unscheduled events. Indeed, sixty-four percent of executives found it near enough impossible to set work schedules which would be followed, a further sixty-three percent claiming that meetings consumed a superfluous amount of time. The data collected by observation also highlighted the brief and fragmented nature of the naval executives' jobs. On average, the

executives performed forty-three activities per day, typically of a very brief nature(ibid). Consequently, the executives had *"insufficient time to devote to leadership activities, long range planning and/or definition of organisational goals"* (ibid).

Finally, over seventy percent of the naval executives' total working time was spent interacting with others, of which forty-five percent was spent in scheduled meetings and seventeen percent in unscheduled meetings. Thus, it is of no surprise that the executives spent only twenty-four percent of their time alone, generally taken up by desk work (ibid: 519).

C. Strengths and Weaknesses

> *"The results of this study suggest that both public and private sector executives perform the same kind of activities, both in terms of complexity of job content and roles, and in terms of job characteristics"* (ibid).

Perhaps the main strength of Lau et al's study was that it recognized the importance of environmental influences on the manager's job. *"Anyone undertaking research in a large, public sector organisation should be aware of the need to describe and deal with the complexity of functioning that probably pervades all public sector bureaucracies"* (ibid). However, Lau et al merely identified the environmental influences, overlooking an in-depth analysis of how the environment actually affected the content of managers' jobs.

Moreover, one of the fundamental weaknesses of this study is its concentration on an extremely narrow and highly specialised group of managers in the American public sector. Thus, Lau et al have contributed relatively little to our understanding of managerial work in the public sector, generalizations unable to be made for all public managers from one study of highly specialised Navy executives.

Furthermore, Lau et al made direct comparisons with Mintzberg's research without appreciating the differing methodologies employed in both studies. Surely the question remains of whether Lau et al's results would have differed had there been a wholesale adoption of Mintzberg's methodology.

2.5.2 British Research

At best, therefore, the negligible number of American studies on public managerial work attempt to provide both an account of the nature of management in particular areas of the public domain, and to test elements of Mintzberg's(1973) research. This differs radically from Britain, where much of the research on public sector managers is practitioner based, relying on *"personal experience, anecdotal material, teaching cases and metaphorical concepts to create an experiential picture of the job of the government executive"* (Lynn, 1994:240). Moreover, personal accounts of the chief executive's job are overwhelmingly local authority orientated.

Deriving from his experience as a local authority chief executive, Sir John Boynton(1986) provided an anecdotal account of the chief executive job. Likewise, Morphet's(1993:5) study of local government chief executives stemmed from *"over twenty years of observation and experience...in various local authorities and central government"*. Although Morphet had a chapter entitled 'What do chief executives do?', this proved to be an account of the implications of the Widdicombe Report(1986) and the Audit Commission's(1989) study 'More Equal Than Others'.

Nevertheless, although the majority of Morphet's(1993) work was based on personal experience, she did undertake a postal survey based on the twelve management roles identified by the Audit Commission(1989), asking chief executives to assess both the importance of these twelve roles to their jobs and to indicate how often they performed the twelve roles.

Morris and Paine's(1995) account of the local authority chief executive's job is similarly based on their own and colleagues' experiences as chief executives. *"This work provides a personal and practical framework for many of the dilemmas and experiences faced by chief executives (and)....details methods for chief executives to find support and guidance and maintain their self development, whether experienced or new to the challenge"* (Hunt, 1995: xi).

Thus, the preceding three accounts of the local authority chief executive job contribute very little to an understanding of the content and characteristics of the public sector managerial job. Instead, they are geared towards helping chief executives work more effectively, highlighting issues chief executives are likely to face.

Recognizing from the outset that *"there are probably as many versions of being a chief executive as there are holders of that post"* (Gordon, 1995: 41), Gordon relied on her experience as Sheffield City Council's chief executive to identify key management roles, including the role of top official contact and the roles of visibility, trouble-shooting, advising members, utilizing every opportunity and leading corporate initiatives (ibid: 39-41).

Of greater significance is Gordon's recognition that the chief executive's job was fragmented. *"The paradoxes in the job have always struck me forcibly.....breaking off briefly from crisis budget talks for a pre-arranged chat with a visiting foreign dignitary"* (ibid: 42). Furthermore, Gordon acknowledged the heavy workload chief executives faced. *"I find that my diary leaves me far too little time to think and write, to meet people within and outside the authority and to follow up what happened after last week's panic. Keeping a large number of balls in the air is an art form in itself"* (ibid). Thus, Gordon's(1995) personal account of the chief executive's job does illustrate, albeit rather superficially, previous research

findings(Carlson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1967) that senior management jobs are characterized by brevity, fragmentation and excessive workloads.

Nevertheless, accounts of public management generally focus on the skills managers need, the roles they assume and attributes of the management job, rather than on the characteristics and content of the work they undertake on a daily basis. Innumerable journal articles, again local authority dominated, characterize the public manager's job as: focusing on customer needs; communicating with a wide variety of people; managing change; pursuing value-for-money; leading the organisation; reacting to competition; setting and meeting objectives; undertaking strategic management; political management; advising members; managing budgets; strengthening the authority's image; directing and motivating staff; developing commercial skills; trouble-shooting (Clarke and Stewart, 1986; Hepworth, 1988; Bichard, 1989; Filkin, 1990; Ouseley, 1990; Sabin, 1990; Stewart, 1990; Whyatt, 1990; Smith, 1992; Collinge and Fraser, 1993; Sinclair, 1994; Thompson, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Marinetto, 1996).

Any field research which has been conducted on public sector managerial work tends to rely on the use of questionnaires, zooming in on a specific element of the manager's job rather than on the content and characteristics of managerial work as a whole. For example, in an attempt to answer the question, *"what do chief executives currently in post consider to be the essential features of the job they do?"* (Mills and

Norton, 1990: 10), Mills and Norton(1990) issued questionnaires to all British local authority chief executives. The researchers were primarily concerned with the tasks performed by chief executives, seeking to *"establish which tasks chief executives see as essential to their role, which are non-essential and which might be classed as desirable for the chief executive to carry out but suitable for delegation to other officers"* (ibid). Using findings from similar questionnaire surveys, Mills and Norton defined a list of functions, leading to the identification of fifty-four management tasks common to management jobs today(ibid).

"Building and leading an effective management team" (ibid) emerged as the primary task undertaken by the chief executives, other core tasks being performance appraisal, policy advice, strategic management and encouraging productive relationships between members and between members and officers(ibid: 11). Of interest is the finding that in spite of both an increased focus on collaborating with the private and voluntary sectors, and contracting-out services, *"relatively few...respondents indicated that representing the authority's interests with the private sector or with others in the community needs to be the personal responsibility of the Chief Executive"* (ibid: 14).

In May 1996, Travers et al(1997:19) issued questionnaires to every British local authority chief executive, focusing on *"the way in which developments in local governance had affected the time spent by chief executives on particular activities"*.

In general, managers spent sixty-four percent of their total weekly working time in meetings, three percent attending conferences, twenty-two percent on general administration and twelve percent on other functions(ibid: 21). Thus, these findings correspond with earlier claims (Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1988) that managers prefer verbal communication.

However, the central focus of this research was contact with external bodies, Travers et al(1997:28) concluding that chief executives spent approximately ten percent of their total working time networking and performing other local governance activities(ibid).

Finally, other public sector studies tend to focus on the ways in which recent reforms have affected managerial work. For example, Strong and Robinson's(1990:6) research was *"an analysis of the huge wave of change that swept across NHS management in the years that followed 1984. It deals with the dilemmas and solutions, the experience and opinions, the hopes and the fears, the tactics and strategies, the perspectives and ideologies of the new management class as it struggled in the mid-1980s to make sense of, and to implement, Griffiths"*. Based on interviews with senior district managers, general managers and chief nurse advisors, this study gives an anecdotal account of the ways in which NHS management reforms have affected managers.

Furthermore, Talbot(1994:1-2) issued questionnaires to one thousand one hundred and sixty public managers in December 1993, the purpose of this research being to *"examine what managers see as the forces driving public management change.......to focus on how managers in the public sector see the changes taking place around them and their reactions to the change process".*

Thus, due to the limited amount of research undertaken on public sector management, very little is known about the content and characteristics of public sector managerial work.

2.6 THE WAY FORWARD

> *"The so-called 'classical' or POSDCORB approach is.....of little value for understanding the reality as opposed to the rhetoric of management"* (Gunn, 1975:15).

Empirical studies of managerial work(Carlson, 1951; Kotter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1973; Stewart, 1967, 1976) challenged the classical school's management fables, concluding that *"management is a much less tidy, less organised and less easily defined activity than that traditionally presented"* (Stewart, 1976:125). However, criticism of the classical management school is somewhat short-sighted, given that classical theory focused on the functions of the executive in the organisation rather than on the nature of the executive job. Consequently, it is of no surprise that conclusions drawn by empirical studies differ radically from classical theory, the former moving away from examining the structure of the organisation.

> *"We remain grossly ignorant about the fundamental content of the manager's job and have barely addressed the major issues and dilemmas in its practice"* (Mintzberg, 1990 : 170).

The question surrounding what managers do has not been adequately answered because *"the meaning and purpose of the activities observed has not been looked for. The question 'why this activity?' has invariably not been asked"* (Phillips, 1993: 181).

A further flaw in the managerial work literature is the apparent lack of recognition given to the styles of individual managers. *"The idea of management style is under researched in general and poorly related to studies of management activity"* (Elliot and Lawrence, 1985 : 45). Managerial style influences how the manager does his work and, consequently, must be looked at if a true insight into managerial work is to be gained.

> *"The nature of the organisation may significantly affect the nature of managerial work within the organisation; organisational variables should be considered as research questions and investigated systematically"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 23-24).

Management studies tend to neglect the organisational context in which the manager works, little attention given to the inherent differences between managing in one organisation and managing in another. Mintzberg(1973:104), for example, contended that *"managers' jobs are remarkably alike. The work of foremen, presidents, government administrators and other managers can be described in*

terms of ten basic roles and six sets of working characteristics". However, Mintzberg overlooked the important point that *"not only do managerial jobs differ in their mix of functions depending on their level and the particular department involved, but they also differ from organisation to organisation"* (Miner, 1973: 63).

Given that little attention has been paid to organisational influences, it should come as no surprise that the environmental influences which affect managerial work are looked at superficially. For example, Mintzberg(1973) mentioned the environment in passing, failing to give an adequate account of the ways in which management jobs were affected by environmental influences. However, although Mintzberg failed to look at the context in which his chief executives worked, subsequent criticisms are unfounded since they are made by researchers unable to provide any fuller explanation of environmental influences.

> *"There is no real equivalent in the British public sector to the studies of managers' jobs which have been done for the private sector by writers such as Rosemary Stewart (British) and Henry Mintzberg(USA)"* (Gunn, 1976: 122).

Public and private sector managers arguably work in diverse environments, faced with differing demands, challenges and ethics which may require different managerial skills. Given that the public sector plays a large part in most peoples' lives at some stage or another, one might have imagined that researchers would have

been keen to look at the nature of managerial work in the public sector. Instead, the focus has been on business managers.

Thus, it soon becomes evident from an analysis of the managerial work literature that scope exists for empirical research to be undertaken on public sector managerial work. There has been no single, large scale study undertaken on the work of public sector managers. Where public managers have featured in management studies(Mintzberg, 1973), it is arguably as token gestures, little attention paid to the distinct environment in which they work. Furthermore, studies based on public managerial work have generally been conducted in America and have focused on highly specialised public managers, removing any possibility of generalizations being made. Where studies have taken place in Britain, they have tended to focus on a specific aspect of managing in the public sector rather than on the content and characteristics of managerial work as a whole. Even then, most research has been undertaken in local government to the detriment of other public organisations.

> *"There is no one best way of organizing. The appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment with which one is dealing"* (Morgan, 1986:49).

As well as empirical space, it would seem that the literature on managerial work also provides theoretical space for further research on environmental influences on managerial work. The early classical management theorists *"devoted relatively little*

attention to the environment. They treated the organisation as a 'closed' mechanical system and became preoccupied with principles of internal design" (ibid: 45).

Consequently, organisation theorists(Burns and Stalker, 1961; Woodward, 1965; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) challenged the 'mechanistic' view of organisations, instead postulating systems theory which *"builds on the principle that organisations, like organisms, are 'open' to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive"* (Morgan, 1986:44-45). Contingency theory was ultimately born, organisational size, the technology in use, the organisation's goals and activities and the wider external environment in which the organisation operates influencing the structure of organisations (Hales, 1993; Watson, 1991). Indeed, Lawrence and Lorsch's(1967) study demonstrated that *"the degree of required differentiation in managerial and organisational styles between departments varied according to the nature of the industry and its environment"* (Morgan, 1986:55).

Thus, *"the open systems view......sugg(ests) that we should always organize with the environment in mind"* (ibid: 45). From the outset, however, it would seem that few, if any, alliances have been formed between organisation theorists and managerial work researchers, given that *"studies into managerial work have remained insular and have continued to be conducted with very little cognizance having been taken of the environment generally"* (Phillips, 1993:418). Existing studies have generally

failed to contextualise the environment in which managers work, the environment featuring in a critique of the research rather than as a true part of the managerial work agenda. Consequently, an underlying aim of this research study is to examine the environments in which public managers work.

Phillips(1993:425) concluded that *"the meanings that were....put to activities....recounted by the chief executives themselves, were, environmentally relevant. In other words, they had a meaning or significance that was unique to the particular...context that they were taking place within and to it alone".* Thus, the meaning and content of managerial work exists solely within an understanding of the management environment. This understanding can be obtained, on the one hand, through the observation of managers at work. Although observation has been criticized for its inability to generate an understanding of the meanings and purposes behind managers' actions and behaviour (Snyder and Glueck, 1980), this obstacle can be overcome if adherence to a strict observational approach is deviated from, the researcher instead asking managers about the underlying reasons behind their actions. In this way, *"the researcher gains a valuable insight into the subject's mind set and thought processes"* (Dargie, 1998:67).

On the other hand, the environments in which public managers work can be examined from the viewpoint of managers themselves. Thus, the objective behind issuing questionnaires to a representative sample of public managers in Scotland was

to gain an understanding of managers' perceptions of the context in which they work and the values which they draw on, allowing conclusions to be made about the extent to which the pattern of managerial work is a response to how public managers conceive their environment.

Furthermore, as chapter three will demonstrate, the New Public Management(NPM) make widespread claims and generalizations about public management without actually looking at the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work. Instead, the NPM identify the core elements of public sector change, for example value-for-money and markets, and assume they affect all public managers, ignoring the important point that public management jobs differ.

In addition, it would seem that unlike managerial work studies, the NPM is obsessed with context, focusing on key elements of public sector reform. However, the downfall of the NPM approach is that theorists do not show how this context maps onto the work public managers actually do. In other words, there is no correlation between what managers do and the context in which they work.

Consequently, the NPM are arguably doing no more than reproducing the genericism of existing managerial work studies, looking at public management irrespective of the different environments in which individual managers work. Thus,

a further aim of this research is to observe senior public managers in their working environments, relating managerial work patterns to environmental influences.

When addressing senior representatives of NHS management services twenty-one years ago, Gunn(1976: 124) claimed:

> *"that there is some fundamental work to be done in identifying the essential management functions and the processes involved in each. This is work in which management teachers and management services might combine.....we might attempt a study of the actual content and characteristics of various types of managerial jobs in the reorganized NHS".*

It has taken twenty-three years for Gunn's wishes to be granted, this research attempting to provide a much needed insight into the nature of managerial work in the British public sector.

CHAPTER 3

THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

A Critique

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The New Public Management (NPM) is an international movement which attempts to *"turn SPENDERS into MANAGERS and to forge a tight relationship between RESOURCES and RESULTS"* (Schick, 1990 : 32).

Hood is perhaps the most well renowned for his work on the NPM and has identified seven doctrines:

1. Hands on professional management in the public sector
2. Explicit standards and measures of performance
3. Greater emphasis on output controls
4. Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector
5. Shift to greater competition in the public sector
6. Stress on private sector styles of management practice
7. Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use

(Hood, 1991 : 4-5).

"Many academic commentators associate the rise of the NPM with the political rise of the New Right" (ibid: 6). Indeed, Farnham and Horton(1993(b):47) claimed that there was a political agenda underpinning public sector management changes, since *"the new managerialism...was a distinctive element in the policies of the New Right towards the public services"*.

In Britain, the 1980s witnessed the development of the new managerialism with the then prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, contending that New Right arguments formed the *"intellectual support"* (Thatcher, 1983) for policy currently being implemented in Britain. Although New Right ideas had been in circulation since the early 1950s, they were not actively pursued by any government with the enthusiasm shown by Thatcher (Gilmour, 1992:8).

However, perhaps the reason why the Thatcher government looked to the New Right was simply because *"the old model did not work any longer"* (Hughes, 1994: 21). Whatever the reason, *"the election of Thatcher's first government is understandably seen as the real starting point for the......attack on the public sector"* (Johnson, 1993:27).

In order to come to some conclusions about the extent to which developments in the public sector reflect private sector practice, this chapter will examine the theoretical background to the NPM, look at what has happened in practice, discuss the implications of the changes and assess arguments that private sector management techniques cannot be transferred to the public sector because the latter has a distinct ethos and culture.

3.2 THEORETICAL/IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND TO THE NPM: THE INFLUENCE OF THE NEW RIGHT

> *"The New Right have succeeded in redefining the central political issue. For them, the issue is not what should the state be used for, but the extent to which social and economic life should be regulated and controlled by the state"* (Harris, 1989 : 1).

Constituting the core of the New Right is the contention that *"freedom, individualism and inequality are the fundamental social values"* (George and Wilding, 1992: 19). New Right theorists (Hayek, 1960; Friedman, 1962) are *"fierce critics"* (Gamble, 1988 : 28) of Keynesian policies of economic management and high public welfare expenditure. The resultant hostility towards public service provision is based on the premise that *"a publicly provided service......will be inefficient because not stimulated by competition; it will offer individuals little or no choice; it will be cluttered by bureaucracy"* (George and Wilding, 1992 : 42).

The New Right critique of public service provision is constituted by three main elements:

3.2.1 Freedom and individualism are linked with free market capitalism, *"markets provid(ing) the best mechanisms for individuals to maximise their welfare"* (Midwinter, 1992:1).

> *"The very existence of this state.....is a potential threat to all the moral, cultural, social and economic benefits of freedom"* (Thatcher, 1996).

Classical New Right liberals define freedom as the *"state in which a man is not subject to coercion by the arbitrary will of another or others"* (Hayek, 1960 : 11). Individuals are deemed to be free when others have no control over them, even where the individuals themselves have no bona fide options (ibid). Whilst it is unlikely that coercion will be completely eradicated, liberalism aims to reduce it to a minimum, since *"coercion......eliminates an individual as a thinking and valuing person and makes him a bare tool in the achievement of the ends of another"* (ibid : 20 - 21).

The state initially curtails freedom through taxation, reducing individual property rights (King, 1987). Freedom is diminished further by the *"deliberate directing of citizens toward defined choices"* (ibid : 45), choices which are minimal given that public service provision tends towards uniformity and standardisation(Heald, 1987). However, this point is arguably overplayed since there are areas of public service provision which allow elements of choice, for example, higher education, energy consumption and public transport. More importantly, the New Right neglect the possibility that the presence of uniformity can in fact improve service provision(ibid). Although Hayek (1960) contends that greater diversity of service provision can be achieved in the market place, this supposed extension of choice may be illusory. Although individuals will have real choices between alternative suppliers(Seldon, 1979), it will only be choice between similar services.

The welfare state is also condemned for inducing dependency amongst many of its recipients, militating against their pursuit of alternative options. However, *"whether (welfare recipients) would realistically be able to exploit their liberty without state assistance remains doubtful"* (King, 1987 : 46).

An immediate problem with classical liberal arguments is that although freedom is defined in terms of absence of coercion, freedom can also be defined in terms of the capacity to do things. Consequently, the welfare state can be seen to *"increase the freedom of welfare recipients from social and economic obstacles to live their lives as they please"* (Heald, 1987 : 79).

Furthermore, although the state is perceived to be the source of coercion and the market the source of freedom, *"such a simple dichotomy presumes too readily that the operation of the market, dependent as it is upon legally enforceable property rights, does not itself generate unfreedoms as well as freedoms"* (ibid: 60). Lindblom(1977) was highly critical of Hayek's(1960) and Friedman's(1962) beliefs that market economies were not coercive, *"private property....itself (being) a barrier to freedom"* (Stoker, 1991 : 243). *"The lesson of Britain's ruinous experiment with New Right government is that there is in the long run no trade-off between economic efficiency and social cohesion"* (Gray, 1996).

Whilst public provision of services is condemned for suppressing individual choice, markets will not necessarily enhance individualism. *"As soon as we notice that peoples' preferences are, at least in part a function of the choices open to them, then the justification of the market appears entirely circular"* (Hindess, 1987 : 124). The alternative to state provision is not so much individual choice, as a system based on private insurance. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that what is available to most individuals will be determined by the policies of large insurance companies.

In addition, markets introduced into the public sector in the 1980s were *"not necessarily consumer-led markets"* (Stewart and Walsh, 1992 : 507). Furthermore, only those goods and services which generate the most profit will be provided within a market system, to the detriment of what people need and want. Thus, *"the 'people' do not have a 'free choice' at all, only a choice between what the system 'decides' to produce"* (Harris, 1989 : 11).

Although the state is seen as the ultimate coercer, and market provision of services the favoured alternative, the importance of a limited state is addressed. A traditional liberal defence of the free economy is combined with a traditional conservative defence of state authority, otherwise known as the free economy/strong state paradox (Gamble, 1988).

With the underlying intention of increasing liberty, the Thatcher government sought *"to change the relationship between the state, the market and the polity"* (Heald, 1987:68), resulting in the utilisation of the full range of state activities available. Likewise, the government attempted to curtail public service provision by reducing public expenditure, but in reality the dramatic cuts in spending have not been achieved(Midwinter, 1992). Thus, it would appear that the state has been strong, but not in the form envisaged by the New Right.

3.2.2 Public service provision is inherently inefficient, the market being the most viable alternative

The ideology underlying the increased concern with markets in the public sector may be attributed to Hayek's(1960) recommendation that markets combat the inefficiency inherent in public service provision. Unlike competitive firms in the private sector, public service providers have no inbuilt mechanism to promote efficiency, since they are, in effect, monopolies, and face relatively little, if any, competition(Flynn, 1993).

On the contrary, the market system is seen as the *"great engine of economic growth, making possible a more sophisticated, complex, efficient and responsive economy"* (ibid : 28). Unlike the public sector, markets *"transmit information about what those who are in a position to pay for a service actually want, swiftly and effectively"* (Taylor-Gooby and Lawson, 1993(a): 136).

Market provision is favoured because capitalism is the main source of economic growth and any level of public provision crowds out private capital and incentives to invest, thereby reducing economic growth(Bacon and Eltis, 1976; Tomkins, 1987).

Furthermore, liberals assume the absence of consumer control is characteristic of public service provision. Although public services may be insensitive to their recipients' needs, this is not an inexorable feature of public provision. Several Labour controlled local authorities, for example, introduced *"decentralised systems of housing and social service administration which are significantly more responsive to consumer demand"* (Hindess, 1987 : 142).

Denationalisation, originally used to boost public revenue, became symbolic of increasing individual property rights and economic freedom. However, as a means of breaking down monopoly provision and reducing state intervention it has failed (Kaletsky, 1986). British Telecom entered the private sector with unprecedented market power, requiring the establishment of a regulatory agency (OFTEL) and state subsidies to a private company (Mercury) in order to create an 'artificial' market.

Finally, markets are arguably less efficient than public service provision, due to market failure. Private ownership introduces the risk of failure and discontinuity of supply, whereas public ownership spreads risks and ensures that the consequences of failure are not sudden shifts of failure of supply(Flynn, 1993; Levacic, 1991).

Additionally, activities which are not profitable will not take place at all under private ownership. Thus, it would not be unreasonable to argue that state intervention is required in order to prevent or counter such imperfections.

3.2.3 Public choice theorists are one faction of the New Right who apply *"economic concepts to the analysis of politics and bureaucracy"* (Midwinter, 1992 : 1).

Recent changes aimed at implementing private sector management concepts into the public sector may be the NPM's solution to public choice arguments that public managers give preference to satisfying personal rather than organisational needs.

Public choice theorists apply the *"tools and framework of economic reasoning to the functioning of bureaucracy"* (ibid : 8), arguing that choices made by politicians, bureaucrats and voters about public service provision will always be expansionary. Such a contention arises, however, not from substantial empirical evidence, but rather from the *"microeconomic assumptions of actors (egoism, self interest) and context (a perfect political market), with utility maximisation and rational action by the parties also assumed"* (King, 1987: 100). Consequently, public choice theory *"cannot provide a comprehensive theoretical underpinning or an inclusive analytic framework for public organisational design"* (Wise, 1990: 144).

"To assume that public employees never consider their client interests is as naive as assuming that they never consider their own" (Le Grand and Robinson, 1984: 8).

Public servants may well be instilled with a public service ethos (Kelman, 1987; Stoker, 1991). In addition, neither politicians nor bureaucrats can do whatever they wish(King, 1987).

A further difficulty arising from public choice theory is the assumption that voters, politicians and bureaucrats pursue their own economic self interest. *"Granted that the basic motive is self interest, why does it have to be only economic interests?"* (Lane, 1993 : 156)

Public choice theorists(Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Downs, 1957) contend that policy decisions made by politicians result in both an expanding public sector and increased inefficiency. Downs'(1957) central hypothesis is that political parties develop their policy objectives in order to achieve electoral success. *"Because the government.........wishes to maximise (its) political support, it carries out those acts of spending which gain the most votes by means of those acts of financing which lose the fewest votes"* (Downs, 1957 : 52). Consequently, *"the pursuit of self interest by politicians is alleged to destabilise the macroeconomy, generating political business cycles synchronised to the electoral cycle"* (Heald, 1987 : 118).

The 1991 Autumn Statement, the election year being 1992, supports the political business cycle theorem. A Public Sector Borrowing Requirement ranging from £20 to £50 billion was accepted, outlining proposals to allocate more resources to those

services which proved to be most popular, namely education and health. Although it cannot be ascertained whether the Conservatives won the 1992 election because *"the foundations had been laid during the Autumn of 1991....there can be no doubt that the government was able to fight the election on the pledges for public expenditure which had been outlined in the Autumn Statement"* (Mullard, 1992:50).

However, the political business cycle theorem presumes that politicians have sufficient freedom to influence the economic cycle. If this were the case, surely politicians would be capable of manipulating the economy to bring about eternal public service growth (Alt and Chrystal, 1979). Furthermore, *"the political business cycle is presented as a model with independent predictive variables, suggesting that there is a stable relationship between changes in macro-economic variables and government popularity"* (Mullard, 1992 :51). If this relationship did exist, surely the Conservatives would have lost the 1983 election, due to poor economic performance between 1979 and 1982, the result of high levels of unemployment. The political business cycle theory also predicts that in an election year, welfare provision will expand. In reality, the converse has tended to happen in the 1980s and 1990s, with the exception of the 1992 election (ibid).

Downs'(1957) theory that political choices in public service provision are expansionary and inefficient is questioned further, given the policies pursued by the Thatcher government in the 1980s. Balanced budgets and reduced taxes were

necessary to restore a minimal state role(Thatcher, 1977: 35), resulting in politicians seeking popularity from voters by promising to cut spending. However, in spite of this commitment to reduce spending, spending rose inexorably after 1978 - 79(Thain and Wright, 1988 : 4-5). Whether spending was increased out of a genuine belief that Britain's economic performance would be improved, or whether the government increased spending to combat falling popularity, is open to debate.

> *"For all their high moral talk about professional ethics, teachers, doctors, nurses and civil servants......exploit their collective power to preserve life tenure and over-manning, while opposing efficiency audits, payment by results and contracting out of ancillary services"* (Harris, 1988 :19).

"Just as businessmen seek to maximise profit, bureaucrats seek to maximise the size of the bureau" (Mishra, 1984 : 32), since the growth of public services is matched by an increase in both the responsibility of the individual bureaucrat and the benefits they are credited with providing, thereby raising their power, status and salary(Niskanen, 1971).

Niskanen(1971) contends that a bilateral monopoly exists between bureaucrats and politicians. Bureaucrats receive support from politicians, who are eager to increase spending when it appears to favour their constituents, and are equally reluctant to lower spending if their supporters would be adversely affected. Furthermore, given that politicians do not have, and are unable to acquire, information pertaining to the true costs of bureaucratic services necessary to control the bureaucracy, *"it is*

possible to hoodwink political sponsors into providing funds surplus to that necessary to produce the output demanded" (Boyne, 1987 : 80). Thus,

> *"without the restraining influence of market forces, public bureaucrats are much freer to pursue their own advantage than those in the private sector; to respond more rapidly and thoroughly to instructions which coincide with their own advantage; to use the choice between similar policies in favour of policies more closely in accord with their own interests; to distort upward information flows and to show their activities in the best possible light"* (Hickie, 1995 : 113).

However, assuming that bureaucrats will instinctively exploit their position as monopolists of information neglects the possibility that *"the liar must keep his lies down to believable proportions or he loses credibility"* (Goodin, 1982 : 26). Furthermore, given that British bureaucrats have little control over both the size and design of their departments(Hoopes, 1997), *"one wonders why Niskanen thinks bureaucrats are so desirous of maximising their budgets if they can enjoy so few of the fruits"* (Wilson, 1989:118).

Given that public sector remuneration has been influenced by incomes policies, subjecting pay levels to downward pressure, *"one wonders at the rationality of self interested, financially motivated, public officials at not having followed a more lucrative career"* (Hickie, 1995 : 116).

In addition, uncertainty surrounds the extent to which a bilateral monopoly characterises the relationship between British bureaucrats and politicians, Hoopes(1997) contending that politicians have supremacy over bureaucrats.

Furthermore, an American study by Lewis(1990) demonstrates that bureaucrats have no greater inclination to favour increased government spending than citizens. *"A series of questions on eleven items of foreign and domestic spending show(ed) virtually identical spending priorities for bureaucrats and ordinary people"* (Lewis, 1990 :222).

Perhaps greatest doubt is cast on Niskanen's(1971) theory when policies implemented from 1979 are examined. From the early 1980s, the Conservative government pursued a programme of privatisation, young and unheard of civil servants rising to the top positions as a reward for their successful privatisation policies. However, if personal utility is the key factor, surely these people could not be trusted to privatise any more than they could be trusted to expand public services.

Furthermore, Compulsory Competitive Tendering does not resolve the problem that it is senior bureaucrats, in consultation with politicians, who take decisions about public provision, without being subject to competitive forces. The nature of provision and the content and level of service provided remain dictated by the bureaucrat, albeit service delivery may be handled by private organisations.

Given that privatisation, CCT and the introduction of quasi-markets have led to reduced responsibilities in some government departments, it would not be unreasonable to expect budget maximising bureaucrats to oppose such policies. *"The problem for public choice theorists is to explain why the privatisation boom has taken off so fast, and met with such low level resistance, from the public service bureaucracies"* (Dunleavy, 1986 : 17).

Even where markets have been introduced into the public sector they have been manipulated, albeit not for strictly personal gain. *"Artfully assembled figures on 'market demand' and rhetorical appeals to 'service quality' provided (a consultant) with new ammunition in bargaining for necessary resources"* (Strong and Robinson, 1990 :841).

Since public services are provided free, *"the electorate tend to expect too much from government at too little cost"* (Mishra, 1984 : 37). Consequently, there is a wasteful use of resources by consumers(George and Wilding, 1992), the repercussion being government overload, where the demands made on government exceed its capacity to meet them effectively.

Given that governments depend on support, they seek to satisfy the needs of particular interest groups who can spend a good deal on *"persuasion and legitimation of their causes, and by a process of 'log rolling' (vote trading)... can*

secure approval of a whole array of spending programmes" (Hill and Bramley, 1986 : 99).

However, if voters were purely self-interested, surely it would be reasonable to expect a one hundred per cent turn out at elections. Furthermore, it would be logical to anticipate the self-interested working class, who do not pay for increased welfare provision, voting for parties pledging to improve public provision. In reality, those individuals who could demand more without paying for it do not vote(Stoker, 1991).

The act of voting itself, contrary to public choice assumptions, is a poor means of articulating preferences about different forms of public policy, since there is no way in which voters can pick and mix priorities between different policy areas(Gamble, 1988 : 51). Furthermore, it would be difficult to pursue one's own interests given the marginal impact of any single vote, and the fact that voters are allowed only one decision every few years(Schackleton, 1986).

3.3 AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

> *"Hardly a country on the planet has not begun.......to transform the role of the state, its relationship with the market, the mix and balance of public and private sectors and the way in which public utility services are run"* (Martin, 1994 : 22).

Whilst it may be argued that the rise of the NPM in Britain can be correlated with the election of a Conservative government committed to New Right ideas, *"that on its own does not explain why......NPM was so strongly endorsed by Labour governments ostensibly opposed to the New Right, notably in Australia and New Zealand"* (Hood, 1991:6). In Australia, *"improved public sector productivity and efficiency have become important goals"* (OECD, 1990 :19), culminating in the development of an Efficiency Scrutiny Unit and a Financial Management Improvement Programme (Zifcak, 1994).

Likewise, New Zealand's 1984 Labour Party Policy Document stated that the party would *"initiate and implement......new ideas for improving services, increasing efficiency, and, where appropriate, lifting profitability"* (Boston, 1987 : 431). Consequently, decision making and budgetary powers have been delegated and privatisation has been pursued(Chapman, 1989; Halligan, 1997; Pollitt and Summa, 1997; Scott et al, 1990; Wistrich, 1992).

Thus, the public sectors in New Zealand and Britain have experienced similar changes, yet are governed by parties at opposite ends of the political spectrum. It would therefore seem that the political persuasion of a country has little relevance when considering why the work of the NPM has been widely accepted. Are there *"more fundamental causes of what is happening to the administration of social services that lie beyond national politics?"* (Baldock, 1993 : 24)

> *"While it would not be correct to see NPM as a new global paradigm, it is in response to global economic changes, technological innovation and the resulting domestic pressures, that many governments have embarked upon dramatic reconstructions of their public sectors"* (Massey, 1997:21).

"For most countries, the pressure to reduce budget deficits has been the most important driving force behind management improvement" (OECD, 1990 :9). By the end of the 1970s, concern was expressed by all British political parties that the costs of public service provision had spiralled dramatically(Baldock, 1993).

Likewise, when elected to power in 1984, the New Zealand Labour Party faced a *"serious crisis of confidence in the New Zealand dollar, a fiscal deficit and a mounting burden of international indebtedness"* (Boston, 1987 : 431). Furthermore, the Swedish Social Democrats were forced to take action when taxation reached a 'political ceiling' (Fudge and Gustafsson, 1989).

Increased concern with economic performance is also a contributory factor in public sector reform. *"The super shock of the oil price rises and the consequent world-wide recession had brought all industrial societies into an abrupt and unusual synchronisation of their economic cycles. They all faced the same problems and constraints at more or less the same time"* (Baldock, 1993 : 26). Consequently, many countries saw the growth of the public sector as *"detracting from, rather than contributing to, overall macro-economic balance and economic growth objective"* (OECD, 1985: 121). Perhaps this is one of the underlying reasons why

governments in OECD member countries employed public sector reduction programmes.

By 1990, a collective recognition by governments of the link between public sector performance and the overall performance of the national economy had emerged (OECD, 1990). This may explain the upsurge in the use of performance indicators, markets and competition as world-wide tools to transform public sectors.

However, countervailing evidence questions the influence of the economy on public sector reform. It should be remembered that the Thatcher government began implementing their most extreme reforms between 1987 and 1988, a period of economic growth, *"whereas the deep economic downturns of 1981 and 1991 did not seem to lead directly to anything particularly new"* (Pollitt and Summa, 1997:14).

Linked to the pressures faced by governments of the rising cost and size of the public sector are demographic pressures(Rocine, 1987; Sargent, 1993; Upton and Brooks, 1995). The rising dependency ratios produced by the worlds ageing population means that needs are growing relatively faster than the existing tax base(Gillion, 1991). Furthermore, the rising number of elderly people puts health care provision under enormous strain (Saltman, 1991).

A further incentive for undertaking public sector institutional reform was the need to *"cope with the rapid globalisation of the economy and to maintain international competitiveness"* (OECD, 1990 : 9). Policies of privatisation were being pursued throughout the world because *"industries such as telecommunications, finance and energy (were) being restructured to respond to the needs of an integrated world economy"* (Martin, 1994 : 22).

In addition, *"some observers and commentators link a general shift in public management style to developments in technology"* (Hood, 1995 : 105). *"The needs of information age societies were colliding with the limits of industrial-era government. Regardless of party, regardless of ideology........governments were responding"* (Gore, 1993 : 6).

Finally, public sector reform has perhaps been influenced by changing cultures in the populations of all countries(Caulfield and Schultz, 1989; Eastel and Thomas, 1984). *"People are becoming sophisticated, discriminating, assertive and less subservient to official views and actions. They are demanding not only more services but also better quality provisions"* (Isaac Henry, 1993: 4). Hence, the development of a Citizens Charter in Britain.

Thus, much of modern welfare state reform can be attributed not to the *"ideologies of particular governments, but to more fundamental social and economic changes"* (Baldock, 1993 :29).

3.4 THE NPM IN PRACTICE: MANAGEMENT CHANGES

> *"Equity used to be one of the key values in the public sector. It has been overshadowed by drives for efficiency, economy, effectiveness and enterprise"* (Irving, 1995).

Theoretically, economy is a simple matter of *"ensuring that actual inputs do not exceed planned inputs......planning to reduce the level of input........is politically acceptable"* (Gunn, 1988 : 21).

Essentially, therefore, economy is about spending as little as possible. The Conservative government, elected in 1979, was committed to reducing public expenditure to the extent that *"public expenditure seems to have been pursued as an end in itself"* (ibid).

Efficiency, expressed in terms of the ratio of output to input, is attained either by *"increasing output whilst holding input constant, or by holding output constant whilst reducing inputs"* (McAllister and Connolly, 1990 : 36). However, whilst efficiency measures assist towards a manager's contribution to *"improving......and determining the expected gains"*, they say *"nothing about the quality and value of*

services provided, or how they relate to policy objectives" (ibid). Thus, measures of effectiveness are also required.

Effectiveness ensures that *"the output from any given activity is achieving the desired results"* (ibid). The NPM approach envisages that economy and efficiency will lead to effectiveness. However, this rather *"narrow and short term concern with economy and efficiency has......been in conflict with longer term effectiveness in the delivery of public services"* (Gunn, 1988 : 22).

Although public sector managers believe economy, efficiency and effectiveness are the *"three most important factors in changing internal policies and arrangements"* (Talbot, 1994:6), economy and efficiency have prevailed over effectiveness (Mascarenhas, 1990).

It would therefore seem that all public services have undergone radical change since the election of the Conservative government in 1979, the private sector being *"held up as a model of economic efficiency, business competitiveness (and) wealth generating enterprise"* (Farnham and Horton, 1993(c) :240).

3.4.1 Value-for-Money

The initial concern with value-for-money began with the radical transformation of the civil service, many of the reforms introduced in central government later

reappearing elsewhere in the public sector. In 1979, Sir (now Lord) Derek Rayner established scrutinies, the objectives being twofold:

1. To examine a specific policy or activity, questioning all aspects of work normally taken for granted;
2. To propose solutions to problems and to make recommendations to achieve savings and increase efficiency and effectiveness(Rayner, 1982: para 2:2).

By 1986, total savings were estimated at £950 million against scrutiny costs of only £5 million(Public Accounts Committee, 1985 - 1986 : para 15). However, the extent of the savings in such a short time span implies that perhaps savings undermined the effectiveness of the quality of service provided (Reed and Ellis, 1987: 182-183).

Management Information Systems for Ministers(MINIS), initiated in 1980 by Michael Heseltine, evolved from a Rayner Scrutiny concerned with the delegation of running cost budgets to departmental managers and improving departmental information systems. Although MINIS quickly disappeared, the fundamental idea of creating management information systems became grounded in the Financial Management Initiative(FMI).

FMI was launched in May 1982, aiming to *"promote a new culture of public administration in which resource management was to be the cornerstone"* (Gray and Jenkins, 1993:14).

Managers at all levels would have:

1. A clear view of their objectives, and means to access, and wherever possible, measure, outputs or performance in relation to these objectives;
2. Well defined responsibility for making the best use of their resources, including a critical scrutiny of output and value-for-money;
3. The information (particularly about costs), the training and the access to expert advice which they need to exercise their responsibilities effectively(Cmnd. 9058, 1983 : para 13).

However, public service inputs and outputs are often difficult to quantify, even when they can be identified(Gray and Jenkins, 1993). Furthermore, *"the private sector criteria of managerial efficiency upon which FMI was based, were in conflict with public administration ideas of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary scrutiny and Treasury control"* (Horton, 1993 :136).

Nevertheless, some public services have benefited from FMI, managers *"having a much clearer idea of priorities, objectives and targets"* (Jones, 1988) and being

"much more cost conscious...on the look out for more cost-effective ways of carrying out their tasks" (Thorpe-Tracey, 1987 : 335).

The delegation of budgets to cost centres was further developed in 1988 by the introduction of Next Steps. Evidence suggests that real improvements in efficiency have occurred, for example, the speedier delivery of social security benefits at a lower unit cost(Richards and Rodrigues, 1993).

Thus, *"FMI was the impetus for government departments to produce reports on their activities, their effectiveness in achieving policy objectives, and the efficiency with which they were undertaken"* (Beeton, 1988 : 100). This focus on efficiency and effectiveness filtered into all parts of the public sector, the *"current emphasis (being) on making (managers) manage by nailing down the performance levels to which they will be held"* (Schick, 1990 :33).

Consequently, performance measurement has been a key element in public sector reform. Performance indicators benefit public managers by providing information on *"costs, quality of service, achievement of goals and demand versus provision of service"* (Palmer, 1993 : 33). Furthermore, performance measures aid public managers when *"evaluating final outcomes, justifying the use of resources and indicating areas of potential cost savings"* (ibid: 35), proving to be invaluable when

the organisation's future priorities are being decided(Holtham, 1988; Moss Kanter and Summers, 1994; Smith, 1990).

However, the suitability of using performance measurement as a management tool in the public sector is surrounded by scepticism(Carter, 1991; Carvel, 1997; Flynn, 1986; Flynn et al, 1988; Likierman, 1993; Stewart and Walsh, 1994; Wilson, 1995). Since performance indicators generally link efficiency with cost, it is highly questionable whether indicators were introduced to increase the effectiveness of service delivery (Harte, 1992; Kean, 1994).

Furthermore, *"levels of service provision are rarely a straightforward matter of relative efficiencies; more often than not they reflect policy decisions and local priorities just as much as national geography or social and economic factors"* (Calpin, 1995 : 15). League tables of exam results, for example, fail to *"take into account the social factors, completely outside the control of schools, that influence the level of students' achievement"* (Taylor Gooby, 1993 : 114). Consequently, *"information on pupil attainment, unless adjusted to take account of the multiplicity of factors which affect pupil learning"*, will convey more about the quality of pupils attending the schools than *"about what happened to them whilst attending a particular school"* (Strain, 1990 : 24).

Rather than increase management control, it could be argued that performance indicators enhance the government's ability to maintain control of the service (Carter, 1991; 1994). In addition, managerial control is limited when using performance indicators because many departments do not have complete control over their performance (ibid).

However, in spite of their weaknesses, *"performance indicators are a means of assisting responsible management to make efficient and effective decisions. They are not, however, a mechanical substitute for good judgement, political wisdom or leadership"* (Jackson, 1988 :15).

Thus, it would appear that these efficiency programmes culminated in an attempt to implant into the public sector, *"selected managerial practices and cultural attitudes derived from the private sector"* (Greenwood and Wilson, 1989 : 138).

3.4.2 Devolved Management leading to disaggregation of units

> *"There is a growing trend towards the decentralisation of management and the empowerment of staff and managers"* (Talbot, 1994:34).

In order to make the best use of their resources, FMI required each government department to *"examine the scope for breaking its structure down into cost centres.....to which effective resource costs (could) be allocated"* (Cmnd. 8616:

Appendix 3). Cost centre managers became budget holders, managing budgets and accounting for resources used.

Not content with delegation of budgets, the Next Steps programme was established in 1988, creating executive agencies which would administer the executive functions of government. Chief executives were responsible for day-to-day operations, managing within policy objectives and resource frameworks designed by Ministers in consultation with the Treasury (HMSO, 1988; Mellon, 1993).

Thus, Next Steps enhanced the move from *"large homogeneous bureaucracies towards smaller, more tightly focused and responsive organisations"* (Gray and Jenkins, 1993:16). The Benefits Agency, for example, underwent *"a cultural revolution designed to turn the organisation which pays social security benefits from a sluggish bureaucracy into a fast moving customer friendly service"*(Cellan-Jones, 1992), the consequence being that words such as *"vision, ownership and empowerment, the common currency of the private sector in the eighties, are now being heard in Whitehall corridors"* (ibid).

By 1994, 62 percent of all civil servants worked in the hundred or so executive agencies which had been created (Cmnd. 2750). Whilst these executive agencies operate as businesses in the sense that they *"compete with each other, issue contracts to each other and......charge what are thought to be 'commercial' rates for*

their services" (Chapman and O'Toole, 1995 : 12), managers remain constrained by the level of control still exerted by government(Massey, 1995; Mellon, 1993; Richards and Rodrigues, 1993; Walker, 1993).

The influence of FMI is apparent in the Resource Management Initiative(RMI) introduced into the NHS(Department of Health and Social Security, 1986), the underlying intention being to *"enable the National Health Service to give a better service to its patients by helping clinicians and other managers to make better informed judgements about how the resources they control can be used to maximum effect"* (Packwood et al, 1991:11). Although RMI was an experimental programme, launched in several sites rather than throughout the health service(Lowson, 1991; Perrin, 1988), its principles *"later became enmeshed in the development of the internal market in the National Health Service"* (Walsh, 1995:171). Clinical directorates were born out of the belief that clinicians *"must accept the management responsibility which goes with clinical freedom"* (Wistow, 1992:107).

Although *"many senior medical staff seized the opportunities for active business management roles with considerable enthusiasm"* (Whittington et al, 1994 : 836), their medical training does not prepare them for the responsibilities involved in making profit related decisions(Cunningham and Hyman, 1995; Galbraith, 1991). Thus, in a period when the Conservative government espoused policies aimed at increasing economy and efficiency, it is not immediately apparent to see the

underlying logic of introducing clinical directorates into the NHS. *"Doctors have been trained at enormous expense to be specialists in medicine. How cost effective is it if they are all to become mini-managers and if all of them now need to spend time negotiating patient care deals?"* (Strong and Robinson, 1990 : 189)

Delegation was taken to its fullest in 1989, with legislation granting trust status to NHS hospitals(Cmnd. 555). Hospital trusts were empowered to employ their own staff, buy and sell goods and services and raise capital, either by borrowing from the government or in the financial markets. Their revenue would emanate exclusively from the sale of their services(Bradley, 1995). By becoming trusts, hospitals *"opt out of some of the bureaucracy and have more freedom"* (McColl, 1996).

Likewise, principles of FMI are visible within education, where Local Management of Schools(LMS) involves the delegation of budgets to cost centres, in this case, schools. Governors and headteachers manage their school's finances, a break with the past where education authorities had managerial responsibility for all the schools in their district. Given that the training offered to headteachers has focused mainly on budgetary responsibilities and managing a cost effective service, it would seem that *"the impoverished concept of management flowing from the efficiency strategy in central government.......have further parallels at local government level"* (Harrow and Willcocks, 1992:56).

In addition, concern has been expressed(Arnott et al, 1992; Cave and Demick, 1990) that LMS will change the role of the headteacher from providing the traditional professional leadership of an educator, to one of running the school like a business, detached from teaching.

Governing bodies have also been delegated responsibilities to appoint staff and determine the number of teachers working in schools. However, these devolved powers are limited, governing bodies remaining bound by the terms and conditions of the Teachers Pay and Conditions Act 1987, and national agreements conferring individual contractual rights to teachers.

Devolved powers in education were gradually extended with the emergence of grant maintained schools, allowing schools to opt out of local authority control and become independently run. The original consultation paper on grant maintained schools stated that such schools would compete on equal terms with the local authority sector, being funded on the same basis as other schools in their neighbourhood. However, the average capital allocation for all grant maintained schools amounted to £276,000, while the average of 25,000 schools in the country as a whole was £15,000 (Simon, 1992). There can, therefore, *"be no doubt whatever, in the light of the enormous disparities shown, that the offer of substantial financial inducements to opt out was now deliberate government policy"* (ibid : 162).

Rather than seeking grant maintained status because of a desire to become independently managed, evidence suggests opt out ballots were held to prevent school closures and to escape budgetary problems(Forum for the Discussion of New Trends in Education, 1989; Milne, 1995; Pollitt et al, 1997). Allowing schools with an insufficient number of pupils and empty classrooms to opt out, remaining open for at least another year, is surely inefficient, the very thing the Conservative government was trying to combat.

3.4.3 The introduction of business management and business practices

> *"In the public sector......there can hardly be a school, hospital, social services department, university or college in the UK that has not in some way become permeated by the language of enterprise"* (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992 : 622).

The publication of the Griffiths Report(1983) resulted in a major restructuring of NHS management, the aim being to *"introduce the concepts and methods of business management into the NHS"* (Allsop, 1989 :59). Criticising *"consensus management for delay and lowest common denominator decision making"* (Wistow, 1992 : 105), general managers were introduced at unit, district and regional level, replacing the professionally based team which had previously managed the NHS. The Department of Health and Social Security circular on implementation outlined the role of the general manager as *"leadership, bringing about a constant search for major change and cost improvement, securing proper motivation of staff, ensuring that the professional functions are effectively geared into overall objectives and*

responsibilities of the general management process and making sense of the process of consultation" (Circular HC (83) 13 paras 9 a-e).

In reality, however, general managers believe that the majority of their work concerns short term financial manoeuvring, reducing the time available to spend on other tasks(Pollitt et al, 1991; Strong and Robinson, 1990).

Furthermore, the government *"introduced a modern business model of organisation....inside the traditional health service hierarchy"* (Strong and Robinson, 1990 : 160). General managers were expected to *"make things happen"* (Exworthy, 1994 : 20), yet are constrained by central government controls, funding levels and professional power held by the medical profession(Strong and Robinson, 1990).

In addition, there was an underlying assumption in the Griffiths Report(1983) that the new general managers would *"bring efficiency oriented skills from non-NHS settings to bear on the service"* (Moon and Kendall, 1993 : 179). In reality, these general management posts were predominantly internal appointments (Strong and Robinson, 1990). Thus, *"private sector management methods were not introduced by imports from the private sector but by converts from within the NHS"* (Moon and Kendall, 1993 : 179).

The consequence of Griffiths'(1983) reforms was a growth in general and senior management positions, from 500 in 1986 to some 20,000 in 1993(Fletcher, 1995). It was intended that 10,000 of these jobs would be dispensed with as part of a Conservative government drive to reduce NHS bureaucracy (ibid), the bureaucracy which the government introduced under Griffiths.

Thus, the influence of private sector management practices is paramount when examining recent NHS management changes. Indeed, it would seem that no public service has remained unscathed in a time when the private sector has been held to be the model to follow.

> *"The Conservative government is shifting local government........towards a more fragmented, more privatised, more private sector oriented form"* (Hambleton, 1990 : 50).

It would seem that a company ethos has flourished in local government in the last decade. Authorities are: adopting flatter structures; devolving management responsibility; undertaking business and strategic planning; creating information systems; competing in a market system; becoming enablers of public provision; establishing business units; focusing on cost cutting and efficiency; creating performance indicators to ensure objectives are met; focusing on the customer; pursuing programmes of management accountability (Barber, 1994; Beardmore and Frost, 1993; Bell, 1990; Bichard, 1989; Brooke, 1989; Broussine at al, 1995;

Buckland and Joshua, 1992; Conner and Roberts, 1993; Conner, 1994; March, 1994; Scales, 1988; Stephenson, 1995).

Perhaps such changes indicate that local authorities do not just adopt business techniques, but think they are businesses with *"business units, business language and an emphasis on cost cutting"* (Usher and Darbourne, 1993 :12). Perhaps *"many key professionals (now) seek legitimacy not from the electoral process, but from their ability to fit in with the latest management language"* (Cochrane, 1991 : 295).

Furthermore, *"the word quality has featured prominently in the vocabulary of public service organisations in the last 3 or 4 years......This is only to be expected given the interest in quality in the private sector"* (Davies and Hinton, 1993: 51). Organisations have adopted quality initiatives as the natural follow on from management reforms such as competition, customer care, performance measurement and devolution of management powers(ibid).

However, the development of quality initiatives has been viewed *"both as a justification for and an outcome of radical organisation change"* (Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995(a): 8). Perhaps the focus on quality has provided a smoke screen for the underlying reasons behind public sector reform.

Thus, the public sector has undergone a radical transformation, with the apparent injection of private sector techniques into public services. However, Holmes and Shand (1995) warn of the dangers of merely assuming that the public sector has modelled itself on the private sector. Instead, they contend that *"the bulk of reforms in this area have mostly reflected common sense and if the private sector has also found this to be the case, so be it"* (Holmes and Shand, 1995 :556).

3.4.4 Markets

> *"A central and important tenet of Mrs Thatcher's Conservatism was the emphasis put on the use of markets and free enterprise"* (Holmes, 1985:40).

i. Privatisation

The Thatcher government pursued a programme of privatisation, with state ownership in nationalised industries being transferred to the private sector. Aside from its importance as a method of raising money(Edmonds, 1987), the intentions of privatisation were to: *"(create) a mass, property owning society and (wean) away British culture from its acceptance of state provision and intervention"* (Henig et al, 1988 : 463); give the customer greater choice through competition; allow public organisations to take on an international role; cut the rate of job losses that had been occurring in the late 1970s through closures in traditional industries; give managers *"freedom from government involvement, freed of finance investment in a flexible, long term and cost effective way and freedom to expand into complementary business"* (Beaver, 1988:8); create a new kind of employee involvement through

share ownership and buyouts(Beaver, 1988; Hughes, 1994; Hurl, 1988; Lawton and Rose, 1994; Marsh, 1991).

The consequence of privatisation was a changed management role(Buckland, 1989; Freeman, 1990; Richardson, 1993). The water industry, for example, *"moved away from the 'nudge and fudge' of the public sector. There were clear objectives, clear timescales and a clear basis for financing operations"*(Semple, 1990).

"Privatisation, together with regulation, is a way of ensuring that we use business skills to achieve an effective industry from an industrial point of view, and yet safeguard the public interest" (Byatt, 1990). However, the issue is not public versus private, but rather competition versus monopoly. Perhaps competition from both Plessey in equipment supply and from Mercury in services, were the driving forces behind increased efficiency and improved service delivery, not privatisation (Common et al, 1992).

Since public services such as education, health and social security could not be directly transferred to the private sector, the government looked for alternative ways of introducing competition and market type relationships. The solutions appeared to be internal markets and Compulsory Competitive Tendering, culminating in a highly managed market, in the sense that *"they were entirely artificial constructions,*

which ran according to sets of rules, definitions and formulae, invented largely by senior officials in Whitehall" (Pollitt, 1993 : 181).

ii. The Internal Market

> *"Internal markets developed quickly as old-time bureaucrats became risk taking entrepreneurs"* (Parston, 1996:17).

Internal markets were introduced, most notably in health and education, in the late 1980s. Like CCT, a distinction is made between the core and the ancillary. *"The public core becomes setting objectives and standards, and financing provision"*, whilst service delivery becomes ancillary and *"open to being hived off, contracted out or market tested"* (Mair and Wilkie, 1993: 3). The relationship between the parties *"embodie(s) the commercial principles upon which the edifice was built; they (will) behave towards each other as buyers and sellers, the relationship being a contractual one"* (Wistow, 1992 : 65).

Clients in the NHS, generally known as commissioners, consist of GPs and District Health Authorities. GPs with practices containing seven thousand patients are eligible to become fundholders and subsequently receive a budget from their Regional Health Authority, to purchase *"outpatient care, diagnostic testing and a range of inpatient and day care treatments for patients"* (Butler, 1993: 62). The other commissioning agent, District Health Authorities, purchase services on behalf of patients registered with non- budget holding GP practices. Contractors consist of

independent hospitals, self governing trusts and hospitals remaining under management control of District Health Authorities.

The intention of the internal market was to increase efficiency and effectiveness, with contractors competing for the commissioner's custom. Consequently, hospitals have been forced to market themselves to attract business(Bowers, 1992; Whittington et al, 1994).

Issues surrounding the viability of the NHS internal market soon became apparent, evidence demonstrating that *"the administrative baggage that came with the internal market had cost the NHS £1.2 billion"* (Gray, 1993: 12). Furthermore, the outcome of internal markets for both hospital trusts and GPs was excessive bureaucracy and an increased workload(Brindle, 1996; Ham 1996; Rankine, 1996).

In addition, given that sixty percent of a GP's income is reliant on a capitation fee, a forceful stimulant exists to develop lists of patients with minimal health care needs. Although the White Paper claims GPs will be given incentives to put patients first (Cmnd. 555), a greater incentive will undoubtedly exist to use the cheapest hospitals and exclude expensive patients.

Evidence also suggests that patients on fundholding GP lists will receive priority over those with non-fundholding GPs, GP fundholders receiving better services

because they possess a degree of financial leverage with which to press for improvements in the quality of clinical and other services provided by hospitals(BBC, 1996; Hudson, 1992; Kemp, 1990(b); Wistow, 1992). However, new guidance was issued to consultants in June 1991, prohibiting provider units from offering contracts to one purchaser that would disadvantage the patients of other purchasers(Hughes, 1993), implying that the internal market had been anything but non-partisan on conception.

Furthermore, the NHS internal market is not wholly representative of private markets because it *"remains very much an 'inward facing' and regulated market"* (Ferlie, 1994: 110). Finally, although the fundamental objective of the internal market was the creation of competition, in reality competition is limited or non-existent. With the exception of larger cities, most places in Britain have only one hospital in their locality, the consequence being that competition will be achieved at the expense of increased travelling distances for patients(Burns, 1995; Strong and Robinson, 1990).

Nevertheless, mangers within the NHS generally welcomed the internal market, since it strengthened both strategic and operational management(Moon and Kendall, 1993; Whittington et al, 1994).

However, managers responsible for purchasing services, initially attracted to the NHS through a desire to provide health care, found themselves separated from the provider function(Whittington et al, 1994:834). Managers responsible for providing services, however, found *"some elements of continuity with pre-April 1991 situations"* (Moon and Kendall, 1993 : 184).

As well as introducing an internal market into the NHS, the government aimed to increase parental choice through an education market, which schools were encouraged to enter through the system of Local Management of Schools. *"The division between LEAs and schools will, in some ways, parallel the client-contractor split needed in the case of local authority services subject to compulsory competition. The LEA will be responsible for setting objectives, the schools for delivering performance which makes those objectives a reality"* (Audit Commission, 1988: 3).

By removing the restrictions on the number of pupils admitted to any school, competition between schools was encouraged since *"LEAs (were) required to allocate seventy five percent of the general school budget on a strict, undiluted, per capita basis"* (Ball, 1990 : 4). Consequently, *"survival will depend upon the ability of school managers to sell their product in a competitive environment"* (Barnes and Williams, 1993: 117).

Although it was assumed that the education market would enhance parental choice, the reality is that choices made by some parents affect the choices of others (Taylor Gooby, 1993). *"While the market is the best way of providing retail services.......the poor often end up having to buy from the local, high price shop while the better off drive to the spacious, well filled aisles of Sainsbury's. In a marketed schools system, who will take the less able children?"* (Corry, 1996) Finally, it is debatable to what extent schools declining in numbers, and hence resources, can provide a full range of education at a high standard.

iii. Compulsory Competitive Tendering

CCT, introduced by the Local Government and Planning Land Act 1980 and subsequently strengthened by Local Government Acts implemented in 1988 and 1992, represented an *"integral and important part of the (Conservative government's) campaign to introduce private sector discipline and efficiency into British government"* (Ascher, 1987: 1). CCT required public agencies to specify and justify the need for services more precisely than in the past, revealing information about the nature of current operations and costs of providing a certain level of service (Stewart, 1993).

Given that in all but exceptional circumstances the lowest tender is accepted, perhaps CCT will contribute to *"the replacement of the public service ethos with private sector profit motive objective"* (Ascher, 1987: 20).

Furthermore, if a contract was awarded to a private sector company, *"some would suggest that the consumer of public services will suffer because private sector provision is likely to be less responsive"* (Walker, 1984). Concern has also been expressed that local flexibility will vanish because authorities will become bound by contracts, rendering it difficult to react to changing circumstances (Ascher, 1987; Bach, 1989; Kerr and Radford, 1995). Finally, evidence shows that there is a greater likelihood of private sector contractors making cuts in service provision than DSOs (Painter, 1991).

Whilst the objective of CCT was to promote competition, evidence shows that little effective competition actually exists(Fair, 1995). Thus, although DSO success may initially indicate increased efficiency, it may simply be an indication of little private interest in the contract(Audit Commission, 1993).

Furthermore, it is unclear whether large private sector firms tendering for public contracts will actually be competing. *"It is possible that increased monopoly will lead to price increases..........suggest (ing) that the policy is more concerned with ownership and control, than competition and efficiency"* (Harte, 1992:193).

This lack of competition, combined with government regulation of private contractors, questions the extent to which CCT emulates private sector markets. *"Government regulation can reduce choice and variety"* (Knapp, 1989: 236),

because the standards set down by government will ensure that *"the non-public producers (will become) more and more alike and more and more similar to the government's chosen style, quality or orientation of service"* (ibid).

In addition, the possibility exists that organisations will fail to function as single entities under CCT(Nove, 1993). If a private company wins a contract, their workers will not be directly accountable to the public organisation, the needs of the private company undoubtedly competing with the needs of the contracting firm. Consequently, antagonistic relationships between clients and contractors have emerged, the former focusing on public service, the latter focusing solely on survival(Shaw et al, 1993).

The most common criticism of CCT, however, is the deterioration of terms and conditions of employment(Auda, 1993 ; Caldwell, 1988; IPM, 1986; LRD, 1987; Mailly, 1986; White and Palmer, 1987). However, Domberger et al(1986) undertook a study in which they found that 17 percent of the 22 percent savings made by private contractors were due to improved technical efficiency, the corresponding figure for technical efficiency in DSOs being 7 percent of the 17 percent savings. Thus, these figures do not support arguments that savings are largely the result of poorer terms and conditions of employment.

Finally, CCT has disbenefited the economy as a whole. Job uncertainty has discouraged private investment and unemployment has increased, resulting in an increase in income support and housing benefit uptake(Auda, 1993; Coote and Corry, 1995)

However, in spite of its weaknesses, CCT has achieved economy. When private contractors were awarded the contract, costs fell by 22 percent (Domberger et al, 1986). The corresponding figure when work remained in-house was 17 percent. One possible explanation for this small difference is that the critical factor is not whether the providers are private or public, but rather whether the service is provided under competitive or monopolistic conditions. However, savings made by CCT must be counterbalanced by the administration costs which were required to implement it (Rao and Young, 1995).

"CCT means more than savings" (Lang, 1991). Management practices have benefited from: increased cost effectiveness; improved organisational management, the result of clearer objectives, clarified responsibilities, articulation of standards and setting of targets; improved monitoring; a competitive ethos; raised standards; improvements in quality; the cultivation of a more business like and innovative approach(Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes, 1993; Department of Environment, 1993; Jones, 1994; Parker and Hartley, 1990; Rao and Young, 1995; Shaw et al, 1993; Szymanski, 1994).

The client side of the split, responsible for purchasing services for their customers, has been categorised as outward looking with a public service/customer orientation (Campbell, 1994; Shaw et al, 1993). Consequently, client side managers must *"research, listen and be responsive to customer needs and wants, monitor the effectiveness of what has been specified and delivered, examine alternative means by service delivery, vision the future direction of the service and protect the organisation's interests"* (Campbell, 1994: 22).

Contractors are inward looking, concentrating on delivering the specification and making the required rate of return (Shaw et al, 1993). DSOs are *"single mindedly focused on their survival and their bottom line"* (Holdcroft, 1993: 18), service managers being educated to *"think like their external competitors"* (Ranade and Haywood, 1989: 31). *"DSO managers will have to manage rather than administer and become increasingly sensitive to change and 'best practice' in the external commercial environment"* (Kerley and Wynn, 1990: 35).

It would seem that effective DSOs: provide an excellent and innovative service; sustain quality assurance; co-operate with clients; develop close relationships with customers; stand up to comparisons with alternative suppliers; meet their councils financial and policy objectives; focus on business planning; concentrate on marketing their services; rethink how work can be provided more effectively (Flynn, 1990; Frederick, 1994; LGTB., 1988; Moon and Kendall, 1993; Moore, 1993).

Thus, it would seem DSOs are encouraged to adopt private sector business techniques, with managers themselves recognising the need to follow commercial models and adopt a corporate strategy (PFA Panel, 1988; McHale, 1995).

Although DSOs do appear to operate along private sector lines, the fact that they are winning substantially more contracts than their private competitors suggests there are differences in the way they are managed(Liggins, 1985). After all, there are many examples of bad management in private sector contractor companies (Audit Commission, 1993; Bach, 1989; Hislop, 1995; Sonnett, 1985).

Consequently, *"in most cases contracts have been won by DSOs which have slimmed down, become more cost conscious and responsive and improved productivity and quality of service"* (Frederick, 1994:22).

iv. Market Testing

Competitive tendering was introduced into the Civil Service in 1992 under the guise of market testing,

> *"the process by which services currently provided in-house are compared to services offered by the private sector to ensure that managers obtain best value for money and that the efficiency of in-house operations is maximised"* (Department of Social Security, 1992:2).

Thus, like CCT, civil service departments and Next Steps agencies can contract with private firms to undertake specified duties. By 1993, civil service work

totalling £1.1 billion had been exposed to market testing, the government estimating savings of approximately 25 percent, regardless of whether the bids were won by contractors or remained in-house(Flynn, 1997: 115).

However, *"where firms operating under such contracts abide by the requirements of freely negotiated contracts it is clear that no minister or civil servant would be able to intervene in the operation of those firms"* (O'Toole, 1995: 67). Departments and agencies could attempt to negotiate a clause in the contract allowing ministerial intervention, although it would be highly unlikely that any private firm would agree to ministers interfering at every opportunity (ibid).

Furthermore, the motives behind market testing are dubious. The initial reasoning given for establishing Next Steps agencies was that chief executives would be granted day-to-day responsibility to manage the agency as an entity and improve performance. Having been given these powers, however, *"managers are now expected to be testing their activities constantly against the market"* (Holmes and Shand, 1995: 566). It would therefore appear that these chief executives are thought to be incapable of managing their agencies, instead requiring guidance and influence from the private sector.

Finally, there has been a downward spiralling of interest in market testing by private companies, who object to having to pay to make bids when 70 percent of these bids remain in-house(Flynn, 1997).

Nevertheless, more than one-half of agency chief executives found market testing *"a valuable aid to increased efficiency and about half believe that if they were situated in the private sector they would be able to recover their running costs and make a profit"* (Massey, 1995: 81).

3.5 NETWORK MANAGEMENT: THE CONSEQUENCE OF NPM?

> *"The local authority that does not realise it has to become the centre of a network will become the centre of nothing"* (Alexander, 1988).

"Management in the public domain is necessarily management in an inter-organisational context" (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 134). Whilst each organisation pursues its own tasks, all organisations *"share the purposes and values of the public domain, are governed by its organising principles, subject to its distinctive conditions and have to carry out its tasks"* (ibid: 133). This shared framework demands co-operation between those organisations.

Networks, defined as a *"complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other.....complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies"* (Benson, 1982 : 148), have grown in the public

sector for reasons related to NPM. For example, Next Step agencies implement policies legislated and initiated by central government whilst internal markets bring together purchasers, suppliers and contractors. Consequently, contractual relationships between public purchasers and public, private or voluntary suppliers have developed through service level agreements and quasi contractual relationships(Rigg and Trehan, 1993; Walsh, 1995). Furthermore, the creation of unitary local authorities increased the networks in operation, these authorities being surrounded by new quangos, joint boards and committees (Gunn, 1995).

The consequence of other developments such as opting out, devolved school management, decentralisation and the enabling local authority has been the emergence of autonomous/semi-autonomous units within the public sector, enhancing the likelihood of increasing differentiation and different forms of relationships between organisations. *"As differentiation grows so does the need for integrative mechanisms, if fragmentation is to be avoided and shared purposes and values of the public domain realised"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 135-6). Thus, surely one of the primary tasks of public managers today will be to facilitate co-operation between their organisation and others.

Network management *"requires people capable of working sideways, rather than keeping strictly to the hierarchical channels"* (Rigg and Trehan, 1993: 87). Subsequently, the manager must adopt the roles of leader, communicator,

negotiator, teambuilder, juggler and influencer rather than rely on their formal authority(Moss Kanter, 1989).

An example of a public service which has encountered difficulties in its inter-organisational relations is community care(Webb, 1991). The implementation of care in the community required collaboration between the NHS and local government. The ingredients for successful collaboration were initially identified as a clear and mutual understanding of the powers and responsibilities of each agency, of who decides what and of the money flow(Cmnd. 849). By 1990, however, collaboration between the NHS and local government was strained(Beardshaw, 1988; Hudson, 1987). *"Priorities, organisational styles and cultures (were) different, frequently producing uncomplimentary opinions of each other and a reluctance to work co-operatively"* (Audit Commission, 1992 : 2).

"The structural division between health and social services was reinforced by organisational design" (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 141), making it difficult to achieve harmonious working relationships. Divisions were built into the structures by: the difference in governance between the elected local authority and the appointed health authority; different committees and planning cycles; health authorities being dependent on grants whilst local authorities have their own taxation powers; different management structures; differences in the hierarchical relationship between health authorities and central government and the relative autonomy of local

authorities; clinicians having greater power and authority within their workplace than social work practitioners(Audit Commission, 1992; Ranson and Stewart, 1994).

Thus, the underlying reason for the difficulties associated with implementing community care was a lack of co-operation. Hence, the emphasis placed on co-ordination by the Audit Commission(1992:54), achievable by *"shared commitment and good relationships.....it (being) necessary to achieve shared commitment to common goals".* This shared commitment was to be gained by a joint assessment of need within the community and joint plans produced by local social services and District Health Authorities(Clarke et al, 1995; Rea Price, 1997).

Within the public domain, there is a presumption of co-operation. This implies that *"no particular organisation can be regarded as in principle autonomous, setting its particular purposes before the purposes of the public domain"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 139). Nevertheless, it is debatable whether co-operation predominates today, given the injection of competitive practices into the public sector. Perhaps the introduction of CCT and internal markets have created public organisations more interested in 'winning the competition' than co-operating with fellow competitors. However, Ranson and Stewart contend that the presumption of co-operation does not exclude the possibility of competition. Thus, *"the tension between the competition of voices in the arena of discourse and the presumption of co-operation is a dilemma to be managed in the public domain"* (ibid : 140).

3.6 THE DISTINCT ETHOS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

> *"One of the hallmarks of Thatcherism became the extent to which private sector management techniques were seen as worthy of emulation, with state operations reconstructed along 'business lines"* (Painter et al, 1993 : 171).

Evidence suggests that managers have made *"much greater use of all private sector techniques in public organisations"* (Talbot, 1994: 6). At the 1993 Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Conference, commentators noted that the speakers *"liberally sprinkled"* (Wild, 1993(a):14) their addresses with corporate catchphrases. Likewise, the Treasury and Civil Service Committee recommended the introduction of a civil service code, *"which could easily.......be applied to employees in.....business organisations. It isn't a statement about public duty or about the distinctive characteristics of public service"* (Chapman and O'Toole, 1995:16).

Furthermore, *"public service and private sector employment practices are increasingly converging"* (Farnham, 1993:124). National bargaining has been replaced by decentralised bargaining, individual approaches to employer/employee relations have been pursued, the personnel function has been decentralised and pay flexibility has been introduced(Thomson, 1992; Weggemans, 1994).

Thus, it would seem that *"the new management thinking has displaced a theme of the 1970s and 1980s that emphasises the distinctiveness of the public domain"* (Parry, 1992: 6). Given that private sector practices are arguably

commonplace in the public sector (Farnham and Horton, 1993(b); Pollitt, 1993), it would be reasonable to surmise the coalescence of the public and private sectors, with managers in both sectors performing interchangeable tasks (Fesler and Kettl, 1991; Waldo, 1980). Although they will never be quite the same, there will be increasing convergence of style and idiom (Freer, 1988 ; Parry, 1992), *"making it more sensible to think in terms of an organisational continuum than a dichotomy, stressing differences of degree rather than kind"* (Painter, 1993 : 41).

However,

> *"to adopt on a wholesale basis business like techniques.........without appreciating the fundamental difference between business management and public sector management may bring together some of the worst features of both, perhaps without gaining many of the benefits expected from business methods"* (Reed and Ellis, 1987 : 18).

William Waldegrave, when Secretary of State for Health, highlighted the danger of the emerging language of management in the health service. *"Without remitting for one moment the pressure to get a better management system....let us watch our language a bit. It just bears saying straight out : the NHS is not a business; it is a public service"* (Waldegrave, 1991 : 12). Likewise, whilst public managers can learn from the experience of the private sector, *"those advocates of the wholesale adoption by public services of the policies and practices of the private sector are dangerously misguided"* (Hepworth, 1994).

Thus, *"the danger for the development of public service management is that it is based on the private sector model"* (Stewart, 1989 : 12). Transferring private sector management practices into the public sector *"assumes the purposes, conditions and tasks of the private sector, not those of the public domain"* (ibid).

Whilst private organisations have clearly defined goals, public organisations have less concrete and conflicting goals due to the absence of the profit motive (Murray, 1975). However, it has been argued that private organisations are equally confronted with *"multi-objective goal functions"* (Lane, 1991 : 48). Furthermore, *"it is not clear that the budgetary restraints under which public sector agencies operate are any less effective in guiding the manager's use of resources than the pressure of the bottom line upon the private manager's use of resources"* (Wagner Weinberg, 1983 : 108-109).

Furthermore, public organisations function in a political environment, accountable to Parliament, the electorate and clients (Lane, 1991; Parry, 1992; MacIntosh, 1995). Managers in the public sector are *"operating in the full glare of publicity, subject to the governmental resource rationing system, the constraints associated with handling taxpayers' money and with public accountability placing......limits on the scope for a commercial ethos"* (Isaac-Henry and Painter, 1991 : 170).

On the other hand, private sector organisations are non-political and are accountable primarily to shareholders(Chandler, 1991; Joseph, 1982). However, it has been suggested that information is much more readily available to shareholders of private companies, the consequence being that shareholders can hold management to greater account than patients or citizens can(Wild, 1993(a)). Furthermore, private sector organisations are arguably affected by the political environment since *"decisions made by politicians to....keep interest rates high will have a profound effect on the very existence of some firms"* (Lawton and Rose, 1994:7).

In addition, *"public leaders work in a more stable environment than private leaders. They are not withdrawn from hazardous events, sudden changes or long term transformations but they can rely upon the existence of a base that tends to remain rather fixed over time"* (Lane, 1991 :61). However, the future of public organisations depends on the outcomes of general elections, which can lead to policy changes over a short timespan. Furthermore, public managers cannot necessarily rely on a fixed 'base'. Since 1979, some public managers have been managing their organisations out of existence, for example, managers in housing departments selling off council houses. Finally, 'jobs for life' are no longer guaranteed in the public sector, many managers now employed on one to three year contracts which may or may not be renewed, depending on performance.

Whilst private organisations are competitive, their counterparts in the public sector are seen to be monopolistic (Farnham and Horton, 1993(b)). However, *"privatised British Telecom provides a more inescapable monopoly for those wishing to use a telephone service than the state provides over education"* (Chandler, 1991: 388).

Further differences between the public and private sectors are that the former searches for equality of need and justice, whilst the latter pursues market satisfaction and equity of the market. In addition, both sectors serve different populations. Customers in the private sector are voluntary whereas in the public sector some are voluntary, some coerced and others dependent. Furthermore, those working in public organisations claim that their customers place more pressure on them than colleagues in the private sector experience (Strong and Robinson, 1990). Finally, public organisations are working in statutory defined and delimited fields of activity, on short time horizons due to political and electoral influences and are less likely to take risks because embarrassment, especially in the media, can become the great fear(Farnham and Horton, 1993(b); Lane, 1991; Parry, 1992; Shafritz and Hyde, 1992; Stewart and Ranson, 1988; Vielba, 1986).

Public service management therefore appears to be distinct and separate from much of private sector practice, because it is contingent on factors unique to public organisations. In other words, managing public organisations differs from managing organisations in the private sector, because both have different contexts and

orientations. Private sector managers who moved into top public sector positions in America stressed that there was something distinctly public about public administration (Fesler and Kettl, 1991 : 8).

Thus, public management is

> *"shaped by the context and specific purposes of that domain........the management of public services is defined by distinctive values that express collective purpose in society and the management of such purpose will require specific conditions if it is to be effective"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1989: 6).

The English language defines context as *"the circumstances relevant to something under consideration"* (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990: 248). Ranson and Stewart (1989, 1994) identify 'the public' as the circumstances, since they take *"the public as simply the given context in which to explore particular managerial thematic"* (Mair and Moore, 1993 : 1). In other words, management in particular public services and in particular sectors will have its own purposes and conditions which *"define the management task"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 36).

The purpose of the context (the public) is the pursuance of collective values, with *"collective action as the instrument of the polity"* (Stewart and Ranson, 1988 : 15). The public domain provides goods and services which are *"regarded as essential to the community as a whole"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1989 : 7), possessing the unique characteristics of non-excludability and non-rivalness. A public good is non-excludable if it is impractical to exclude consumers from the benefits of the service

once it is provided. Non-rival goods exist where *"the marginal cost of additional consumption is zero"* (ibid), the addition of an extra consumer not detracting from the benefit of another (Lane, 1984; Schackleton, 1986).

However, *"welfare in general and education and medical care in particular, are substantially not public goods; they can be (and commonly are) supplied in the market"* (Harris and Seldon, 1987: 73). Thus, a distinction can be drawn between services that can be marketed and those that are necessarily public. For example, water is a public good which is now managed as a profit making service, like any private good. *"Gone is the notion of public service, the idea that everyone has some right to be supplied with the basic elements of existence - water, heat, light"* (Coyne, 1994 : 24). However, Blackburn(1993:24) acknowledges that there remains a *"cogent argument that water remains a public good, with the water companies acting as agents of the state in place of the local authorities....this is a plausible argument so long as the service is provided to all, subject to state regulation and charged according to means, as would apply to a public good".*

In addition to characterising the context by its distinct purpose, Ranson and Stewart (1988:15) contend that the public domain is constituted by certain conditions, without which *"there is no legitimate basis for collective action". "The political process is a basic condition of management in the public domain"* (ibid: 14), through which collective needs are defined and decisions are taken about the action

needed to satisfy these needs. Furthermore, *"one of the unique characteristics of the public domain is the scrutiny to which it is subjected"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1989: 18), public organisations being held accountable for actions taken. Finally, *"the voices of pressure and protect are part of the process by which a local authority governs and is governed by the community"* (ibid: 17).

The public sector also has unique tasks, consisting of evaluating need, securing law and maintaining order and *"balancing...interest and.....search(ing) for collective values beyond the particular"* (ibid: 16).

Subsequently, *"management has to be understood in its context. The purposes and conditions of that context and the tasks to be carried out determine the unique nature of a management system and the criteria for its evaluation"* (Ranson and Stewart, 1994 : 37).

The traditional method of defining the distinct ethos of the public sector has therefore been to define 'the public' as context. Perry and Kramer's (1983) definition of public is *"a value context within which generic instrumentalities comprising management are practised"* (Mair and Moore, 1993 :1). Likewise, the definition of publicness used by Hood(1991) is contextual. Mair and Moore(1993) adopt a radically different approach, defining the public as content. *"The possibility of a distinctively "public" management where the form of management is intrinsic to the*

"publicness" is assumed out of existence by conceptualising the "public" simply as context and not content" (Mair and Moore, 1993 :1).

Mair and Moore criticise the definition of *"public goods on a dichotomy between the technically necessary and the value determined"* (ibid: 4). The technical argument that certain goods must be provided publicly due to non-excludable benefits is seriously flawed, the assumption being made that people seeking to satisfy their own self interests will act in ways which will impair their objective and collective interests. Furthermore, the fact that a service cannot be provided by the market does not imply that it must or indeed should be provided in the public domain (ibid).

Thus, *"the alleged technical argument is essentially a disguised value argument about the satisfaction of collective and objective interests"* (ibid), the consequence being that 'the public' should be defined in terms of these collective and objective interests. Consequently, the argument that a substantial part of public service provision could be provided through the market is systematically affected.

It is assumed that whether publicly or privately provided, public services will remain the same. However, if education for all is required, for example, the market will fail since availability will be rationed by market pricing. Thus, *"publicness can, and should be, construed as an inherent characteristic of public services and, if it is, these services are necessarily public"* (ibid : 5).

Consequently, *"universally available or 'free at the point of use' attribute to a service change its characteristic, not merely its context : it becomes a different service altogether and one for which market failure is inevitable"* (ibid).

3.7 CONCLUSION: CRITIQUE OF THE NPM

> *"It is not too much to claim that the 'new managerialism' in the 'new public services' ....is, to some degree, a by-product of the ascendancy of New Right ideas"* (Farnham and Horton, 1993(a):25).

Nevertheless, whilst public sector reform was actively pursued in Britain under a right wing Conservative government, similar changes were occurring in socialist countries. Thus, *"where the same thing is happening, it is often for quite different reasons, reflecting different underlying political agendas"* (Hood, 1995 :106). For example, whilst competition was *"a live and emotive issue"* (Green, 1990 section 8.1 - 8.6) in France, Denmark, Canada and the United States of America, it was not legally enforced by central government through CCT(Digings, 1991). Thus, *"the meanings given to public sector management reform...vary...what looks like the same reform may be quite differently framed and valued in different countries"* (Pollitt and Summa, 1997:16).

> *"It would be wrong to suggest that the Conservative governments from 1979 onwards have been simply vehicles for the New Right.....many New Right proposals......proved to be too extreme even for reforming Conservative governments"* (Farnham and Horton, 1993(a) :16).

The internal markets which have developed are *"essentially markets without customers, in which the normal price mechanisms and patterns of supply and demand do not operate"* (Walsh, 1995:248). Furthermore, contrary to New Right ideology, child benefit was never abolished and vouchers were only ever introduced for nursery education. Thus, *"Thatcherism always retained significant elements of collectivism, particularly in its approach to welfare state reform"* (Green and Lucas, 1992:29).

Furthermore, the assertion that New Right policies are perpetuated in the work of the NPM begins to falter when the core of both theories are examined. It would seem that the New Right question the existence of public service provision whilst the NPM merely question who should provide the public services.

Uncertainty also surrounds the extent to which public sector management change implemented since 1979 can be defined as 'new'. Public service provision through private companies, grant maintained schools, housing associations and central funding agencies, *"have brought back in a different form the ad hoc agencies and quangos of the 19th century"* (Travers et al, 1997:17).

Furthermore, The Plowden Report(Treasury, 1961) *"became increasingly conscious of the importance of management"* (Delafons, 1982 :264). Similarly, the Fulton Report (1968) *"sought to managerialise Whitehall"* (Barberis, 1995: 38),

recommending the clear delegation of authority, with objectives being set to enable performance and efficiency to be measured(Cmnd. 3638). Thus, recent civil service management reforms are intrinsically linked to developments in the 1960s.

Likewise, the Guillebaud Committee(MH, 1956) initially addressed the issue of performance measurement in the NHS by focusing on VFM and efficiency(Klein, 1982). *"In retrospect.....the Guillebaud Report took the first step towards constructing an agenda of management issues which has remained relevant ever since"* (Barnard, 1989: 187). Furthermore, the Cogwheel Report(1967) recommended the delegation of managerial responsibilities to clinicians. *"The notion that the service needed better management and that senior administrators and senior members of a number of the health professions should regard themselves as managers pre dates Griffiths by some 30 years"* (Harrison et al, 1992 : 30).

Thus, the founding principles behind recent public sector reform arguably existed forty years ago, questioning the 'New' in NPM. Perhaps the key difference is that although performance measurement, delegated management and value-for-money were pursued in the 1960s, they were not subject to the same level of publicity and scrutiny surrounding public sector reform today. This may be the consequence of a conscious decision by public administration academics to examine recent trends in public management to safeguard their livelihood, dropping the term administration in favour of management to keep abreast of change.

> *".......teachers, trainers or researchers in the academic field of public service studies.....have had to develop coherent interpretations of the changes that have taken place, construct new concepts to give expression to them, develop methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of the new practices based on new kinds of criteria and generate a body of techniques and materials for assisting public sector practitioners to adapt to their new roles and situations"* (Prior, 1993 : 447-448).

Furthermore, Hoggett(1996:13) contends that whilst *"a number of observers would regard the increased revert to subcontracting as a sign of the development of the post bureaucratic organisational form........such extended forms of subcontracting have existed all along, academics only just having discovered it"*. Evidence that there has been *"almost a doubling of the number of articles on managerial issues in the (public service) journals analysed between 1980 and 1992"* (Walsh et al, 1996:317), is a further indication of the extent to which academics have placed public sector reform on the management agenda.

Thus, perhaps the reform process being pursued under the term NPM could equally be occurring under the guise of public administration. *"I have seen little in (NPM) courses which would not sit comfortably in courses in public administration"* (Midwinter, 1990 : 3).

> *"The reform agendas of recent years are not wholly the idle product of fashion-driven politicians and management gurus. They are responses to changes in the environment : a public less trusting and more demanding of its public services; a sustained fiscal crisis created by expanding demand for public provision and an unwillingness to pay through taxation for that provision......"* (Stoker, 1997:233).

Perhaps public sector reform should simply be viewed as the consequence of circumstances, rather than as the outcome of a verbalisation of interests of right-wing politicians and NPM academics. Reform was ultimately driven by the 1970s economic crisis, which led to reduced resources and subsequently public expenditure cutbacks. In order to improve Britain's economy, the government endorsed value-for-money throughout the public sector, continually seeking more efficient and economic working practices. For example, the development of public sector markets was a *"result of the reaction to circumstances, rather than any change in basic values"* (Walsh, 1995:56). Thus, the implication is that *"adhoc changes have been derived from a set of circumstances or economic imperatives"* (Jefferies, 1989:25) and would have occurred anyway, regardless of the publicity given to them by NPM academics.

In addition to being a rationalisation of economic and financial pressures, perhaps public sector reforms are also the consequence of a deliberate attempt to preserve and enhance the personal positions of senior bureaucrats (Dunleavy, 1982, 1985, 1986). Dunleavy (1986:19) adopts a radical approach to public administration, stressing that *"rational bureaucrats will put their efforts primarily into individual rather than collective forms of welfare maximisation"*. Consequently, privatisation met little resistance because unprecedented opportunities were bestowed on senior managers and policy makers to shape organisations to their best possible advantage. *"Policy elites gain enhanced work utilities(and often pecuniary benefits as well)*

from reshaping on NPM lines, while the costs of organisational changes are borne by other less powerful interests, typically front-line staff" (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994:12).

Thus, whilst an initial reading of CCT suggests that the government has launched an assault on the public sector in an attempt to make monolithic bureaucracies more efficient, a more in-depth analysis demonstrates that CCT has preserved the role of policy-makers to the detriment of front-line service providers. Thus, perhaps public sector reform amounted to a rationalisation of economic and financial pressures, reinforced by those preserving their own position.

> "*The new public service is subject to conflicting pressures for centralisation and decentralisation*" (Walsh, 1995:203).

One of the most controversial aspects of the management reforms has been the extent to which public managers have been delegated real powers, the reality appearing to be that central government has tightened its hold over public services(Ascherson, 1994; Goldsmith and Page, 1997; Hoggett, 1996; John, 1994). The introduction of performance measures in various public services has been a form of 'hands off' control (Carter, 1994). Likewise, Local Management of Schools delegated budgetary powers to headteachers and school governors at the same time as national testing and the national curriculum increased central control (MacLure, 1988; Thomas and

Levacic, 1991). Within the NHS, *"the service was....trapped, for general managers at least, within a national straitjacket"* (Morgan, 1994 : 456).

Thus, it is not surprising that nearly one-half of public sector managers questioned in a recent survey, felt *"their ability to resist political interference in operational management decisions has markedly declined"* (Talbot, 1994 :38) in the last three years. This is a contradiction of government policy given that *"one of the undoubted aims of government policy has been to reinforce managers' right to manage and free(dom) from political control"* (ibid: 32). Nevertheless, whilst senior public managers in Pollitt et al's(1997:2) study witnessed an increase in central government control, they also contended that their self-managed units *"had gained greater autonomy"*.

Whilst the government contend that poor management is at the heart of ineffective provision of public services, the general public fervently disagree. Only 6 percent of the population cited poor management as the reason for their dissatisfaction with public services, the majority view being that public services fail to meet expectations because they are of poor quality, are underfunded and difficulties surround their access and availability (Parston, 1996).

One of the criticisms frequently heard of the NPM is that *"it is all hype and no substance....a true product of the style conscious 1980s.....All that has changed is the*

language in which senior public managers speak in public" (Hood, 1991 : 9). The NPM has *"made a major impact at the level of rhetoric and vocabulary"* (Pollitt, 1993 : 85), with visible changes apparent in the usage of language in public service journals, *"the rhetoric of consumerism and commercialism becoming clearer........there is a gradual process by which language becomes accepted as the normal currency of debate, for example, in the case of 'VFM'"* (Walsh et al, 1996 : 323).

However, whilst the language used by public sector managers may reflect private sector terminology, it should not necessarily be assumed that their attitudes and outlook are comparative to colleagues managing in private organisations. Perhaps the motive underlying doctors completing MBAs, for example, is one of learning the language of business to enable them to defend their area of work, rather than a desire to become more business orientated.

Whilst much has been written about public management since 1979, no single large scale study has been undertaken to examine the work public managers actually do and the workload they carry. Instead, the NPM make widespread claims and generalisations about public management based on opinions and case studies of particular public services. However, case studies selected by Farnham and Horton(1993) and Harrow and Willcocks(1992) do not *"fit happily with the definition given of major public sector organisations"* (Prior, 1993 : 449), the

result being an *"imbalance in the....account of current public service management"* (ibid : 452).

Thus, it would seem that the NPM is no more than a replication of the classical school of management. It is merely a theory devised by academics, evidence appearing to be cursory to the extreme.

Consequently, this research centres on the observation of seven senior public managers, an attempt finally being made to assess whether the generalisations made by the NPM can be translated into practice. It was decided that the most lively context to study public management would be to look at the work performed by managers in 'traditional' hospital trust and local authority departments and that undertaken by contract managers. It would not be unreasonable to expect 'traditional' public managers to remain relatively unaffected by the management reforms implemented since 1979, since their role will surely continue to be one of formulating policy. In contrast, however, contract managers surely face the challenges of markets, competition, resource constraints and so on.

One further problem with the NPM literature is that it is generally academics who give an account of the changes faced by public managers, based on opinions and conceptions, rather than the managers themselves. Hence, the decision to send out postal questionnaires to three hundred and forty-seven directors and chief executives

working in the public sector. Only by communicating with the very people who manage public organisations can a full understanding be grasped of the nature of public sector managerial reform.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theory and Practice

4.1 INTRODUCTION

> *"The purposes of doing research are multiple, such as to describe, explain, understand, foresee, criticize and /or analyze already existing knowledge or phenomena in social services"* (Ghauri et al, 1995 : 6).

Research methods utilized in management studies exhibit qualitative and/or quantitative tendencies.

> *"Qualitative methods.....is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate or otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world"* (Van Maanen, 1979 : 520).

Qualitative data are favoured by many researchers because

> *"they are rich, full, earthy, holistic, "real"; their face validity seems unimpeachable; they preserve chronological flow where that is important, and suffer minimally from retrospective distortion..... their collection requires minimal front-end instrumentation........they lend themselves to the production of serendipitous findings and the adumbration of unforeseen theoretical leaps....... their results......have a quality of 'undeniability' that lends punch to research reports"* (Miles, 1979 : 590).

Quantitative methods of research are appropriate, however, when *"the issue is one of looking for general patterns and common properties in the population as a whole"* (Blackman, 1993 : 248).

Nevertheless, it is not always easy to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993). Whilst interviews can provide a verbatim account of managerial work they can equally be coded and used quantitatively. Likewise, observation can encompass both anecdotes about

managerial work and statistics about the frequency of activities performed. *"The idea that observational data cannot be quantified is a misconception"* (Selltiz et al, 1959:203).

The aim of this chapter is to outline the various qualitative and quantitative research methods common to management studies, providing a critique of their strengths and weaknesses. Depending on the circumstances in which they are used, several methods can be classified as both qualitative and quantitative. Hence, the approach adopted within this chapter has been to classify managerial research tools as either direct or indirect methods of research. Furthermore, attention will be focused on practical issues of method which have been encountered in this research.

4.2 DIRECT METHODS OF RESEARCH

> *"It is important that the growing commitment to research in the public sector is not restricted to more surveys and statistical work. The capacity to conduct qualitative research is essential to any serious research enterprise in the public services"* (Blackman, 1993 : 243).

Direct methods of research encompass observation, diaries, activity sampling and stimulated recall and protocol analysis, all of which provide an account of the actual time spent by managers on various activities by using the tools of direct observation and self-reporting.

4.2.1 Observation

> *"As the actions and behaviour of people are a central aspect in virtually any enquiry, a natural and obvious technique is to watch what they do, to record this in* some *way and then to describe, analyze and interpret what we have observed"* (Robson, 1993 : 190).

Used in management research, observation consists of either an unstructured or structured approach. Unstructured observation(Dalton, 1959; Sayles, 1964) is the method whereby *"the researcher lives in the system, either as a participant or as an independent observer, and records all observations that interest him"* (Mintzberg, 1973 : 226). Some researchers undertaking participant observation choose to conceal their role as observer from those they are interacting with(Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992; Becker and Geer, 1970). If, however, researchers are worried about the ethical implications of complete participation, they can adopt a more explicit role, working within the organisation as a known observer(Easterby-Smith et al, 1993; Robson, 1993).

Unstructured observation requires the researcher to examine *"people's....behaviour without pre-structuring the data by 'imposing' a questionnaire schedule on respondents"* (Blackman, 1993 : 242). The data produced from observation is then taken from the setting and subject to in-depth analysis.

Hodgson et al(1965 : 20) contended that the major advantage of this approach was that *"many of the data that proved to be analytically most useful were gathered*

unexpectedly". In other words, had the researcher used structured observation, this data would not have been obtained. Furthermore, the researcher can thoroughly scrutinize the work observed, allowing for a better understanding of managerial work (Mintzberg, 1973).

Kotter(1982) favoured the extensive use of unstructured observation, claiming that it was the only method of research which allowed the researcher to *"get inside descriptions of activities undertaken or roles played in order to reveal how managers constructed and maintained their relationships with others"* (Willmott, 1987 : 252).

However, questions remain as to just how unstructured any observation can be. Although Light(1979 :553) contended that *"observation.......is naturalistic. When done by a trained observer, its categories emerge from what is actually happening rather than from artificial, preconceived notions"*, it is highly probable that the researcher is armed with preconceived ideas arising from previous research, experiences and existing literature. Consequently, one might expect the researcher to have a vague idea of the kind of information and findings they seek. *"Individuals enter situations with maps already established in their minds into which they fit the evidence of their senses"* (Shipman, 1982:75). Thus, uncertainty surrounds the extent to which the categorization of managerial activities observed is a post hoc decision. Surely the researcher is working with categories, however implicit and

emergent, when they observe managers at work, unless they end up recording everything without discrimination, a scenario hard to envisage.

Furthermore, the researcher cannot replicate the research. What is obtained is a theory not capable of scientific validation, since the findings are supported by *"anecdote and not by systematic evidence"* (Mintzberg, 1973 :227).

One of the main consequences of using unstructured observation is that the researcher becomes inundated with substantial amounts of information, hindering the process of analysis(McCall et al 1978). When Kotter(1982) completed his data collection, for example, he had acquired a file on each manager that was between four and eight inches thick, taking approximately two years to analyze.

This weakness is the main strength of structured observation, which *"offers the best of both worlds - inductive power of observation coupled with the structure of systematic recording"* (Mintzberg, 1973 : 227). The researcher observes the manager at work and then categorizes each observed event, *"structured observation (drawing) on the chief strength of unstructured observation, namely, the development of categorization schemes during and after observation"* (ibid). Thus, unlike unstructured observation, the structured approach *"imposes a large amount of structure and direction on what is to be observed"* (Robson, 1993 : 194).

Whether the researcher chooses a structured or unstructured approach, observation has a lot to offer the world of research, especially in comparison with questionnaires and surveys.

> *"(Observation) does not interrupt the normal work activities of managers and take up their time; (it is the) most accurate and reliable method for determining time distribution among observable activities; (it is) not subject to defensive biases in self report; (and it) can capture brief activities and the flow, brevity and fragmentation of work"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 35).

An observation study will be more reliable than a survey when looking at what public managers actually do since the latter is a manager's opinion of the amount of time spent doing various activities. Perhaps reality would be distorted by constrained recall and lapse of memory. *"Interview and questionnaire responses are notorious for discrepancies between what people say they have done, or will do, and what they actually did, or will do"* (Robson, 1993 : 191). Indeed, surveys have proved to be inadequate in *"understanding the complexity of human behaviour. Longitudinal, in-depth and open ended research designs have almost become a necessity to capture the complex and multi-dimensional behaviour patterns associated with organisations"* (Hari Das, 1983 : 304).

Furthermore, a reasonably constant standard will be applied when recording the activities of a diverse range of people since the observer is the only one recording what is happening(Stewart, 1972).

Light(1979) postulated the argument that the researcher is granted the flexibility to discover under observation. This differs from questionnaires, which presume prior knowledge and understanding of all the main influences affecting managers. In addition, observation *"allows one to develop hypotheses, test them, alter them and retest them while the study is going on"* (Light, 1979 : 553).

Furthermore, observation is argued to be *"pre-eminently the appropriate technique for getting at 'real life' in the 'real world'......direct observation in the field permits a lack of artificiality which is all too rare with other techniques"* (Robson, 1993 : 191).

Thus, *"we can interpret and understand the observed behaviour, attitude and situation more accurately and capture the dynamics of social behaviour in a way that is not possible through questionnaires and interviews"* (Ghauri et al, 1995 : 57).

However, a number of arguments have been presented(Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992; Hari-Das, 1983; Hemphill, 1959; McCall et al, 1978; Mintzberg, 1973; Phillips, 1993; Stewart, 1967) which highlight the inadequacies inherent in observational methods of research, the most frequent of which is that the researcher will have a small sample size. For example, Mintzberg(1973) studied five chief executives using structured observation whereas Stewart(1967) looked at one hundred and sixty managers with the diary method. However, Mintzberg(1970) contended that sample

size was not of utmost importance when seeking to categorize a type of work rather than to compare different workers. He posed the question that given he had one hundred people prepared to embark on one year of research, should each researcher study one hundred organisations, giving superficial information on ten thousand or should each researcher study one organisation, giving comprehensive data on one hundred? His reply was that the choice obviously depended on what was to be studied but, *"it should not preclude the small sample, which has often proved superior"* (Mintzberg, 1979 : 584).

In addition, the possibility exists that the observer's presence will distort the true picture of managerial work(Alexander, 1984; Dargie, 1998; Shipman, 1982; Stern, 1979; Whyte, 1955). Managers may present themselves in a favourable light, changing their behaviour simply because they are being watched. Employees may also be wary of what they say and do in the presence of an observer. *"The observer role is often disliked by employees since it seems like 'eavesdropping'"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993 : 100).

However, *"people seem to get used to observers if the behaviour of the observers convinces the group members that they are no threat"* (Selltiz et al, 1959:233-234). Mintzberg (1970) found that, in general, the basic activities of any manager's week do not change when an observer is present. Furthermore, Phillips(1993) found that the continuous pace of work and pressures placed on the chief executive by

colleagues would render it impossible for the chief executive to keep up any abnormal behaviour for too long. However, both Mintzberg's and Phillips' belief that their presence did not distort the manager's behaviour is not completely convincing, given that they would never be in a position to witness how the managers behaved in their absence.

One of the main deterrents from using observation is that it is relatively expensive in terms of time, money and personnel(McCall et al 1978). Unlike other research methods, the researcher must be in attendance for the full period of their observation study. Furthermore, observation *"may overload the researcher at every point because of his or her intense involvement in observing, writing, coding and interpreting the data"* (Hari-Das, 1983: 309).

In addition, some managers are reluctant to participate in observation studies through fear that anonymity is, in essence, inconceivable since the observer has witnessed everything that the manager has said and done(Phillips, 1993).

A further limitation experienced by the observer is exclusion from confidential meetings, work completed at home and telephone conversations, where the observer will only hear one-half of what is said (Mintzberg, 1973; Phillips, 1993). Although the manager may be requested to give an account of these activities, questions must surely arise as to the reliability of their word.

Mintzberg (1973:228) raised the interesting point that the person observing the manager may have difficulty comprehending some of the management activity witnessed. Thus, activities which may be of significance to the manager's work may go unnoticed or may be misinterpreted. Furthermore, uncertainty surrounds the extent to which the researcher captures all parts of the job. Perhaps they capture only that which interests them or grabs their attention. *"All perceptual processes involving the taking in of information by observation and its subsequent internal processing are subject to bias. Our interests, experience and expectations all affect what we attend to"* (Robson, 1993 : 202). Thus, researchers are confronted with the difficulty of separating fact from opinion, or objective from subjective reporting (Hari-Das, 1983; Shartle, 1956).

Observation has also been criticized by researchers (Hemphill, 1959; Phillips, 1993; Stewart, 1967) for its incapacity to evaluate non-observable activities such as thinking and planning. *"One of the things I am suggesting.......is that we cannot understand a position simply by watching the man who holds it do things. The knowledge that he answered such and such a telephone call at 10:30.....does not tell us nearly enough. There is more to a job than that"* (Hemphill, 1959: 56). There is a tendency to describe what managerial work looks like, not what it actually is, because *"the meaning and purpose of the activities observed has not been looked for. The question 'why this activity?' has not been asked"* (Phillips, 1993 : 181). Thus, in order to gain an understanding of the more profound purposes underlying the

activities, a method is needed which will connect the activity with its purpose(McCall et al, 1978). *"The intentions, expectations, attributions, purposes and affective states of managers are an important part of what managers "really do" and structured observation, to this point, has not effectively investigated or described these processes"* (Martinko and Gardner, 1985 : 689).

One further criticism made of observation is that it is difficult to ascertain a period for observation that is considered to be archetypal of the manager's work as a whole. Mintzberg (1973) was criticized for restricting his study to a one week observation of chief executives, the researcher only seeing a fraction of the manager's work (Phillips, 1993). Phillips attempted to rectify this shortcoming by observing her managers for two weeks. However, given that the work of many mangers is characterized by cyclical patterns, perhaps it would be more representative to observe managers for two separate weeks at different times in the year.

Finally, the researcher faces the arduous task of *"systematically and objectively"* (Hari-Das, 1983 : 309) categorizing the substantial amount of information acquired during observation.

In spite of the inherent difficulties associated with observational methods of research, *"such techniques do give extremely accurate pictures of what takes place and how*

long they take, even if they fall short of giving a full account of why things are happening" (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993 : 100).

> *"With a desire to improve links between academics and practitioners, observation is a practical research technique that can help researchers understand and interpret what actors in the public sphere do"* (Dargie, 1998:71).

With the underlying intention of:

1. shedding light on the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work
2. examining the NPM's generalizations and assumptions about public sector management

this researcher observed seven senior public managers at work. Before beginning the observation, practical issues required attention.

i. Access

The focus of research was limited to chief executives and directors of services for two principal reasons. Firstly, a comparison of the results with those of Mintzberg's would surely only be justified if like was being compared with like. Secondly, it was envisaged that it would be easier accessing the top management echelons, since the more junior levels of management would need to obtain permission from a chain of superiors.

As well as deciding which level of management to observe, the type of public manager to be included in the study also had to be determined. Should the study be restricted to one part of the public sector, for example, local government, or would it be better studying managers from various public sector organisations? In order to obtain a true representation of the diversity of work performed, it was decided to study managers from various organisations within the public sector.

The issue also arose of whether a 'token' private sector manager should be included, since this researcher's recording and interpretation of events may differ from others who have conducted similar research on private sector managers. However, it would have been a futile exercise selecting a private sector manager and classifying them as typical, given the considerable disparities between managerial jobs in the private sector. Consequently, comparisons will be made with established studies, possible differences in interpretation and classification of activities being emphasized from the outset.

The question also arose of the number of managers to include in the observational research. Seven managers were eventually chosen since it was the mix of managers observed rather than the number which were of utmost importance. *"Low numbers are justified because we often want to do in-depth studies or provide 'thick description' which is not possible in cases of numerous observations"* (Ghauri et al, 1995 : 86).

"Gaining entry to a setting or getting permission to do an interview is greatly expedited if you have 'connections'" (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:37). Once these issues had been addressed, the problem arose of actually gaining access to chief executives and directors. *"Nowadays managers have to count very carefully the cost of their time and therefore short interviews are likely to be more feasible than...observation"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993). Few public managers welcomed the prospect of a researcher observing their every action. Fortunately university staff had numerous contacts with senior public managers and were able to generate some interest in the study. However, this raises questions of just how random and representative the sample was. Were the managers who agreed to participate in the study truly representative of public managers as a whole? What kind of manager agreed to be observed? Were the managers merely agreeing to participate in the research out of a sense of duty to university staff? Were the managers on an ego trip, filled with self importance because someone found their work worthy of exploration? Were they sympathetic to the researcher's needs, having completed further education degrees themselves? In other words, what was different about managers who agreed to be observed and those who refused, and was this difference enough to dispel the argument that the former were truly representative of public managers as a whole?

However, this had to be balanced with the reality that those being observed stated they would have been less likely to have agreed to the observation study had they

known nothing about the researcher or their supervisor. The hospital trust director, whose main task was contracting, would have refused access to a stranger when the contracts were being drawn up, due to the commercially sensitive information being discussed. Hence, the researcher would have been refused access to witness a vital part of this director's job. It should be pointed out, however, that although the researcher was allowed access at this time, she was still excluded from numerous meetings because of the confidential nature of the material being discussed.

Nevertheless, the majority of observed managers would have carefully considered any request to undertake an observation study, since they were sympathetic to the needs of researchers. This may be reflective of the fact that five of the seven observed managers had postgraduate qualifications.

Even when a week for observation had been decided, this did not necessarily mean that the researcher was guaranteed access. For example, the weeks spent with the local authority managers were rearranged several times, the consequence of heavy workloads and increased pressures arising from local government reorganisation. *"An agreed observation may be cancelled at the last minute. It is a high risk strategy. The research design needs to be flexible so that alternative organisations may be contacted"* (Dargie, 1998:67).

Once a willing manager had been found, the issue of access did not end there, exclusion from confidential meetings being encountered. Understandably, disciplinary meetings were out of bounds. In addition, other meetings were 'off-limits', simply because it was felt those attending would be less forthcoming and less argumentative in the presence of an observer. However, the majority of meetings the researcher was excluded from were the direct result of the commercially sensitive nature of the issues being discussed. Although she gave her word of confidentiality, this was never enough. Such meetings actually formed a major chunk of the work of the hospital trust director. To be fair to the director, it was the hospital trust board who were *"rather twitchy about an outsider being present"*. Nevertheless, it calls into question the openness of public organisations, especially when this said director declared he was the *"hospital's director of openness"*.

Exclusion from vital meetings was overcome to some extent by asking the manager to give as detailed an account as possible of what the meeting concerned, who was present, decisions reached and the role of the manager in the meeting. Easterby-Smith et al (1993: 100) criticized observation because the *"inevitable detachment prevents the degree of trust and friendship forming between researcher and respondent which.....is an important component of other methods"* . However, it was not uncommon to find that information was more forthcoming towards the end of the week, principally because the managers felt more comfortable entrusting the

researcher with confidential information and she felt more at ease asking questions, without fear of damaging the relationship of trust which had emerged.

ii. Workload

Prior to commencing the period of observation, it was thought essential to meet up with the manager concerned, the purpose being to 'break the ice'. This informal meeting provided an opportunity to explain what the observation study involved, discussing any issues which the manager wished to raise. However, this meeting was not always feasible due to the location of several managers, in which case a telephone conversation was held.

One of the things that had to be emphasized from the very first meeting with the manager was that it was an insight into a typical working week which was required. It was not uncommon for the managers to ask what the researcher wanted to see and to organize meetings and other activities so that the week was busy. By doing this, however, the managers distorted the true picture of what their work involved. One chief executive, for example, later admitted that he had arranged more meetings than what would have been normal to prevent the researcher from becoming bored. The point had to be reinforced throughout the observation period that the researcher wanted an insight into what the manager would be doing that week had she not been present, and if that involved sitting at a desk writing then that is what she wanted to observe.

Based on the work of others who conducted observation studies (Mintzberg, 1973; Phillips, 1993), it was thought useful to have a discussion with the manager at the end of the working day, enquiring about issues that remained unclear and probing them as to why they dealt with some issues the way they did. However, it is somewhat of a puzzle how Mintzberg and Phillips managed this. The observed managers worked long hours and had family commitments and when they decided their working day had ended all they wanted to do was go home. Hence, any activities occurring during the day which were unclear were asked about at the first opportunity, care taken to minimize interruptions to the manager's flow of work.

One further area which needed attention was determining a suitable period of observation. Mintzberg(1973) observed his managers for one week whilst Phillips(1993) used a two week period of observation, contending that Mintzberg only saw a fraction of the manager's work. This researcher originally intended to observe managers for two weeks since she envisaged she would have blended into the background after the two week period had culminated. After completing her first week of observation, however, she decided that a period of one week would be better, both from her point of view and that of the manager. It is mentally draining being in an organisation you know little about, following everything that is happening and noting it down. It is this researcher's feeling that had she observed managers for two solid weeks, the results would have been less reliable by the end of the second week. Equally the managers felt that one week periods of observation

were sufficient for them, less tiring and physically draining than two weeks. However, this admission is somewhat contradictory given that the managers claimed the researcher's presence did not affect their work.

iii. Procedures

The general procedure adopted was to observe the managers from the moment they began their working day until the moment they left their office, recording events as they happened, usually in the form of a dialogue. The procedure adopted was neither purely inductive or deductive. Instead, it could be argued that the categories which emerged from observation were the result of a dialectic of emergence between preconceptions and observation. The observation would never have been completely unstructured, since the researcher's reading and experiences had created mental categories of management tasks and skills, preconceptions existing as to what constituted managerial work. Thus, although she did not go into the observation period with a defined list of pre-coded categories, she did have a vision about what she expected to witness. However, these ideas and preconceptions were soon refuted or confirmed by what the manager actually did. Hence, it can be argued that the resultant categories arising from observation were the consequence of both structured and unstructured observation.

Furthermore, this researcher was probably not as detached from the observation as preceding researchers, unobtrusive observation not adhered to in the strictest sense.

In order to gain an understanding of the underlying meanings behind the managers' actions and behaviour, a series of rolling face-to-face interviews were conducted, managers asked to explain the reasons behind their actions.

Practical issues arose when observing, such as deciding whether to use a stopwatch to record the duration of activities performed by the manager. Mintzberg(1970) did not consider it either necessary or appropriate to use a stopwatch, instead recording activities to the nearest one-tenth of an hour. The procedure adopted by this researcher involved glancing at her watch both at the beginning and end of an activity, recording the activity's duration to the nearest minute. This was felt to be less obtrusive than sitting with a stop watch.

Furthermore, problems arose over how to cope during a particularly busy time when people popped in and out of the manager's office and the telephone rang. The key in situations such as this was to remember to record the length of time each activity took, who was involved and key words about what was occurring, enough to allow the researcher to remember what happened and to recall that information at a quieter time.

Decisions also had to be made about recording meetings where several parties were involved. One option would be to seek permission to tape record meetings. This option was rejected for two reasons. Firstly, it was difficult enough gaining access

to some meetings without the added burden of requesting the presence of a tape recorder. Even if people had agreed to the tape recorder being used, it would have been highly probable that they would have been extremely careful about what was said. Secondly, too much information would have been collected if a meeting had been recorded. The approach followed, therefore, was to adopt the role of journalist, deciding what was and was not important. However, the possibility existed that the observer would miss the important issues raised, instead recording the mundane ones. This could be overcome to some extent by discussing the meeting afterwards with the manager.

Furthermore, the researcher faced the problem of one-sided telephone conversations. Prior to beginning the observation, this researcher requested that managers summarize the purpose of any telephone calls. Although all the managers agreed in principle, in practice they tended to forget because it was not unusual for them to finish one telephone call and then phone several other people immediately afterwards. Not wanting to interrupt their flow of work, managers were merely asked for a summary at the end of a sequence of telephone calls about whom they had been speaking to and what it concerned. In some cases it was clear what the call was about from previous events.

One of the main concerns for all researchers conducting an observation study must surely be that their presence will affect the behaviour of the person being observed.

In order to minimize their presence, this researcher endeavoured to sit either in a corner of the room or back from the manager's desk. However, this was not always practical due to the size of the room.

This researcher generally found managers to be more guarded about what they said and did and to be more formal with their staff on the first day, than they were by the end of the week. The impression was given that the managers were conscious of the researcher's presence in the beginning, but by the end of the week the researcher had blended into the background. For example, the hospital director used to leave his room to see someone and then he would have to come back and get the researcher because he had overlooked the researcher's presence. Nevertheless, it was not atypical for the managers to claim that some of their staff "played to an audience" when the researcher was present, although the managers could inform the researcher who these staff were. However, there was no guarantee, and indeed no way of knowing for definite, that the managers themselves were not "playing to an audience".

Finally, the researcher tried to involve the managers' personal assistants in the observation by asking them to record incoming and outgoing mail. It was intended that mail entering the managers' offices would be recorded into a log book which would note the date of the correspondence, from whom it came and the essence of the mail. Likewise, letters leaving the office would be logged out in the same way.

However, it became clear that like the managers, the personal assistants' had a heavy workload and were unable to complete satisfactory mail records. After receiving incomplete mail records from three observation studies, this facet of the research was disbanded.

iv. The Environment

> *"The impression that by and large has been created by the research into managerial work generally is that managerial work and jobs exist and function in an environmental vacuum, which exerts no influences, pressures, dangers or frustrations of any sort on the manager"* (Phillips, 1993 :6).

One criticism of management studies is that little account has been taken of the societal context in which managers work. *"Until perhaps the 1960s, a major constraint on progress in organisational design in the public sector and to a certain extent in the private sector, was that organisational analysts had for the most part not taken the organisation in its environment as a unit of observation and analysis"* (Wise, 1990:144). Mintzberg(1973) failed to look at the context in which his chief executives worked whilst Phillips(1993) looked at the environment from an interpretative point of view, based on her experience as a Ghanaian, raising doubts about methodological soundness.

"An organisation's environment consists of the forces and conditions that surround and pervade it" (Morgan, 1994: 461). It is essential that an observer has background knowledge of the organisation in which the manager works, in order to

gain a comprehensive understanding of managerial work. Organisational information is located in Annual Reports, Financial Reports, newsletters and publicity material. *"These would provide a picture of the influences exerted on the manager by the system"* (Marples, 1967 : 297). Information should also be sought on the lay out of the organisation since *"local amenities and organisational arrangements have a great influence on the chief executives in their daily work. Like all other craftsmen they are dependent on their working environment"* (Carlson, 1951: 91).

However, an analysis of the managerial environment must not be restricted to organisational influences. Account must also be taken of political, economic, social, technological and demographic influences, allowing an examination of the effects of the wider societal environment on managerial work. *"In a sense context is everything"* (Massey, 1995 : 81). It must be recognized that different types of public organisations face different environments and consequently different types of pressures and influences.

4.2.2 Diary Studies

The diary method of research found favour with several researchers(Carlson, 1951; Burns, 1954, 1957; Dubin and Spray ,1964; Horne and Lupton ,1965; Stewart, 1967) because it was cheaper and made less demands on time than observation(Hartley et al, 1977; Stewart, 1967). By asking managers to document details of activities performed during their working day on a diary recording form,

constituted by pre-coded classifications in order to minimize disruption to the manager, information can be gathered on the characteristics of managerial work, namely relationship contacts and time allocations.

Diaries are used by many researchers simply because they enable large numbers of managers, working in diverse organisations and geographic locations, to be studied (Stewart, 1967). Furthermore, the recording and categorization of activities is undertaken by those deemed to possess the most knowledge and understanding of the activities performed, the managers themselves(Easterby-Smith et al, 1993; Stewart, 1965). An observer, unless highly familiar with the job being observed, often faces difficulty understanding what is taking place.

In addition, *"diaries permit managers to record unobservational as well as observational activities which are important but frequently overlooked aspects of the manager's work"* (Phillips, 1993 : 194).

Moreover, managers completing diaries can record details of all the activities performed throughout the day, differing from observation whereby the researcher faces possible exclusion from confidential meetings and telephone conversations (Stewart, 1965).

However, countless weaknesses are associated with the use of diaries to look at managerial work. From the outset, it is an onerous task obtaining a random sample since the researcher inevitably relies on volunteers(Stewart, 1965), many managers viewing diaries as an added burden on their already busy schedule. *"The method of data collected undoubtedly interferes in important ways with the normal work patterns of respondents, both by consuming their time and by affecting their perspectives towards themselves and their work"* (Scott, 1965). When managers do agree to partake in a diary study, it is difficult to maintain their assistance and dedication for longer than two weeks (McCall et al, 1978).

Classification of the behaviour and activities of managers raises problems of *"developing accurate, unambiguous and comprehensive categories"* (Phillips, 1993: 196). Creating categories prior to commencing the actual study could pervert the results, especially where *"variations in managerial activities and behaviour, which do not readily conform to these pre-coded categories become evident in the course of the study"* (ibid: 197).

The diary itself may not capture certain activities, for example, routine or very brief activities, because the manager involved is not aware of them. These activities may, however, have been visible to the detached observer(Phillips, 1993; Weick, 1968).

There is also a tendency for managers to forget to record their activities on completion, due to time constraints. Consequently, *"fleeting contacts and short episodes are invariably overlooked and not recorded"* (Phillips, 1993 : 195).

Furthermore, researchers highlight the lack of objectivity surrounding the records, which prove to be no more than *"statements made by individuals about what they thought - or thought I ought to know - they were doing"* (Burns, 1957:47). In addition, managers were found to differ in their ability to report their behaviour objectively. *"Every person views the world through his own set of perceptual filters and is typically unaware of the nature of his biases..........he may be unable to provide accurate, complete observations since it is left to each managers' own judgement to determine what is worth reporting and what is not"* (Haas et al, 1969 : 63).

Gilchrist and Marples(1967) compared diaries kept by managers with observations recorded for the same period by a work study engineer. It became evident that the managers were much more likely to categorize several distinct activities as one action, frequently failing to record fleeting interruptions. Likewise, Burns(1957) found that some recorders were inclined to run incidents together more than others.

If the researcher's objective is to attain information on the content of managerial work, the diary will be an inappropriate research tool since it is concerned with the

media used, rather than the content of the activity performed. *"In simple terms, we know that the manager was with a supplier, that they conversed in the boardroom and that the meeting lasted 53 minutes, but we are never told why they met or what they talked about"* (Mintzberg, 1970:88). Thus, the *"amount of information in the diary is extremely limited - amounts to a description of one's behaviour in a language of less than 50 verbs and nouns"* (Burns, 1957 : 46).

Finally, when interpreting the data acquired from the diary sheets, the researcher will be confronted with the problem of *"ambiguity and consistency of interpretation"* (Phillips, 1993 : 197). *"Every basis of classification has involved interpretation of the events recorded or observed.....interpretation is a source of error and ambiguity"* (Marples, 1967 : 284).

Given the many limitations inherent in diary studies, the diary method of research should be favoured over observation if there is a likelihood that managers will distort their activities in the presence of an observer (McCall et al, 1978).

Mintzberg(1970) contended that diaries should only be used to study the characteristics of a large sample of differing managerial jobs. *"Whilst it may be true that diaries have provided no measure of output (purpose/content) this fact does not invalidate the 'time spending' approach"* (Mintzberg, 1970:89). Consequently, an initial objective of this research study was to use the diary method of research to

counteract one of the main weaknesses of observation - the small sample size. Issuing diaries to a large sample of public managers would provide the researcher with a more representative account of the characteristics of public sector managerial work than would ever be obtained using observation.

The diary recording form used in this research(Appendix 1) was an adaptation of the forms used by Carlson(1951), Horne and Lupton(1965) and Stewart(1967). It was designed to collect information on: the type of activity performed; the duration of the activity; who initiated the activity; who participated in the activity; whether the participant was internal or external to the organisation; the location of the activity; the media used to perform the activity; the subject matter of the activity; the action taken by the manager. The layout of the diary sheet simply required managers to circle the applicable category. Furthermore, the managers received a list of definitions of the terms used within the diary, to limit possible differences in interpretation.

This researcher's original intention was to issue diaries both to managers participating in the observational research and to a larger sample of public sector managers. By issuing diaries to managers to complete the week they were being observed, an insight would be gained into the extent the managers' interpretation of events paralleled that of the researcher.

Given that the managers were observed for a period of one week, it was also decided that diaries should be issued for a one week period to allow comparisons to be made between the diaries completed by both categories of managers. Previous diary research gave conflicting guidelines as to the appropriate length of time managers should be expected to keep diaries. Carlson(1951) reported reliability problems after two weeks whilst Stewart(1967) suggested reliable recording could be obtained from managers for at least four weeks.

Given the numerous limitations of the diary method, diaries were initially kept by managers being observed, allowing questions to be asked about how realistic it was to expect managers to faithfully record every activity they performed in their working day.

The fundamental weakness highlighted by these managers was the inaccurate recording of events. Managers claimed that it was unrealistic to expect them to record details of every interruption and telephone call received, due to time constraints and workload pressures. Managers also expressed concern that completing a diary record sheet after every activity would distort their flow of work. Thus, each manager recorded only those activities which consumed a substantial portion of their time, disregarding fleeting contacts and interruptions. Moreover, there was a tendency for managers to complete the diary forms after several events had occurred, or at the end of the working day or even the next morning. When

completing the diary, it was not uncommon for managers to rely on their own diaries to jog their memory. Some managers even asked the researcher to check her observation notes to see how long specific activities lasted.

The context in which the diary was originally intended to be used was to look at the characteristics of managerial work, that is, the time spent on various activities and the frequency with which they occurred. However, it soon became apparent that the diary would be an inadequate tool to achieve this kind of analysis, due to the number of activities performed by managers which were never recorded.

Consequently, the fact that countless activities were overlooked by managers, coupled with the reality that diaries were rarely completed immediately after episodes occurred, calls into question the reliability of research employing diaries as the primary methodological tool (Carlson, 1951; Stewart, 1967). Why should the managers in earlier studies be any more conscientious keeping diaries than those managers participating in this research? Can it be inferred that public managers are much busier and have much more fragmented work patterns than their counterparts in the private sector? Perhaps it is an indication that all managers today are under much more pressure than when the diary initially materialized as a research tool.

Thus, the diaries kept by the seven managers in this study failed to achieve the original objective of describing the characteristics of work, due to inadequate

completion. Consequently, it was not considered to be productive, either in time or resources, to issue diaries to a wider population of public managers.

4.2.3 Random/Activity Sampling

Some researchers (Hannaway, 1989; Kelly, 1964; Wirdenius, 1958) contend that managers should be observed by a process of activity/random sampling, whereby managerial work is observed randomly rather than for a continuous period of time. *"Since observations can be made over a period of days or weeks, the chances that day-to-day or week-to-week variations will affect the results, as in the case with a defined or restricted period of.......observation, is reduced"* (Phillips, 1993: 218).

The objective of Kelly's (1964:278) research was to ascertain the feasibility of studying executive behaviour by activity sampling. To be effective, the following conditions had to be met: the observations had to be momentary; they had to be made at randomly selected times; the manager's behaviour should not be altered because an observer was present; the types of event and behaviour to be observed should be clearly specified.

By using activity sampling, a larger cross section of managers can be studied concurrently and for longer periods of time than under observation. Consequently, the likelihood of variations on a daily or weekly basis will be limited in comparison with the diary and observational methods of research, which occur within a stipulated

timespan. Furthermore, measurements can be made with a pre-assigned level of veracity, the results being easier to interpret than under observation (ibid).

Hannaway(1989) conducted a random observation of fifty-two managers over a period of six weeks. When the random beep sounded, the managers answered ten questions about the task they were undertaking. Hannaway justified her use of random sampling because it minimized perceptual biases and was a relatively quick process, much less demanding than keeping a diary. Furthermore, information could be collected simultaneously from almost all the managers in one system, raising awareness of the work flows and interactions within the system, not possible with observation.

However, there would appear to be significant problems associated with activity sampling which explain both the infrequency with which it is used in management research, and the decision not to employ activity sampling in this research study. When compared with continuous observation, the information obtained is not as comprehensive and potentially useful(Phillips, 1993). *"One in effect photographs the action periodically....hence interpretation of complex aspects of it becomes difficult"* (Mintzberg, 1973 : 226). More importantly, *"the manager is unlikely to get accustomed to the presence of the researcher as he would tend to where the observation is being conducted on a continuous basis for a specified*

period" (Phillips, 1993 : 219), the consequence being that the researcher witnesses 'artificial' managerial behaviour.

Furthermore, the researcher faces the demanding task of ensuring the observations made are random(Kelly, 1964). Finally, *"random sampling is not a recommended method for identifying and understanding the nature of the societal influence on managerial work"* (Phillips, 1993 : 220), since the only data collected is that relating to the activities the manager was performing when the bleeper sounded at random. *"The explanation of these activities, their purpose, meaning and significance will generally not be found unless some other method is used"* (ibid).

Stewart(1965) discussed the implications of activity sampling with respect to the diary method of data collection. At the outset, there was the problem of the manager actually remembering to fill in their diary at specified random intervals. *"Short of being able to equip each manager with a random alarm clock (this) seemed an insuperable difficulty"* (Stewart, 1965 : 228). Furthermore, it was difficult upholding the managers' interest for the duration needed to produce information of sufficient magnitude (ibid).

Thus, activity sampling should perhaps be restricted to situations where *"the topic under study is well understood and can be coded simply and quickly"* and when

"known aspects of a variety of jobs must be studied in one location" (Mintzberg, 1973:226).

4.2.4 Protocol Analysis and Stimulated Recall

One possible way forward is to adopt the method devised by Burgoyne and Hodgson, that of asking managers to *"think aloud while doing their work, reliving episodes soon afterwards"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983 : 387). This approach has been termed protocol analysis and stimulated recall. Protocol analysis is defined as *"recording individuals articulating their stream of consciousness, their thoughts, feelings and emotions while they actually go about the activity being studied"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984 : 163). Stimulated recall requires the individual to listen to the recorded protocol and explain in more detail the experience they went through when the activity occurred and also the rationality behind their actions. Some weeks or months later, the individual is asked about: additional happenings in the course of events of which the episodes were part; the outcome of actions taken, or choices made, during the episodes; their present understanding of phenomena, procedures and relationships relevant to the incidents(Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983: 391).

Protocol analysis and stimulated recall attempt to *"get inside.....small and often rather prosaic incidents"* (ibid: 390), with the aim of defining and gaining an insight into managerial action by looking at what managers actually do. They

provide the researcher with a *"phenomenological view of the manager's world as experienced by the manager, rather than examining the behaviour itself"* (ibid). Thus, protocol analysis and stimulated recall provide a method to begin to understand the managerial process from *"the perspective of the manager rather than......that of the researcher"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984:168). Both methods improve accessibility to, and explanations of, mental processes, an area neglected by Mintzberg(1973). *"Protocol analysis and stimulated recall are very much about trying to obtain peoples' perceptions within the context of the concrete experience of these perceptions"* (ibid: 169).

The main strengths of protocol analysis and stimulated recall relate to the use of verbal reports to collect information about experience. Although the authors appreciate that the authenticity of the data obtained from verbal reports may be *"constrained by the extent to which the person concerned 'censors' his thoughts before articulation"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983), *"the immediacy of the process is a check against too much retrospection"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1983: 92). Furthermore, the approach helps develop trust between the researcher and the participants, encouraging open statements and explanations (ibid).

In addition, the methodology makes it possible *"to arrive at some understanding of the influence of the researcher/manager relationship on the data"* (Burgoyne and

Hodgson, 1983 :392). For example, managers were conscious of being more lenient with subordinates in the presence of a researcher(Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1984).

Finally, managers were generally very willing to try out this new research method, the majority finding *"the experience a rewarding one (valuing) it as a process of personal reflection, insight and awareness-raising"* (Burgoyne and Hodgson, 1983: 392).

However, a number of difficulties have been highlighted concerning the suitability of protocol analysis and stimulated recall to management research. Given that this method is relatively new to management research, questions must surely arise over its reliability. Furthermore, the researcher may become overwhelmed by the substantial amount of time and effort needed to conduct protocol analysis and stimulated recall(Weissenberg, 1984). *"The researcher would have to have a good deal of training in both observational and interview skills in order to produce an accurate protocol for future analysis"* (ibid: 213).

Moreover, uncertainty surrounds the extent to which an understanding can be grasped of the manager's stream of consciousness, that is, the bit between doing the act and recalling it. If the researcher continually asks the manager why they did something when they did it, there is the risk that the researcher could begin to influence their answers and guide what they think about. If the researcher waits until

the end of the day and then asks managers why they did what they did, they are likely to get the tidied up version. Thus, one wonders just how possible it is in practice to get the real meanings behind the acts.

Finally, if, when accounting what they have done, managers paint a completely different picture from that documented by the researcher, whose view should be given the most weight to - the researcher's or the manager's?

Nevertheless, *"Burgoyne and Hodgson are to be applauded for presenting us with a tool that has helped them in understanding managerial behaviour. Even if some misgivings continue about its transferability we should try it because the tool may help and it certainly cannot hurt"* (Weissenberg, 1984:213).

However, the fact that this method is relatively new to management research deterred this researcher from using protocol analysis and stimulated recall to examine public sector managerial work.

4.3 INDIRECT METHODS OF RESEARCH

> *"Interview/survey techniques can be viewed as indirect methods of gathering information about behaviours. They are based on asking managers to describe what they do rather than actually observing the managers at work"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 26).

4.3.1 Interview

Traditionally, the in-depth interview has been the favoured instrument when measuring the manager's attitude towards *"their jobs, colleagues, work organisations and to specific outside products or events"* (Hari-Das, 1983 : 308).

The main advantage interviews have over questionnaires is that *"in-depth interviews aim to identify a respondent's attitudes, motives and behaviour by encouraging the person to talk freely and to express his ideas on the subject matter under discussion"* (ibid), whereas questionnaires tend to confine the respondent's thoughts by forcing them to select one of few options.

Again, unlike questionnaires, if confusion arises over the meaning of a question the interviewer can explain what is being asked of the respondent. Furthermore, the interviewer will be observing *"not only WHAT the respondent says but HOW he says it"* (Selltiz et al, 1959:242). Thus, the interviewer may be able to tell if the respondent is giving honest answers(Parten, 1950). Finally, *"the interviewer may catch the informant off guard and thus secure more spontaneous reactions than would be the case if a written form were mailed out for the informant to mull over"* (ibid: 80).

However, the main weaknesses of the interview are the strengths of the questionnaire. *"The course of the interview is decided by the skills of the interviewer*

when asking questions and probing further with supplementary questions" (Ghauri et al, 1995 : 65). Thus, the possibility of interviewer bias is always prevalent. *"The way the interviewer asks questions, and even the interviewer's general appearance or vocal qualities, may influence respondents' answers"* (Kidder et al, 1986: 222). Interviewer bias can be overcome by using questionnaires, although it has been suggested that the respondent of a questionnaire *"will INTERACT with the questionnaire and may PROJECT some kind of person 'behind' the questions"* (Open University, 1989 : 53).

Furthermore, interviews involve a longer process than simply requiring managers to complete a questionnaire. The researcher may need a number of follow-up interviews with the same respondent (Kidder et al, 1986).

Finally, interviews are generally more difficult to interpret and evaluate. *"Our own background may highly influence the interpretations, thereby causing problems of objectivity"* (Ghauri et al, 1995 : 66).

4.3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are commonly used as research instruments because they are typically inexpensive and cover a large geographical area(Kidder et al, 1986; Moser and Kalton, 1981; Open University, 1989; Parten, 1950; Robson, 1993; Sanders and Pinhey, 1983; Selltiz et al, 1959). Furthermore, questionnaires consume less of the

researcher's time than methods such as observation and interviews(Robson, 1983). *"Relatively low costs and the ability to reach a large number of people over a very large area, make the mailed questionnaire one of the most often used survey techniques available"* (Sanders and Pinhey, 1983 : 147).

Questionnaires appear to be more attractive to respondents, who can complete them at their leisure(Stacey, 1969). Consequently, questionnaires may lead to more accurate answers than would be attained in an interview, since the respondent will have time to deliberate over the questions(Hoinville et al, 1978; Kidder et al, 1986). Furthermore, questionnaires guarantee anonymity which *"can encourage frankness when sensitive areas are involved"* (Robson, 1993). Equally, however, *"some respondents may hesitate to put their ideas in writing for fear that their schedules may be identified even though unsigned"* (Parten, 1950:94).

Although questionnaires *"provide a relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives"* (Robson, 1993 : 240), this must be balanced with numerous identifiable weaknesses, the main one being the relatively low response rate most questionnaires accrue. This leads to uncertainty over whether the completed questionnaires are a representative sub sample of all the questionnaires originally sent out(Open University, 1989). *"Response rate is the chief index of data quality in a survey, because it defines the extent of possible bias from non-response"* (Kidder et al, 1986).

Moreover, questions arise over the reliability of the data received in a questionnaire. The fact that a questionnaire is sent out to a specified manager does not necessarily mean that the manager has completed it. Perhaps he delegated it to a more junior manager to complete, without making this known when the questionnaire was returned(Sanders and Pinhey, 1983). In addition, respondents may misinterpret questions, giving misleading results(Parten, 1950; Robson, 1993). Thus, *"a researcher's lack of control over the subjects' attitudes or motivations in completing a questionnaire should be considered when assessing the validity and reliability of questionnaire data"* (Hartley et al, 1977:32).

Furthermore, questionnaires are inflexible in the sense that there is *"no opportunity to probe beyond the given answer, to clarify an ambiguous one, to overcome unwillingness to answer a particular question or to appraise the validity of WHAT a respondent said in the light of HOW he said it"* (Moser and Kalton, 1981: 260). Hence, *"the data are, necessarily, superficial. There is little or no check on the honesty or seriousness of responses. Responses have to be squeezed into predetermined boxes which may or may not be appropriate"* (Robson, 1993: 243).

In addition, the answers given in questionnaires are not independent of each other for the simple reason that the respondent can look at all the questions in the questionnaire before he answers any single question (Moser and Kalton, 1981).

Consequently, the respondent's reply to any one question is highly likely to be influenced by the other questions asked.

Moreover, *"we don't know (and can never know) what the respondent thought or said when confronted with our question"* (Open University, 1989: 63). Thus, there is a realistic danger that the respondent will either give the answers they think the researcher wants or answers which place them in a favourable light.

With the underlying objective of gaining an insight into managers' perceptions of their jobs(Haas et al, 1969), a questionnaire was devised which asked managers both about their workload and their opinions about recent public sector change(Appendix 2). By asking managers to estimate the proportion of time spent with various people and performing numerous activities, the managers' self reporting could be compared with the researcher's observation.

In addition, the NPM claim that the work of public sector managers has become increasingly business orientated, yet provide little concrete evidence to substantiate their contentions. By issuing questionnaires to public managers themselves, attention can be focused on whether the *"affinity for...(business) terminology (is) superficial and opportunistic"* (Pollitt, 1993 : 85).

i. Layout of questionnaire

Advice was taken from guidelines given by numerous experts(Babbie, 1990; Ghauri et al, 1995; Hoinville et al, 1978; Moser and Kalton, 1981; Robson, 1993; Sanders and Pinhey, 1983; Selltiz et al, 1959) when the questionnaire was initially drafted. Whilst a questionnaire comprising ten or more sides of A4 paper was found to deter a considerable percentage of the population(Hoinville et al, 1978; Sanders and Pinhey, 1983), very short questionnaires were rarely taken seriously by managers(Sanders and Pinhey, 1983). Respondents with "*a special interest in the subject or with a high standard of literacy*" (Hoinville et al, 1978: 127), would not be dissuaded from completing a lengthy questionnaire. Thus, it was envisaged that a significant proportion of managers would complete this researcher's twenty page questionnaire on public sector managerial work, since it was directly relevant to the top echelons of public management to whom it was being issued.

Long questionnaires can, nevertheless, be structured in ways which reduce the appearance of length. Rather than number each question, groupings can be made with sub-lettering(Hoinville et al, 1978). Whatever the length, however, it is highly recommended that a questionnaire is *"spread out and uncluttered.....(maximizing) the 'white space' in (the) instrument"* (Babbie, 1990: 135).

The questionnaire was divided into five sections with clear instructions, in bold type, outlining what was expected from the manager(Hoinville et al, 1978; Robson, 1993).

It was essential that the questions proceeded *"in a logical manner, moving from topic to topic in a way that indicate(d) to the respondent the relationship between the questions"* (Moser and Kalton, 1981: 346). Personal information questions were situated at the end of the questionnaire(ibid).

The questionnaire had to be *"clearly written and unambiguous"* (Sanders and Pinhey, 1983 :83), avoiding both leading and double barrelled questions(Moser and Kalton, 1981). A mixture of open and closed questions was used, the former addressing issues when a comprehensive account was needed of the *"aspects of an issue.....uppermost in the respondent's mind"* (ibid :342). Closed questions, however, provide much greater *"uniformity of responses and are more easily processed"* (Babbie, 1990 :127) than open questions, albeit they restrict answers to predetermined categories which might *"overlook certain issues that respondents would have said were important"* (ibid: 128). When using closed questions, the researcher must decide whether to *"code for a neutral position"* (Moser and Kalton, 1981:344). This researcher deliberately decided not to offer the option 'don't know', evidence suggesting that a considerable number of respondents choose that option if given the opportunity (ibid).

Furthermore, questions based on 'Five Point Rating Scales'(Parten, 1950) were also incorporated into the questionnaire, *"because respondents will find it faster to complete a set of questions presented in this fashion"* (Babbie, 1990).

Given that the questionnaire was lengthy, the first few questions were relatively straightforward in an attempt to maintain enthusiasm and interest, the more demanding questions appearing later on(Babbie, 1990; Ghauri et al, 1995; Hoinville et al, 1978). In general, the questionnaire endeavoured to mix open, closed and five point rating scale questions to make completion more varied and interesting for the respondent.

ii. The distribution of postal questionnaires

A personalised letter accompanied the questionnaire, distributed in an envelope addressed to a named person, although evidence suggests there is only a small likelihood response rates increase with personalisation(Moser and Kalton, 1981; Sanders and Pinhey, 1983). A self-addressed envelope accompanied the questionnaire, using a business reply service for cost effectiveness.

Three hundred and forty-seven questionnaires were issued to chief executives and directors in local authorities and hospital trusts, to chief constables and firemasters, to the chief executives of water authorities and finally to Scottish Office officers ranked at grades two and three, a sample considered to be representative of all senior public managers in Scotland.

Probability sampling was favoured, *"a subject selection process in which each subject in the sampling frame has a non-zero chance of being included in the*

sample" (Suen and Ary, 1989 : 37). This differs from non-probability sampling, whereby there is *"no assurance that every element has some chance of being included"* (Selltiz et al, 1959: 515). Unlike non-probability sampling, *"the judgement or bias of the investigator"* (Shipman, 1981 : 61) is eliminated when using probability sampling, the consequence being that the resultant sample represents the population (Suen and Ary, 1989).

The dominant form of probability sampling is random sampling, a method of selection which *"assures each individual or element in the universe an equal chance of being chosen"* (Parten, 1950:219). This was deemed to be inappropriate for this research because *"random samples do not guarantee representativeness"* (Shipman, 1981: 61). One of the intentions of issuing a questionnaire to a wide range of public managers was to compare work patterns and attitudes between managers in various services and localities. For example, local authority versus hospital trust managers, contractors versus clients, managers in rural areas versus those in urban areas and so forth. However, *"simple random sampling may, by chance, fail to select members from a particular subgroup, making the desired comparison impossible"* (Suen and Ary, 1989 : 39).

Thus, given that this research required the representation of specific subgroups within the sample (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992), stratified random sampling was adopted.

> *"On the basis of the relative proportion of the population represented by a given group, you select - randomly or systematically - a number of elements from that group constituting the same proportion of your desired sample size"* (Babbie, 1990 : 86).

"It is important that the information about the strata be up to date, accurate, complete, applicable to the population and available to the surveyor" (Parten, 1950:231-232). The total population of public managers in Scotland being sampled was obtained from the Directory of Scottish Local Government(1996), the Civil Service Yearbook(1995) and the IHSM Health Services Year Book(1995). The public managers were divided by service and then subdivided into units, for example, hospitals in the NHS, departments in the Scottish Office and so forth. It was decided to issue questionnaires to one-half of the managers in this total population, the chosen sample representing one-half of the managers in each unit in each service. For example, in a hospital with eight managers, four were chosen at random.

Thus,

> *"all we can ask of a researcher is that the sample is representative of the population in those things that are probably relevant to the research question. If we are assured of that, we can proceed on the assumption that the error in this sample is no different from the error in a true random sample"* (Stern, 1979: 79).

"Postal questionnaires usually get a very low response rate.....the usual figure being 30 percent" (Shipman, 1981:68). Of these three hundred and forty-seven questionnaires, one hundred and thirty-two were completed and returned within four

weeks of being dispatched, marking a response rate of 38 percent. By the end of these four weeks, 'reminder' letters were sent to non-respondents, *"an excellent way to increase the overall response rate"* (Sanders and Pinhey, 1983:151). Issuing these 'reminder' letters resulted in the return of a further twenty-nine questionnaires, raising the response rate by 8.4 percent, amounting to a final response rate of 46.4 percent.

4.3.3 Indirect Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses

Taken as a whole, indirect methods of research are advantageous to the extent that a large number of managers can be studied and managers are likely to cooperate, since these methods are not so intrusive as, for example, observation. Thus, interviews and questionnaires should be recognized as useful in the study of managers' perceptions of their own jobs.

However, it is dangerous to rely solely on these methods of data collection due to their possible inaccuracy, arising as a result of *"restriction on human processes of observation, recording, recall and reporting"* (Phillips, 1993:191). *"The sheer volume and nature of activities seriously hinders a manager's effort to conscientiously observe and purposively memorize activities for accurate reporting on a future survey"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 27). Evidence suggests that managers are poor judges of their own activities (Mintzberg, 1973).

> *"Memory decay is greater with 1) more elapsed time since the event; 2) lesser occurrence of the event; 3) relative unimportance of the event; 4) stronger personal connection of the question to a person's self-esteem and 5) less accessibility to relevant data. Thus, much data is inaccessible to the researcher since respondents often cannot recall events, or misrecall various events"* (Smith, 1975 : 194).

Furthermore, there is a tendency for constrained report, managers presenting themselves in a favourable light by censoring their account of how they spend their time. *"Distortions can occur within any one or more of the following dimensions concerning the behaviours of activities of interests: frequency; duration; location; time and date; contact parties; content; method"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 31-32).

Finally, *"to ask a manager what he does is to make him the researcher; he is expected to translate complex reality into meaningful abstraction. There is no evidence to suggest that managers can do this effectively"* (Mintzberg, 1973: 222).

Thus, *"the fallibilities of retrospective data are often reason enough for an investigator to attempt an observational study"* (Weick, 1968:364).

4.4 MIXED METHODOLOGY

> *"Researchers must begin to adopt multiple method research designs........For describing managerial behaviour no method clearly shows itself superior for all potential research circumstances and settings"* (McCall et al, 1978 : 33).

Given the weaknesses inherent in the methods of research outlined above, perhaps methods should be combined, negating the adverse effects likely to arise from using

one specific method. *"Although it has always been observed that each method has assets and liabilities"*, the use of multiple methods *"purports to exploit the assets and neutralize, rather than compound, the liabilities"* (Jick, 1979:604).

"The combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978 : 291), is most commonly termed triangulation, a term emanating from navigation and surveying, *"where a minimum of three reference points are taken to check an object's location"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993:133).

Data most commonly obtained from triangulation is the product of different research methods, otherwise known as the *"between methods"* (Denzin, 1978 : 302) approach, *"largely a vehicle for cross validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data"* (Jick, 1979 : 602).

"Any study employing a single type of research method.......leaves untested rival hypotheses (or alternative interpretations of data) that call the validity of the study's findings into question" (Brewer and Hunter, 1989: 14). Coupled with the knowledge that the shortcomings in each single method will be offset by the counterbalancing strengths of another(Jick, 1979; Todd, 1979), greater confidence is bestowed in results deriving from multimethod research.

The use of multiple methods may also *"uncover some unique variance which otherwise may have been neglected by single methods"* (Jick, 1979 : 603), allowing a more wholesome description of the issues being studied. In addition, the validity of each research method can be evaluated against other methods (Brewer and Hunter, 1989).

Furthermore, triangulation *"stimulate(s) the creation of inventive methods"* (Jick, 1979:608), defined as *"new ways of capturing a problem to balance with conventional data collection methods"* (ibid). Moreover, triangulation assists in both the development of new theories and the refashioning of old theories, the consequence of *"different viewpoints.... produc(ing) some elements which do not fit a theory or model"* (ibid: 609).

However, there are numerous weaknesses associated with triangulation. From a practical perspective, *"multimethod battery is complex and time consuming"* (Webb and Weick, 1979 : 651), replication of the research being extremely difficult. Problems also arise when the researcher uses triangulation to *"legitimate a dominant, personally preferred model"* (Jick, 1979 : 609). Each method should be given equal weight to and if either qualitative or quantitative methods *"become mere window dressing for the other, then the design is inadequate or biased"* (ibid).

Furthermore, combining different methods in a single study may produce antithetical findings, the consequence being that the researcher is faced with the intricate task of interpreting these inconsistencies (Ghauri et al, 1995). Conflicting results question the reliability of each method, resulting in *"incoherence, confusion and fruitless controversy"* (Brewer and Hunter, 1989: 23). Perhaps this explains why multiple methods remain an *"extraordinary achievement or a mere ideal"* (ibid: 28).

In addition, the extent to which multiple methods focus on *"differing dimensions of the same phenomena"* (Hari-Das, 1983:309) is questionable. It could be argued that, in reality, mixed methodology encompasses the measuring of different phenomena. *"Do quite different styles of research really study the same phenomenon in anything but name?"* (Brewer and Hunter, 1989 : 67). For example, a questionnaire asking a manager about activities they had performed is liable to get a different response than if the manager was asked about the activities at the end of the working day, differing again from the likely response which would be attained if the manager was asked about the activity as soon as they had completed it. By asking questions in these three stages, the researcher would be measuring the manager's immediate and rationalizing responses.

Thus, uncertainty arises over the compatibility of data attained from two diverse methods, for example, observation and survey. *"What these data signify, what they mean and what phenomena they portray, have a great deal to do with their*

respective theoretical contexts; contexts which are incompatible and even incommensurate" (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1992:172).

Nevertheless, triangulation is a valuable tool for researchers. *"If a description can be shown to agree with those provided by complimentary methods, then it contains a degree of accuracy unattainable by a description that is consistent with only one method"* (McCall et al, 1978:33).

This researcher attempted to triangulate, *"methodological triangulation"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993:134) adopted. Qualitative and quantitative methods were combined, taking the form of observation and the issuing of questionnaires. Observation was deemed to be the most suitable research tool in the quest to acquire an understanding of public sector managerial work, since the researcher would experience firsthand the activities performed by public managers. However, given the many inherent weaknesses of observation, questionnaires emerged as a complimentary methodology. *"No single method was sufficient and thus a design evolved that utilized a combination of methods"* (Jick, 1979 :605).

Thus, two studies were undertaken into the nature of public sector managerial work in Scotland, studies which employed diverse research methods. In reality, however, the studies were not as separate as triangulation suggests. The questionnaire emanated from the observational research and consequently, a common set of

concerns linked both aspects of this research study. For example, the questions on the patterns and characteristics of managerial work were based on the researcher's direct observations of managers at work. Furthermore, the section in the questionnaire on periodicity of managerial work stemmed from observation, it soon becoming clear that managers' priorities differed at certain times in the year. Thus, the observation and questionnaire studies were not entirely separate. Ultimately, a questionnaire evolved which was suitably informed by the researcher's experience of public sector managerial work.

Taking on board Jick's(1979:609) warning that qualitative and quantitative methods should not *"become mere window dressing for the other"*, it should be stressed that although the questionnaire evolved out of the observational research, both were given equal weight in the final analysis of public sector managerial work. The research structure was deliberately sequenced so that the questionnaire succeeded the observational research, observation providing a substantial amount of interpretative knowledge about public sector managerial work which had been overlooked in both the managerial work and NPM literatures.

Triangulation, however, was not the sole purpose for combining observation and questionnaires to study public sector managerial work. Instead, these diverse research methods were primarily used because the researcher was seeking different types of information. Whilst observation would allow the researcher to define the

nature of managerial work in the public sector, questionnaires would paint a picture of managerial work based on the managers' own perceptions. Consequently, a comparison of the data obtained from both methods would show whether managers' perceptions of their jobs differed from what was observed.

Furthermore, the underlying intention behind this research was to assess whether public sector managers were increasingly adopting similar working methods to colleagues in the private sector. On the one hand, observation would provide the researcher with factual data about public sector managerial work patterns, allowing comparisons to be made with the existing literature on private sector managerial work patterns. On the other hand, the questionnaire would provide a forum to ask public managers about their values, opinions and attitudes towards the NPM's claims that public management is becoming increasingly like management in the private sector. Indeed, the questionnaire was central to this research because it would gain an insight into managers' views about the changing context of public management and their value base, an outlook not obtainable under observation. Thus, only by issuing questionnaires could an understanding be developed of the extent to which the themes and language of NPM have been absorbed by public managers themselves.

4.5 CONCLUSION

> *"We often treat different methods as concretely different types of study rather than as analytically different aspects of the same study"* (Zelditch, 1962: 97).

Observation emerged as the most suitable research tool in the drive to gain a comprehensive understanding of the work performed by public sector managers. However, given that this tool was only suitable for observing a small number of managers, combined with the fact that there was no way of knowing if these managers were representative of the population as a whole, questionnaires were issued to a wider sample of public managers, allowing generalizations to be made.

> *"In recent years, researchers have experimented with adding qualitative components to large-scale survey projects, with generally positive results. The reverse strategy may sometimes prove equally fruitful"* (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:21).

"The distinguishing feature of multimethod research is that it generates multiple data sets about the same research problem, each set being collected with a different type of method" (Brewer and Hunter, 1989: 82). Initially, information collected from observation and the questionnaires was examined independently. Thereafter, the cross validation and cross referencing of research methods, conclusions and theories was attempted (Brewer and Hunter, 1989).

"When two reliable instruments yield conflicting results, the validity of each is cast into doubt. When the findings of different methods agree, we are more confident" (ibid: 17). Thus, the findings of this research will be strengthened if information collected on managerial activity patterns is constant across the observation and questionnaire studies. If, however, there are obvious disparities between what a manager actually does and what they say they do, questions will surely arise as to the

suitability of each method in studying managerial work, the picture painted depending on whether managerial activity is viewed through the eyes of the researcher or the managers themselves.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE OF MANAGERIAL WORK

An Observation Study of Seven Public Managers in Scotland

5.1 INTRODUCTION

> *"As with other aspects in the life of chief executives, there is very little information on what chief executives do, or what chief executives themselves think about this.....a realistic understanding of what the job entails can only usually be gained either by doing it, or through a close working relationship with someone who is in the post"* (Morphet, 1993:152-171).

As chapter two demonstrated, the main downfall of the leading managerial work studies is the almost total omission of public managers as research subjects. Even when public managers have been included in such studies(Mintzberg, 1973; Kurke and Aldrich, 1983) it is ultimately as token gestures, little attention paid to the differing environments public and private sector managers work in. Instead, attention has been focused on *"the management of private sector organisations. So far as public services management is concerned, the tendency has been to extrapolate.......schemas across, with little consideration as to their relevance, rather than to research and develop public sector schemas"* (Willcocks and Harrow, 1992: xvi).

Studies which have exclusively focused on public sector managerial work are typically American and 'zoom in' on specific types of managers, hardly conducive to generalising about British public sector managerial work. Where research has taken place in Britain it is mostly practitioner based, reliance placed on anecdotes and personal accounts of life as a senior public manager. Furthermore, much of this British research is overwhelmingly local authority orientated, to the detriment of managers working in equally important areas of the public sector.

Thus, there is an immense gap in the managerial work literature as it stands at present, relatively little known about the daily activities and tasks undertaken by those managers leading 'public' organisations. It is somewhat ironic that whilst 'public' organisations are ultimately accountable to the general public, little is known about the managerial work practices employed within these organisations, public sector managerial work remaining relatively hidden and removed from the existing body of managerial work research.

With the underlying intention of bridging this gap in the managerial work literature, shedding light on the nature and pattern of work undertaken by public sector managers, seven senior managers were observed in their workplace for a period of one week. *"The observing researcher sees events 'as they happen'.......Observation allows the researcher to collect data from the context in which it occurs"* (Dargie, 1998:66). Only by recording firsthand the activities undertaken by managers, could the researcher *"get at real life in the real world"* (Robson, 1993:191), overcoming the inherent difficulties of interview and questionnaire research, namely constrained recall and restricted reporting.

As well as attempting to throw some light onto the pattern and nature of public sector managerial work, it was hoped that this empirical research would also explore the NPM's widespread claims and generalisations about public management. As chapter three argued, the NPM contend that public and private sector managerial work are

converging, no empirical evidence provided to substantiate their claims. Although the NPM identify key elements of public sector reform, they fail to show how this reform impacts on the actual work managers undertake. Furthermore, the NPM assume that all public managers are equally affected by reform, ignoring the important point that public management jobs differ.

Those public managers observed were at director level or above in a variety of Scottish public sector organisations. Two local authority chief executives were observed, one of whom managed a district council before local authority reorganisation whilst the other headed a new unitary authority. This allowed an examination to be made of the impact of one major piece of central government legislation on public sector managerial work. Both chief executives worked in authorities varying in scope, size and geographical location.

Local authority and hospital trust contract directors are arguably the new breed of public managers who are most representative of business managers.

> *"DSO managers have had to grapple with competence in financial management and forecasting, and the need to be innovative and capable of meeting the demands for effectiveness and efficiency. The skills demanded of them have been considerable......to turn departments into profitable business units and to keep their fingers on the pulse of market trends and know what competitors are doing"* (Rao and Young, 1995:39).

In order to establish whether the work processes and patterns of contract managers differ from those of traditional public managers, a local authority and hospital trust contract director were also observed.

> *"'Policing' and 'management' have tended to be terms that do not sit easily together. Developments in police managerial strategies from the 1980s onwards have arisen against a back cloth of the difficulties of reconciling the myriad activities of policing with the processes of management"* (Savage and Leishman, 1996:242).

It was therefore considered interesting to observe the work of a chief constable, a manager working within a traditional rank organisational structure.

Quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations (QUANGOs)

> *"carry out functions for which ministers have made provision as a policy decision, but which they have decided are best delivered at arm's length. These functions include executive, judicial and advisory actions, and encompass service delivery, licensing, policy advising, regulatory and coercive(policing) elements"* (Massey, 1995:77).

It was felt necessary to include a quango manager in the sample, given the government's increased commitment to create agencies to undertake work previously done by central government departments.

In an attempt to make a contribution to a somewhat incomplete literature on managerial work, the characteristics and patterns of work of the seven observed managers will initially be looked at. Thereafter, the focus of attention will turn to

the nature of public sector managerial work, encompassing an examination of the underlying purposes behind the observed managers' contacts. Finally, some of the key management changes which have been identified by the NPM as stemming from Conservative government policies, will be explored in relation to the work of these observed managers.

Following on from this exposition of the observation findings, an attempt will be made to compare and contrast the work undertaken by the seven observed managers with the findings of existing managerial work studies. Only then can an understanding begin to be gained of whether managerial work researchers are justified in claiming that their findings represent all managerial work.

> *"The vast majority of the research into managerial jobs and behaviour has been conducted with very little recognition being given to the external environmental context within which these jobs take place.....necessary if one is attempting to gain an in-depth understanding of managerial work rather than a superficial one, and if one is to understand the forces influencing and impacting on it"* (Phillips, 1993 : 413).

Existing studies of managerial work have generally failed to contextualise the environment in which managers work, the environment featuring in a critique of the research rather than as a true part of the research agenda. On the contrary, the NPM is obsessed with context, focusing on key elements of public sector reform. However, the NPM fail to look at the environments in which individual public managers work, assuming all public managers are equally affected by the reforms.

Thus, the NPM arguably reproduce the genericism of the existing managerial work research, neglecting the important point that public management jobs differ. Consequently, an underlying aim of this research study is to examine the nature and patterns of work of the public managers in relation to their own individual working environments, involving a focus on the effects of periodic work cycles.

Stemming from a combination of observation and discussions with the observed managers, this research will then break with tradition by outlining the main tasks undertaken by public sector managers. In other words, an attempt will be made to move away from the tradition of creating typologies of work which are so vague that they could quite easily have universal application. Furthermore, reliance on typologies merely results in the recording of activities, no account given of the meaning and significance of these activities. Consequently, by identifying essential tasks undertaken by the observed managers, this research attempts to overcome the failure of existing managerial researchers to engage in any explanation as to the content of managerial work, or simply, *"why do managers do what they do in the way that they do"?*

5.2 PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERIAL WORK IN SCOTLAND: AN ACCOUNT OF THE OBSERVATION RESEARCH

5.2.1 The Patterns and Characteristics of Public Sector Managerial Work

Executing one hundred and forty-seven activities during the observational week, the public managers worked approximately forty hours, rising to just over forty-three

hours when travelling time was included. Furthermore, evening work was undertaken by one-half of the observed managers, the majority of whom worked one evening.

The observed public managers appeared to have some control over the design of their working day to the extent that they initiated 57.4 percent of their contacts. Furthermore, these managers spent more time in contacts they themselves initiated (Appendix 3, Table 2).

Nevertheless, the observed managers were frequently interrupted throughout the course of the working day. 16.3 percent of their activities were accounted for by brief face-to-face contacts lasting five minutes or less. Furthermore, only 6.9 percent of the managers' activities lasted one hour or more. Indeed, 65 percent of managers' activities lasted nine minutes or less, just over one-half were five minutes or less and 14.1 percent took one minute.

Consequently, the observed managers spent only 20.4 percent of their working time alone. Of the remainder, 79.6 percent was spent with people internal to the organisation(Appendix 3, Table 4). Whilst almost one-third of weekly working time was consumed by management subordinates, only three percent was spent with non-management subordinates. 9.3 percent of weekly working time was spent with personal assistants, 3.9 percent with peers and 2.1 percent with superiors. Furthermore, 16.7 percent was spent with several people of mixed status whilst 15.5

percent was spent with a combination of people internal and external to the organisation in which the manager worked. Finally, 15.1 percent of contacts were with people external to the organisation, including the press, further education establishments, contractors, clients, suppliers, the public, consultants and colleagues in similar organisations.

Although managers were frequently interrupted, the majority of their contact time was accounted for by formal scheduled meetings, managers spending one-third of the time in unscheduled meetings as they spent in scheduled meetings(Appendix 3, Table 7). Brief face-to-face contacts lasting five minutes or less consumed 2.6 percent of weekly working time, pre and post-meetings accounted for 1.9 percent of time, telephone calls amounted to 6.6 percent of managerial time and tours consumed only 1 percent of the managers' weekly working time. The remaining methods of communication could be classified as secondary, consisting of lectures and conferences, public relations activities and business lunches.

Finally, not only did the observed managers spend the majority of their time with persons internal to the organisation, they also spent 88.5 percent of weekly working time within their organisation, over one-half of which was spent in their own office. Of the remaining time, 11.1 percent was spent in other internal offices, 14.6 percent in the boardroom, 2.7 percent in council chambers and 4.5 percent in the managers' personal assistants' office.

5.2.2 The Underlying Purposes Behind The Observed Managers' Contacts

By outlining the purposes underlying the work of public managers, an understanding can perhaps now begin to be gained of the previously unanswered question of *'what do public managers actually do?'*

Given that a fundamental objective of this research was to compare and contrast the purposes of public sector managerial work with existing managerial work research, this researcher was faced with the *"problem of coding behaviour so that it is described accurately and is comparable with prior research"* (Martinko and Gardner, 1984:159). Consequently, this research *"maintains the integrity of the Mintzberg system so that the data remain comparable"* (ibid).

Overall, 20.4 percent of the observed managers' weekly working time was accounted for by desk work, during which managers wrote reports, prepared presentations, processed mail and other information flowing into their office, wrote or dictated letters and so forth. A further 9.3 percent of weekly working time was accounted for by contact with personal assistants, during which the mail was sorted, the diaries were updated, reports and letters were dictated, duties were confirmed and messages were passed on. The remaining time was spent in contact with others, the underlying purposes of which were(Appendix 3, Tables 9 and 10):

i. Information Contacts

Comprising 32.4 percent of the observed managers' contacts, the majority of contact time was spent in information contacts, scheduled and unscheduled meetings generally being the medium through which information was passed on.

a. Review

9.4 percent of the managers' contacts took the form of reviews, consuming 24.8 percent of contact time. Reviews were simply meetings in which a wide range of issues were discussed, information flowing between those present. The majority of review sessions were **deputy reviews,** where the manager had regular, usually unscheduled meetings with subordinates with whom they had a particularly close working relationship, discussing issues of current importance.

An additional 27.4 percent of review sessions could be termed **post-meeting reviews,** meetings which took place after scheduled meetings, their purpose being to review important issues raised in formal meetings. These post-meetings generally involved subordinates or peers and usually occurred after scheduled meetings with persons external to the organisation.

A further 16.1 percent of review sessions were **pre-meetings,** meetings held with subordinates, peers and advisers immediately before a scheduled meeting with persons external to the organisation. The underlying objective of these meetings

was to provide an opportunity for the managers and their peers, subordinates and advisers to raise issues which they felt should be discussed in the scheduled meetings.

Moreover, 5.7 percent of review sessions were accounted for by **board meetings,** highly formalised meetings usually initiated by the clock and held in the board room. Hospital trust board meetings resembled business board meetings to the extent that the trust was governed by a board consisting of both executive and non-executive directors. The equivalent of board meetings in local authorities were management team meetings, where the chief executive met in the boardroom with his service directors.

Community reviews accounted for 4.8 percent of reviews, managers attending locally arranged community meetings to discuss issues directly affecting residents. Finally, 4.8 percent of reviews were categorised as policy reviews, managers attending scheduled meetings to discuss one particular area of policy adopted by the organisation.

b. Giving Information

Overall, 8.6 percent of the managers' weekly contact time was spent giving information, amounting to 10.5 percent of the managers' total contacts. The majority of information could be classified as **instant,** passing immediately from

the manager to the opposite party. A further 21.4 percent of information could be classified as an **update or brief**, whereby the manager informed others about events occurring in their organisation.

An additional 14.3 percent of the information given by managers was in the form of **advice**, whilst 10 percent concerned **plans and policies** to be implemented. Finally, almost one-twentieth of information given by managers took the form of a **lecture**, the manager giving outsiders an insight into the organisation they managed.

c. Receiving information

6.4 percent of managers' weekly contact time was spent receiving information, accounting for 11.3 percent of the observed managers' contacts. Like information given, the majority of information received by the observed managers could be classified as **instant**, that is, extremely up-to-the-minute information transmitted to managers as soon as it had been received by others. Likewise, a further 23.9 percent of information received was merely a **general update** of what was happening in the organisation. Finally, an additional 13.4 percent of information took the form of a **briefing**, usually by management subordinates or consultants.

d. Tour

Consuming only 1.1 percent of the managers' contact time and comprising only 1.2 percent of the managers' total contacts, tours were the final way in which

information was either passed on or received by the observed managers. Tours were frequently defined as *"management by walking about"*, the manager gaining a vital insight into what was happening in their organisation simply by 'popping in' unexpectedly on subordinates.

ii. Decision Making Contacts

Overall, contacts involving the making of important organisational decisions accounted for 27.1 percent of managers' contact time and comprised 9.3 percent of managers' total contacts.

a. Strategy

Constituting 6.7 percent of managers' total contacts, 18.2 percent of managers' weekly contact time involved strategic decision making, *"concerned with......the making of strategic choices - setting the directions in which the organisation is to move in the future..........strategic implementation - ensuring that the organisation has the right structures, processes and culture to carry out the policies determined by the strategic choices its governors have made"* (Elcock, 1993:55).

44.1 percent of the managers' strategy based decisions led to **key organisational decisions** being made and **key policies** being formulated. An additional 23.5 percent of strategic decision-making took the form of **local authority council meetings,** where elected members ultimately approved Council policy. 14.7 percent of strategic

decisions involved **open ended strategic planning**, managers meeting regularly with a group of subordinates in a *"brainstorming"* environment, *"an explicit attempt (made) to set out some kind of long-term strategic direction....in terms of core values or substantive priorities or both"* (Leach et al, 1992:19). **Budgeting,** encompassing decisions about the allocation of resources, accounted for almost one-tenth of the managers' strategic decisions. Finally, 5.9 percent of strategic decisions involved **operational planning** whilst 2.9 percent required the managers to **deal with crises**.

b. Negotiation

With the underlying intention of coming to some kind of arrangement, managers generally negotiated with persons external to the organisation. For example, the quango manager scheduled a meeting with another organisation to discuss the possibility of the two organisations working together to attract money to build a science centre. Such negotiations consumed 8.9 percent of managers' weekly contact time and accounted for 2.6 percent of managers' total contacts.

iii. Request Contacts

Requests made by managers themselves or by others for action by the manager, accounted for 22.9 percent of the public managers' contact time and 42.5 percent of their total weekly contacts.

a. Action requests

Defined as requests made of the manager, action requests consumed 11.6 percent of managerial contact time and 18.5 percent of total contacts. The majority of these requests were for **current information** at the disposal of the manager, for advice and opinions and for information relating to the plans and policies of the organisation. A further 9 percent of action requests involved requests for **authorisation,** that is, requests by subordinates to endorse policies, authorise payments and approve work. Whilst **media interviews** accounted for 6.6 percent of action requests, only 1.6 percent of requests involved the manager being asked to **initiate something.**

b. Manager Requests

Managers also made requests of the other party to the contact, accounting for 11.2 percent of their weekly contact time and 23.9 percent of their weekly contacts. Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of manager requests were for **information and advice.** Consequently, just over one-fifth of manager requests concerned **delegating** work to others.

c. Status Requests

Consuming less than 1 percent of the managers' total contacts and weekly contact time, status requests occurred when the manager was asked to do something simply because of the position they held.

iv. Secondary Contacts

Secondary contacts can be defined as contacts which are relatively minor to the manager's work as a whole. Combined, secondary contacts accounted for 9.1 percent of managers' contact time and 17.1 percent of their weekly contacts.

Consuming 2.2 percent of the managers' contact time, managers undertook work **external** to the organisation which employed them. A further 2.1 percent of managers' contact time was consumed by contacts which were essentially **ceremonial** in nature. That is, the contact was the direct consequence of the position and status held by the manager in the organisation. An additional 2 percent of contact time was accounted for by **business lunches.**

Personal matters consumed 1.3 percent of managerial time, the average personal contact lasting five minutes. A further 0.8 percent of contact time was consumed by managers **scheduling** time to meet with others. Finally, 0.7 percent of contact time was accounted for by **general discussion**, the manager simply passing the time of day with others, talking about nothing in particular.

Thus, an examination of the underlying purposes behind the observed managers' contacts suggests that the most important element of these managers' jobs was as a source of information. Whilst the majority of information was exchanged and received in meetings with persons both internal and external to the organisation, the

public manager also passed on selective information and received important news and occasionally 'gossip' by virtue of their position. Consequently, less time was spent on the more *"hands-on"* elements of management, namely decision-making, delegating work to subordinates and actioning requests made by others.

5.2.3 The influence of public sector reform on the observed managers' work

As chapter three explained, the NPM contend that the election of a Conservative government in 1979 led to a radical programme of reform, the work of public managers becoming increasingly like that of colleagues in the private sector. Today's public managers arguably work in 'commercial environments', where markets, competition, value-for-money, performance, quality, networking and consumerism prevail.

Although managers may think the public sector has changed, have they merely

> *"absorbed the new managerial jargon - performance indicators, key result areas, strategy, organisational culture and so on?.........In many cases the understanding does not rise above this level"* (Hughes, 1994:263).

In other words, although the language used by public managers may have changed, perhaps the nature of their work has remained relatively unaffected. Thus, an attempt will be made to assess the degree of fit between the existing NPM theorisation of public management change and the nature of managerial work which emerged from the observation of seven senior public sector managers.

The main elements of public sector reform identified by the NPM were outlined in chapter three: an increased focus on value-for-money; devolving managerial responsibilities to the lowest level; the introduction of business management practices ; an increased requirement to network. These will be examined in detail in relation to the actual content of work undertaken by seven observed managers. Only then will an insight begin to be gained into whether public sector management practices have been influenced by management techniques commonly used in business organisations.

i. An increased focus on 'Value-for-Money'

> *"We would argue that the performance ethos partly emerged from the value for money initiatives which gained momentum during the late 1980s"* (Ball and Monaghan, 1996: 41).

An increased focus on value-for-money was clearly identified by the pre-reorganisation chief executive, who contended that *"there has certainly been a greater focus on the three E's. The local authority has become more and more accountable".* This underlying concern with value-for-money has undoubtedly stemmed from resource constraints. For example, at a Senior Management Seminar, the chief constable highlighted the implications of the cash limiting regime and current level of Grant Aided Expenditure, the level set in 1996 being one million pounds less than the previous year. *"We and the public will have to realise that we cannot do everything we want to do - we will need to make choices - 'what these choices are' and 'how do we decide on them?'".* Furthermore, when looking at

whether his constabulary could continue to provide the present local style of policing, the chief constable proclaimed that the force *"may need to look at economic choices which do not affect effectiveness and efficiency. We must focus on 'value added outcomes' and ignore unproductive activities which do not provide this added value".* Finally, he argued that the Constabulary *"needs to recognise seriously that survival is a key issue, the survival of our local style of community policing. Remember, others will be examining our effectiveness, efficiency and overall performance, with the possibility of resources being provided depending on our success in the future".*

Likewise, the contract director's hospital trust expressed concern in its Business Plan that although the trust has been able to accommodate unexpected cost increases in previous years, this will be more difficult in future years.

However, whilst the observed public managers appeared to be working in organisations which openly welcomed a focus on value-for-money, very few of their activities involved an explicit focus on value-for-money. Instead, it would seem that value-for-money was much more implicit in the work of public managers. Generally speaking, the exceptions to the rule were the two contract directors and the social work director. The local authority contract director had a lengthy meeting with her two deputies to discuss value-for-money in relation to contract performance.

Likewise, the hospital trust contract director was required to demonstrate that contractual decisions represented value-for-money. During the observational week, this manager was responsible for writing a report to persuade the hospital trust board that his decision to change providers for a particular service was better value-for-money, even although he did not think the new provider was more cost-effective. Although *"the question is not simply cost-effectiveness but quality"*, the hospital trust contract director had to justify his decision to change providers since *"quality costs money"*.

Nevertheless, the hospital contract manager was visited by a representative from a toxin company, attempting to sell his company's brand of toxin to the hospital. The contract director's response was that he was not going to *"decide a clinical issue. Trust's have not gone that far yet where I instruct people to go for the cheaper product. I do however hope that when two products are equal and one is cheaper, the clinical side will go for the cheaper one but I can't instruct them to"*.

Finally, during the observational week, the social work director's local authority announced a package of redundancies to offset resource shortfalls. The social work department alone was delegated the task of swiping a significant sum of money off their budget in order to meet planning targets. However, the social work director highlighted the conflict between economy and effectiveness, arguing that *"a residential home is either staffed or it isn't. We must staff it one hundred percent or*

not at all. We can't cut five percent off. If we do, the quality of the service will begin to falter". Nevertheless, when discussing joint ownership of a residential home with the local hospital, the social work director claimed that the underlying objective was to *"get more innovative ways to make the best use of the resources we have. If the hospital and council can openly participate in joint working on savings I can't see the council complaining".*

Thus, it would seem that although the organisations in which the observed managers worked were keen to instil an ethos of value-for-money in their employees, the impact of this increased focus on the effective use of resources on the actual work undertaken by the observed managers was relatively marginal. Moreover, the experiences of observation also suggest that this increased concern with value-for-money was simply the consequence of public organisations being expected to do more with less money, rather than the consequence of a desire and commitment to become more 'business-like'.

> *"Like city analysts, the work of most senior and middle ranking public servants is increasingly shaped by performance indicators and performance measures.....preoccupation with indicator-driven management"* (Raine and Willson, 1997:19).

With the exception of the quango manager, performance measurement appeared to be in full swing in the observed managers' organisations. *"There has to be a process of performance management to ensure work gets done of sufficient quality and*

quantity". Activity Plans formed the basis of performance measurement in the pre-reorganisation chief executive's local authority, outlining departmental targets to be met and standards to be achieved. Ultimately, performance measurement was about ensuring that *"all the activities and people contribute as effectively as possible to achieve their objectives, activities reviewed in a way which enabled the local authority to learn and thereby improve services to the community".*

The hospital in which the contract director worked featured in league tables in the NHS Scotland Annual Report, allowing the general public to compare hospital trusts in relation to, for example, outpatient consultations, inpatient and day case treatment, cancellations of planned admissions and response rates to complaints. The hospital contract director thought league tables were here to stay, professing that *"there is an argument for league tables providing the explanation behind the statistics is accurate and precise",* a prerequisite clearly missing in the NHS Annual Report.

In addition, the local authority contract director's departmental business plan devoted two pages to performance targets for both client services and the DSO. Likewise, the chief constable's Constabulary's policing plan claimed that *"emphasis will be placed on measuring performance against set targets for key areas of service delivery laid down by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, The Local Government Act 1992 and our own Policing Charter".* Finally, like other

departments in the island authority, the social work director's department published performance indicators in the back of the authority's annual report.

Nevertheless, several of the observed managers were sceptical of the performance measures currently in place in their organisations. For example, the pre-reorganisation chief executive argued that *"it is difficult to see how performance management fits in. Local authorities are unique because their main focus is with the community and people".* Consequently, *"performance management in local authorities is soft. The private sector equals profit whereas the public sector is subjective".* Thus, the pre-reorganisation chief executive's local authority was not simply concerned with service delivery in the form of, for example, the number of dustbins emptied. Instead, its underlying objective was to provide the context in which services could be best delivered to the community. Furthermore, this manager expressed concern that performance should not be based on the number of complaints the local authority received. The local authority may receive twenty-five complaints one day and none the next, yet the same faults undoubtedly exist.

Moreover, although the hospital trust contract director proclaimed that league tables were here to stay, he contended that *"performance review must be something positive. It should not be if you don't do X the stick will be brought out".*

It would therefore seem that the majority of observed managers were working in organisations with established systems of performance measurement in place. However, during the observational weeks the only managers directly caught up in performance issues were the hospital trust and local authority contract directors. The former discussed his trust's previous year's contract performance with two health boards, whilst the latter spent time writing that part of her departmental business plan which related to performance targets. Perhaps contract managers are more directly concerned with performance issues, given that poor contract performance one year would most probably lead to a loss of contract the following year. Furthermore, the very nature of the contract director's job requires them to negotiate prices and expected levels of contract performance with clients.

Nevertheless, given the upsurge in appraisal systems, it might be realistic to assume that performance issues are closely linked to the managers' actions. *"The public sector is no longer a soft option - short term contracts and performance measurement are now the norm"*. The pre-reorganisation chief executive's local authority had appraisal systems in place which addressed issues by agreement which were then reviewed on a six monthly basis. This led to the manager himself being appraised by the elected members. *"The process is all about giving accountability - checking the staff are worthy and have earned their place in the council"*. Nevertheless, staff appraisals had taken a backseat at the time of observation due to the more pressing issue of local government reorganisation.

On joining the National Health Service, the hospital trust contract director had a 'job for life', a contractual safety net which was enjoyed until 1987/88 on enforcement of senior management contracts. Although these were five year rolling contracts, they were reviewed in relation to performance after three years. *"The culture is one of deliver or thank you very much for your hard work and inability to deliver".*

Although the local authority chief executive's organisation *"was not in a position to have formal appraisal schemes for senior staff"*, he recognised that key objectives needed to be identified for senior officers to enable them to work towards defined targets. In consultation with his senior management, the local authority chief executive defined these key objectives as: organisational development and review; time spent out and about; developing the management role, given that the majority of senior officers are in different jobs than prior to local government reorganisation; improving senior officers own abilities. *"The key is to keep it simple. It is not a complex, bureaucratic operation".*

ii. Devolved Management

A review of the NPM literature clearly shows that since 1979, management powers have been increasingly delegated to those who use resources, the underlying intention being to increase accountability. Consequently, delegation of management powers was very much evident in the organisations in which the observed managers worked. Decentralisation was actively pursued in the chief constable's Constabulary,

Area Commands led by area commanders who had a high degree of autonomy in relation to operational policing matters within their areas.

The pre-reorganisation chief executive also worked in a local authority which looked favourably on devolved decision-making, financial responsibility laying with those managers who were actually taking operational decisions. Each of the local authority departments formulated activity plans, which outlined the department's objectives, the standards to be achieved, the key tasks and targets, the resources needed and future developments. The local authority benefited because *"the people to whom authority has been delegated are given responsibility and pride in their activities. These people are given delegated budgetary powers at the same time as standards and targets are monitored"*.

The hospital trust contract director was in overall charge of clinical directorates which had been incorporated into the hospital trust's management structure in order that responsibility and accountability could be devolved to clinical directors, supported by business managers. Not surprisingly, *"involvement in resource allocation came as a culture shock to clinical directors"*. Before the clinical directorates were established, the hospital trust contract director had a budgetary responsibility of over £18 million. On incorporation of clinical directorates, his budgetary responsibility changed to just over £4 million on paper. In reality, however, he was still responsible for the £18 million given that it was still his duty

to oversee much of the work of those clinical directors with devolved responsibilities. Consequently, the extent to which real powers have been delegated to clinicians can be questioned.

The local authority chief executive's council wanted to *"move away from a situation where everything is decided at the centre and where departments work in isolation from each other. Team working through a partnership......will be the norm throughout the Council".* However, the difficulties inherent in devolution soon became apparent in the local authority chief executive's organisation. The council leader wanted an officer budgetary group to be formed, and although the chief executive wanted to *"develop this group further down the organisation, it would be uneconomic because junior levels of management would only come to us for advice and we'd need to read the stuff anyway".*

Thus, in an attempt to increase responsibility for the accountable use of resources, the observed managers worked in local authorities, a hospital trust and a constabulary which had clearly identifiable structures of decentralisation in place. On a daily basis, however, a considerable proportion of the observed managers' time was spent with subordinates, managers coaching and facilitating subordinates to make important organisational decisions. For example, the local authority contract director devolved decision-making to the extent that she saw her main role as facilitating the work of her two deputies. Nevertheless, *"although I am trying to*

establish a team to tender, I like being around and having my finger on the pulse in case they run into difficulties". Likewise, the chief constable delegated management powers to subordinates on a daily basis, encapsulating his primary task as coaching management subordinates to make important organisational decisions.

However, like the majority of observed managers, the hospital trust manager gets very annoyed that a large proportion of subordinates do not use the powers they have been devolved. *"I pay people five figure sums to make decisions. A lot are at junior/middle level, have been in the health service for ages and are quite happy to muddle through but this organisation moves at a very fast pace and people must make decisions they have been empowered to do".*

iii. The introduction of business management and business methods

> *"....the period of the Thatcher administration and that of her successor Major have.....evinced an increasing emphasis on businesslike managerialism and market orientation in government management"* (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997:37).

a. A commercial ethos

From the outset, 'business language' was most apparent in the work of the observed contract directors, references made to 'competition', 'contracts', 'tenders', 'economy', 'markets', 'clients', 'quality awards', 'performance' and so forth. During the observation week, both contract directors were involved in writing their departmental business plans, outlining departmental aims, activity and financial

projections, service developments and quality levels to be attained. Language commonly found in business organisation's annual reports was very much evident in these plans. For example, the local authority contract director's plan introduced her department as being *"developed strategically to create an efficient service unit that can compete effectively against the private sector companies on the most commercial basis"*.

Furthermore, a significant amount of the hospital trust contract director's week was consumed by activities more typically associated with business organisations. Contracts were negotiated with health boards, both parties to the negotiations trying to *"find pricing levels which were agreeable"*. In addition, this manager negotiated a new clause into a GP Fundholding contract to cover the trust's risk. Moreover, the hospital trust contract director was involved in a confidential project, the upshot of which was contract negotiations. Being a relatively new project, this manager spent a considerable proportion of time seeking advice from private sector financial and legal consultants about *"financial strategy"* and the *"business scope"*. Finally, the hospital trust contract director held a meeting with his 'business managers' to discuss contract performance and Activity and Business Plans, alongside other issues more commonly associated with hospitals, for example, waiting lists.

However, had the hospital trust contract director been observed when contract negotiations had been completed, as was the case with the local authority contract director, his work would have been significantly less likely to parallel that undertaken by business managers. Nevertheless, of all the observed public managers, the contract directors were most likely to work in an environment in which a commercial ethos prevailed.

The work of local authority managers appeared to be much more 'public' orientated than that undertaken by hospital trust colleagues, perhaps due to the constitution of both organisations. For example, local authority managers attended cyclical council committee meetings, where important policy decisions were made by elected members, these meetings also open to the general public. On the contrary, decision-making was very much a closed process in hospital trusts, the hospital trust governed by a board akin to a private company's board of directors. Although the hospital trust adhered to a policy of 'openness', the mere fact that the researcher was excluded from board meetings surely questions this openness.

In addition, hospital trusts are part of an internal market, competing with other hospital trusts for contracts to provide services to health boards. Consequently, the hospital trust contract director rarely contacted colleagues in other hospital trusts, *"because they are in direct competition with each other for services and are wary about letting important commercial information slip"*. On the contrary, the local

authority contract director spent a significant amount of time colluding with colleagues in other local authorities since DSOs compete with private companies for contracts, rather than with fellow DSOs.

Business language and management practices appeared to infiltrate the work of the observed directors far more than the chief executives, the latter's role tending to be more one of guiding and steering the organisation as a whole.

Finally, in spite of the Conservative government's claims that the public sector had much to learn from the business world, the limitations of 'business management' were explicitly recognised by the chief constable's constabulary. *"It must be remembered that, although certain facets of business management can be applied, policing is about providing a largely demand led service to the public".*

b. An Increase in budgetary responsibility?

> *"The move to markets within the public service means that traditional public sector and financial management procedures must be supplemented with management accounting regimes more akin to those used in the private sector"* (Walsh, 1995:208).

As heads of organisations, the chief constable and local authority chief executives were ultimately responsible for managing their organisations' overall budgets. Likewise, the quango manager was charged with the task of presiding over the allocation of resources to individual projects. On a smaller scale, the observed

service directors were accountable for the *"efficient and economic use of departmental resources"*. Consequently, it was not uncommon for budgetary issues to be raised in strategy meetings, hospital trust board meetings or council committee meetings. Financial matters were not, however, restricted to a formal arena. Passing reference was frequently made to the availability of resources in face-to-face discussions, where issues were discussed which would impinge on the budget. Thus, it would seem that a central function of the observed managers' jobs was budget management.

That said, with the exception of the hospital trust contract director who was caught up in contract negotiations, and the local authority chief executive who was finalising budget cutbacks, very little of the observed managers' daily time was specifically devoted to calculating budgets and allocating resources. Any time spent ultimately depended on the time of year at which the public manager was observed. For example, the social work director was observed in November, when the half-yearly social work figures were discussed with the departmental accountant, revisions made when necessary. Likewise, the local authority chief executive was observed in January, when budgetary issues were at the forefront. However, as these local authority managers pointed out, they have always had a role to play in formulating the yearly budget, such a task clearly not indicative of a move to business management methods.

Thus, although budget management was an essential function of the observed managers' jobs, a concern with resource allocation appeared to be secondary to most managers' work on a daily basis, the time spent ultimately depending on the time of year during which the manager was observed.

c. A Quality Agenda

> *"The word quality has featured prominently in the vocabulary of public service organisations in the last three or four years. Quality Assurance, Quality Management, TQM and other quality phases abound. This is only to be expected given the interest in quality in the private sector"* (Davies and Hinton, 1993:51).

Consequently, it should be of no surprise that words such as 'charter mark', 'crystal mark' and 'total quality management' cropped up in the work of the observed public managers, more so for the two contract managers.

"The hospital's record demonstrates that the highest possible priority has been placed on all aspects of service quality and the continued improvement of this quality process is a cornerstone of the Trust's management philosophy....A Quality Department has been established to provide advice and support to assist departments in achieving their quality of output and quality of internal workings". The hospital trust manager's directorate was involved in a range of quality initiatives. At the time of observation, the directorate had just completed the Kings Fund Organisational Audit and its Day Surgery Unit had just received a commendation following its Charter Mark application. Furthermore, this manager's directorate had

embarked on an inpatient services questionnaire, enabling the views of patients to be taken into account.

The hospital trust's quality strategy *"enables all departments to develop cost effective service improvements through the understanding of their processes....encourage and enable external accreditation to be achieved....provide all departments with a framework to effectively manage and implement their quality responsibilities.....provide advice and support to assist each department in achieving their quality of output and quality of internal workings".* However, one wonders at the extent to which an emphasis on quality is a smokescreen for further efficiency savings, the hospital trust's operational quality plan stating that a key element is *"increased focus on the processes of the way in which tasks are carried out within the trust to reduce inefficiencies, wastage costs and to improve the quality of healthcare delivered through a more effective use of the Trust's resources".*

"Local authorities have never been under so much pressure to deliver quality. Along with CCT, the Local Government Act of 1992 introduced performance indicators then came the government's Charter marks, benchmarking and so on" (North, 1997:32). The local authority contract director's department identified its quality service strategy as being *"to provide the highest quality service, customer focused, with continuous review and improvement initiatives developing an ownership culture throughout the service and corporately".*

Although the contract directors were most likely to be directly involved in quality initiatives, more general quality statements were to be found in the annual reports of the other observed managers' organisations. For example, the pre-reorganisation chief executive's local authority detailed one of its corporate values as aiming to *"provide high quality services which meet the needs of individuals and communities and contribute to improving the quality of life in X"*. Likewise, the chief constable's constabulary had been awarded a Charter Mark for excellence in the provision of public service. Furthermore, its 1996/97 policing plan outlined three quality targets which had to be met, the chief constable intending to establish a quality unit out of his commitment to quality and police management.

Whilst the provision of quality services was surely behind the work of all the observed managers, impinging on their work at least implicitly, quality management was firmly on the agenda of the two contract directors. Quality issues were raised during the hospital trust's contract negotiations and board meetings. Indeed, this manager spent the best part of a morning writing a report to convince the board to change to a private lithotripsy service provider, simply because he believed the quality of service was suffering under the current system of provision.

During the observational week, the local authority contract director chaired a Process Management and Improvement Working Group, whose remit was to *"identify examples of Process Management and Improvement systems, including*

Improvement Teams, Quality Circles and formal accreditation to evaluate these to provide a guide to best practice and to make recommendations for their development within the council". Part of this group's task was to look at the quality processes in several private organisations, examining how these organisations attained quality accreditation. *"The focus is now on customer care and we have to get accreditation for our market. We are in a climate of change and have to respond by improving quality".* Consequently, commercial services hoped to attain BS EN ISO9002 Quality Assurance Registration for management systems, the Crystal Mark, the Charter Mark and EFQM self-assessment to establish critical success factors to direct resources for business planning and performance benchmarking.

Moreover, the local authority contract director had the task of finalising her departmental quality plan during the observational week. Before applying for accreditation, she attended a meeting with a quality adviser in order to check whether the quality plan had reached the necessary standard.

However, as the observed managers themselves pointed out, the ultimate objective of their work has always been to provide quality services to those in need. The difference with today's public sector seems to be that quality management is much more explicit, organisations expected to attain quality awards and meet quality targets. However, the evidence from observation appears to suggest yet again that whilst quality issues are much more implicit in the work of local authority chief

executives and the chief constable, the contract directors have had to focus on attaining accreditation in order to compete successfully with other hospitals and private sector providers.

d. The User as Consumer

> *"The user of public services has an explicit place within the new management as customer or consumer"* (Walsh, 1995: xv).

Although the Conservative government attempted to introduce the public sector to the language of consumerism, observation suggests that, with the exception of the hospital trust contract director, public managers were more likely to refer to service users as the 'public' rather than as 'customers' and 'consumers'. The hospital contract director, however, was much more likely to talk about 'customers' and even used the term 'cases' during negotiations with clients about the number of patients likely to be treated if his hospital trust was awarded the contract.

More importantly, the observed managers seemed to have a genuine concern with the interests of their 'users'. For example, two of the local authority managers attended evening community meetings to find out what issues were currently concerning local residents. Furthermore, the quango manager was determined that the regeneration of his area would benefit the residents in that area as well as being geared towards tourists. Finally, the hospital trust contract director spoke to several

distressed patients when he could have easily as referred these to the complaints officer.

Thus, whilst NPM rhetoric suggests there has been a move to consumerism, evidence suggests that the change in language has been fairly limited, the observed managers still referring to service users as 'citizens', 'patients' and the 'public'. Moreover, reflections from observation also suggest that public managers still have an appreciation of the reasons why their organisations were established in the first place.

iv. Networking

> *"Public management is the 'governance' of complex networks, consisting of many different actors , such as parts of national, provincial and local government, political and societal groups, pressure, action and interest groups, societal institutions, private and business organisations, etc."* (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997:39).

Jervis and Richards(1996:9) contend that *"public managers are inveterate 'networkers'. That is what they tell us they do".* The extent to which the observed managers could be classified as 'networkers' depends on the definition given to networking. If a general definition is assumed, encompassing any contacts made with people both internal and external to the manager's organisation, networking was an essential part of the observed managers' jobs, these managers spending relatively little time alone. If, however, networking is *"a convenient shorthand for using your list of friends and contacts to good advantage......find(ing) colleagues in*

all sorts of areas a valuable source of experience and help from time to time" (Morris and Paine, 1995:83), it is evident that the observed managers spent relatively little time with anyone other than people working within their organisation.

Indeed, only one-quarter of the observed managers' contact time was spent networking with people outside their organisation(Appendix 3, Table 14). It should, however, be pointed out that this figure masks significant differences between managers. For example, two-fifths of the quango manager's contact time was spent networking with people outside his organisation, not surprising given that the remit of his job was to co-ordinate the various agencies and private businesses involved in area regeneration. Furthermore, just over one-third of the hospital trust contract director's time was spent with persons external to the organisation, largely due to him spending time with private contractors and legal and financial consultants. Local authority managers spent by far the least time networking with people outside the confines of their organisation.

The quango manager spent their networking time with a combination of agencies and private businesses involved in area regeneration. Although this manager *"recognised the requirement for individual businesses to remain commercially competitive....issues like overall business management and the training and development of workforces are all issues where joint working would be commercially advantageous".*

Of the remaining observed managers, the majority of networking time was spent with fellow public sector organisations. For example, the social work director's department and the local health board were responsible for the joint running of a residential home.

Only 3.3 percent of the observed managers' contact time was spent with voluntary organisations, these managers all working in local authorities. The local authority chief executive spent by far the most time with a voluntary organisation, somewhat misleading given that this time was accounted for by an infrequent meeting with a charitable company which he chaired. Excluding the local authority chief executive, therefore, the social work director spent the most time with voluntary organisations, the consequence of a relatively lengthy meeting with the Citizens Advice Bureau. The social work director wanted the bureau to do benefit check-ups for the department's clients, claiming that *"it's all about the voluntary and statutory sectors working together to help anyone they can"*.

Finally, 6.5 percent of the observed managers' contact time was spent with private sector organisations. The only managers to spend any time with private sector colleagues were the chief constable and, not surprisingly, the two contract directors. Indeed, one-quarter of the hospital manager's contact time was spent with private organisations, the consequence of meetings with private contractors and professional advisers.

Given that public organisations are increasingly being subjected to competition, it would not be unreasonable to expect conflict to arise between collaborating with fellow organisations and competing against them. However, conflict was only really apparent in the work of the hospital trust contract director. This manager came into relatively little contact with colleagues in other hospitals, essentially because they were all players in an internal market, competing with each other for contracts from health boards. This was in sharp contrast to the local authority director, given that CCT required her department's DSO to compete with private companies for contracts. Consequently, this manager spent a considerable proportion of time on the telephone speaking to contract directors in other local authorities, updating each other about recent developments in their organisations. *"Reassurance is gained from knowing that there is always someone on the other end of the phone who knows what I am going through"*. It should, however, be pointed out that the local authority contract director had established good working relationships with other local authority contract directors when they worked together in one of the former regional councils.

Gunn(1995), Rigg and Trehan(1993) and Walsh(1995) contend that public managers are increasingly being required to network, the consequence of government reforms which bring together purchasers, suppliers and contractors in an internal market. Furthermore, reorganisation has led to local authorities being surrounded by new quangos, joint boards and committees. However, excluding the quango manager

whose remit was to coordinate agencies and private businesses, the experiences of observation show that managers spent relatively little time communicating with people outwith their own organisation. Furthermore, local government reorganisation does not appear to have affected the networking activities of local authority managers, those observed before pre-reorganisation spending similar amounts of time networking with public, private and voluntary organisations as those observed when unitary authorities were up and running.

5.3 A CRITIQUE OF THE OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH

5.3.1 Public sector managerial work versus the existing managerial work and NPM literatures

i. Work patterns and characteristics: A comparison

As chapter two highlighted, Mintzberg(1973:104) was not alone when he claimed that

> *"the empirical studies of the actual work characteristics of managers appear to show no variations by country. Evidence from the diary studies of Carlson (1951) in Sweden, Stewart(1967) in Great Britain and Dubin and Spray(1964) in America suggest that the basic characteristics of managerial work know no national boundaries".*

Consequently, if there is any element of truth in Mintzberg's hypothesis it would not be unreasonable to expect the work characteristics and patterns of the seven observed managers to be an extension of those of managers previously studied. Hence an attempt will now be made to assess the degree of 'fit' between this research and

existing studies of managerial work by comparing and contrasting the findings. However,

> *"anyone seeking to build a consistent body of knowledge from the different research studies by a process of contrast and comparison, finds the task* difficult. *Managing from one study to another invariably brings both a change in focus and in the categories employed to describe the phenomenon"* (Hales, 1986: 105).

Whilst an attempt will be made to compare and contrast the findings of this research with earlier studies, it should be remembered that such comparisons are between studies which utilised a variety of diverse research methods.

a. Workload

Although the observed managers' working week was almost identical to the managers in Mintzberg's(1973) study and relatively similar to the managers in Stewart's(1976) study, these managers worked considerably less hours than Carlson's(1951) managing directors, Lau et al's(1980) American naval executives and Norton's (1991:94) local authority chief executives. Furthermore, Copeman's(1963) managing directors worked longer hours than directors, a scenario not witnessed under observation. Thus, what becomes immediately apparent is that the number of weekly hours worked by the observed public managers confirms existing findings from managerial work studies undertaken using observation, differing from the diary managerial work studies where the managers themselves estimated their weekly working hours.

Like Morphet(1993:63) who pointed to the evening committee meetings requiring the presence of the local authority chief executive, the observed local authority managers were more likely to attend evening meetings than other public sector colleagues. Indeed, three-quarters of local authority managers attended evening meetings during the observational week. Excluding these evening meetings, only 42.9 percent of the observed managers worked evenings during the observational week, differing from Norton(1991 : 164) who found that 53 percent of his local authority chief executives often worked evenings, a further 45 percent occasionally working evenings.

Finally, on the whole, the observed managers supported Mintzberg's(1973) claim that managers were never in a position to forget their jobs. The majority of the observed managers alleged that even when they were not in the office, they regularly thought about their work, the chief constable contending that he thought about his work all the time.

b. Brevity and fragmentation

Carlson(1951) contended that his managers exercised relatively little control over their working day, others determining what the manager did. Consequently, it is of no surprise that Carlson's(1951) managers worked alone for periods of at least twenty-three minutes or more only twelve times in thirty-five days.

Likewise, Stewart's(1967) managers averaged only nine periods of thirty minutes or more without interruption. Furthermore, Stewart's managers had approximately twelve fleeting contacts per day, that is telephone or face-to-face conversations lasting for less than five minutes.

In addition, 72 percent of Lau et al's(1980) managers also contended that their daily work routine was fragmented with interruptions and unscheduled events. Finally, one-tenth of the activities of Mintzberg's(1973) chief executives lasted more than one hour whilst one-half of the activities were completed in less than nine minutes.

Likewise, from the outset it would seem that the work undertaken by the observed public managers was characterised by brevity and fragmentation. Only 6.9 percent of their activities lasted for more than an hour whilst a staggering 65 percent lasted nine minutes or less. In addition, 16.3 percent of these managers' activities could be defined as brief contacts lasting five minutes or less. Finally, the average duration of the observational managers' desk work sessions was thirteen minutes, compared to the fifteen minutes spent on desk work by Mintzberg's managers.

Thus, whether compared to diary or observational research, the present study suggests that the seven public managers were equally as likely to exercise relatively little control over the design of their working day.

c. Methods of communication

Like the existing managerial work studies, the observed managers were equally likely to favour verbal to written communication. Nevertheless, it would seem that the observed public managers spent more time alone than managers in existing managerial work studies(Carlson, 1951; Burns, 1954; Horne and Lupton, 1965; Kotter, 1982), Stewart's(1967) managers being the only ones who spent more of their daily working time alone. Similarly, these public managers spent more time alone than managers in other studies of public sector managerial work (Lau et al, 1980; Martinko and Gardner, 1984).

Stewart(1967) contended that the manager's diary conditioned the time they spent alone. It was equally apparent that the time spent alone by the observed public managers depended on what else they had to do, desk work generally fitted around scheduled and unscheduled meetings. Thus, the observed managers spent relatively little time alone during days that were heavily scheduled with meetings.

However, although the observation managers generally spent a greater proportion of their working day alone than managers in preceding studies, they still overwhelmingly favoured verbal communication. Indeed, all of these public managers operated an open door policy, similar policies operated by English local authority chief executives because they allow staff to *"feel free to talk about the*

issues affecting them and crucially, the chief executive could be forewarned of potential problems" (Kean, 1994(a):14).

However, unlike the managers in Burns'(1957), Copeman's(1963), Stewart's(1967) and Martinko and Gardner's(1984) studies, the observed managers spent more time in formal than informal conversation. That said, however, the observed managers spent a fraction more time in informal conversation than the managers in Mintzberg's(1973) study, the consequence being the former spent seven-tenths of the time spent by the latter in scheduled meetings.

Furthermore, the observed managers spent comparable amounts of time on the telephone as the managers in the studies outlined in chapter two. However, the managers in Mintzberg's(1973) study spent three times as much time as the observed managers conducting tours.

Finally, whilst Mintzberg(1973:41) claimed that telephone calls combined with unscheduled meetings accounted for two-thirds of his chief executives' verbal contacts, these activities amounted to only two-fifths of the observed managers' contacts.

d. Persons contacted

Paralleling the studies reviewed in chapter two, the observed managers spent more time with subordinates than with peers and superiors. However, they spent less time with subordinates than managers in Mintzberg's(1973) study. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that an additional category emerged from the observation, that of contact with a mixed status group, which may explain some of the differences.

Whilst both Burns(1954) and Dubin and Spray(1964) contended that executives spent a great deal of time with peers, only 3.9 percent of the observed managers' respective daily working time was spent with peers, amounting to one-third of the time spent with peers by Mintzberg's(1973) managers.

Furthermore, the observed managers spent only 2.1 percent of their weekly working time with superiors, significantly less than the managers in studies reviewed in chapter two. Not surprisingly, the observational research confirmed Copeman's(1963) findings, directors spending considerably more of their daily working time with superiors than chief executives did.

Finally, Mintzberg's(1973) managers spent almost three times as much time as the observed managers with persons external to the organisation, perhaps an indication that business organisations are much more likely to network with outsiders than

public organisations. However, it should be borne in mind that the observational research included a category covering contacts with people internal and external to the organisation, consuming 15.5 percent of the managers' weekly working time. Nevertheless, if the percentages of time spent with firstly, people external to the organisation and secondly, with a combination of people internal and external to the organisation are added together, the observed managers still spent substantially less time than Mintzberg's(1973) managers with outsiders.

Finally, like the managers in Burns'(1954) and Dubin and Spray's(1964) studies, the observed managers were more likely to initiate contacts than receive them. This finding differs radically from Mintzberg's(1973), who found that the other party to the contact was significantly more likely to initiate the contact than the manager.

e. External relationships

Like the management studies outlined in chapter two, the observed managers preferred working within their organisation than outside it. Indeed, they spent considerably more time in their own organisation than the managers in Stewart's(1967, 1976), Carlson's(1951) and Mintzberg's(1973) studies. Not surprisingly, the findings from the observation research corresponded with Carlson's(1951), Horne and Lupton's(1965) and Stewart's(1967) findings that when managers did work in their organisation, they spent more than one-half of this time in their own office.

Horne and Lupton(1965) and Dubin and Spray(1967) found that the more senior managers spent a greater percentage of time outside the organisation. Likewise, the more senior managers who were observed (the chief constable, pre-reorganisation chief executive and local authority chief executive) were slightly more likely to work in external locations, although the differences between chief executives and directors were marginal.

What strikes as more interesting was the finding that the observed contract directors, those managers argued to be the most representative of business managers, spent far more time working within their organisation than the public managers as a whole.

f. Time spent planning work and reacting to issues

> *"Managers.....are likely to have a reactive agenda.......managers can get through the day very busily without an explicit agenda, reacting to the people and problems that present themselves. The momentum of the job carries them along"* (Stewart, 1979:37-38).

Like Mintzberg(1973:25), who contended that the *"classic view of the manager as a planner is not in accord with reality"*, the observation managers generally only planned their daily work to the extent that they kept appointment diaries. However, a considerable amount of the managers' working time was spent undertaking strategic management and forward planning. For example, the local authority chief executive chaired several strategy group meetings which had evolved out of a commitment to developing and implementing organisational strategy. One such

meeting focused solely on planning a weekend management development course for all service heads. Likewise, establishing organisational goals and the long-term strategic direction of the hospital trust was an essential part of the contract director's job as an ex-officio board member.

ii. The Underlying Purposes of Managerial Work: A Comparison

In order to examine Mintzberg's(1973) claim that his results know no national boundaries and secondly, NPM claims that public and private sector managerial work are converging, the purposes underlying the work of Mintzberg's(1973) managers will be compared and contrasted with the purposes underlying the work of the observed public managers.

a. A Comparison of Mintzberg's managers with the observed public managers

Although the observed public managers were slightly less likely to be involved in informational contacts than Mintzberg's managers, both spent identical percentages of time in such contacts(Appendix 3, Table 11). Whilst both were equally likely to be party to reviews, the observed managers spent almost one-third more time in reviews.Consequently, whilst both the observed managers and Mintzberg's managers spent equal amounts of time giving information, the latter spent more than twice as much time receiving information.

Of interest, the public managers were one-quarter more likely than Mintzberg's managers to be involved in contacts whose underlying purpose was to make, or have requests made, of them. Subsequently, the former spent one-fifth more time in such contacts than Mintzberg's managers.

Although the public managers were twice as likely as Mintzberg's managers to make requests and subsequently spent twice as much time in such requests, both managers were equally likely to have requests made of them and spent equal percentages of time in action requests. Finally, Mintzberg's managers were five times as likely to have status requests made of them.

In addition, the observed public managers were both more likely to be involved in contacts whose underlying purpose was to make decisions, and spend more time in decision-making contacts than Mintzberg's managers. Although the observed managers spent approximately the same percentage of time in negotiations as Mintzberg's managers, the former spent approximately one-quarter more time taking strategic decisions.

Finally, Mintzberg's managers were one-quarter more likely to participate in contacts with secondary purposes, spending three times as much time in them as the observed managers. Interestingly, Mintzberg's managers were three times as likely to be involved in ceremonial contacts, spending six times as much time in such

contacts. In addition, these managers were almost three times as likely as the observed managers to schedule time, spending three times as much time scheduling contacts.

Thus, compared to Mintzberg's managers, the observed public managers spent similar percentages of time in information contacts, more time in action and decision-making contacts and less time in secondary contacts.

b. A comparison of Mintzberg's chief executives with the observed chief executives

Unlike this research, Mintzberg only observed the work of chief executives. Consequently, it was felt necessary to compare and contrast the underlying purposes of the managerial work undertaken by Mintzberg's chief executives with the public sector heads of organisations, removing the possibility that any differences between both sets of managers may be attributable to the work of the observed directors and the quango manager (Appendix 3, Table 12).

Mintzberg's chief executives and the observed heads of organisations were equally as likely to be involved in information contacts, spending almost identical percentages of time in such contacts. Unlike the observed managers as a whole, the observed chief executives were only a fraction more likely to be involved in contacts where requests were made and received.

Whilst the observed managers as a whole spent one-quarter more time in decision-making contacts than Mintzberg's managers, the latter spent almost identical percentages of time as the observed chief executives making decisions. Nevertheless, unlike Mintzberg's chief executives, the observed chief executives spent no time conducting negotiations.

Finally, compared to the observed chief executives, Mintzberg's chief executives spent one-third more time participating in contacts which were secondary to their work.

Thus, whilst Mintzberg's chief executives and the observed chief executives spent almost identical percentages of time in information and decision-making contacts, the latter spent more time in request contacts and less time in secondary contacts.

c. A comparison of Mintzberg's chief executives with the observed contract directors

Given that it would not be unreasonable to expect contract directors to be those public managers most likely to resemble business managers, it was considered interesting to compare the purposes of the work undertaken by the contract directors observed in this study with the purposes of the work undertaken by Mintzberg's managers(Appendix 3, Table 13).

In respect of contacts concerning information and requests, it is apparent that the contract directors differed from Mintzberg's chief executives to a greater extent than the observed managers overall. Thus, the contract directors were two-fifths more likely than Mintzberg's chief executives to be party to contacts involving requests. However, although the contract directors were significantly less likely to be involved in information contacts than Mintzberg's chief executives, both sets of managers spent almost identical percentages of time in information contacts.

Furthermore, the contract directors spent two-fifths more time making decisions than Mintzberg's chief executives. Indeed, the former were six times as likely to be involved in negotiations than the latter, spending almost twice as much time negotiating.

Finally, Mintzberg's managers were almost three times as likely as the contract directors to participate in secondary contacts, spending more than four times as much time in them.

Thus, it would seem that those managers working in the most business orientated parts of the public sector resemble Mintzberg's managers even less than the observed public managers as a whole resemble Mintzberg's managers.

iii. Observation data and NPM claims about public sector managerial work

From the outset, it seemed that the observed managers were generally working in organisations that recognised the fundamental principles of public sector reform identified by the NPM. Their organisations' annual reports and business plans were littered with terms such as 'value-for-money', 'performance', 'targets', 'quality', contracts', 'charters', 'corporate review', 'strategic aims', 'cost improvements' and so forth. Nevertheless, these terms were discreetly balanced with references to language more traditionally associated with the public sector, for example, 'patients', 'caring for people in need', 'caring for the environment', 'community interests' and so forth.

Thus the observed managers were clearly working in organisations which set down performance targets, were committed to quality improvements and embraced value-for-money as a key organisational principle. Nevertheless, very few of the day-to-day tasks actually undertaken by the local authority chief executives, the social work director and the chief constable gave any inclination that their work was driven by business concerns. For example, unlike Mintzberg's(1973) managers, no observed chief executive spent any time negotiating. With the objective of *"ensuring my (organisation) meets the needs of the community it serves"*, heads of organisations were, instead, ultimately responsible for giving overall direction to the organisation as a whole, facilitating the work of their immediate management subordinates.

Furthermore, local authority managers continued to work in an environment where councillors determined policy and supervised the management of the council's services through committees. The social work director also exhibited few characteristics that would immediately associate him with a business manager. For example, he spent time visiting a childrens home, discussing community care to local residents, outlining developments to a sheltered housing warden, discussing social work training with a local college lecturer and arranging for the Citizens Advice Bureau and the social work department to work together to benefit those residents needing financial help. Finally, the chief constable was very much concerned with operational policing matters and staffing issues.

Thus, very little of the chief executives' and social work director's work explicitly revolved around issues more commonly associated with the world of business. Nevertheless, these managers may well think about their work in a different way than they previously did, guided by the overall aims of their organisations which recognised the importance of value-for-money and quality improvements.

This implicit reference to private sector management techniques could not have been further from the truth when the local authority and hospital trust contract directors were observed, a commercial ethos becoming immediately apparent. The hospital trust contract director spent a significant proportion of his weekly working time negotiating contracts and communicating with legal and financial advisers about the

requirements to be met before his hospital could submit a contract tender. Furthermore, several afternoons and evenings were consumed by finance and strategy board meetings, which this manager attended in an ex-officio capacity.

Given that the local authority contract director was observed when contract negotiations had been completed, no time was spent in negotiations. Nevertheless, this manager spent a significant amount of her weekly working time discussing quality issues and the desire to attain quality accreditation for her services, in order to *"provide what the market wants"*. Furthermore, contract performance was discussed with the chair and vice chair of her departmental council committee, who presided over the management of the department. Finally, the departmental business plan was drafted and the following year's performance targets were drawn up.

The commercial ethos prevalent in the work of the local authority and hospital trust contract director's departments was undoubtedly the outcome of the competitive environment in which both managers worked. Whilst the hospital trust contract director was a player in an internal market, competing with other hospitals for contracts, the local authority contract director's DSO was in direct competition with private companies for cleaning and catering contracts. An uneconomic use of resources and unsatisfactory performance would undoubtedly lead to contract loss and ultimately the manager's job.

Thus, the observation of seven public managers suggests that there is a direct link between the work of contract directors and the introduction of management practices from the private sector, a link which is much more subtle in the working practices of the other managers who were observed. Consequently, the NPM can be criticised for identifying reforms and assuming they affect the work of all public managers, regardless of the organisation in which managers work, the level of job they hold, the environment surrounding them and so on.

With the exception of the contract directors, whose jobs were created in response to legislative changes which introduced CCT and the NHS internal market, perhaps the only thing that has changed in the work of public managers is the language used and the explicit verbal recognition given to business management methods. Given that public managers have never had an unlimited pot of resources, surely it would be absurd to suggest that they completely disregarded the efficient use of resources prior to 1979. Perhaps all that has really changed is that whilst value-for-money, performance, quality and so on were pursued in the 1960s, they were not subject to the same level of publicity and scrutiny surrounding the public sector today. For example, *"the language of the market (or 'marketspeak') is a new language for the NHS. Whilst recent moves to play down such jargon, along with similar private sector metaphors, is arguably commendable the reality is that a new economic discourse is being introduced. The economic aspects of delivering health care are being made more visible by the adoption of this new language"* (Laughlin, 1991:37).

Furthermore, faced with a shortage of resources, perhaps value-for-money is being pursued by today's public managers out of financial necessity rather than out of a commitment to business management methods.

Moreover, *"public management is not only about increasing effectiveness and efficiency but it is also a matter of legality and legitimacy, of more than strictly businesslike values"* (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997:38). In spite of NPM claims that there has been a move towards a business focus in the public sector, much is still to be found in public organisations which distinguish them from business organisations. For example, at a senior management seminar the chief constable declared that one of the underlying objectives of his constabulary was *"valuing, caring and meeting the needs of all the individuals within the organisation and public at large in a professional manner".* Subsequent reference was made to *"openness and accountability"* and *"identifying and reflecting community needs, responding to the expectations of the community".*

Furthermore, the pre-reorganisation chief executive's annual report contended that *"local authorities must be firmly based in the communities they represent. Local people must be able to influence the services they receive".* Thus, as well as identifying corporate values such as value-for-money and quality, this chief executive's local authority aimed to become closer to the public and ensure equality of access and opportunity to services.

Likewise, the local authority chief executive's organisation identified its core values as working in ways which promote openness and accountability, participation and involvement, quality and equality, devolved decision making and learning and development.

Even the hospital trust's aims initially focused on meeting the healthcare needs of the community, concerned with enhancing the range and quality of services and improving the patient's amenities. However, these aims soon moved onto the participation of clinicians in management, breaking even on income and expenditure and enhancing management information. Finally, whilst the local authority contract director's departmental service statement was *"to provide quality, in-house services that provide vfm, clearly specified and delivered to meet corporate objectives and customer care"*, this was to be achieved within the council's overall aims and objectives, which set out *"to protect and promote the interests of the people.....and improve their quality of life"*.

iv. Are managerial work and NPM generalisations justified?

If Mintzberg's(1973) claim is to be believed, managerial work being remarkably alike regardless of organisational, societal, cultural and environmental differences, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the patterns, characteristics and purposes of the observed public managers' work would parallel those of managers already studied.

Although similarities in work patterns and characteristics are prevalent between the seven observed managers and those managers featuring in existing research studies, surely the number of differences highlighted call into question the reliability of generalisations about managerial work.

Furthermore, it soon became apparent that public managers as a whole spent more time in action and decision-making contacts than Mintzberg's managers, and subsequently spent less time in secondary contacts. In addition, if Mintzberg's classification of purposes was universally applicable, it would not be unreasonable to assume that all public managers spend time negotiating, a misleading assumption given that none of the observed heads of organisations spent any time in negotiations. Thus, a comparison of the underlying purposes of the observed managers' work with those of Mintzberg's managers adds more fuel to the argument that generalisations cannot be made about managerial work.

Whilst managerial work researchers claim their findings are universally applicable to the work of all managers, the NPM equally contends that public sector reform has affected the work of all managers, regardless of their individual contexts and circumstances. The observational research, however, demonstrated that contract directors were quicker to adopt business techniques than traditional public sector managers, absorbing the language of competition, efficiency, clients, cost-effectiveness, contracts and so forth. For the more traditional public managers, it

would seem that business practices and methods of management have been introduced in a much more piecemeal fashion, some managers affected by private sector management practices more than others.

Thus, the managerial work and NPM literatures can both be criticised for neglecting the effects of environmental influences on the work of individual public managers. Studies of relatively small samples of managers have led to the emergence of typologies of managerial work which are held to be applicable to all managerial jobs. Likewise, the NPM has identified a range of public sector reforms implemented by Conservative governments, assuming these reforms affect the work of all public managers. If managerial work research is to progress, attention must be focused on examining the contexts in which individual managers work.

5.3.2 The public sector managerial job in context

i. Managerial work as a reflection of the individual manager's prevailing circumstances

> *".....the organisational environment that influences and controls managerial behaviour has been badly neglected. Too often, models of management........fail to take into consideration the very important interactive nature of the manager's world"* (Davis and Luthan, 1980: 67).

Given the criticism already levelled at the existing managerial work and NPM literatures, it would be an utter absurdity to discuss public sector managerial work irrespective of the context in which public managers work.

Only by examining the work of each individual observed manager in relation to the specific context in which they work (Appendix 3, Tables 1-10), can an attempt begin to be made to focus on the relationship between how what the manager does is a reflection of their immediate environment and external circumstances. *"Sound theories must recognize that the context in which at least some managers work is very complex and can vary significantly in many dimensions in different situations"* (Kotter, 1982: 148).

a. Manager A: Pre-reorganisation Chief Executive

Manager A was chief executive in a district council in the Highlands, a post he had held for five years. Consisting of about twenty members, this district council had a total revenue budget of approximately £24 million and employed around four hundred full-time employees. However, it was one of the largest Scottish local authorities in respect of the geographical area covered. With a population in excess of fifty thousand, the *"vast majority of the people and the foundations of the local economy remained predominantly rural"*.

Manager A visualised his role as *"providing the context in which services (were) best delivered"*. Thus, core corporate values consisted of the provision of: quality services; closeness to the public; value-for-money; innovation; equality of access and opportunity; community representation; the forging of partnerships; commitment to employees.

Manager A was observed in November 1995, five months before local government reorganisation became a reality. Hence this chief executive was managing an organisation which would cease to exist in April 1996. Not surprisingly, morale was relatively low, few employees having found new jobs. Indeed, manager A encapsulated his role in the last few months of the council's existence as *"trying to stop things going to pot"*.

Consequently, out of all the managers observed, manager A was most likely to have his contacts mutually initiated. He was not adverse to general and nonsensical chat about issues of no relevance to the district council, no doubt a ploy to keep morale up at a time when stress levels were running high in the face of ever increasing uncertainty.

In addition, the forthcoming local government reorganisation resulted in manager A spending more time than average with the press, a local journalist enquiring about the implications of reorganisation. He was especially interested in focusing on the role manager A's district council had played in the community over the years.

Manager A had been successful in achieving employment in one of the new unitary authorities, the consequence being that he had to spend two days a week preparing the shadow authority for April 1996, when reorganisation became a reality. The

substantial amount of time spent on the telephone with persons external to manager A's district council was mostly attributable to contact with his shadow authority.

The finding that manager A spent more time than the observed managers overall with persons external to their organisation was also the direct consequence of manager A lecturing to university students, both in the vicinity of his own organisation and in a hotel in one of Scotland's large cities. These lectures arose out of close personal relationships with university staff, and explained the excessive number of hours this manager spent travelling. Interestingly, the visit by students to manager A's district council occurred once a year, whilst the seminar in the city was a 'one-off'.

Manager A also spent significantly more time than the observed managers as a whole with his personal assistant, manager A preferring to dictate letters and reports directly to his personal assistant. Furthermore, the layout of the organisation aided manager A's communication with his personal assistant, their offices connected by an adjoining door. Thus, it is of no surprise that manager A spent almost one-quarter of his weekly working time in his personal assistant's office.

During the observation week, manager A attended management team meetings and council committee meetings, explaining why manager A's contacts were more likely to be initiated by the clock than managers' contacts overall. Council committee

meetings also explained why the pre-reorganisation chief executive spent more time than the observed managers as a whole with councillors. During council committee day, manager A was frequently interrupted by councillors seeking advice and information. In addition, manager A was caught up in a number of issues which required the involvement of councillors. For example, a councillor asked him if he would bail out a golf club in severe financial difficulty, a request which led to the pre-reorganisation chief executive writing a report to be voted on at the council committee meeting.

Although the pre-reorganisation chief executive attended several council committee meetings, he spent significantly less time than managers overall in scheduled meetings. Consequently, manager A spent more time in unscheduled meetings than managers as a whole. Furthermore, 18.6 percent of this manager's activities were accounted for by brief face-to-face contacts lasting five minutes or less. Thus, informality appeared to be the preferred option, in part due to personal preference and in part due to the fact that manager A's organisation was relatively small and located in a rural area.

Furthermore, this manager spent the most time in pre-meetings and post-meetings. Generally speaking, meetings with persons external to the organisation were also attended by manager A's deputy. After the formal scheduled meeting concluded, the pre-reorganisation chief executive and his depute would discuss any issues arising.

Furthermore, many of manager A's directors used the close of scheduled meetings as an opportunity to update him about issues, ask for advice or arrange meetings.

Consequently, 2.4 percent of weekly working time was spent in other internal offices, whilst 4.3 percent was spent in the boardroom and 11.6 percent was spent in the Council Chambers.

Finally, the pre-reorganisation chief executive spent 43.7 percent of his time in informational contacts, the majority of which led to him giving information. Furthermore, manager A spent less time than managers overall in decision-making contacts, all of which were strategy based. In addition, out of all the observed managers, the pre-reorganisation chief executive spent the most time in secondary contacts, mainly due to his contact with the new shadow authority he was helping establish.

b. Manager B: Director of Contracts in a Hospital Trust

Manager B was a contract director in a large NHS hospital trust in the West of Scotland. The hospital in which manager B worked attained trust status in 1993 and by 1995, the trust's income exceeded £80 million and there were around one thousand beds in use. With approximately five thousand staff, the trust treated more than three hundred thousand outpatients and fifty thousand inpatients per year.

The main elements of manager's B job entailed: strategic and high level planning; the formulation of business cases to secure funding from purchasers; the negotiation of contracts; managing contracts on a day-to-day basis, monitoring service levels in order that over and under performance could be reported to the board; analysing information on the trust on a year-to-year basis; devising the trust's marketing plan and strategy with senior managers and clinical managers; ensuring the trust adhered to a policy of openness; ensuring complaints were dealt with timeously and in full. Manager B also attended board meetings *"in an ex-officio capacity in order to ensure that the entire range of the Trust's patient and support services (were) properly represented".*

Manager B was observed for one week during January 1996 when contracts were being negotiated. From the outset, contract negotiations meant that he spent one-fifth of his weekly working time with a combination of people internal and external to the organisation, the hospital trust's finance director also present at negotiations. Furthermore, the hospital trust contract director spent more time than his local authority colleague with contractors, clients and suppliers, simply because he was observed during a week heavily scheduled with contract negotiations.

Manager B was also delegated a project initially undertaken by an absent colleague which had to be completed by the end of the observation week, putting an added strain on his workload. Hence, manager B spent significantly more time working at

home during the evening. In addition, he spent almost five times as much time as managers overall with superiors, the consequence of lengthy strategy meetings with his immediate boss about this project. Likewise, he spent twice as much time as managers overall with consultants, seeking advice from financial and legal experts about the project.

Thus, contract negotiations combined with the delegation of an important project explained why, unlike the other observed managers, the hospital contract director spent more time in other offices than in his own office, one-third of his time spent in the boardroom alone. Furthermore, both activities justified why over one-half of his weekly working time was consumed by scheduled meetings. Likewise, manager B spent more time on the telephone than managers as a whole, a considerable proportion of this time spent talking to persons both directly and indirectly related to the project.

Although manager B spent above average percentages of time in unscheduled meetings, he was less likely to experience informal face-to-face interruptions lasting less than five minutes, in part due to the fact that he spent most of his time in meetings where interruptions were prevented. Furthermore, manager B spent twice as much time as managers overall with peers, working with the finance and human resources director on the business plan.

In comparison to all the other observed managers, the hospital contract director spent most of his time in decision-making contacts, the majority of this time spent in negotiations. Indeed, this manager spent significantly more time in negotiations than the public managers as a whole. Finally, the hospital trust director spent by far the least time in secondary contacts.

c. Manager C: Director of Social Work

Having worked in several local authorities as a social worker, manager C had recently become the Director of Social Work in one of the Scottish island authorities. The authority in which manager C worked consisted of approximately thirty members who served a population of almost thirty thousand, the majority of the island's population resident in two main areas.

With the net cost of council services amounting to approximately £70m in 1996, manager C was responsible for a service budget of about £9m. One-ninth of this budget was consumed by purchasing services, twice as much as the previous financial year. Furthermore, spending on community care had increased, counteracted by a fall in more traditional methods of care such as day care centres and residential homes.

Manager C was responsible for the effective provision of community care, home care, criminal justice, childrens' services, day care centres, hostels, sheltered

housing, residential homes, care units and domiciliary care. He was observed in November 1996, eight months after local government reorganisation, although island authorities remained relatively unaffected and unchanged by local government reorganisation.

Manager C had a shorter working week than the managers as a whole, in part due to the fact that he was only observed for four and one-half days. Even although he worked in a rural area and travelled frequently to team meetings in locations the other side of town, he spent less time travelling than managers overall.

The occurrence of cyclical council meetings during the week of observation meant that manager C was more likely to have his contacts initiated by the clock than the observed managers as a whole were.

The observational week was atypical, the island authority announcing a considerable number of redundancies. Manager C's initial reaction was to organise emergency meetings with his social work teams to relay the facts before the *"rumour machine got into action"*. Combined with the council committee meetings, these relatively lengthy emergency meetings largely explained why out of all the observed managers, manager C spent the most time with groups of people of mixed status.

Furthermore, manager C spent more time than managers overall with a combination of people internal and external to the organisation, the consequence of him requesting the attendance of his deputy at negotiations with the hospital and the health board. In addition, the social work director attended a public meeting about the council's policy on community care, the result being that of all the managers observed, manager C spent the most time with the general public.

Thus, manager C spent most of his time in scheduled meetings. Furthermore, although the majority of his time was spent in his own office, a considerable proportion was spent in other offices due to council and board meetings. Finally, over one-tenth of manager C's time was spent in external locations.

During the observational week, the police entered the council's premises unannounced and lifted documents, beginning an investigation into certain contracts won by the council's Direct Service Organisation. On hearing about this 'on the grapevine', manager C went for *"a wander to see what was going on"*, spending twice as much time conducting tours as the public managers as a whole.

Manager C also spent less time alone than managers overall, the majority of his contact time taken up by persons internal to the organisation. Furthermore, the social work director spent more time than managers overall with management subordinates, largely the outcome of lengthy meetings with his deputy who was

usually based on one of the smaller islands and visited council headquarters infrequently.

Out of all the observed managers, the social work director spent the least time on the telephone, using it merely as a tool to arrange and confirm meetings. Lastly, manager C spent more time than the observed managers as a whole in informal face-to-face discussion lasting five minutes or less, perhaps the consequence of working in a rural organisation with a relatively relaxed atmosphere.

The social work director spent more time in informational contacts than managers overall. The majority of this was spent in reviews, undoubtedly the consequence of a community meeting and regular meetings with his deputy. Furthermore, the social work director spent more time than managers overall in decision-making contacts, largely the consequence of council committee meetings. Interestingly, 39.8 percent of the decision-making contacts were negotiations, the social work director negotiating with the health board and the local hospital. Finally, this manager spent less time than managers overall in secondary contacts.

d. Manager D: Quango manager

Having previously worked in local government, manager D was approached and subsequently appointed as project director of a quango, established to oversee the development of a tourist area in northern Scotland.

Unlike the other observed managers, manager D was neither in charge of project delivery nor managing employees. Instead, he was in overall charge of the process, the main purpose of his job being to coordinate the various agencies involved in delivering projects and ensuring they worked together effectively. Thus, much time was spent working with agencies, the Chamber of Commerce and private businesses. Not surprisingly, therefore, the quango manager spent more time than managers overall on the telephone, the majority of which was spent conversing with persons external to the organisation. Furthermore, although the majority of manager D's time was spent in his own office, he spent considerably more time than managers overall in external locations.

Again, unlike the other observed managers, there was little structure to manager D's job. Indeed, manager D was initially concerned that there was not enough work to fill a 9am-5pm day, only to be told that the whole purpose of his job was to be in the office and to be available should people wish to contact him. Consequently, the quango manager was more likely than managers overall to have his contacts initiated by the other party to the contact. Moreover, none of manager D's contacts were initiated by the clock, a further indication of the lack of structure in his job.

Essentially, manager D was an outreach worker, based in the area he was responsible for regenerating, yet employed and accountable to an organisation which was an hour's drive away. Consequently, travelling to and from offices consumed a

significant proportion of manager D's time. Furthermore, he spent more than three times as much time as managers overall with peers, the consequence of a relatively lengthy meeting with colleagues in the organisation to which he was accountable.

In contrast to the other observed public managers, manager D had a mentor who had a direct line to the appropriate minister. Furthermore, this manager shared an office with two other quango employees - a project worker and an administrator. Consequently, manager D spent more than six times as much time as managers overall with non-management subordinates, largely due to the fact that he shared an office with his administrator. Furthermore, the quango manager spent a considerable proportion of time trying to pacify an emotional non-management subordinate who needed a fair bit of guidance in the face of redundancy. Finally, the quango manager spent twice as much time as managers overall with a combination of persons internal and external to the organisation, the consequence of one or both of the other project team employees generally attending meetings manager D was invited to with persons external to the organisation.

Although the majority of manager D's time was spent in scheduled meetings, he spent almost twice as much time as managers overall in unscheduled meetings. He was most likely to be interrupted for five minutes or less, in part attributable to the fact that he shared an office and there was a tendency for all of the team members to mention any mail they had read, telephone calls they had received or chat about the

work they were currently doing. Furthermore, any individual meetings held by the quango manager or the other two project team workers had to take place in the office they all shared, since there was no other meeting room. Thus, the quango manager usually had a brief chat with people arriving for meetings with the other two project team employees.

During the week in which manager D was observed, the Secretary of State for Scotland announced a substantial amount of extra funding for the regeneration of the area in which manager D worked. The outcome of this announcement was media interest, the quango manager spending twice as much time as managers overall with the press.

Like the majority of the observed managers, the quango manager spent most of his contact time in informational contacts. Although he spent more time than managers overall in request contacts, less time was spent making decisions. Nevertheless, the quango manager spent more time negotiating than the observed managers as a whole, the consequence of him working with a diverse range of agencies in the regeneration of a tourist area. Finally, the quango manager spent more time than managers overall in secondary contacts, mainly due to a lengthy Christmas lunch.

e. Manager E: Local Authority Chief Executive

Having worked in local government on leaving university, manager E had been a local authority chief executive for over ten years. The authority in which he worked had been in existence for approximately ten months, the consequence of local government reorganisation. With a budget in excess of £400 million, this authority employed over twenty thousand staff to provide the services previously provided by the former District councils and the Regional council. With over ninety members, this authority served a large and geographically dispersed population of over three hundred and fifty thousand.

The values of this authority centred on the promotion of: openness and accountability; participation and involvement; quality and equality; devolved decision making; learning and development. Consequently, the strategic policy objectives of this authority were: to strengthen local democracy; to ensure strong, safe and thriving communities; to reduce inequality and widen opportunity; to protect and enhance the authority's environment, quality of life and profile; to strengthen and diversify the economy; to provide services directly which are responsive, efficient, reliable and effective.

Manager E worked slightly more hours and spent more time working at home than the observed managers as a whole. In addition, he attended a relatively lengthy community meeting, part of his new year's resolution to *"attend evening council*

meetings to give me an insight into the concerns of people and issues arising in local communities".

Manager E had recently been appointed chairman of an independent company with charitable status committed to sustainable development in Scotland. This organisation worked in partnership with communities, voluntary organisations, local authorities, the government and private sector organisations and received core funding from the Scottish Office. The first meeting manager E had with this company occurred during the observational week, such meetings only happening a few times during the year. The meeting occurred in one of Scotland's large cities, explaining the fact that manager E spent significantly more time travelling than managers overall.

Interestingly, the local authority chief executive was the manager most likely to initiate their contacts. Furthermore, he spent significantly more time alone than managers overall, in part due to the fact that he dictated reports and letters directly into a dictaphone rather than *"consume (his) personal assistant's time"*. Moreover, manager E had several team meeting agendas to write as well as a number of reports, including one initially started by an absent management subordinate.

The local authority chief executive also spent more time than managers overall with persons internal to the organisation, especially with management subordinates and

his personal assistant. Furthermore, he spent considerably more time with councillors than the other managers, the consequence of lengthy weekly meetings with the leader and convenor of the council.

Indeed, these meetings helped explain why manager E spent two-fifths of his time in scheduled meetings, the consequence also of cyclical meetings with the Corporate Management Team, Core Budget Group and the Strategic Management Team. In addition, manager E was observed in January when budgetary issues were at the forefront. His local authority had taken the decision to print a list of possible budget cutbacks in the local newspaper, asking residents to prioritise where they thought the cutbacks should occur. Preparation for this public consultation process involved numerous scheduled meetings with manager E's heads of service, the local authority's union representatives, the leader of the council and the council's press office, manager E acknowledging that if *"the public consultation process is a disaster, it will be my head on the chopping board"*.

Manager E was the manager least likely to spend time in unscheduled meetings and was also less likely than managers overall to experience interruptions lasting five minutes or less. Finally, he spent significantly less time on the telephone than the public managers as a whole. However, manager E commented on the surprising lack of calls received during the observational week, highlighting the efficiency of

his personal assistant who screened his calls and dealt with enquiries wherever possible, to free him from as many interruptions as possible.

The majority of the local authority chief executive's time was spent in his office, most of the remaining time spent in other internal offices and the boardroom. Manager E felt it was important to see his directors in their own working environments, rather than expecting them to come to his office all the time.

Although the local authority chief executive spent most of his time in informational contacts, he spent significantly less time than managers overall in contacts where requests were made. However, the local authority chief executive spent more time than managers overall in decision-making contacts, all of which were strategy-based. Finally, like the pre-reorganisation chief executive, the local authority chief executive spent more time than managers overall in secondary contacts.

f. Manager F: Local Authority Contract Director

Having worked in cleaning services since leaving college, manager F became the Director of Contract Services in one of the new unitary authorities established in April 1996. With a budget exceeding £18m and an employee roll of approximately 2500, manager F's department was one of the largest employers of manpower in the authority. Manager F was directly supported by a Head of Operations and a Head of Support Services.

Manager F's department aimed to *"promote and deliver a quality service designed to meet customers' needs and expectations at a cost which provided a valued service for the benefit of the local community"*. For this to happen attention had to be paid to CCT, quality service provision, service integration, training and development and budget strategy.

Manager F's department was relatively unique in the sense that it reported to both a client and contractor committee. Firstly, direct services provided a host of services including school and welfare catering, building cleaning, janitorial services, residential homes catering, cleaning and laundry and street crossing patrols. Joint Board services were also provided for the police and fire brigade. The aims of the DSO were to: strengthen front line service delivery and retain services in-house; ensure service provision provided the best possible value-for-money; develop a purchasing strategy which provided economies of scale; manage services to performance targets; prepare a *"competent and innovative tender submission for service provision"*.

Secondly, commercial services had a client role to fulfil, the aims of which were to: ensure legislation was being complied with; monitor contract performance, ensuring value-for-money and the provision of quality services; prepare service specifications; ensure the legislative timescale for CCT was complied with; develop evaluation models to assess each tender.

The local authority contract director worked significantly more hours than the observed managers as a whole. Out of all the observed managers, manager E spent the most time alone. This was due firstly, to this manager dictating directly into a dictaphone, secondly, to reports which had to be written to deadlines and thirdly, to the absence of her personal assistant for three of the five observation days.

Of all the observed managers, manager F also spent the most time with people internal to the organisation. Looking at the local authority contract director's contact patterns, it is apparent that she was the manager most likely to spend time with management subordinates. This was largely the consequence of regular meetings with her two deputies, manager E acknowledging that an important part of her job was to facilitate the work of her deputies.

Furthermore, this manager spent significantly more time than the other observed managers with colleagues in fellow local authorities, speaking to contract directors whom she had worked with in one of the former regional councils. Such contact was a vital source of instant information for the local authority contract director.

Finally, 6.1 percent of manager F's time was spent with a quality consultant who advised her about the requisite standards to be achieved before her department's quality document would be accredited.

The local authority contract director also tended to work within her organisation. Whilst 56.4 percent of time was spent in her own office, 47.8 percent of weekly working time was spent in other offices, the majority of which was spent in the boardroom.

The local authority contract director spent most of her time in informational contacts, 83.3 percent of which was spent in reviews, largely the consequence of this manager having regular meetings with her two deputies. Although manager F spent more time than the managers as a whole in contacts involving requests, she spent less time making decisions. Unlike the hospital contract director, the local authority contract director was observed when negotiations had been completed. Finally, this manager spent more time in secondary contacts than the managers as a whole, largely due to her spending an afternoon at a school janitor's retirement presentation.

g. Manager G: Chief Constable

Having worked in various police constabularies in Great Britain, manager G had recently been appointed as chief constable of a Scottish police force. His constabulary was comprised of two management spheres - policy and management services and operations and crime management. The former covered civilian support staff who worked in finance, personnel, career development, administration, management and information services, licensing, communication, information technology and estates. The latter encompassed operational police staff, focusing on

the *"coordination of the Force's Operational Response to the policing needs of people in the area".* Area Commands were introduced, a form of devolved management which ensured *"that the resources that (were) available (were) effectively and efficiently targeted towards serving the community".*

With a budget exceeding £34m and consisting of over three hundred and eighty civilian support staff and approximately six hundred and fifty operational staff, the police force in which manager G worked served a population of approximately 270,000, living in diverse and widespread geographical locations.

The aim of the police force in which manager G worked was to *"provide a high quality service to all communities and individual members of the public".* It was recognised that *"although certain facets of business management (could) be applied, policing (was) about providing a largely demand led service to the public".*

The chief constable worked significantly less hours than the observed managers as a whole, in part due to the fact that this manager was only observed for four days due to a public holiday. Furthermore, manager G was recovering from the flu and admitted that he was doing less work than usual because he was not feeling particularly well.

Of all the observed managers, the chief constable was most likely to have his contacts initiated by others. He believed that a large part of his job involved coaching subordinates and he subsequently relied on subordinates to arrange meetings with him when they needed advice, authorisation and information.

The chief constable spent less time than the other observed managers with persons external to the organisation. Furthermore, he spent more time than the observed managers as a whole with his personal assistant, preferring to dictate letters directly to her. In addition, the chief constable spent more time than the observed managers overall with groups of people of mixed status. In part, this was attributable to him holding meetings with a combination of civilian support staff and operational managers. Finally, the chief constable spent twice as much time as managers overall with the press, the consequence of media interest after he opened a police conference on child abuse.

The chief constable spent less time in unscheduled meetings and was less likely to be interrupted for five minutes or less than the observed managers as a whole. However, he spent four times as much time as managers overall conducting tours, the consequence of his deliberate decision to visit every police station in his constabulary before retiring. These tours also accounted for the significant amount of time spent travelling by the chief constable.

Out of all the managers observed, the chief constable spent the most time in his own office. Furthermore, he spent the least time in other internal offices, perhaps an indication of rank and file methods of working in operation. Finally, the chief constable spent one-tenth of his time externally, encompassing the local hospital where the police conference was held, a hotel where the chief constable presented long service medals to two policemen and the office of the police board clerk.

Like the local authority chief executive, the chief constable spent less time in informational contacts than managers overall. However, out of all the observed managers, he spent most of his time in contacts involving requests, the majority of which involved others making requests of him. Finally, like the other heads of organisations, the chief constable spent no time negotiating and spent more time than managers overall in secondary contacts.

ii. Can generalisations be made about public sector managerial work from the observation of seven managers?

An examination of the work undertaken by each observed manager, in relation to their own individual working contexts, demonstrates that the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work is closely linked to the circumstances which the individual manager finds themselves working under. Nevertheless, a number of commonalties have emerged in the work of similar groups of managers.

It soon became apparent, for example, that managers in organisations in urban areas worked significantly more weekly hours and more evenings than colleagues in rural areas. Managers in rural areas, however, were more likely to attend evening community meetings. Furthermore, managers working in rural areas were more likely to take a lunch break than urban colleagues. Finally, rural managers spent more weekly time travelling, conducting tours and undertaking work in external locations.

Rural managers also spent slightly more time in information contacts than managers in organisations in urban areas, the former spending twice as much time giving information and six times as much time in observational tours. However, managers in urban areas spent one-third more time in decision-making contacts. Finally, managers in rural areas were slightly more likely to be involved in secondary contacts, more time spent undertaking ceremonial duties.

When the organisations in which the observed managers worked were examined, it soon became obvious that the only managers who attended evening meetings worked in local authorities. Furthermore, it would seem that managers were most likely to have their contacts initiated by the clock if they worked in the health service or local authorities.

Interestingly, two-thirds of those managers who attended evening community meetings were heads of organisations. In addition, if the time spent by the pre-reorganisation chief executive on the telephone to his shadow authority was excluded, it became apparent that heads of organisations used the telephone less than directors.

Furthermore, whilst heads of organisations and service directors spent similar amounts of time in informational contacts, the former were more likely to give and receive information and conduct observational tours, whilst the latter spent one-third more time in reviews. In addition, directors spent one-third more time in decision-making contacts, no head of organisation having any involvement in negotiations. Finally, heads of organisations spent twice as much time as directors in secondary contacts. Thus, it can be argued that the service directors adopted a *"hands-on"* approach to management whereas the work of the heads of organisations was more *"hands-off"*.

The two contract managers worked more weekly hours than the other managers who were observed. Furthermore, whilst the social work director attended an evening community meeting, neither of the contract managers attended evening community meetings. Perhaps directors of traditional local authority services such as social work are more likely to be invited to attend meetings than contract directors, given that

policy endorsed by the former is more likely to directly affect residents living in the surrounding communities.

In addition, the contract managers were the only managers to spend any time with clients, contractors and suppliers. Furthermore, both contract directors spent more time on the telephone than the observed public managers as a whole.

Finally, when looking at the underlying purposes behind managerial work it became apparent that the traditional service director spent more time in information contacts than the contract directors. However, contract directors spent almost two-fifths more time in decision-making contacts, spending approximately double the amount of time spent by the traditional service director negotiating.

Thus, an analysis of the nature and pattern of managerial work undertaken by the seven observed managers highlights differences between chief executives and directors, managers working in different public organisations, managers working in urban and rural geographical locations and managers working in contractual and non-contractual environments. On closer inspection, however, an examination of the work patterns of each individual manager in relation to their own specific context questions the incontestability of such generalisations. For example, a comparison of urban and rural managers suggested that managers in rural areas spent more time travelling than colleagues in urban areas. However, a significant amount of time

spent travelling by rural managers was the consequence of the pre-reorganisation chief executive giving a one-off lecture to students in a location which was a three hour drive from his organisation. Furthermore, just because managers in urban areas were less likely to stop for lunch than colleagues working in rural areas, it should not be assumed that this difference was solely attributable to the latter managers having a more informal and relaxed approach to their work. Those managers least likely to take lunch breaks, for example, worked in organisations which did not have on-site canteen facilities.

In addition, an analysis of each individual manager's work patterns in relation to their own specific context shows that the managers' work characteristics were quite clearly determined by the specific activities undertaken during the observation week. For example, the hospital contract director spent a large proportion of time negotiating, which influenced the people whom he came into contact with and the methods of communication used. Likewise, the prospect of local government reorganisation affected the work of the pre-reorganisation chief executive, this manager caught up in meetings about voluntary redundancies and pay-in-lieu of notice. In addition, the announcement of redundancies in the island authority led to the social work director calling emergency team meetings with staff, restructuring the format of one of his days. Although, as these managers pointed out, crises frequently occur which require immediate attention, the action needed to counteract them and the people involved are not necessarily the same.

Finally, the observed managers themselves contended that *"there is not a typical week. Some are quiet, some are busy"*. Indeed, *"no two weeks are ever the same. Different things constantly arise which need dealing with in different ways"*.

Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that the context in which a manager works plays a large part in determining, or at least influencing, the nature of their work. Consequently, each manager has specialised work patterns tailored to the needs of their organisations, it's surrounding environment and the particular circumstances in which they find themselves working.

> *"I am ever cognizant that every organisation that I have managed has had its own set of dynamics or organisational culture. Each has required that my management style be tailored to fit the factors and the people being dealt with"* (Bennett, 1986:7).

Consequently, the extent to which generalisations can be made about public sector managerial work from a one-week snapshot of the work of seven observed managers is highly questionable.

iii. Periodicity of Work

> *"While the pace of managerial work may remain fairly constant, the types of activities and their content may be cyclical for managers......Certainly, many organisations follow a business cycle in which budgetary activities are concentrated in one period during the year, sales in another etc."* (McCall et al, 1978:24).

One of the main criticisms of the existing literature on managerial work is that relatively little attention has been paid to periodicity of managerial work. Mintzberg(1973) merely noted that no short-term patterns could be pinpointed in the work of his managers, only identifying one annual pattern for his school superintendent. Stewart(1967) highlighted several examples of managers who had defined periods of activity at certain times in the year. *"Most jobs have some element of repetition.......Few management jobs have a daily cycle.......Most have a monthly or seasonal cycle. Managers in such jobs will spend their time in different ways at different periods of the cycle"* (Stewart, 1967:99).

It soon became apparent from the observation that cyclical patterns of work could be identified for managers. The exception to the rule was the quango manager who, at the time of observation, had little structure in his job. Daily patterns of work, however, were not readily identifiable. At most, it could be argued that these existed with managers generally beginning the day in their office catching up on paperwork and telephone calls, and finishing their day in the same way.

Weekly patterns of work were, instead, more evident. The local authority contract director, for example, held a weekly meeting with her two deputies whilst the local authority chief executive had separate weekly meetings with his council's convenor and leader. These meetings were not 'set in stone' and although all parties to these

meetings kept a free slot in their diaries, meetings could be changed or cancelled if the need arose.

Local authority managers had very formal cycles of council committee meetings to attend, three of the four managers attending council committee meetings during the observational week. In addition to the full council committee meetings, these managers also attended more informal service committee meetings, which decided what issues would be raised at the full council meetings. Thus, in the pre-reorganisation chief executive's local authority, *"service committee meetings happen once every six weeks. In between, that is, the third week of the six week cycle, we have a Policy and Resources committee, which is the lead committee. We also have a formal district council meeting at a six week interval which authorises recommendations made by the committees"*.

Although the hospital trust manager did not have formal council meetings to contend with, he was an ex-officio board member and attended cyclical board meetings. He also attended three hour finance and general purposes committee meetings, board meetings and trust operational management group meetings once a fortnight. Furthermore, this manager was required to attend a full-day executive directors' meeting once a month. Likewise, the chief constable attended police board meetings at regular intervals.

In addition, several of the observed public managers were also members of management working groups which met at specific times in the year. For example, the local authority chief executive was a member of a small budgetary core group, strategic management team, Heads of Service team, Member/Officer group and Corporate Management Team, to name but a few. The pre-reorganisation chief executive also attended a management team meeting, as did the social work director who had a full day management team meeting one week in six. Finally, both contract directors attended Corporate Management Team meetings. Generally speaking, these meetings were initiated by the clock, managers knowing that they had to meet at regular intervals on the same day, at the same time and in the same place.

As well as having cyclical meetings, the observed managers' work was also different at defined periods during the year. For example, the public sector financial year runs from April to April so not surprisingly, budgetary issues dominate when managers return from their Christmas break. Indeed, the local authority chief executive was observed during January and a significant part of his work involved devising plans to put the budget out to public consultation.

Likewise, the hospital contract director's job was comprised of two main parts, contracting and monitoring. Contracts were drawn up until the end of March, when the focus changed to one of monitoring the contracts for a period of six months.

Equally, the local authority contract director had a clearly identifiable timetable for CCT, contracts due to be renewed in September, January and June.

It would therefore seem that public sector managerial work is characterised by periodicity, the consequence of firstly, cyclical meetings such as management team meetings. Secondly, board meetings and council meetings are formal cyclical meetings which the manager must attend. Thirdly, the very nature of some public managerial jobs requires managers to undertake certain activities at defined times in the year. Thus, further evidence exists which questions the extent to which reliable generalisations can be made for all public sector managerial jobs, let alone all managerial jobs worldwide.

5.3.3 The Tasks underlying public sector managerial work

By neglecting the effects of environmental influences on managerial work, the lasting impression of the managerial work literature is the creation of typologies of managerial roles, these typologies held to characterise all managerial work regardless of sector, organisation, type and level of job and so forth. Rather than attempting to explain *'why managers do what they do in the way that they do'*, existing studies prefer to describe managerial activities and then categorise these in the form of a typology of roles. The outcome is countless recordings of activities rather than an account of the meanings and significance of these activities.

Stewart(1967), for example, devised five job types (emissaries, writers, discussers, troubleshooters, committee men) which were held to characterise all managerial work. Likewise, Mintzberg(1973) established ten managerial roles and eight managerial job types, which knew *"no national boundaries"*. Furthermore, Stewart(1976) contended that managerial jobs fell under one of four types (hub, peer dependent, man management, solo), depending on whether the job was predominantly internal, external or a combination of both, culminating in twelve job types. Finally, Kotter(1982) contended that in the initial period of their jobs, managers set agendas and create networks.

However, the generalness of the categories used by existing studies means that they can equally apply to the work of the observed public managers. For example, the quango manager was *"in close touch with the world outside"*, making him a perfect candidate for Stewart's(1967) emissary job type. Equally, the quango manager could be classified as Mintzberg's(1973) contact man, investing time building up his own and his organisation's credibility whilst working with people external to the organisation. Thus, the categorisations devised by existing studies are so vague and abstracted that it is almost impossible to imagine not being able to classify public sector managerial work under existing role typologies.

However, simply classifying the quango manager as an 'emissary' or 'contact man' merely informs us that this manager tends to spend a lot of time working outside his

organisation. Such categorisations do not, however, go on to explain why the manager's job is externally based, what the key elements of his job are, what kind of environmental variables he is confronted with and so on.

Moreover, classifying managerial jobs into one of several categories ignores the reality that managerial work changes throughout the year due to cyclical work patterns, unforeseen events and environmental variables. Thus, the pre-reorganisation chief executive may have been categorised as a *"committee man"* (Stewart, 1967) during the observational week, a large percentage of his time spent internally due to council committee meetings. However, had this manager been observed during a week where an important crisis arose which consumed a significant amount of his time, he would then have been classified as a *"troubleshooter"* (ibid).

Given that the typologies emerging from managerial work research appear to be nothing more than vague elucidations, this researcher has made no attempt to categorise specific 'types' of public managers. To do so would be a continuation of one of the main flaws with existing managerial work studies, that is, the tendency to generalise and subsequently obliterate any sensitivity to the context in which managers work. In view of the numerous differences in public sector management jobs, attributable to the wider context's surrounding individual managers, it would make no sense to attempt to pigeonhole the work of public managers into neat

categorisations on the basis of a one week snapshot of their work. Instead, the more logical approach appeared to be to adopt a middle level classification. Based on the purposes underlying the activities performed by the observed public managers, coupled with discussions held with managers about the reasoning behind their actions, an attempt has been made to examine the tasks undertaken by senior public managers, some of which affected certain managers more than others.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that the tasks identified by this research are equally as broad and could equally represent the work of a variety of different types of managers. The difference, however, is that this research appreciates that the picture painted of public sector managerial work is not even fully representative of the work of those managers who were observed, let alone all public managers in Scotland. Furthermore, the value of identifying managerial tasks is that only now can an attempt begin to be made to explain the reasoning behind public managers' activities, based on the actual work of public managers rather than on personal accounts and anecdotes.

i. The mouthpiece of the organisation

Numerous studies(Mintzberg, 1973; Audit Commission, 1989) have demonstrated that chief executives and directors are viewed as the "mouthpiece" or the "figurehead" of their organisation or department. Thus, many demands were made

of the observed public managers simply because of the position they held within their organisations.

The public managers were often asked to do something simply because of their organisational status. In other words, the pre-reorganisation chief executive was asked to write an article for a special twenty-one year review of council services simply because of the position he held. Furthermore, one of the local authority contract director's suppliers asked her to attend a charity dinner. Interestingly, several of the local authority managers explained that they had to be careful about attending functions hosted by organisations who had business dealings with them, in case they were seen to be bribes. *"When a particular person or body has a matter currently in issue with a local authority then common sense dictates a more restrictive approach(e.g., negotiations with an outside organisation). An important criterion in exercising your judgement is what interpretation others may reasonably put on your acceptance"* (Morris and Paine, 1995:114).

Several of the observed managers also attended formal functions as the representative or 'symbol' of the organisation. For example, the local authority contract director attended one of her janitor's retirement presentations to give him a gift on behalf of the local authority contracts department. Indeed, this manager had recently decided that it would be departmental policy for either herself or her deputies to attend such presentations when the person concerned had a sufficient length of service.

"Opportunities should be sought by management to recognize and reward people's accomplishments" (Darrington, 1986:11).

Furthermore, subordinates frequently asked the public managers to authorize their actions. Likewise, accounts, cheques and letters often required the manager's signature, a further indication of the status held by the manager within the organisation.

A significant part of the public managers' job was simply to make themselves available and accessible to others. Complaints were sometimes directed to the "man at the top", and subordinates asked managers for assistance if they felt no-one was listening to them. For example, an inspector arranged a meeting with the chief constable because he was worried about an issue relating to his welfare. Although the chief constable was happy to see the inspector, he was *"unhappy with the situation because it should have been unnecessary had people been doing their job properly"*. Furthermore, the local authority contract director's deputy asked her to phone one of the department's contractors to *"tell them to stop hassling staff about the TOUPE regulations - they won't listen to me"*.

By virtue of their position, several of the observed managers were asked to become involved in outside organisations. Having held the post of chief executive for over ten years, the local authority chief executive was considered to have the necessary

skills and attributes to become the chairman of a charitable company established to look at sustainable development. However, any contact made with this company was done so in the manager's own time. Furthermore, this manager was also a member of the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities Partnership Project Team, again attributable to his reputation and standing as an experienced local authority chief executive.

Finally, many of the observed managers' activities were the direct consequence of them being a public figure. Given that local authorities are responsible for the provision of services to communities, it was not uncommon for the observed local authority managers to be asked to attend community meetings to justify their organisation's actions and to listen to the needs of local residents. The media also took a keen interest in work undertaken by the observed managers, who used every available opportunity to promote a favourable image of their organisation.

ii. Leadership

> *"The key purpose of the leader role is to effect an integration between individual needs and organisational goals. The manager must concentrate his efforts so as to bring subordinates and organisational needs into a common accord in order to promote efficient operations"* (Mintzberg, 1973:62).

"Each time a manager encourages or criticises a subordinate he is acting in his capacity as leader" (ibid). Thus, the hospital contract director was acting in his capacity as leader when he told one of his clinical directors to *"get X off my back and*

clear up the mess Y made". Likewise, the local authority contract director displayed elements of leadership when she told one of her deputies to re-write a series of bullet points as a report, as was originally requested.

With the exception of the chief constable who was referred to as 'sir', the consequence of the traditional rank and file methods of management clearly evident in the police force, managers tended to veer towards an informal approach to leadership. As the pre-reorganisation chief executive argued, *"would my directors of service be as inclined to speak to me if they had a problem, if I requested that they call me Mr X?"* Nevertheless, in spite of being addressed by the term 'sir', the chief constable was very approachable, more so than his predecessors according to staff. Furthermore, the hospital trust contract director claimed he rarely *"pulls rank on anyone because as far as I'm concerned we're all in the same boat and are all working for the same thing"*.

Two important attributes of leadership were present in the work of the observed public managers. Firstly, it would seem that the public managers played a key part in keeping the momentum of the organisation going. *"A manager should look for opportunities to instil some playfulness in the work environment. Keeping a pleasant work atmosphere is essential to productive working relationships"* (Darrington, 1986:11). This was especially so for the pre-reorganisation chief executive who was managing an organisation out of existence, faced with disillusioned staff whose

futures were uncertain. However, although this manager engaged in *"deliberate joking about to keep morale up"* , he admitted it was *"problematic when someone has to be given into trouble. Then I wish there was more formality".*

The underlying reason for the chief constable touring police stations was to praise and encourage staff who were somewhat isolated from police headquarters, making them feel part of the wider organisation. Furthermore, the quango manager spent a significant amount of time listening to a subordinate's concerns and worries about her impending redundancy. The eventual solution was to give the subordinate a minor project to lead, the underlying objective being to make her feel more involved in the last few months of her job. Finally, the social work director stood in stocks and had wet sponges thrown at him in the name of charity!

Secondly, an implicit, but nevertheless important managerial role emerging from the observation of seven public managers at work was one of coaching and facilitating subordinates, in other words, developing employees. *"A wise manager delegates....to capable work associates. With effective delegation, the manager provides an atmosphere of freedom to innovate and create, with accountability and responsibility for one's actions"* (ibid: 10).

All of the observed public managers had open door policies in place, giving subordinates the opportunity to contact them for advice or information to enable

them to do their jobs properly. However, as the hospital contract director pointed out, *"open doors are a high risk since some staff keep coming to see me about matters they should be able to deal with. It is annoying when they merely come looking for reassurance. It is disappointing when you appoint people to make and take decisions and then they come to you for constant reassurance. They have warped the safety net".*

The chief constable believed that one of the most important elements of his job was coaching subordinates. Consequently, a significant number of his meetings were initiated by subordinates who sought advice and comments on work they were undertaking. Likewise, the local authority contract director claimed that her job was about facilitating the work of her deputies. Subsequently, she held regular meetings with her two deputies to pass on and receive current information which would aide them to work together as a team.

Thus, *"taking the lead need not always mean being first, loudest or longest over an issue. It may involve a good deal of activity which is not and is not meant to be, visible to others"* (Morris and Paine, 1995:70).

iii. Communication

The observed public managers spent a large part of their day collecting and disseminating information which was relevant either to their organisation as a whole

or to their individual departments. Much of this information was received by virtue of the managers' positions.

Mail received by the managers was an important source of information, the local authority chief executive spending approximately half-an-hour a day going through mail with his secretary. This manager contended that the mail *"was a way of seeing what goes on in an organisation. If we get a lot of complaints about something, it tells me something is wrong"*. Likewise, the social work director spent about half-an-hour a day with his deputy sorting out the mail. As the local authority chief executive highlighted, *"managers need to learn how to scan their mail for important information, or else they could all too easily become bogged down by it"*.

The managers generally gave mail fairly cursory treatment, instead relying on information to come from peers, subordinates, superiors or outsiders by "word of mouth". Interestingly, the local authority chief executive was kept aware of what was happening in his organisation and its environment by a booklet of newspaper clippings which were received every afternoon.

iv. Team Work

> *"Development of a solid management team is the most effective way to get things done........Part of teamwork is the use of task forces to develop solutions or identify options when changes in major policies are contemplated"* (Darrington, 1986:10).

Team work was evident in the work of the observed public managers, either formally, where the manager was a member of a group established to work on a particular area of organisational policy, or informally, where the manager worked with the same people on an ad-hoc, day-to-day basis.

Formal methods of team working were apparent in the pre-reorganisation and local authority chief executives' jobs. The former *"developed a good team relationship with chief officers. It is fairly abrasive but at the same time it is friendly. Working together for the same aims, we have regular departmental meetings".* Perhaps, however, team working was most evident in the work of the local authority chief executive, the consequence of his organisation's policy that *"team working through a partnership between elected members, managers and staff will be the norm throughout the council".* During the week of observation alone, this manager attended a small budgetary core group, a corporate strategy group and a corporate management team meeting.

On the other hand, informal and ad-hoc team working characterised the work of the quango manager, this manager spending a lot of time working with two colleagues whom he shared an office with.

v. The political element

> *"The management processes of local government are set in a political management system. The key processes of decision-making are political processes......The management processes of local authorities should,*

> *therefore, support that political process and fulfil the requirements of political control. They should be based on the reality and on the legitimacy of the politics of community which are a condition of local government"* (Stewart, 1988(a):4).

Unlike private sector managers, local authority managers are accountable to elected members. Thus, an important element of the work of local authority managers is attendance at council committee meetings, where policy is decided by the elected members and not by the managers. The pre-reorganisation chief executive presented three papers outlining policies he felt the council should be implementing and, although they were approved, the elected members could as easily have rejected his proposals. Thus, although local authority managers have control over the day-to-day running of their organisations or departments, their powers are much more restricted when it comes to determining council policy.

General contact with councillors was also an important element of the local authority manager's work, especially on council committee days. In general, councillors used chief executives and directors as sources of information and advice. For example, the pre-reorganisation chief executive was asked to authorise what a councillor intended to say on the television news. *"No matter how busy you are or what you are doing, you can't turn a councillor away when they come to see you. They just won't accept that you are 'too busy'".*

Finally, the local authority chief executive had separate weekly meetings with the council's convenor and leader, providing a forum to discuss issues of importance. *"The chief executive relates to the political leadership and can assist the leadership in giving political direction to the organisation. The personal relationship with the council's leader is usually particularly important and demands special attention"* (Clarke and Stewart, 1988:4).

The quango manager came into limited contact with community councillors and local authority elected members, whilst the chief constable was visited by two Members of Parliament in the run up to the general election, seeking information about policing policies. Finally, the work of the hospital trust contract director was 'politicised' to the extent that he was a member of the hospital trust board, where responsibility lay for making important organisational and policy decisions.

Thus, the influence of politics on the public sector manager's job was largely determined by the organisation in which the manager worked. That said, however, all of the public sector managerial jobs were politicised to the extent that the wider environments facing the seven managers were politically influenced. For example, local government reorganisation was a political decision, affecting all those who worked in local authorities. Likewise, the local authority and hospital contract managers' jobs were created by a government intent on introducing competition into local government and the health service. Finally, the quango manager's job arose

out of the government's commitment to create agencies to undertake work previously done by central government departments.

vi. Dealing with crises and emergencies

Senior managers in both public and private organisations often have to *"resolv(e) the problems the departments ought to have sorted out themselves"* (Morphet, 1993: 86). For example, the hospital contract director took up a complaint when a patient phoned to express her confusion over two diverse replies she had received from the complaint's officer and the relevant department. Furthermore, this manager made a decision to appoint temporary secretaries simply to get a consultant *"off my back"*, a decision which should have been taken much lower down the management hierarchy.

The public managers may also be expected to deal with *"involuntary situations and change that is partially beyond the manager's control"* (Mintzberg, 1973 : 82). For example, during the week the social work director was being observed, the council announced its proposed plans for redundancies. This led to a management team meeting being called to discuss the implications of this decision.

Thus,

> *"nonrational, emotional, diverse, and unpredictable concerns, events, and beliefs are going to be the rule in...professional life......being comfortable with ambiguity is important"* (Pederson, 1986:9).

vii. Corporate Management

a. Strategic Management

A number of activities undertaken by the public managers were concerned with the development and implementation of organisational strategy. The pre-reorganisation chief executive was responsible for developing *"systems which ensure that the council has an explicit statement of policy and objectives and the resources to meet the objectives"*. His departments devised three-yearly service plans outlining how their corporate strategies would be achieved.

Furthermore, the local authority chief executive had formed a 'Corporate Management Group' and a 'Strategic Management Team' which met at regular intervals. In addition, the local authority contract director led a 'Process Management and Improvement Group', which, at the time of observation, was responsible for determining quality initiatives to be followed by the local authority.

Although strategy-based decision-making most obviously occurred in local authorities, the chief constable was part of an 'Executive Advisory Group' which met regularly to discuss important organisational issues, ranging from staff costs to quality initiatives. Finally, the hospital contract director attended several 'Management Team' meetings where strategy was developed.

b. Negotiation

From the outset, it was apparent that no heads of organisations undertook any form of negotiation, differing from the service directors and the quango manager. The hospital contract manager spent the most time negotiating, simply because he was observed during a week where contract negotiations predominated. In comparison, the local authority contract director spent little time negotiating, this manager having already completed contract negotiations before being observed.

The director of social work also met with the local hospital to discuss their joint ownership of a home, and negotiate who would provide what services. Furthermore, this director met with the health board to discuss how payments to another council would be divided between the two organisations. Finally, the quango manager negotiated office alterations with the owner of the property. Furthermore, this manager bargained with an agency that wanted to use the quango manager's geographical area to enhance their bid for funding for a science centre.

c. Budget Management

Although the managers spent some of their weekly working time dealing with budgets, the time spent was rather limited in comparison to the other tasks these managers undertook. The Director of Social Work merely examined budget allocations with his departmental accountant. Likewise, the chief constable discussed budgetary issues with his director of finance, and attended a

predominantly budgetary meeting with the police board. The local authority contract director also met with her two deputies to discuss the probable out-turns for 1996/1997, deciding how the extra money would be allocated. Finally, the local authority chief executive discussed the allocation of resources to central accommodation. In addition, he was involved in the process of putting proposed budget cuts out to community consultation, allowing the general public a chance to voice their views on areas where cuts should occur.

5.4 CONCLUSION

> *"When we use the blanket terms 'private enterprise' and 'public administration', we are using crude simplifications to talk about what are in fact highly variegated areas of human activity. Consider the differences between a company exposed to the full brunt of market competition, a monopoly enterprise, those extensive areas of economic activity where prices are administered or guaranteed.......*
>
> *.......And in the public sector, things are no less heterogeneous. One need only recall the differences between a ministerial administration and the army, between traditional office administrations (taxes) and the service units(waste disposal), the latter being either departments of a local authority or independent legal entities in themselves; some make profits, others run up deficits......"* (Banner, 1988:99).

One of the fundamental weaknesses of the existing managerial work literature is that managerial work is looked at irrespective of the environments in which individual managers work. Instead, researchers have identified typologies of managerial work and assume they apply to all managers regardless of sector, organisation, nationality and so on. However, as the above quote demonstrates, there are diverse differences

between the constitution of organisations within both the public and private sectors. Consequently, this researcher was sceptical of the degree to which the nature and characteristics of public sector managerial work would be an extension of existing private sector research. This scepticism was not unfounded, little evidence emerging which suggested that satisfactory generalisations could be made. Indeed, the observational research clearly demonstrated that the work undertaken by the observed managers was determined, or at least shaped, by the managers' surrounding context and the circumstances and events occurring during the observational week.

Consequently, the so-called 'typical' public manager covers a diverse range of work patterns and characteristics. For example, whilst the 'average' observed manager worked forty hours per week, the actual weekly hours worked by managers ranged from twenty-nine to fifty-two hours. Likewise, whilst the 'typical' observed manager spent 69.4 percent of their contact time with persons internal to the organisation, the time spent ranged from 60.5 to 79.5 percent. Such disparities surely call into question any attempt to make generalisations about the nature and pattern of work of the 'typical' public manager.

Furthermore, the actual managerial work observed by the researcher was partly down to chance, depending on the week chosen for observation. An attempt was made to control for the possibility that the observed work was anything but 'typical', by asking the observed managers themselves to identify infrequent activities which

took place during the observation week. It soon became clear from these discussions with managers that their work was characterised by periodicity, managers' diaries arranged around cyclical meetings and activities which occur at certain times in the year. For example, three of the four local authority managers were observed during weeks scheduled with cyclical council meetings. Had these managers been observed one week earlier or later, the nature of their work would have undoubtedly been affected by the absence of such meetings.

Furthermore, these managers also identified unexpected events which had arisen during the observational weeks, events which impacted on the activities undertaken by the managers during the remainder of the week. Whilst it is a fact of life that all public managers will be affected by crises and adverse circumstances, the types of action needed to counteract crises will not necessarily be the same.

Like the managerial work literature, the NPM identify core public sector reforms and assume they affect the work of all managers, regardless of the environments surrounding individual managers. The observation research, however, contended that it is rather shortsighted to look at the effects of public sector change irrespective of the manager's environment, some managers clearly affected by reform to a greater degree than others.

Although the observation research has demonstrated that an examination of public sector managerial work cannot be divorced from the environments in which individual managers work, questions surround the reliability of conclusions drawn from observation, these conclusions based on the work of only seven Scottish public managers. Just as questions arise over the extent to which the seven managers were 'typical' of public managers in Scotland as a whole, it is equally unclear whether the observational weeks were 'typical' of each individual manager's work as a whole. Moreover, the researcher may have observed a deliberately 'polished' version of the observed managers' work patterns.

In an attempt to give credence to the observational research, questionnaires were also issued to a wider sample of public managers. As chapter four highlighted, the questionnaire emanated from the observational research, the intention being to test assumptions about managerial work arising from the observation findings. For example, although observation was effective in demonstrating how an individual manager's activities related to the particular context and circumstances in which they worked, very little insight was gained into the broader variances connected to the public sector environment. Consequently, the questionnaire provided a forum to ask managers to identify the extent to which their work was affected by external environmental variables such as economic change, technological change and government policy.

Likewise, whilst observation highlighted the important point that public sector managerial work was characterised by periodicity, the conclusions drawn were not fantastically compelling, given that they were based on discussions with a relatively small sample of managers. Only by issuing a questionnaire to a wider sample of managers could the researcher begin to make relatively strong conclusions about the existence of periodic work cycles in the public sector managerial job.

Furthermore, observation has been criticised for its failure to evaluate non-observable activities such as thinking. Only by issuing questionnaires could an insight begin to be gained into managers' perceptions of their jobs.

Finally, the observation findings seemed to suggest that management changes identified by the NPM affected the work of public managers to differing degrees, depending on the organisation in which the manager worked and the level and type of job in which they were employed. Although it was not always easy to see a direct link between the content of the observed managers' work and the changes which have supposedly occurred, it soon became clear that the organisations in which the managers worked had adopted the language of value-for-money, quality, cost-effectiveness and so on. Only by asking public managers about their values, attitudes and opinions could an insight be gained into the extent to which Conservative government rhetoric has been absorbed by those managers running public services.

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORING MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK

An Outline of the Questionnaire Research

6.1 INTRODUCTION

> *"Public administration in its academic sense has always been somewhat different from its practice. Practitioners often complain that much of what is written in journals or books is irrelevant to their work. There must always be some separation between academic discussion and the work of public servants; however, the introduction of new public management has exacerbated this problem. There now seems to be a bigger gap than usual between management practice and the academic community"* (Hughes, 1994:271-273).

The intention behind issuing three hundred and forty-seven questionnaires to senior public managers in local authorities, hospital trusts, the police, fire service, water authorities and Scottish Office was threefold:

1. The questionnaires would supplement the observation research, providing information about the work characteristics of a larger sample of senior public managers than would ever be obtained using observation, thereby strengthening the results of this research. As chapter four explained, the questionnaire evolved out of the observation research, questions on the patterns and characteristics of managerial work based on the researcher's direct observations of managers at work. Furthermore, questions on environmental influences stemmed from observation, it soon becoming clear that managerial work was determined, or at least influenced, by each individual manager's surrounding context;

2. To gain an insight into managers' perceptions of their jobs, comparing what managers think they do with what is actually observed;

3. To develop an understanding of managers' reactions to public sector reform.

This chapter begins with an outline of the questionnaire managers' perceptions of the nature and pattern of public sector managerial work. Thereafter, comparisons are made with the existing managerial work literature in order to establish whether previous researchers were justified in generalising about the management job. This will be followed by a comparison of managers' perceptions of their work with the observation findings, an attempt made to examine whether there are common patterns of managerial work.

Given the criticism already levelled at the existing research for its neglect of environmental influences, the questionnaire managers' characteristics and patterns of work will be examined in relation to the nature and level of management job, the organisation in which respondents work, whether respondents work in organisations in rural or urban locations and whether they work in contracting organisations. Furthermore, the effects of broader environmental variances on the management job, for example demographic and technological change, will be examined, as will the impact of periodic work cycles.

Thereafter, attention will be focused on managers' attitudes to public sector reform. One of the main weaknesses with the public management literature as it currently stands is that much of what is written in irrelevant to the actual work undertaken by management practitioners, little attention paid to managers' opinions and reflections

on their work. Instead, the NPM make widespread claims and generalisations about the changing nature of public sector managerial work, without providing any concrete evidence to demonstrate how public sector change has impacted on the management job. Moreover, whilst the NPM outline key elements of reform which have affected managers, for example, value-for-money and market mechanisms, it fails to look at the environments in which individual managers work, assuming instead that the reforms affect all public managers.

Thus, this chapter will conclude by examining the questionnaire respondents' values and their attitudes to public sector reform, an attempt made to assess whether change has occurred at a fundamental or rhetorical level. The effects of environmental influences will be considered throughout, managers' attitudes looked at in relation to the job they undertake, the level at which they work and the organisation in which they work.

It must be borne in mind, however, that these questionnaires were completed by 46.4 percent of the chosen sample of questionnaire managers. Care must be taken not to equate these responses with those of all public managers in Scotland. Indeed, *"there is no way of knowing if their characteristics can be generalised to describe the whole sample, let alone the population the sample is intended to represent"* (Kidder et al, 1986 : 223).

6.2 THE PATTERN AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERIAL WORK

6.2.1 Managers' perceptions of their job: an outline of the questionnaire findings

The average questionnaire respondent works between fifty and fifty-nine hours per week.[i] 78.9 percent work weekends,[ii] most of whom work either one or two weekends in four.[iii] A further 97 percent work evenings,[iv] the majority working either two or three evenings per week.[v] On top of this relatively lengthy working week, a staggering 90 percent of questionnaire managers contend that even when they do not work, their mind is on the job.[vi]

67 percent of questionnaire respondents feel that they both exercise a lot of control over the design of their working day[vii] and frequently determine the duration of the activities they perform.[viii] Furthermore, 41 percent of respondents feel that their work schedule allows them time to sit back and reflect on what is happening.[ix]

Consequently, it is somewhat surprising that 83 percent of respondents claim to face constant interruption during the working day.[x] Interruptions can take the form of face-to-face contact, the majority of respondents coming into contact with between ten and fourteen people per day.[xi] Furthermore, managers are frequently interrupted by telephone calls, the majority of respondents receiving between ten and fourteen calls during a working day.[xii] Finally, the majority of managers are also equally split between making either five to nine or ten to fourteen telephone calls per day.[xiii]

Given that 83 percent of the questionnaire respondents face constant interruption, it is surprising that 41 percent frequently find that their job directs attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time.[xiv] It is also surprising that only 54 percent contend that the level of work they perform throughout the day is not constant.[xv] However, it is of no surprise that 95 percent of managers frequently have to deal with two or more issues simultaneously. [xvi]

Questionnaire managers overwhelmingly find themselves conducting their daily work within their organisation.[xvii] Furthermore, 29 percent of their daily working time is spent alone,[xviii] managers undertaking desk work such as reading and report writing. As **figure 1** demonstrates, managers are most likely to work with subordinates, spending more than twice as much time with management as opposed to non-management subordinates. Interestingly, managers charged with the overall responsibility of providing services to the general public only spend 3.4 percent of their weekly contact time with the public.

Contrary to classical management theory, the questionnaire respondents spend the majority of their time reacting to circumstances rather than planning work.[xix] Consequently, it is of no surprise that the questionnaire respondents favour verbal communication **(Figure 2)**. Although the questionnaire respondents claim to spend more time communicating with colleagues than they spend alone, it should be

Figure 1: Persons whom the managers come into contact with

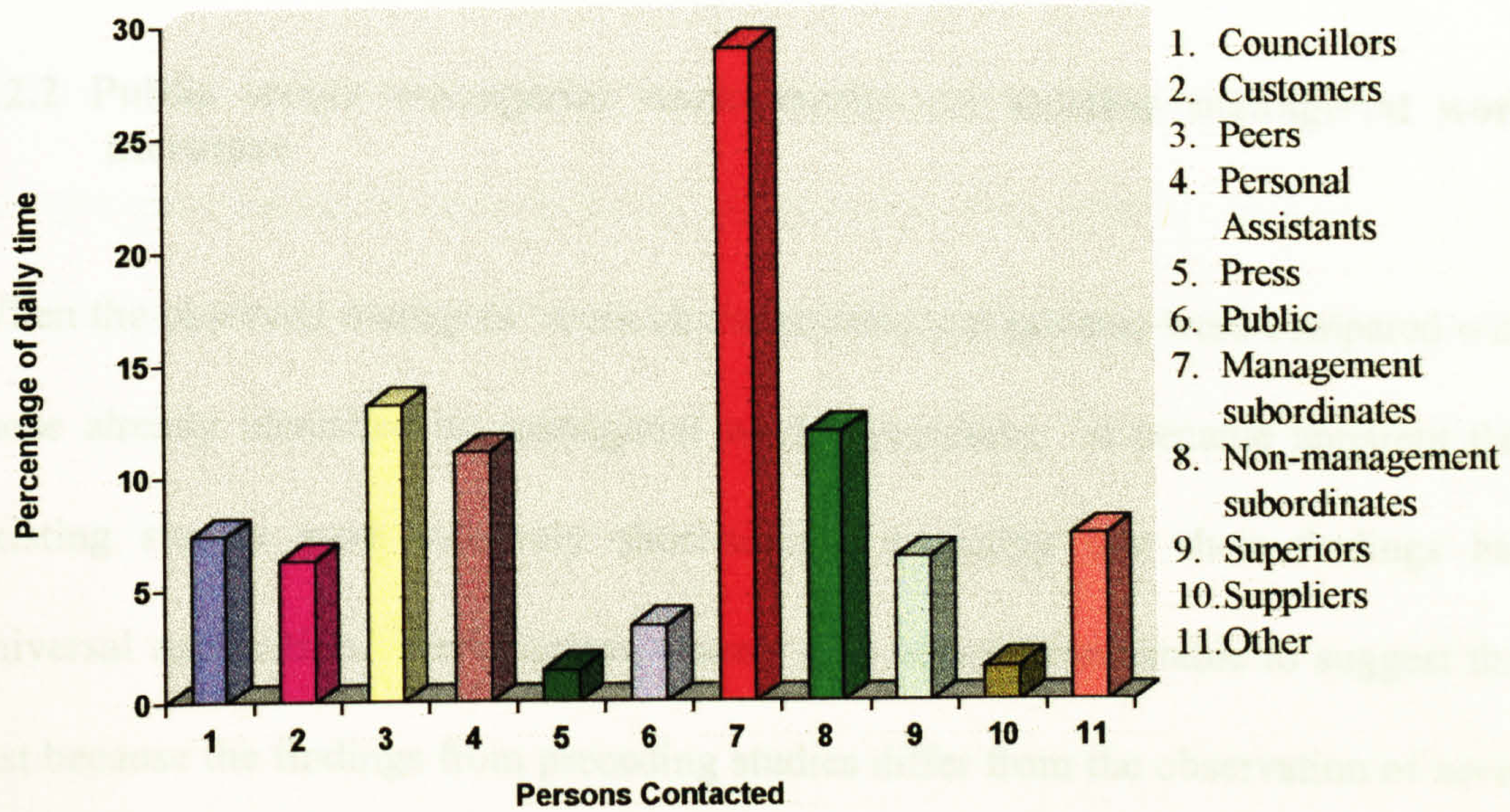
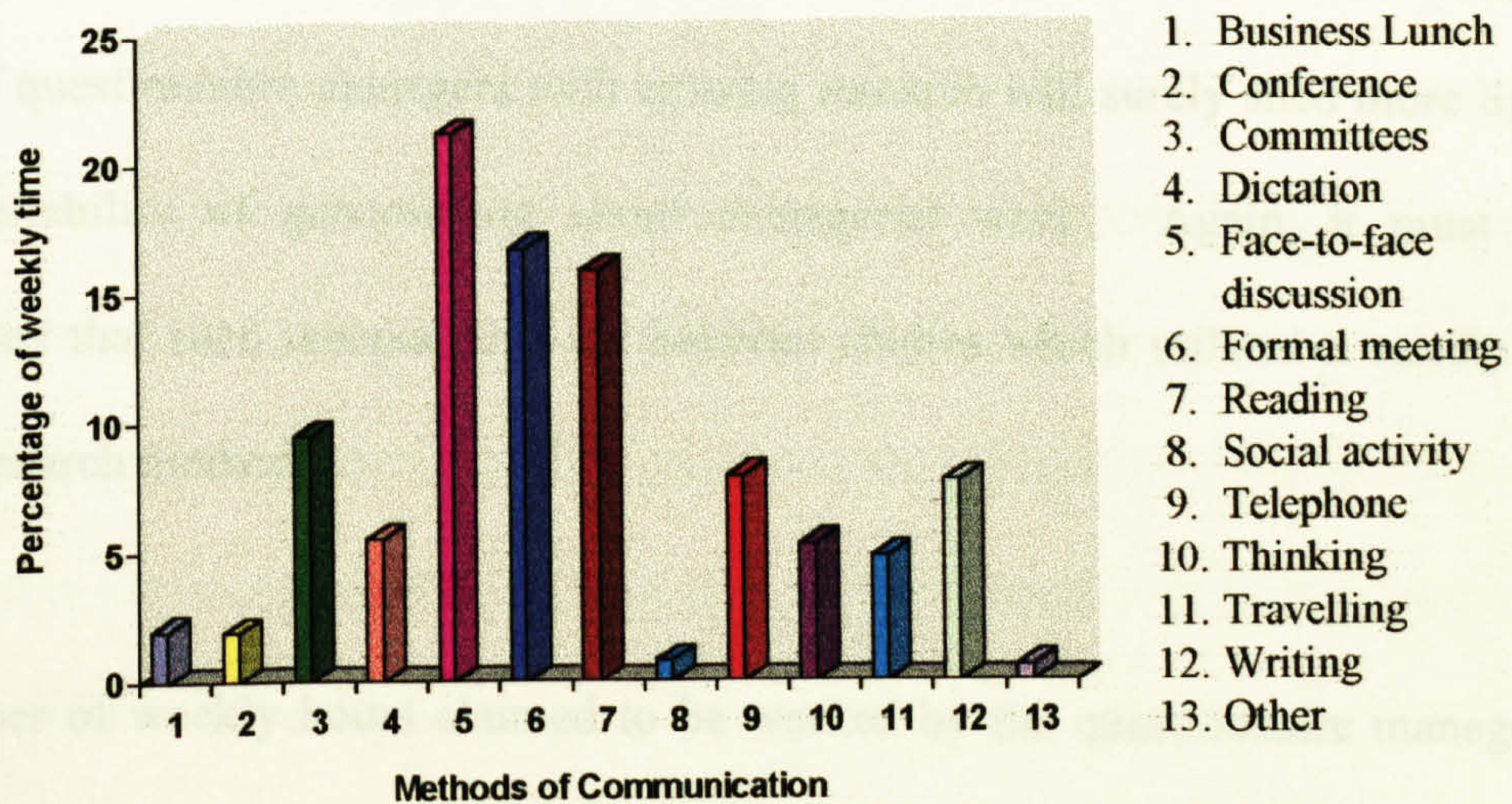


Figure 2 : Methods of communication used by respondents



pointed out that managers believe that they spend 16 percent of their weekly working time reading material received from both within and outside their organisation.

6.2.2 Public sector managerial work versus the existing managerial work literature

When the observed managers' work characteristics and patterns were compared with those already identified by managerial work researchers, it became apparent that existing studies were relatively short-sighted assuming that their findings had universal application. Nevertheless, surely it is equally contestable to suggest that just because the findings from preceding studies differ from the observation of seven senior public managers, it necessarily follows that researchers are unjust in hypothesising that generalisations can be made. Perhaps the observation of seven public managers paints an unrealistic picture of managerial work, the consequence of a small sample size. Hence, a comparison of the patterns of work of a larger sample of questionnaire managers with existing research will surely shed more light on the reliability of generalising about managerial work. Again, it must be remembered that such comparisons are between studies which utilised a variety of diverse research methods.

The number of weekly hours claimed to be worked by the questionnaire managers corresponds with the number of hours worked by managers in existing diary studies. Thus, like Copeman's(1963) managing directors and departmental heads, chief

executives who responded to the questionnaire claim to work longer hours than directors, a scenario not witnessed under observation.

Unlike the existing studies of managerial work and the observation findings, the questionnaire managers seem to be of the belief that their work is anything but brief and fragmented, 41 percent frequently focusing their attention on one issue for more than an hour at a time, only 2.5 percent claiming that this never happens. Interestingly, unlike Copeman's(1963) research which demonstrated that there was a higher probability that managing directors worked for more than an hour without interruptions than departmental heads, the opposite picture emerges from the questionnaire research. 43 percent of directors maintain that they can frequently direct their attention on any one issue for an hour or more at a time, the comparative figure for chief executives being 27.6 percent.

Furthermore, whilst Carlson's(1951) managing directors exercised relatively little control over the design of their working day, the majority of questionnaire managers claim to exercise a lot of control over the shape their working day takes. Finally, the extent to which the work of public managers can be characterised as brief and fragmented is questioned further, 41 percent of questionnaire respondents claiming that their work schedule allows them time to sit back and reflect on what is happening.

Thus, the initial impression drawn from the questionnaire research is that managers believe that their work is anything but brief and fragmented. However, the integrity of the questionnaire responses is questionable, 82.6 percent experiencing interruptions. Indeed, the majority of managers claim to see between ten and fourteen people per day and make and receive between ten and fourteen telephone calls per day.

Paralleling existing managerial work research, questionnaire managers are more likely to communicate verbally than rely on written communication. Nevertheless, confirming the observation findings, the questionnaire managers spend more time alone than the managers in earlier studies. However, like Dubin and Spray's(1964) managers, the proportion of time spent alone by the questionnaire managers was influenced by functional differences, local authority managers appearing to spend a greater percentage of time alone than hospital trust colleagues.

Furthermore, like the observed managers, the questionnaire managers differ from managers in established studies, spending more time communicating formally rather than informally. Finally, although the questionnaire managers are equally as likely as managers in existing studies to use the telephone as a tool of communication, they spend substantially less time undertaking tours, confirming the observation findings.

Like the studies reviewed in chapter two, the questionnaire managers spend more time with subordinates than with peers and superiors. Confirming the findings drawn from the observation of seven public managers, the questionnaire managers spend substantially less time with peers than the managers in Burns'(1954) and Dubin and Spray's(1964) studies. Moreover, directors who responded to the questionnaire are considerably more likely than chief executives to spend time working with superiors, a similar picture emerging from Copeman's(1963) research.

Corresponding with the management studies already examined, the questionnaire managers prefer working within their organisation than outside it. Nevertheless, unlike Horne and Lupton(1965) and Dubin and Spray(1967), who found that the more senior managers spent a greater percentage of time outside the organisation, little differences emerged between the directors and chief executives who responded to the questionnaire. Furthermore, Mintzberg's(1973) managers spent almost three times as much time as the questionnaire managers with persons external to the organisation, a similar picture emerging from the observational element of this research.

Finally, the majority of managers in the questionnaire study react to issues as they arise rather than systematically plan their work, questioning the classical school of management's contention that managers are methodical planners.

Thus, a comparison of the questionnaire research findings with the existing managerial work literature suggests that researchers have been rather short-sighted in their claims that their research findings have universal application. For example, in sharp contrast to the managerial work literature, the responses to the questionnaire suggest that public sector managerial work is anything but brief and fragmented, managers exercising a considerable degree of control over the design of their working day.

Furthermore, if existing researchers are to be believed, managers spend a considerable proportion of their time with people external to the organisation. As both the questionnaire and observation research established, it would be misleading to make this assumption for public sector managerial work. The reality appears to be that public managers as a whole spend relatively insignificant proportions of time with people external to the organisation.

Thus, this research study strongly contests claims made by existing managerial work researchers that their findings know no national boundaries, clear differences in work patterns and characteristics emerging for public sector managers. Even where management researchers have made claims about public sector managerial work, it does not necessarily follow that these claims should be automatically assumed. For example, Mintzberg(1973) contended that managers in public organisations spent more time in formal activity and meeting outsiders than colleagues in private

organisations. Although the questionnaire and observation managers generally spent more time in formal communication than managers in preceding studies, they still spent less time in formal communication than Mintzberg's(1973) managers. Moreover, Mintzberg's hypothesis that public managers spent more time than private sector colleagues with outsiders could not have been further from the truth.

Nevertheless, although the questionnaire responses confirm conclusions drawn from the observation study that existing managerial work research does not have universal application, it is equally obvious that the vague typologies of managerial job types could be applied to the work of the questionnaire managers. The responses given by each questionnaire manager on the patterns and characteristics of work could easily be analysed in such a way that, for example, the questionnaire managers could be stereotyped as emissaries, writers, discussers, trouble shooters and committee men (Stewart, 1967). Indeed, the job types emerging from existing research are so vague that it would be relatively impossible not to categorize public sector managerial work under a specific job type, a process which sheds little light on the content and characteristics of managerial work.

6.2.3 Managers' perceptions versus researcher's observations

Only by comparing and contrasting managers' understanding of their job with actual observations, can conclusions begin to be drawn about the extent to which

generalisations can be made about public sector managerial work, irrespective of the angle from which managerial work is examined.

i. Weekly hours

What becomes immediately evident from a comparison of the observation and questionnaire research is the diversity in the hours worked. It would seem that questionnaire managers overestimate the time they spend working, both in respect of the number of weekly hours and the number of evenings worked. Perhaps, however, it is too short-sighted to assume that such diversity in hours is simply due to public managers being under considerable illusions about the number of hours they work. For example, one of the observation managers was observed for four days whilst another was observed for four and one-half days, their working week obviously shorter than colleagues who worked a full five days. However, it still seems that even had these managers worked five days, their working week would still have been well below the fifty to fifty-nine hours questionnaire managers estimated working.

More noticeable is the finding that 13.7 percent and 5.6 percent of questionnaire respondents respectively, claim to work between sixty and sixty-nine hours and over seventy hours a week. This is in sharp contrast to the observation managers, only one of whom worked more than fifty hours. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that public managers think they work more hours than what they actually do.

Nevertheless, this evidence is not necessarily conclusive that public managers are under illusions as to the number of hours they work. Perhaps the questionnaire respondents had a particularly busy week when they completed the questionnaire, clouding their estimations. The questionnaires were, after all, issued in January when public managers were becoming embroiled in budgetary issues. Furthermore, one of the inherent weaknesses with questionnaires is restricted reporting and constrained recall(McCall et al, 1978). There is, therefore, a realistic possibility that the questionnaire managers distorted the number of hours they worked in order to place themselves in the most favourable light. Maybe, however, the observation managers worked less hours than usual because they wanted to appear efficient and in control of their work.

Furthermore, differences in weekly working hours may simply be the consequence of inconsistencies in managers' interpretations of the term 'work'. It is unclear whether the questionnaire respondents' weekly working hours included any work completed at home and any time spent thinking about work related issues. It is equally unclear just what work the observed managers completed at home, the observer's insight drawing to a close when the manager left the office each night, reliance therefore placed on personal accounts of work completed at home.

ii. Level of control over the design of the working day

The majority of questionnaire managers contend that they exercise a lot of control over the design of their working day. Arguably, the majority of observed managers exercised some control over their working day, initiating 57.4 percent of their contacts. However, like the questionnaire respondents, the observed public managers were frequently interrupted throughout the working day. The average duration of a desk work session for the observed managers was thirteen minutes. Thus, even when these public managers did work alone they were frequently interrupted by telephone calls and subordinates, no doubt the consequence of each of these public managers operating open door policies.

Subsequently, 16.3 percent of the observed managers' activities were brief, face-to-face contacts lasting five minutes or less. Furthermore, 21.2 percent of the managers' activities were telephone calls, 37 percent of which were received by the managers. In addition, 65 percent of the observed managers' overall contacts lasted nine minutes or less whilst only 6.9 percent lasted for an hour or more, differing radically from the questionnaire managers, 41 percent of whom felt that their job frequently directed attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time.

Consequently, the integrity of the questionnaire managers' responses is somewhat questionable. This integrity is questioned further, these managers claiming to have a lot of control over the design of their working day and frequently directing attention

on one issue for an hour or more, yet later admitting to experiencing a constant flow of interruption throughout the working day, a contradiction in itself.

Furthermore, the patterns of work emerging from the observation research question the level of control managers have over their working day. Observation demonstrated that one relatively brief interruption could change the manager's intentions for the remainder of the day. For example, the social work director re-arranged their day when they were sent a memorandum about proposed redundancies, this director holding emergency meetings with their social work teams to explain the situation. Thus, whilst public managers may think they have a fair degree of control over the design of their working day, observation suggests that the needs of others shape the managerial day.

iii. The extent to which managers determine the duration of their activities

Whilst the majority of questionnaire managers contend that they frequently determine the duration of their activities, the picture was less clear when managers were observed. The observed managers determined the duration of their activities in so far as they drew meetings they had scheduled to a close and very often brought telephone conversations to an end. Furthermore, several managers left meetings before they had finished. Finally, the quango manager frequently attempted to tie up meetings initiated by the other party, *"otherwise we would be here forever, going round and round in circles"*.

However, management decisions to close meetings, leave meetings and end telephone calls were not necessarily the consequence of managers determining the duration of their activities. Instead, managers' diaries determined how long they spent in meetings and on the telephone. For example, the director of social work and the local authority chief executive left meetings early simply because they had another appointment.

That said, these managers occasionally let a meeting overrun its allotted time when important issues were being discussed. For example, the hospital trust contract director allowed an important meeting with a consultant to overrun, the subsequent meeting beginning later than scheduled.

On the whole, it would seem that unlike the questionnaire responses, the observed public managers rarely determined the duration of their activities. Instead, the managers' diary conditioned the time they spent on any single activity. Given that managers are ultimately responsible for organising their diaries, however, they are in a position to exert some control over the duration of their appointments, except when the duration is imposed. Nevertheless, managers' control over the duration of their activities ultimately depends on whether managers are driving their diaries or whether managers are being driven by their diaries.

iv. Time spent alone and with others

The questionnaire managers claim to spend more time working alone than what was actually observed. Of the time spent with others, the observed and questionnaire managers spend highly comparable proportions of time with people internal and external to the organisation.

However, the reliability of the questionnaire managers' responses begin to falter when contact patterns are examined. Although the questionnaire and observed public managers spend relatively similar proportions of time with management subordinates, the former claim to spend four times as much time with non-management subordinates than was spent by the latter. Furthermore, the questionnaire managers claim to spend two-thirds more time with peers than was actually observed. Moreover, the questionnaire managers overestimate the time spent with personal assistants, superiors and councillors. Finally, whilst the questionnaire managers claim to spend 6.3 percent of contact time with customers and 1.4 percent with suppliers, observation showed that managers spent only 1 percent of their contact time with contractors, clients and suppliers.

However, it became apparent from the observation that many of the public managers' contacts were with a group of people of mixed status. For example, the hospital contract director attended a meeting with a fellow director(peer) and the organisation's chief executive(superior). Thus, the fact that the category of 'mixed

status' was excluded from the questionnaire may account for some of the differences between the questionnaire and observation results.

v. Communication methods

From an analysis of the observation and questionnaire results, it becomes immediately apparent that the questionnaire managers claim to spend more time on desk work than what was actually observed. Consequently, the questionnaire managers claim to spend three-fifths and two-thirds of the time spent by the observed managers in scheduled meetings and informal face-to-face discussion respectively.

Furthermore, the observed managers were less likely to use the telephone as a communication tool than the questionnaire managers, no observed manager making more than six calls and receiving more than four calls during the working day. Contrary to the findings of the questionnaire, the observed managers made more calls than they received.

Finally, the questionnaire managers claim to spend significantly more time utilising secondary methods of communication, for example, business lunches and combining business with social activities.

vi. Planning and reacting to work

The majority of questionnaire managers contend that they generally react to issues rather than systematically plan their work. Observation demonstrated that managers tended to plan their work to the extent that they kept a diary and organised their working day around the appointments scheduled in their diary. Even then, however, engagements were broken if something more important needed attention. For example, the social work director cancelled a meeting on hearing of the council's proposed redundancies, his immediate concern being to visit his social work teams and inform them of what was happening. Likewise, the hospital contract director had to rearrange his working week when he was delegated a project previously undertaken by an absent colleague.

It would therefore seem that public managers are fully aware of the need to react to issues as they arise rather than systematically plan their work.

vii. Differences between managers' perceptions and the observation findings: an explanation

> *"Rank ordering tasks and questionnaires solicit worked responses at a greater and more useful level of quantification, but our results suggest that the accuracy of such subjective estimates may be so low as to make them only suggestive at best. When it is critical to have precise information about the worker's job and the time he spends doing various tasks, an objective observational approach may be more appropriate"* (Hartley et al, 1977 : 35).

The most obvious reason for the disparity between what managers think they do and what they actually do, is that managers are poor estimators of how they spend their time. For example, whilst several managers in Carlson's(1951) study claimed to tour the plant every two to three weeks, in reality these managers had not inspected their plants for several months. Furthermore, the managers in Burns'(1954) and Horne and Lupton's(1965) studies were asked to estimate the proportion of time spent on certain activities, the estimates differing from what was recorded. However, it is rather short-sighted to assume that the different results are solely attributable to the questionnaire respondents' poor estimations.

Firstly, the observer may simply have interpreted some of the managers' activities differently from the managers themselves. For example, managers may categorise colleagues in other organisations as peers, whereas the researcher categorised such people as external to the organisation. Likewise, although the researcher did not include evening and weekend work in the total weekly hours worked by managers, the questionnaire managers may have included such work in their overall hours.

Secondly, it should be borne in mind that different categories emerged from the observation research which were overlooked in the questionnaire. For example, the observation research clearly showed that the public managers came into frequent contact with groups of people of mixed status, an option not available to questionnaire managers when they were asked to estimate the percentage of time they

spent with named contacts. Consequently, the data being compared is not necessarily analogous.

Thirdly, it soon became apparent from the observation of seven managers that no one managerial week is typical. For example, during the week of observation, local authority managers and the hospital contract director attended cyclical meetings. In addition, the quango manager's organisation had just been awarded a substantial sum of money from the Secretary of State for Scotland, which affected the content of the remainder of the week. Furthermore, the hospital contract director was observed when he was negotiating contracts. Had he been observed six months later, his work would have consisted of monitoring. Is it therefore realistic to expect the questionnaire responses to correspond with the observational research, when the nature and pattern of work undertaken by the observed managers covers a spectrum of diverse work characteristics?

Fourthly, why must it be assumed that it is the questionnaire managers who are poor estimators of their time. Perhaps the observation managers acted differently during the week they were observed.

Thus, one of the major implications emerging from this research is that public managers' perceptions of the patterns and characteristics of their work differ radically from what was actually observed. Whether this is the consequence of poor

estimations on the managers' behalf remains inconclusive. Indeed, it would not be judicious to conclude that those managers who responded to the questionnaire gave a 'tidied up' version of their working week. As chapter five has already established, the managers' surrounding working contexts determines, or at least influences, their work patterns and characteristics. The difference between the questionnaire and observation findings may simply reflect the disparate jobs managers in the public sector undertake.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the observation and questionnaire research implicitly suggests that different research methods produce different outcomes, the picture of public sector managerial work painted being highly dependent on the research methods employed.

That said, consistencies do appear between the observation and questionnaire managers' responses when compared to the existing managerial work research, suggesting that public sector managerial work does indeed differ from that found in the private sector. For example, although the questionnaire managers claim to spend more time alone than what was actually observed, both types of managers spend more time alone that managers in existing studies. Likewise, the questionnaire managers may spend two-thirds more time with peers than the observation managers, yet both kinds of managers spend significantly less time with peers than private sector colleagues. Furthermore, although observation managers spent more time in

scheduled meetings than the questionnaire managers estimated, both types of managers generally spent more time in such meetings than private sector colleagues. Finally, although the questionnaire managers estimated spending more time conducting tours than what was actually observed, both managers spent substantially less time undertaking observational tours than managers in existing studies.

Thus, although differences may exist between the questionnaire and observation research in relation to the time managers spent with peers, the time spent alone, the time spent undertaking tours and so forth, these differences pale into insignificance when the questionnaire and observation research are compared with existing managerial work studies. Then, the important differences emerge between the research on public sector managerial work and that already undertaken on private managers. Perhaps the underlying reason why generalisations could not be adequately made from the existing managerial work literature is simply that the public and private sectors have distinct patterns and characteristics of managerial work.

6.2.4 The impact of the managers' context on their work

Given the criticism already levelled at the existing managerial work literature, it would be an utter absurdity to discuss public sector managerial work irrespective of the context in which public managers work. As chapter five explained, although observational research is adept at demonstrating how individual managers' activities

relate to the particular context and circumstances in which they work at the time of observation, very little insight is gained into the broader variances connected to the public sector environment. Issuing questionnaires to a larger sample of public managers alleviates this problem, allowing managers in jobs at different levels in the management hierarchy, in different types of public organisations and in different geographical locations, to be examined in relation to their work patterns and characteristics. Furthermore, the researcher's experiences of observation allowed questions to be drawn up, asking managers to comment on the effects of wider environmental influences on their job, for example, technological and demographic change. Finally, the observation research identified a number of periodic work cycles which managers were expected to organise their diaries around. Consequently, questionnaire managers were asked to comment on the extent to which their work could be defined as periodic, an attempt made to identify specific kinds of work undertaken by public managers at defined periods in the year.

By comparing and contrasting the responses of different questionnaire managers, an insight will be gained into whether:

1. different public management jobs are so unique that it is impossible to generalise about THE public sector managerial job

or

2. Although differences are prevalent between different types of public sector managerial jobs, there are nevertheless continuous elements which suggest public sector managerial work can be discussed as an entity.

i. Level of job in the management hierarchy

From the outset, it is apparent that the number of hours worked increases with the manager's job level.[xx] However, directors are significantly more likely to argue that even when they are not working their mind is on the job.[xxi] Perhaps when chief executives do eventually go home, they take a complete break from their work.

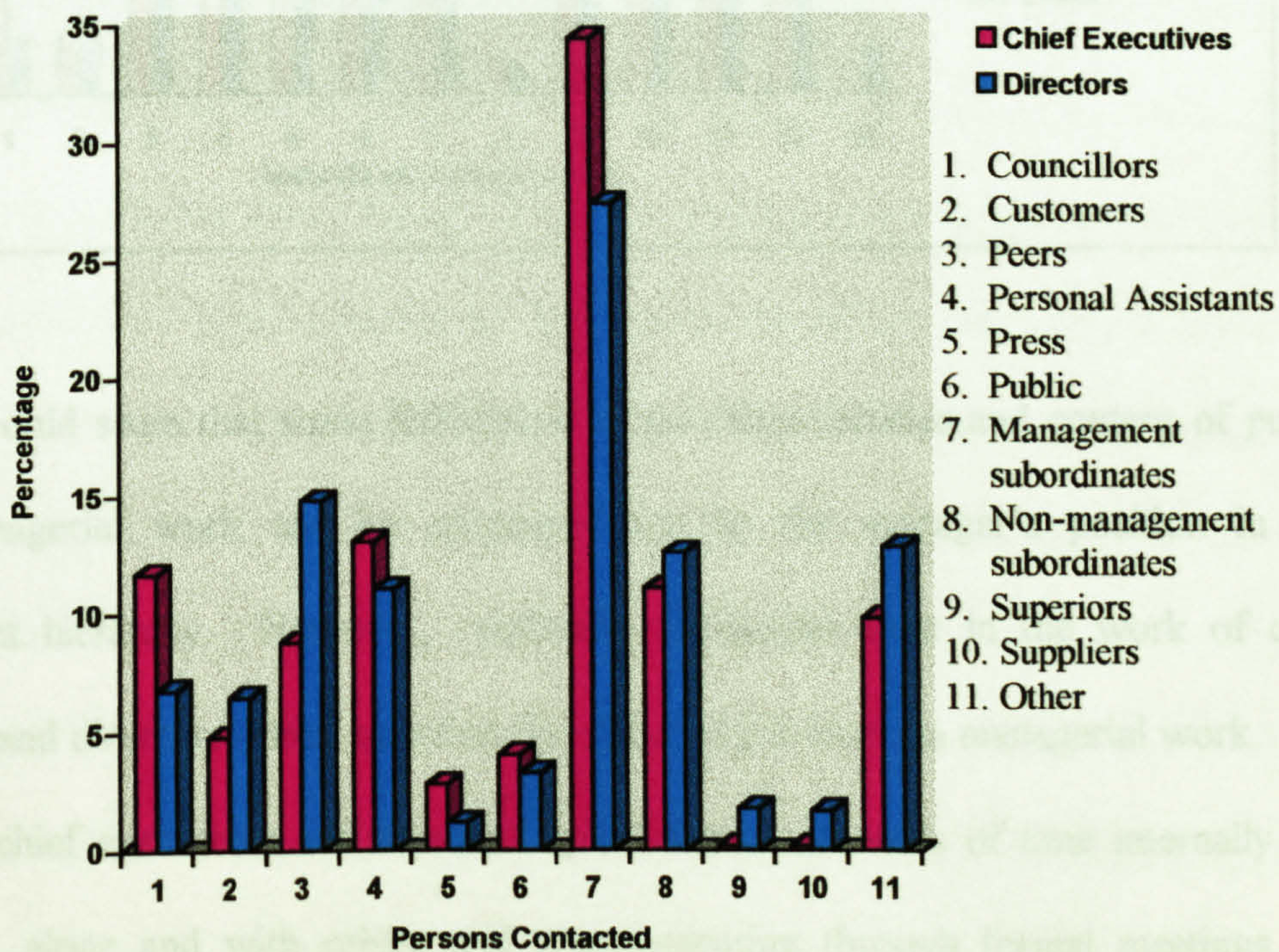
Whilst relatively similar proportions of chief executives and directors contend that they have a lot of control over their work,[xxii] the former are more likely to determine the duration of their activities than the latter.[xxiii] Directors are also more susceptible to interruptions than chief executives,[xxiv] this difference probably attributable to the very real possibility that people will approach directors before they will approach the manager at the top of the *"ivory tower"*. As one chief executive explains, *"I allow interruptions to happen on the basis that those interrupting should know better than to waste my time"*. It is therefore of no surprise that directors are more likely than chief executives to receive over twenty-five telephone calls.[xxv]

Whilst directors experience more interruptions than chief executives, nearly four times as many chief executives as directors feel that they can never focus on a single

issue for more than one hour.[xxvi] Furthermore, approximately one-third more directors than chief executives contend they can frequently focus their attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time.

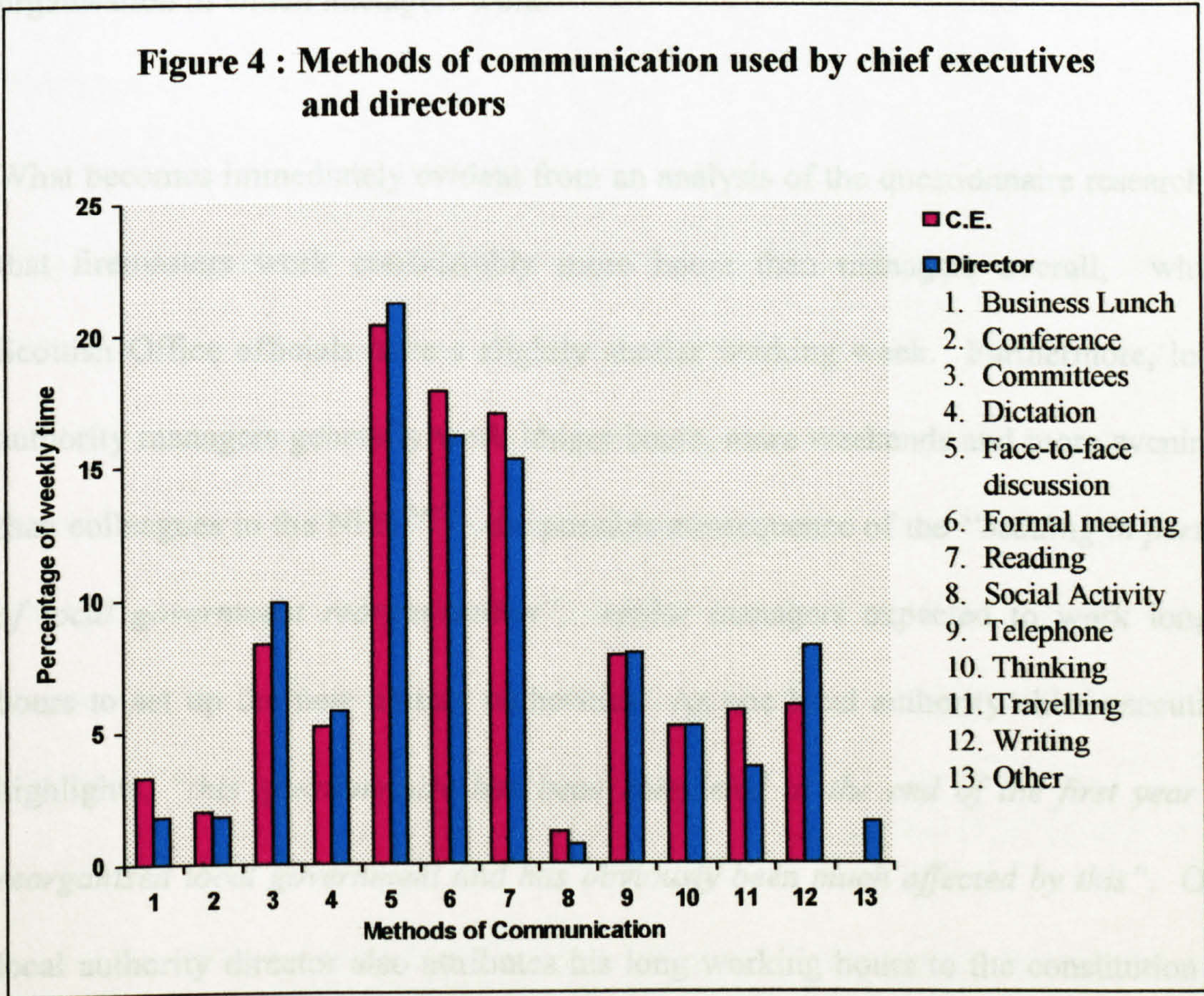
Although chief executives and directors spend relatively similar proportions of time alone,[xxvii] **figure 3** demonstrates that they differ in respect of their contact patterns. Interestingly, directors spend considerably more time than chief executives with customers and suppliers, perhaps an indication of the influence of CCT.

Figure 3: Persons whom chief executives and directors come into contact with



Finally, it is clear from **figure 4** that chief executives are more likely to adopt secondary methods of communication than directors, spending more time in business lunches and combining business with a social activity.

Figure 4 : Methods of communication used by chief executives and directors



Thus, it would seem that some differences in the characteristics and content of public sector managerial work can be accounted for by the manager's position in the management hierarchy. However, sufficient similarities exist in the work of chief executives and directors which question the effect of job level on managerial work. For example, chief executives and directors spend similar amounts of time internally and externally, alone and with others and communicating through formal meetings and informal discussion.

ii. The organisation in which the manager works

An examination of questionnaire responses by organisation soon begins to demonstrate that the management job is influenced and shaped by the type of organisation in which managers work.

What becomes immediately evident from an analysis of the questionnaire research is that firemasters work considerably more hours than managers overall, whilst Scottish Office officials have a slightly shorter working week. Furthermore, local authority managers generally work longer hours, more weekends and more evenings than colleagues in the NHS,[xxviii] the possible consequence of the *"bedding in period of local government reorganisation"*, senior managers expected to work longer hours to set up the new unitary authorities. As one local authority chief executive highlights, *"this questionnaire has been completed at the end of the first year of reorganised local government and has obviously been much affected by this"*. One local authority director also attributes his long working hours to the constitution of local government. *"....as I report to 26 elected councillors they are particularly prone to telephone at any time of day or night for advice or expressing concerns related to service. This is not necessarily encountered to the same extent in the private sector"*.

Firemasters appear to have the most control over their working environment, all firemasters contending that they exert a lot of control over the design of their

working day,[xxix] frequently determine the duration of their activities[xxx] and have time to reflect on what is happening.[xxxi] Consequently, it is surprising that 50 percent of firemasters face constant interruption,[xxxii] although perhaps they may still exercise a lot of control over their work by determining the duration of these interruptions.

Although hospital trust managers are significantly more likely than local authority colleagues to contend that they have a lot of control over their work and that they frequently determine the duration of their activities, relatively similar percentages of these managers contend that they face constant interruption. Whilst hospital trust managers are twice as likely to come into contact with thirty or more people during the working day,[xxxiii] local authority managers spend more time communicating by telephone.[xxxiv]

In addition, 50 percent of Scottish Office officers and firemasters contend that they frequently focus attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time. Slightly more local authority as hospital trust managers share this opinion.[xxxv]

As **figure 5(a)** demonstrates, firemasters claim to spend significantly more time alone than managers overall. Furthermore, local authority managers spend nearly one-third more of their weekly working time alone than hospital trust colleagues **(figures 5 (b) and 5 (c))**.

Figure 5(a) Time spent alone and with others by firemasters

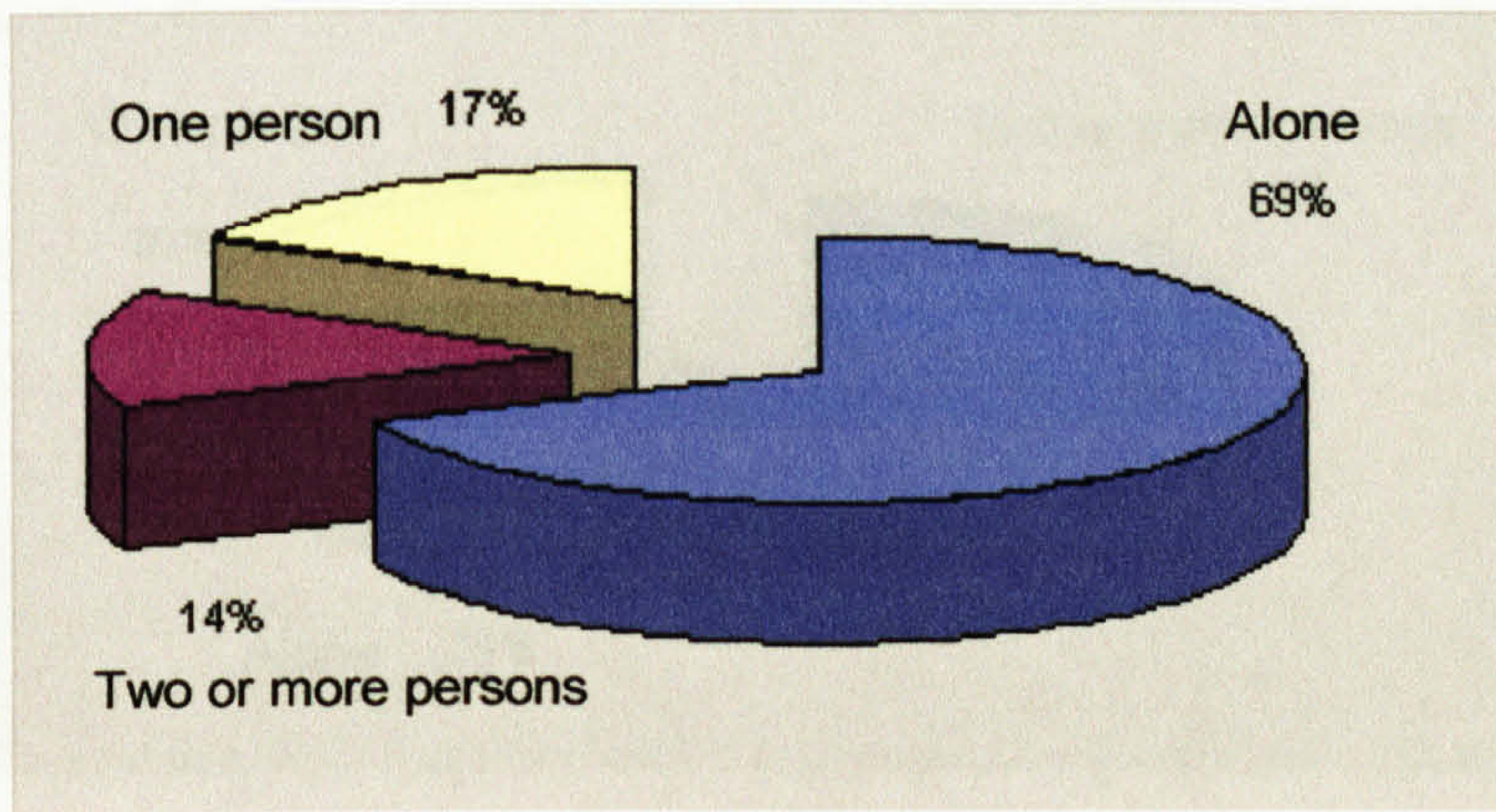


Figure 5(b) Time spent alone and with others by hospital trust managers

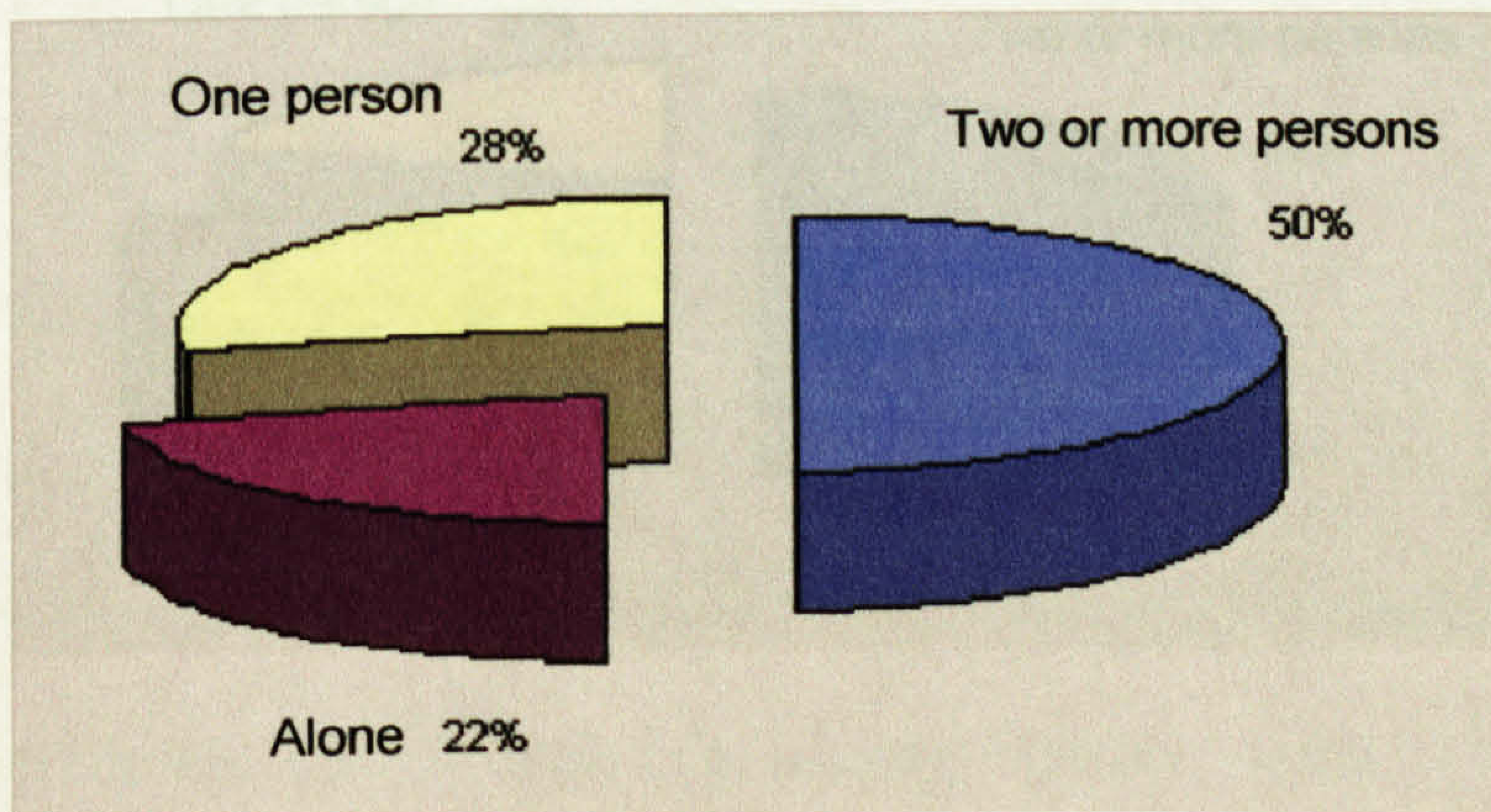


Figure 5(c) Time spent alone and with others by local authority managers

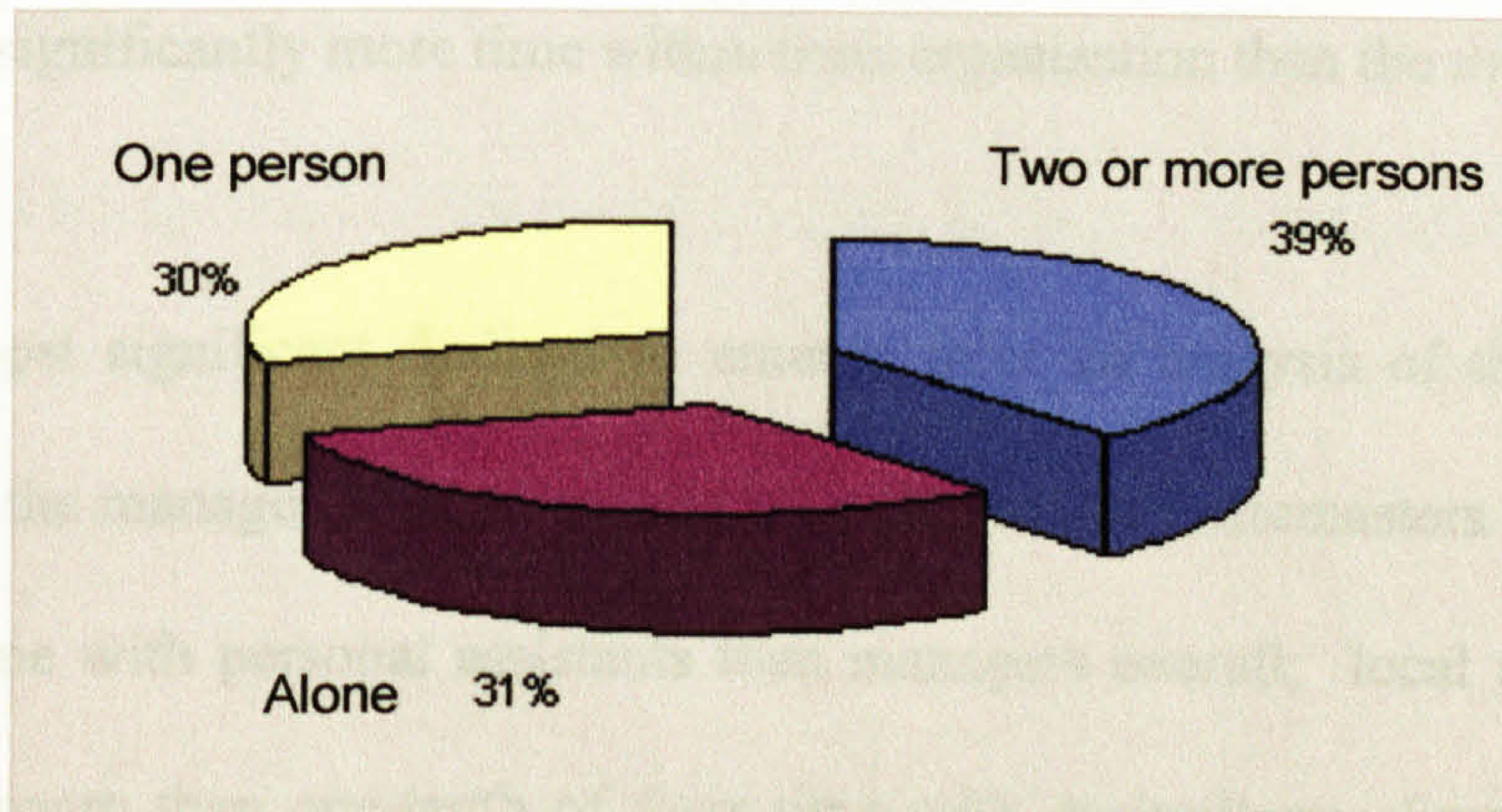
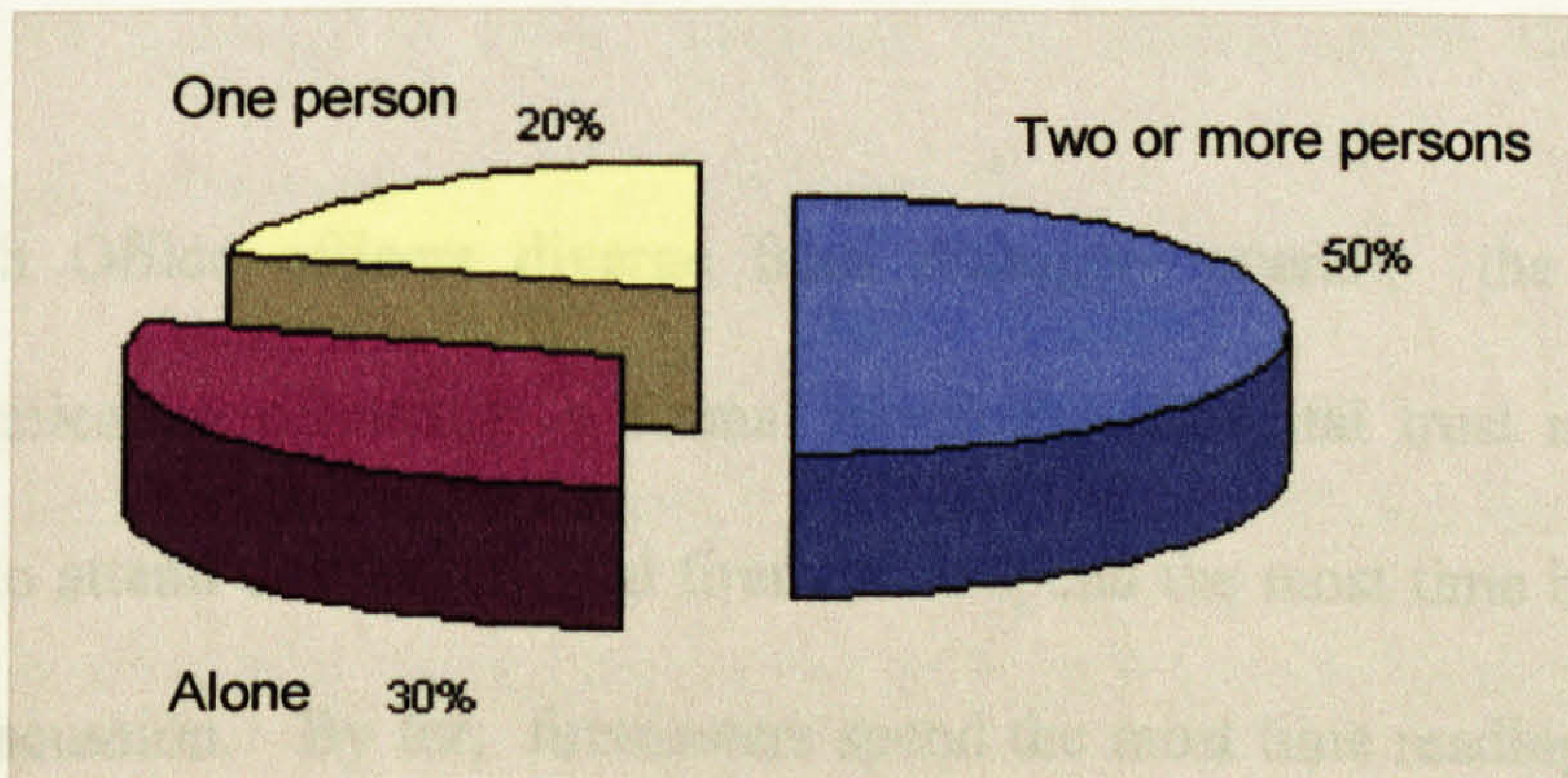


Figure 5(d) Time spent alone and with others by Scottish Office Officers



Whilst the time spent within the organisation by local authority and hospital trust managers represents the overall picture, firemasters and Scottish Office officers spend significantly more time within their organisation than the average respondent.

The most significant findings to emerge from an analysis of the range of people whom the manager comes into contact with are that: firemasters spend significantly less time with personal assistants than managers overall; local authority managers spend more than one-tenth of their time with councillors; firemasters spend very little time with peers; local authority managers are most likely to come into contact with the press and the public, perhaps the consequence of media and public interest in local government reorganisation; firemasters spend substantially more time than managers as a whole with management subordinates; Scottish Office officers spend almost twice as much time as managers overall with non-management subordinates; local authority and hospital trust managers spend the most time with customers. [xxxvi]

Scottish Office officers diverge from managers overall, the majority of their communication occurring in formal meetings. Hospital trust managers are most likely to attend committees and firemasters spend the most time in informal face-to-face discussion. By far, firemasters spend the most time reading material received from within and outwith their organisation. Finally, none of the Scottish Office officers nor firemasters who responded spend any time travelling.[xxxvii]

Lastly, the hospital trust and local authority managers spend more than twice as much time planning their work as the firemasters and Scottish Office officers.[xxxviii]

Thus, a comparison of the various organisations in which the public managers work appears to support Dubin and Spray's(1964) finding that managerial work is largely determined by the nature of the industry in which managers work.

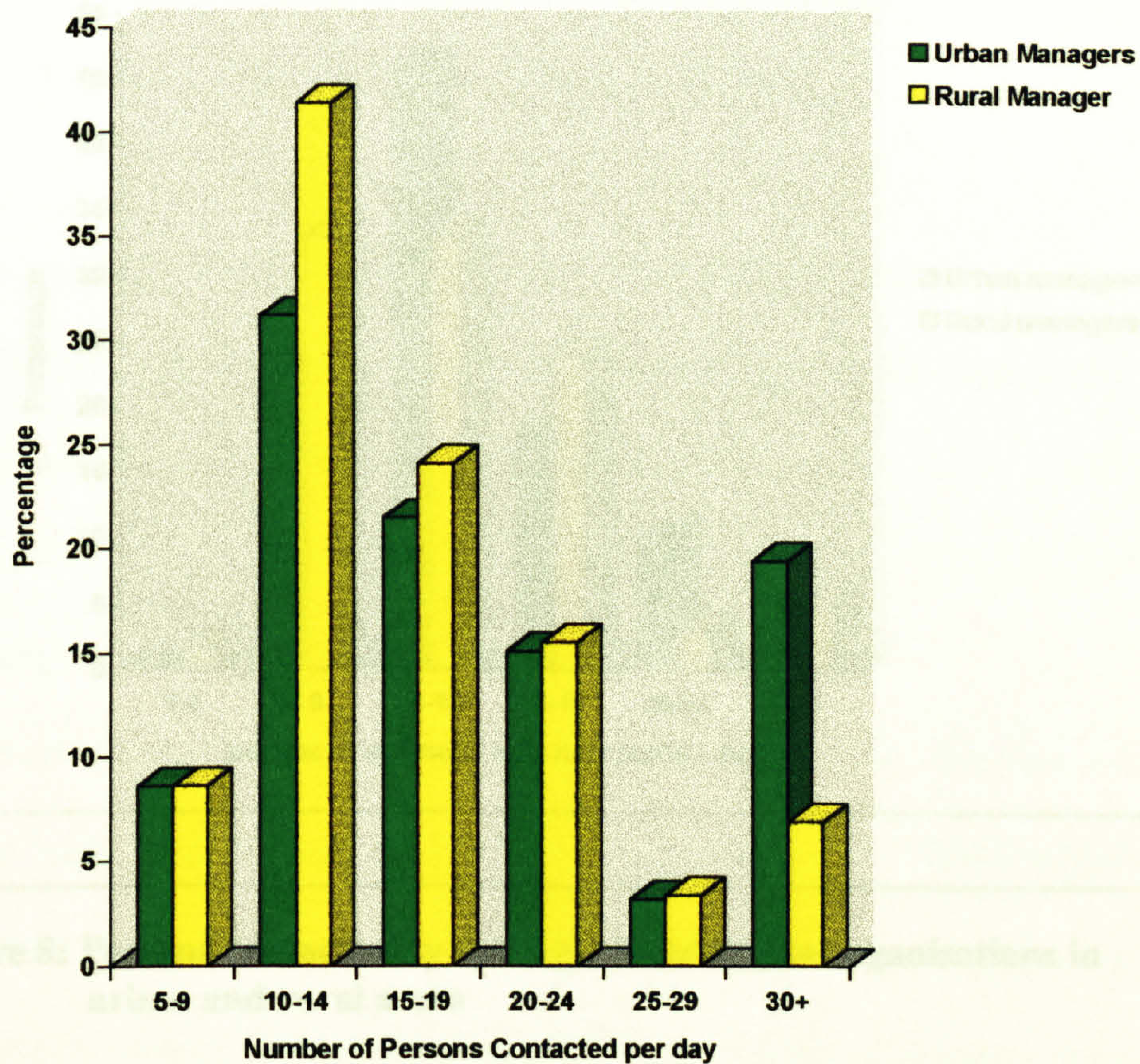
iii. The geographical location of the manager's organisation

> *".......the distinctive problems of rural areas, the pressures of growth in suburban areas and the inner city issue all represent socio-economic disparities of one kind or another. None is static and each will contribute to the particular configuration of issues facing (organisations)"* (LGTB, 1988:14).

Whilst managers working in organisations in urban and rural areas have similar weekly working hours,[xxxix] the former work more evenings and weekends.[xl] Managers working in urban areas are also slightly more likely to experience interruptions than colleagues in rural areas.[xli]

Whilst **figure 6** demonstrates that there is a greater likelihood that managers working in urban areas will come into contact with more people during the working day, **figure 7** shows that managers working in rural areas claim to receive a fraction more telephone calls. Perhaps this is simply due to the location of their organisation, it being easier and cheaper to use the telephone as a tool of communication, rather than rely on personal contact.

Figure 6: Number of persons contacted by managers working in organisations in urban and rural areas



Managers working in rural areas spend more time alone than colleagues based in urban areas.[xlii] Interestingly, managers working in organisations in rural areas only spend a fraction more time in external locations,[xliii] the likely consequence of the wider geographical areas generally covered by such organisations.

Figure 7: Number of telephone calls received by managers working in organisations in urban and rural areas

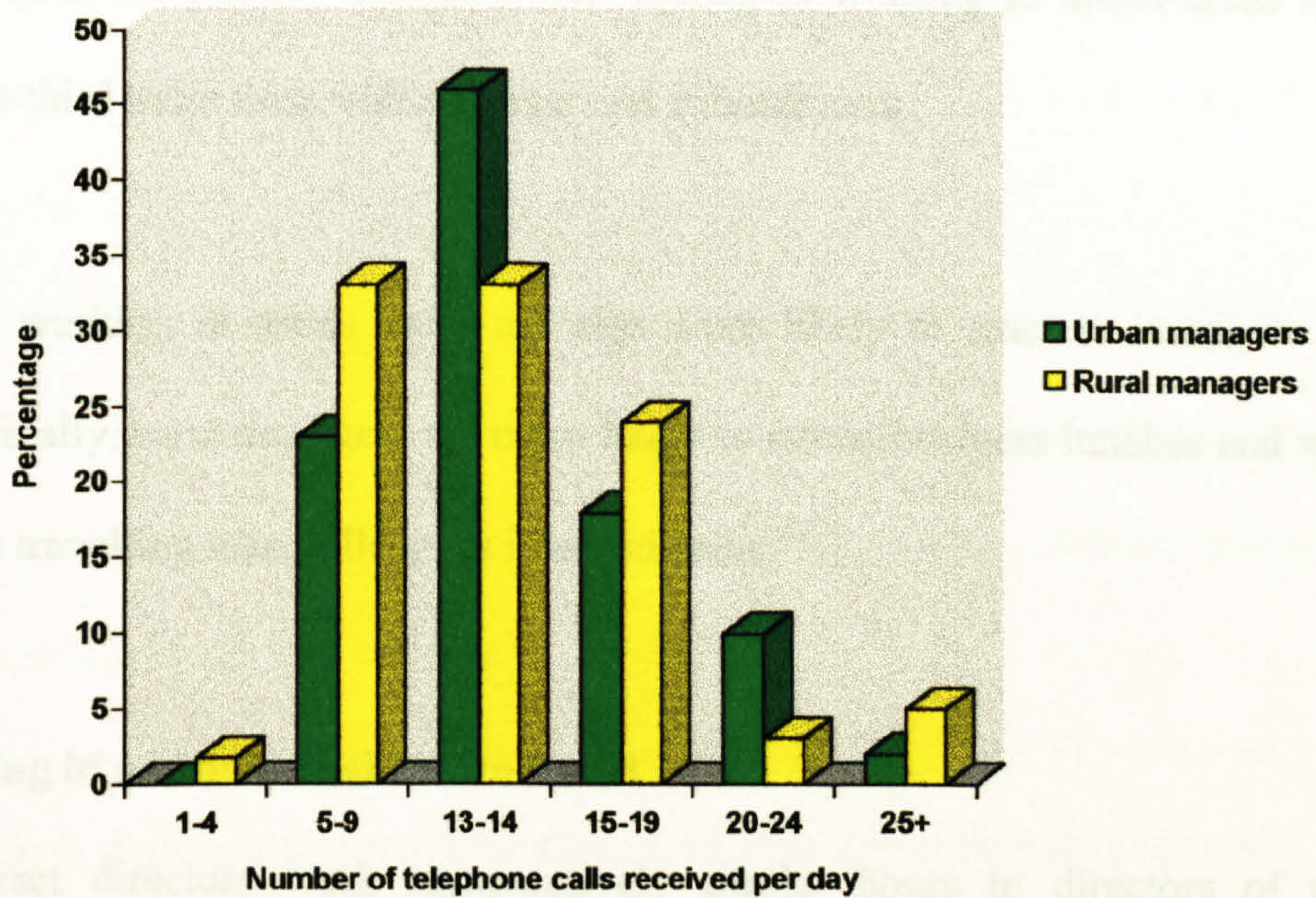
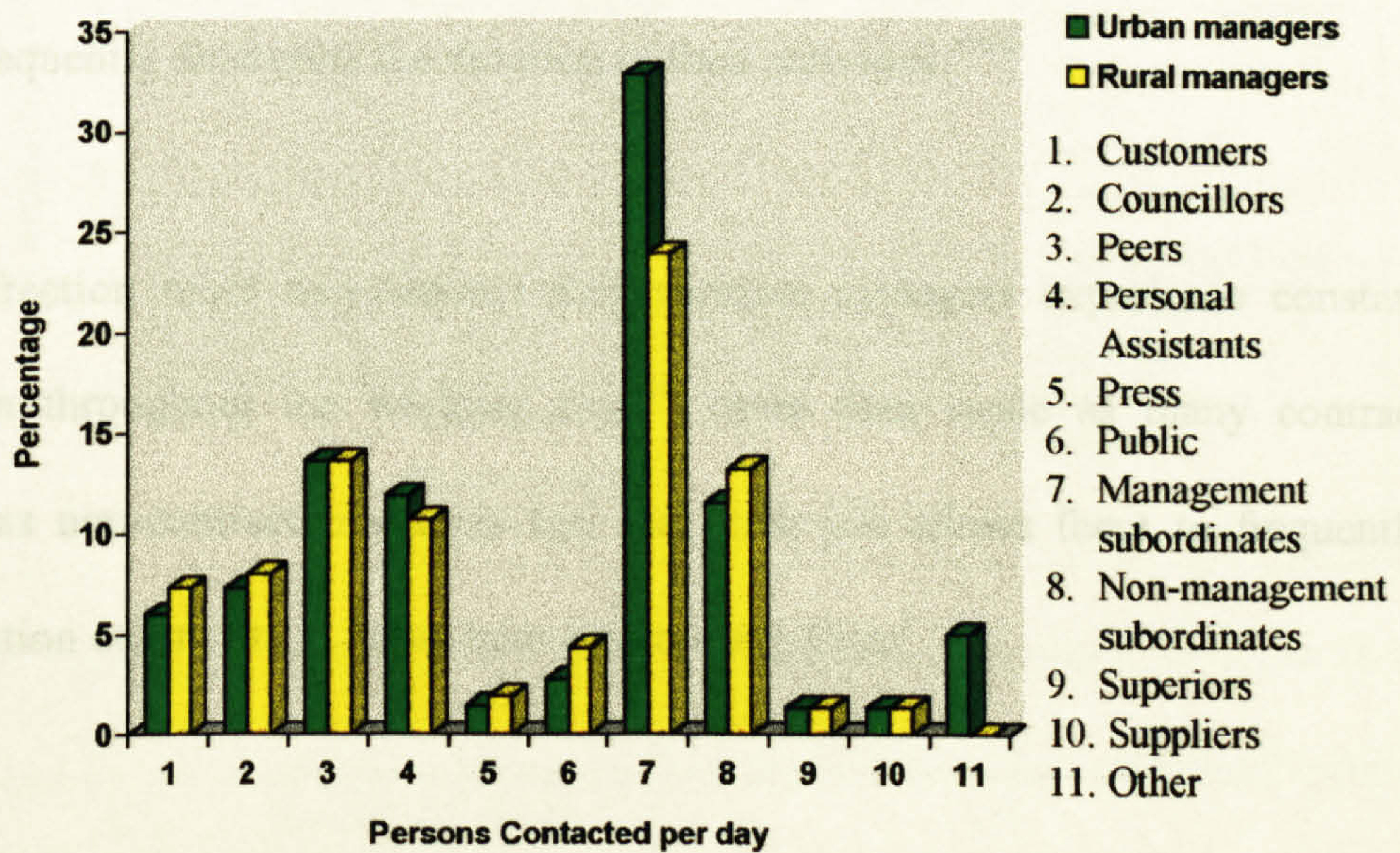


Figure 8: Persons contacted by managers working in organisations in urban and rural areas



Of the time spent with others, the most significant differences emerging from **figure 8** are that managers working in rural areas spend almost twice as much time as urban managers with the public. Furthermore, managers working in urban areas spend nearly one-third more time with management subordinates.

Managers working in urban areas are also more likely to react to issues as they arise.[xliv] Finally, rural managers are more likely to attend business lunches and spend more time travelling than colleagues in urban areas.[xlv]

iv. Working in a contractual environment

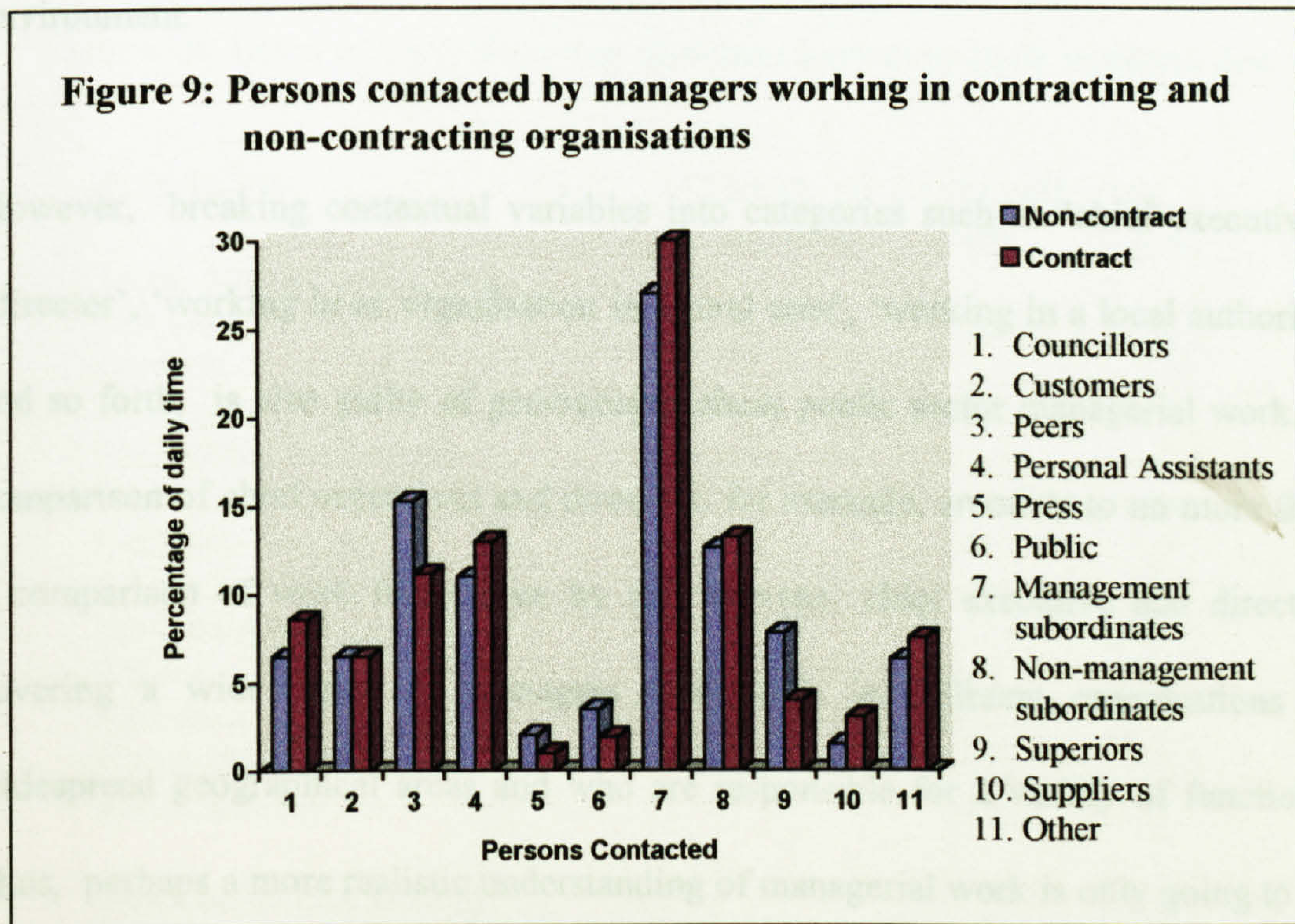
The contract directors work comparatively similar hours to directors of more traditional local authority and hospital trust departments.[xlvi] Whilst significantly more contract managers than non-contract managers believe that they have a lot of control over the design of their working day,[xlvii] both types of manager are equally likely to frequently determine the duration of their activities.[xlviii]

Whilst a fraction more non-contract than contract managers experience constant interruption throughout the working day,[xlix] more than twice as many contract managers as non-contract managers feel that their job allows them to frequently direct attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time.[l]

Perhaps surprisingly, directors of traditional local authority and hospital trust departments are only marginally more likely to work within their organisation than contract managers. [li] Furthermore, contract directors are slightly more likely to work alone.[lii]

As **figure 9** outlines, traditional directors spend slightly more time with peers and almost twice as much time with the public. Interestingly, whilst both types of managers claim to spend equal amounts of time with customers, contract managers spend twice as much time with suppliers.

Figure 9: Persons contacted by managers working in contracting and non-contracting organisations



Although an analysis of contemporary public management literature suggests that contract managers are working in diverse environments from more traditional public managers, a comparison of the characteristics and patterns of work undertaken by

contract and non-contract managers demonstrates that similarities are more evident than differences.

v. Narrowing the focus: specific job types

By looking at the effects of a range of different contextual variables on the public sector management job, the questionnaire research begins to demonstrate that the work patterns and characteristics of public managers differ, depending on the manager's job level, the organisation in which they work, the geographical location of their organisation and whether the manager is working in a contracting environment.

However, breaking contextual variables into categories such as 'chief executive', 'director', 'working in an organisation in a rural area', 'working in a local authority' and so forth, is also guilty of generalising about public sector managerial work. A comparison of chief executives and directors, for example, amounts to no more than a comparison of work undertaken by the 'average' chief executive and director, covering a wide range of managers who work in different organisations in widespread geographical areas and who are responsible for a variety of functions. Thus, perhaps a more realistic understanding of managerial work is only going to be gained if the work patterns and characteristics of managers in specific jobs are examined. Indeed, an analysis of the work undertaken by a diverse range of questionnaire service directors, reinforces the conclusions drawn from observation

that a comprehensive understanding of managerial work can only be gained if individual manager's work patterns are related to their immediate working environments and circumstances.

For example, whilst the majority of directors think that they have a lot of control over their working day, **figure 10** demonstrates that there are widespread differences in opinion between various types of directors.

Figure 10: Level of control service directors have over their working day

JOB TYPE	LEVEL OF CONTROL (%)		
	Very little	**Little**	**A lot**
Local Authority directors			
Contract	9.1	18.2	72.2
Property			100
Housing		66.7	16.7
Information Technology		33.3	66.7
Roads and Transport			100
Corporate Strategy	12.5	50	37.5
Leisure and Recreation			100
Law and Administration		33.3	66.7
Finance		62.5	37.5
Education		25	75
Human Resources		66.7	33.3
Social Services		14.3	85.7
Hospital Trust Directors			
Contract			100
Planning		50	50
Patient Services		100	
Finance	12.5	12.5	75
Operations		42.9	57.1
Nursing		14.3	85.7
Human Resources		33.3	66.7

On the one hand, local authority directors of property, roads and transport and leisure and recreation all contend that they have a lot of control over the design of their working day. On the other hand, the majority of local authority housing, finance and human resource directors believe that they have little control over the format of their working day. Moreover, it is evident that differences in opinion exist between finance directors working in local authorities and in hospital trusts.

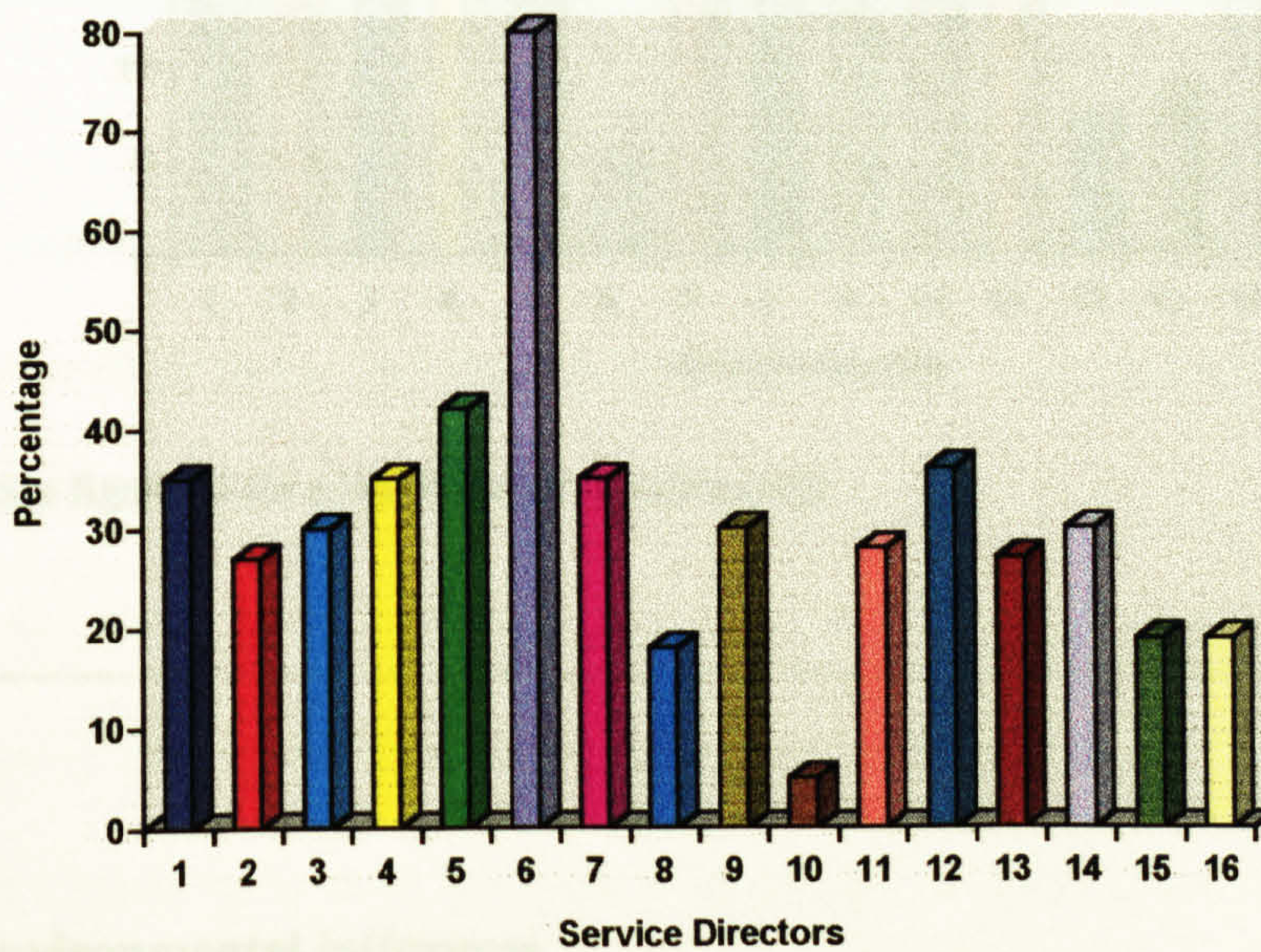
Furthermore, although 85 percent of directors claim to face constant interruptions, three-fifths of local authority social services directors and one-third of hospital trust contract directors claim to experience minimal interruption during their working day.[liii]

The finding that the 'typical' questionnaire director claims to spend 28.3 percent of their daily working time alone could not have been further from the truth for the roads and transport directors, who claim to spend 80 percent of their daily working time alone. As **figure 11** demonstrates, it would seem that directors of more people-oriented services such as patient services, education, nursing and leisure and recreation, spend the least time alone.

By selecting only a few questions relating to managerial work patterns and characteristics, and examining these in relation to the specific jobs undertaken by service directors in local authorities and in hospital trusts, it becomes immediately

apparent that diverse patterns of work can be identified for directors of specific services. Thus, by restricting their focus of managerial work patterns and characteristics to an examination of the 'typical' manager, existing managerial work studies have overlooked the diversity of the managerial job.

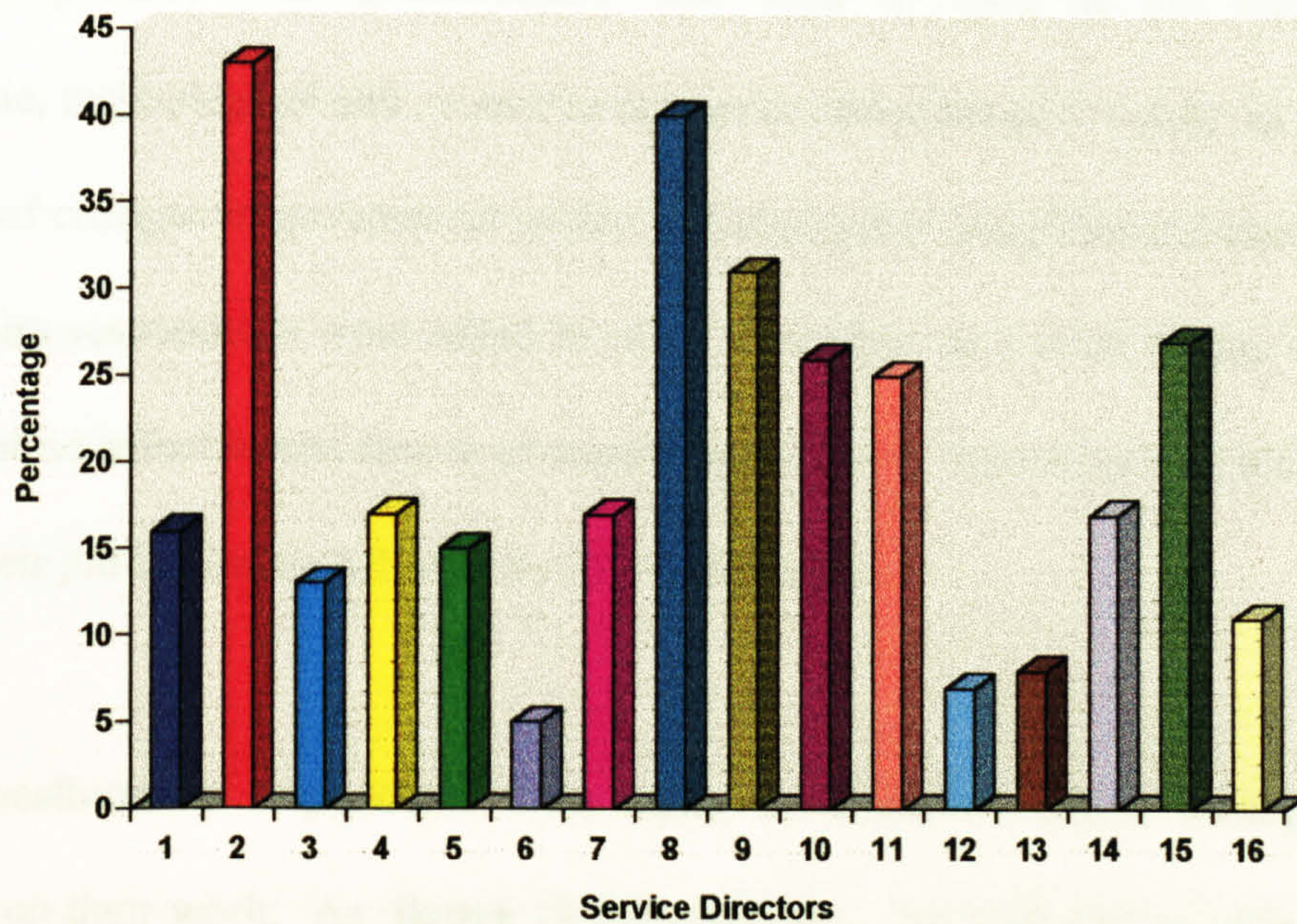
Figure 11: Time spent alone by service directors



Service Directors:

1. Contract
2. Development
3. Property
4. Housing
5. Information Technology
6. Roads and Transport
7. Corporate Strategy
8. Leisure and Recreation
9. Social Services
10. Patient Services
11. Education
12. Law and Administration
13. Finance
14. Operations
15. Nursing
16. Human Resources

Figure 12 : Time spent in external locations by service directors



(See figure 11 for a list of the service directors)

vi. Wider environmental influences

> *".....no organisation exists in a vacuum. Rather, organisations exist in a broad environment which makes demands upon those organisations"* (Lawton and Rose, 1994:152).

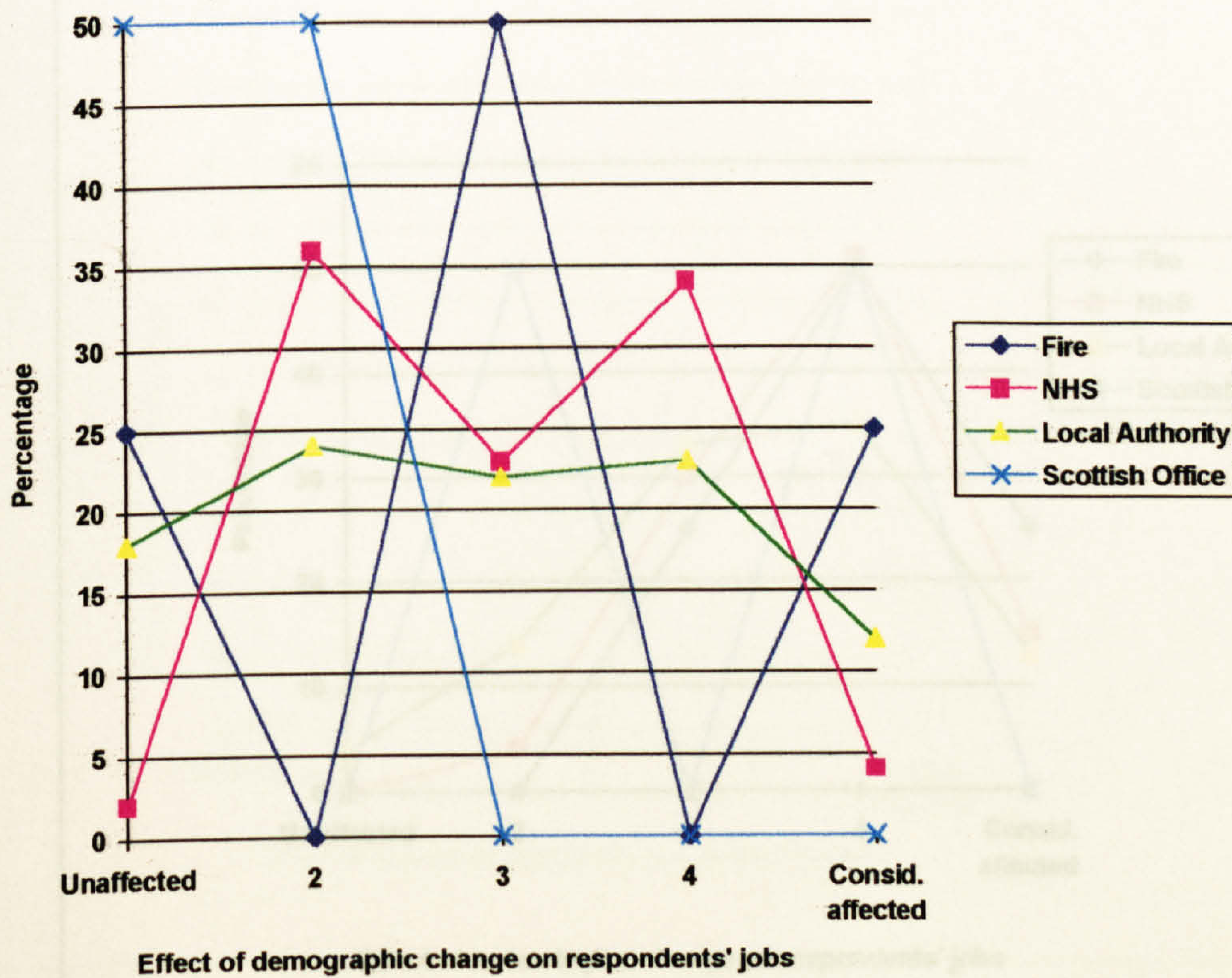
Although the observation research was effective in demonstrating that the picture of managerial work obtained during the observation week was directly related to the wider context and circumstances which prevailed at the time of observation, it was unable to shed much light on the broader environmental variances affecting the

public management job. *"External constituencies are important influences and any manager needs to take account of them in the management task"* (Hughes, 1994: 214). Consequently, the questionnaire was used to look at the effects of demographic, technological and economic change on the managers' work, as well as the effects of changes in government policy and changes in suppliers and customers. Questionnaire respondents were asked to circle a number on a scale of one to five, one being of no effect whilst five is of considerable effect, which reflects the extent to which their job is directly affected by each externality.

Firstly, questionnaire respondents were asked to define the effect demographic change has on their work. As **figure 13** demonstrates, Scottish Office officers are most likely to contend that demographic changes do not impinge on their work. Furthermore, nearly three times as many local authority as hospital trust managers contend that demographic changes considerably affect their work.[liv] *".....changing patterns of demography will have an impact on the content and shape of many services (e.g. the balance of the young and old, patterns of mobility)"* (LGTB, 1988(a):13).

In addition, more than twice as many directors as chief executives contend that demographic changes considerably affect their work. Interestingly, significantly more managers working in rural areas as opposed to urban areas share this viewpoint.[lv] Furthermore, directors of traditional local authority and hospital trusts

are considerably more likely to be affected by demographic change than contract directors.[lvi] Indeed, directors of social services, property, education and nursing, appear to be most likely to be affected by demographic change. This is undoubtedly the consequence of these directors providing services to clearly defined segments of the population, any growth or demise in these populations having knock-on effects on services. Consequently, it is of no surprise that directors of central local authority services such as information technology, human resources and law and administration, remain relatively unaffected by demographic change.[lvii]



"The impact of change in information and communication technology will offer opportunities for re-shaping service delivery and developing new patterns of organisation" (ibid: 13-14).

Managers are approximately five times more likely to contend that technological change considerably affects their work than has no affect.[lviii] As **figure 14** establishes, firemasters are most likely to be considerably affected by technological change.

Furthermore, it soon becomes evident from an analysis of service directors that those directors most likely to be considerably affected by technological change work in information technology, roads and transport and patient services departments.[lix]

Figure 14: Effect of technological change on the management job

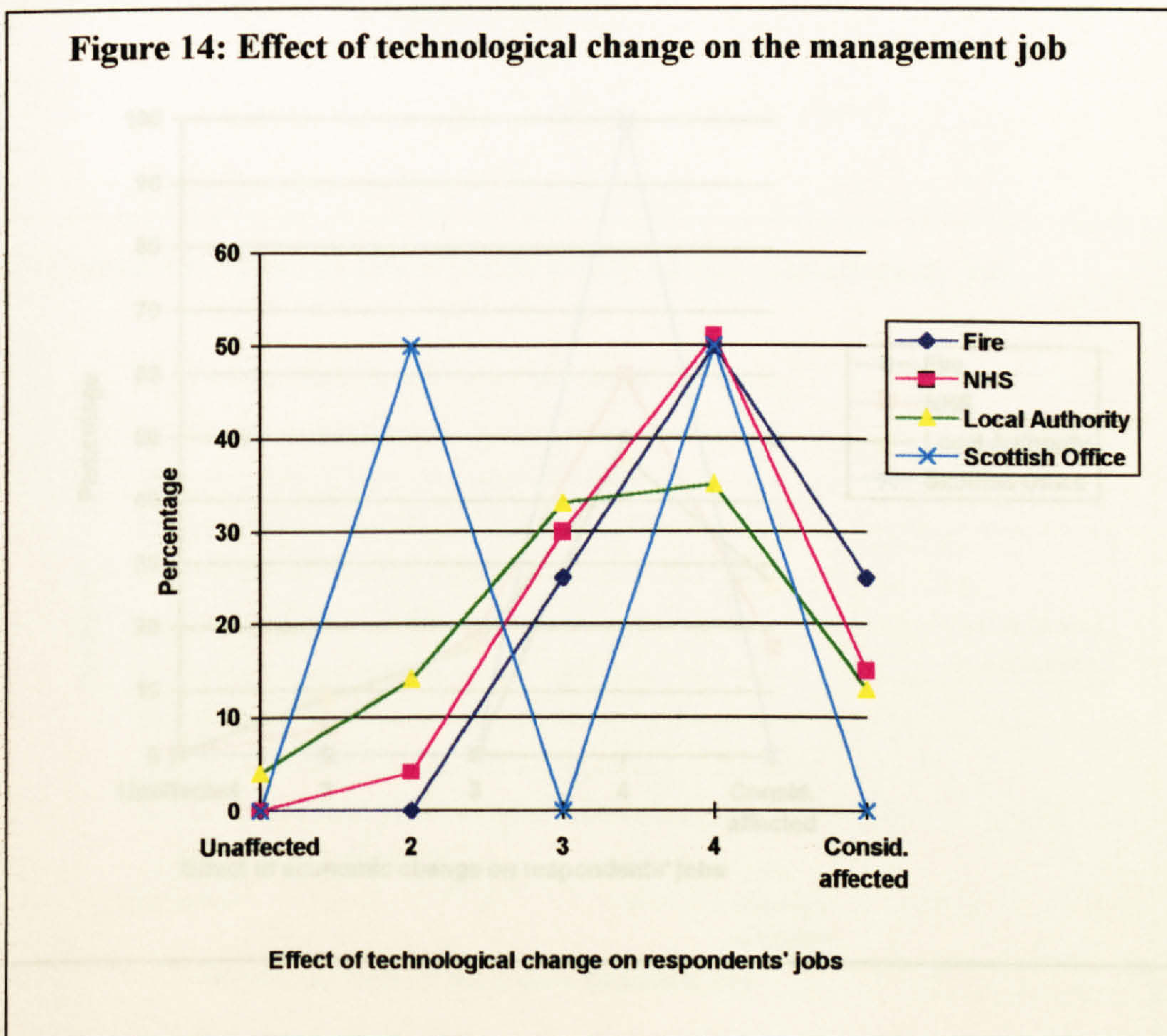
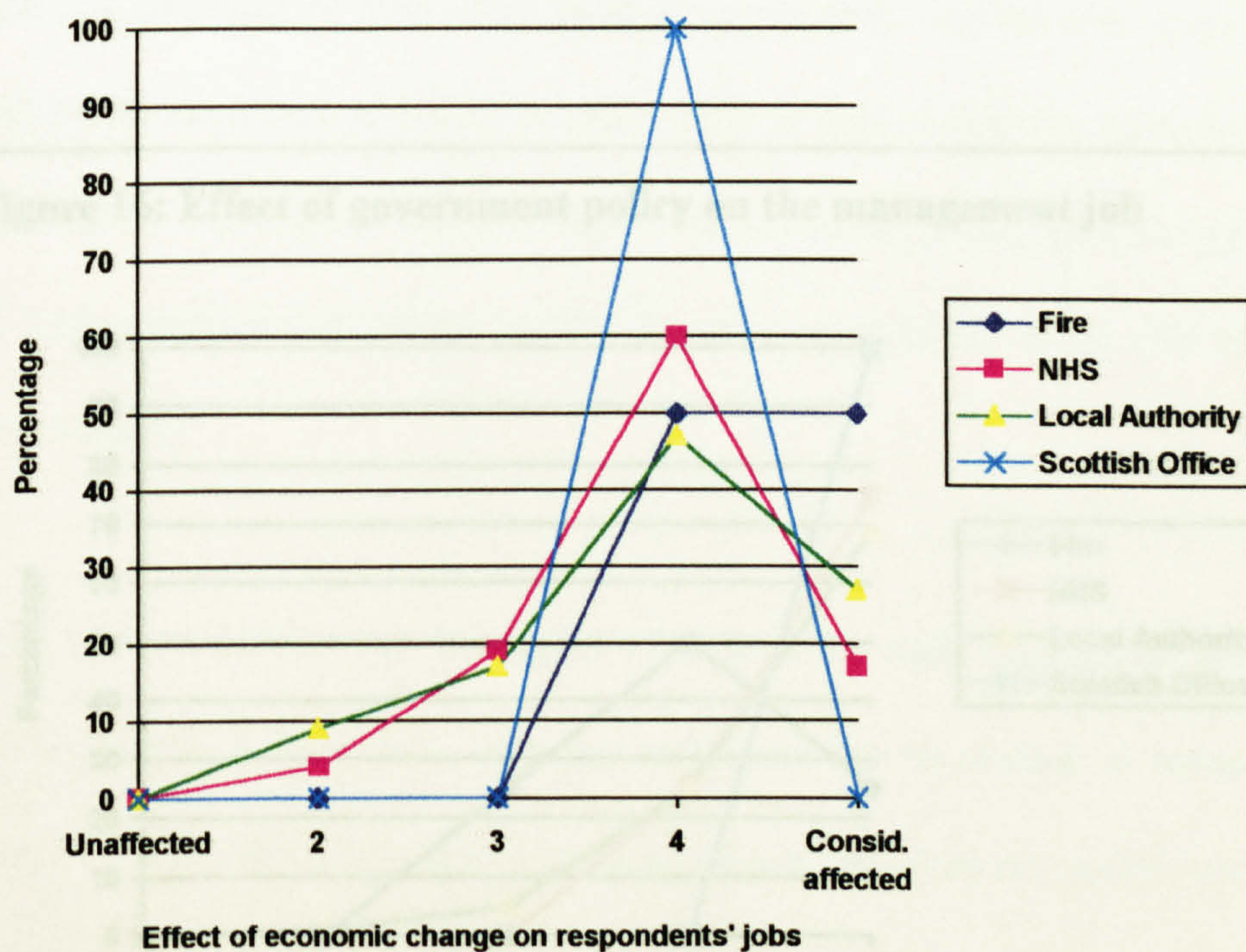


Figure 15 demonstrates that Scottish Office officers are most likely to contend that economic change affects their work than maintain it has no effect. Furthermore, it would seem that more local authority than hospital trust managers believe that they are considerably affected by economic change. *"Structural change in the economy, levels of unemployment, distribution of wealth, changing patterns of work, disparities of geography and the impact of the economy will all offer a range of problems and opportunities to local authorities"* (ibid: 13).

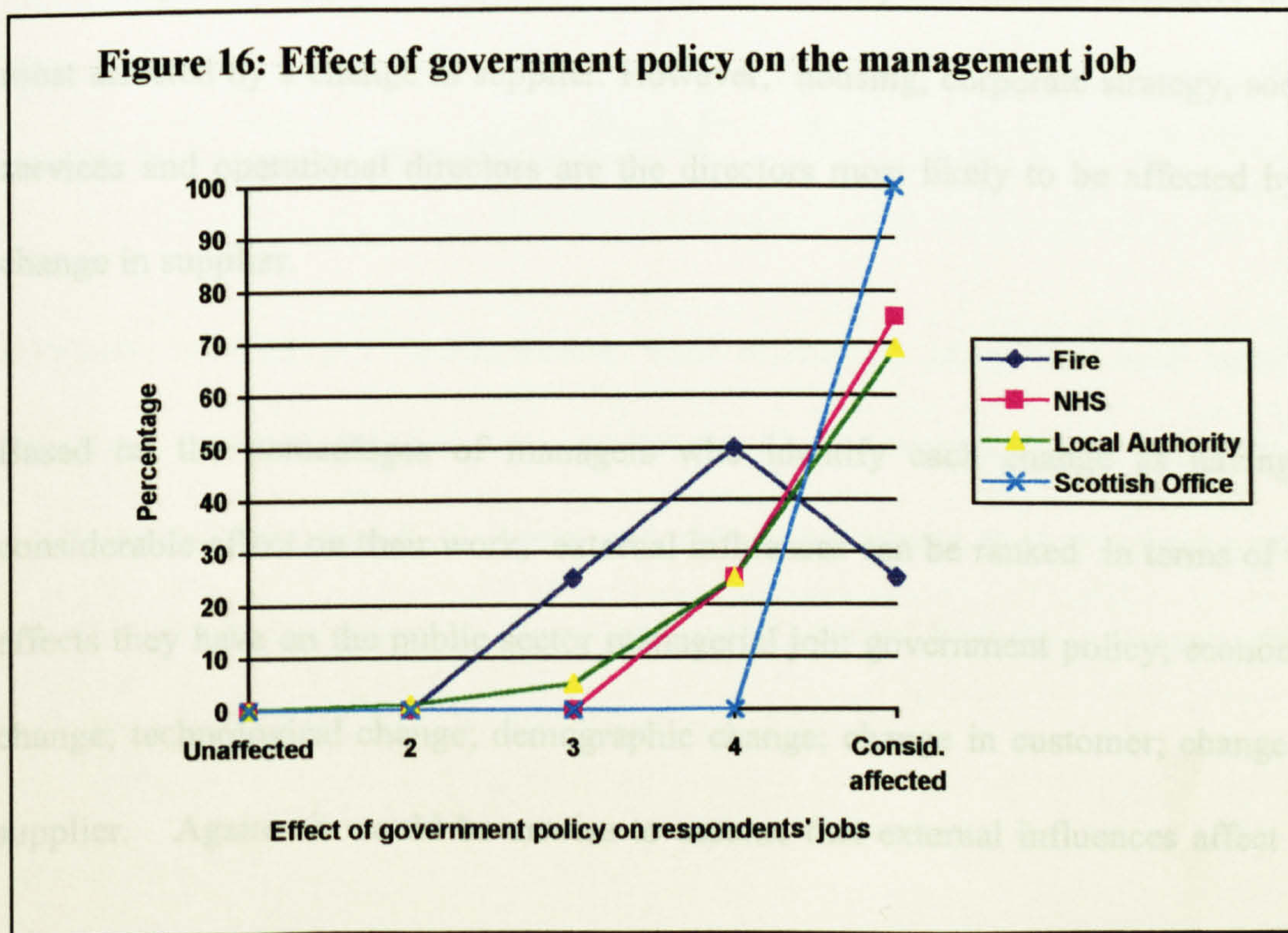
Figure 15: Effect of economic change on the management job



Although the majority of respondents feel that government policy considerably affects their work,[lx] **figure 16** demonstrates that only one-quarter of firemasters believe that their work is affected by government policy, evidence that the fire service has remained relatively untouched by the reform process.

In addition, chief executives are significantly more likely than directors to contend that their work has been considerably affected by government policy.[lxi] Finally, the work of contract directors is slightly more likely to be affected by changes in government policy than the work of directors of traditional local authority and hospital trust departments,[lxii] not surprising given that the formers' jobs were borne out of Conservative government legislation.

Figure 16: Effect of government policy on the management job



The majority of managers contend that a change in customer neither affects nor does not affect their work.[lxiii] This may simply be down to the ambiguity in the wording of the question, questionnaire respondents uncertain as to what was meant by the term customer. Whilst contract directors may have interpreted a change in customer as a client pulling out of a contract, perhaps other questionnaire respondents interpreted a change in customer as a change in customer expectations and attitudes, service users becoming much more demanding.

The confusion surrounding the term customer was equally evident in relation to the question concerning a change in supplier,[lxiv] managers unsure of what a change in supplier actually meant for their work. Given that contract directors spend twice as much time as directors of traditional local authority and hospital trust departments conversing with suppliers, it would be reasonable to expect contract managers to be most affected by a change in supplier. However, housing, corporate strategy, social services and operational directors are the directors most likely to be affected by a change in supplier.

Based on the percentages of managers who identify each change as having a considerable effect on their work, external influences can be ranked in terms of the effects they have on the public sector managerial job: government policy; economic change; technological change; demographic change; change in customer; change in supplier. Again, it would be unwise to assume that external influences affect all

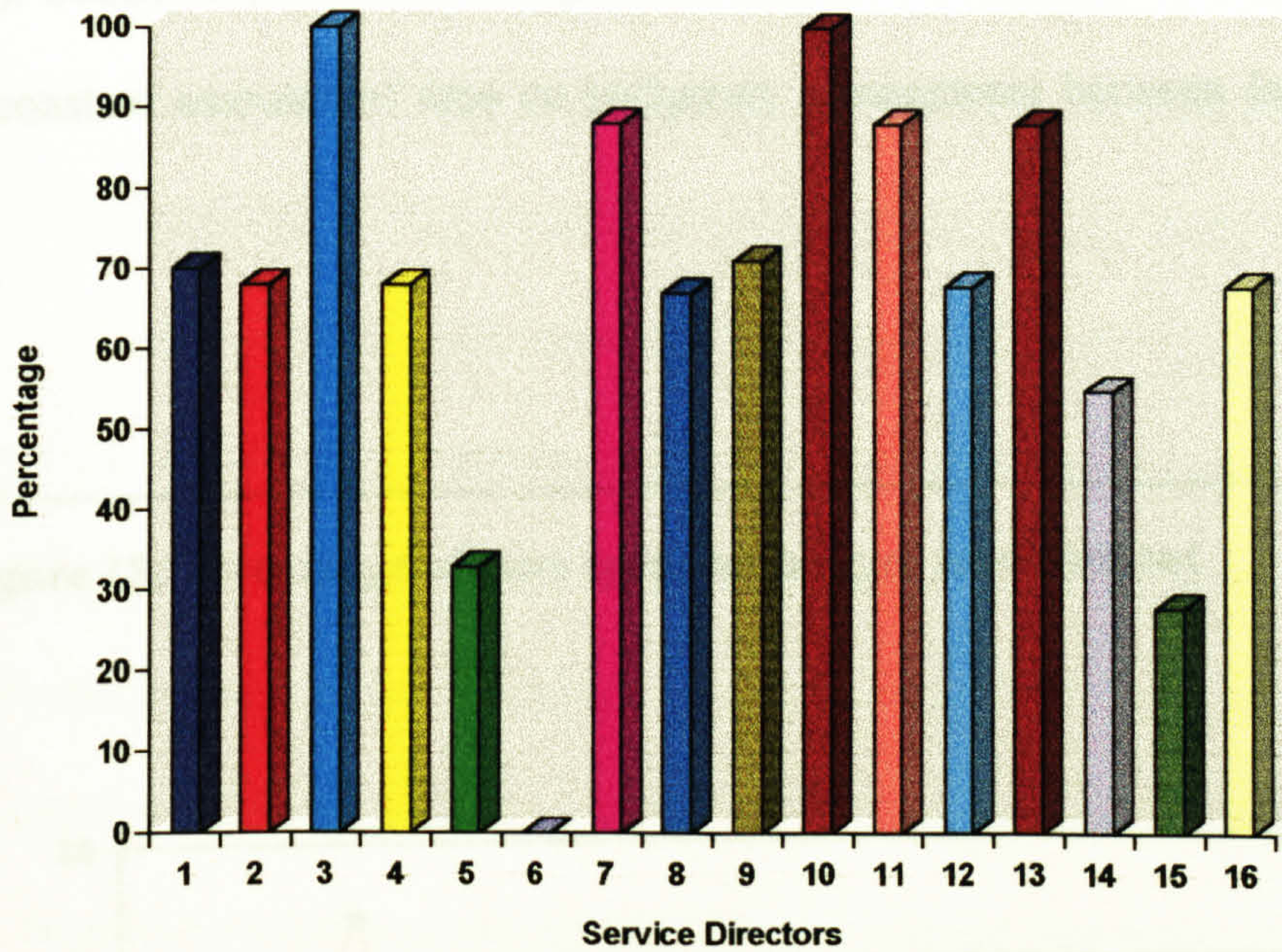
public sector managerial jobs in this order. For example, information technology and roads and transport directors are most likely to be affected by technological change. Furthermore, although the social services directors recognise that changes in government policy are most likely to affect their work, demographic changes are a near second.

vii. Periodicity of work

As chapter five pointed out, one of the main criticisms of the existing managerial work literature is that relatively little attention has been paid to periodicity of work, a major shortfall given that the majority of questionnaire managers classify their work as being periodic,[lxv] different priorities existing at certain times in the year. Chief executives are significantly more likely than directors to contend that their work is periodic.[lxvi] Furthermore, all firemasters and Scottish Office officers believe that their work is periodic, whilst a greater percentage of local authority than hospital trust managers share this opinion.[lxvii]

However, as **figure 17** demonstrates, wide differences in opinion exist between directors of various hospital trust and local authority services. It is perhaps not surprising that the majority of finance and education directors think that their work is periodic, the former bound by their organisation's annual budgeting process, whilst the latter's work is governed by the school year.

Figure 17 : The percentage of service directors who think that their work is periodic

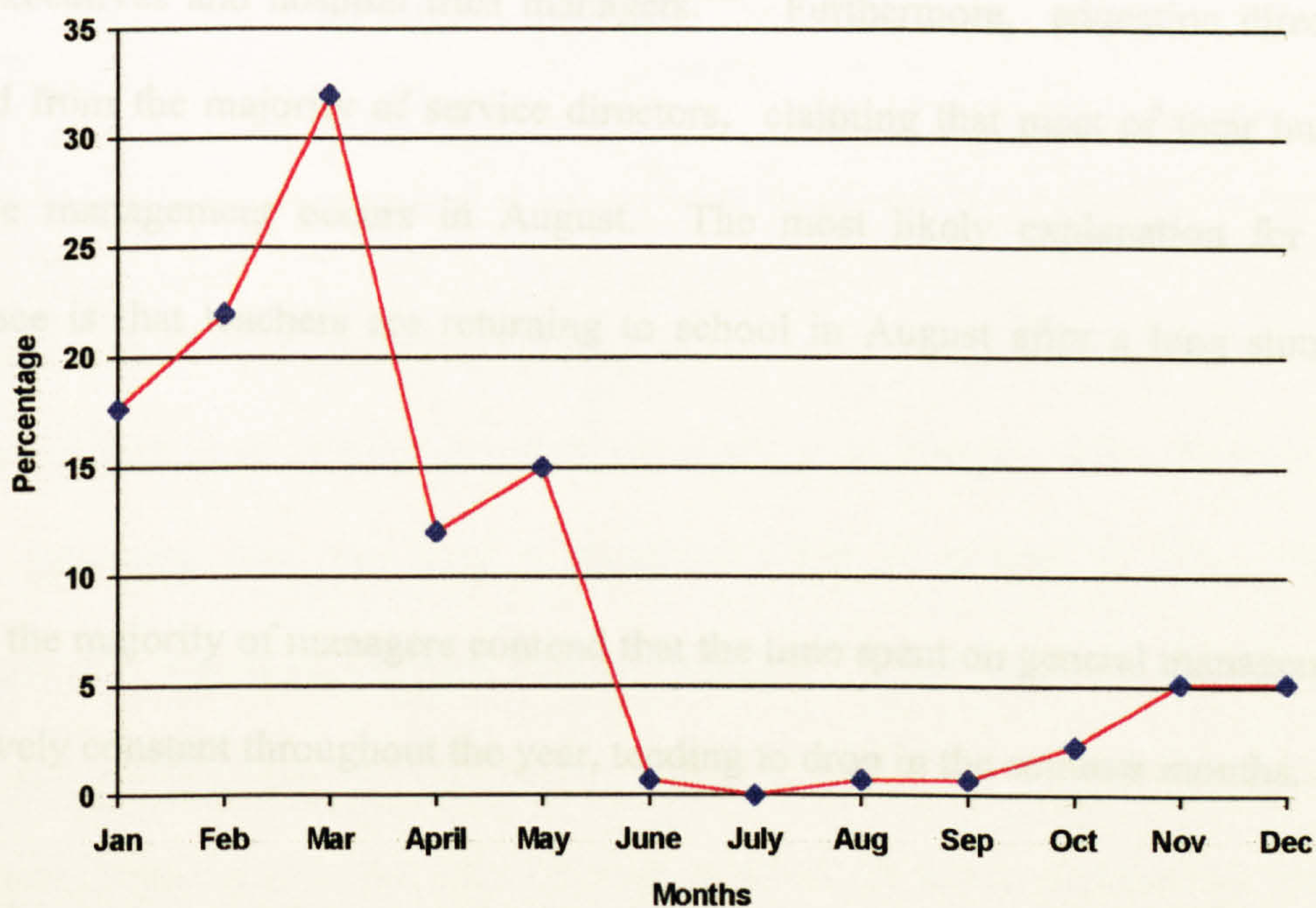


(See figure 11 for a list of service directors)

The observation research, outlined in chapter five, clearly demonstrated that managers were bound by cyclical meetings, periodic negotiations, yearly budgeting and so forth. In order to gain a wider insight into the periodicity of work for a larger sample of public managers, the questionnaire managers were asked to chart the percentage of time spent on financial management, human resource management, contract negotiations and general management in each month of the year. For the purposes of analysis, the month in which the highest percentage of time was spent on each activity was taken from each graph completed by each individual manager. This allowed optimum levels of activity to be calculated for managers overall.

Given that the financial year runs from April to April, it is of no surprise that most budgetary management occurs in the first three months of the year, peaking in March **(figure 18)**. Unlike hospital trust managers, however, local authority colleagues spend relatively constant amounts of time on budgetary management between January and March.

Figure 18: Percentage of time spent on budget management



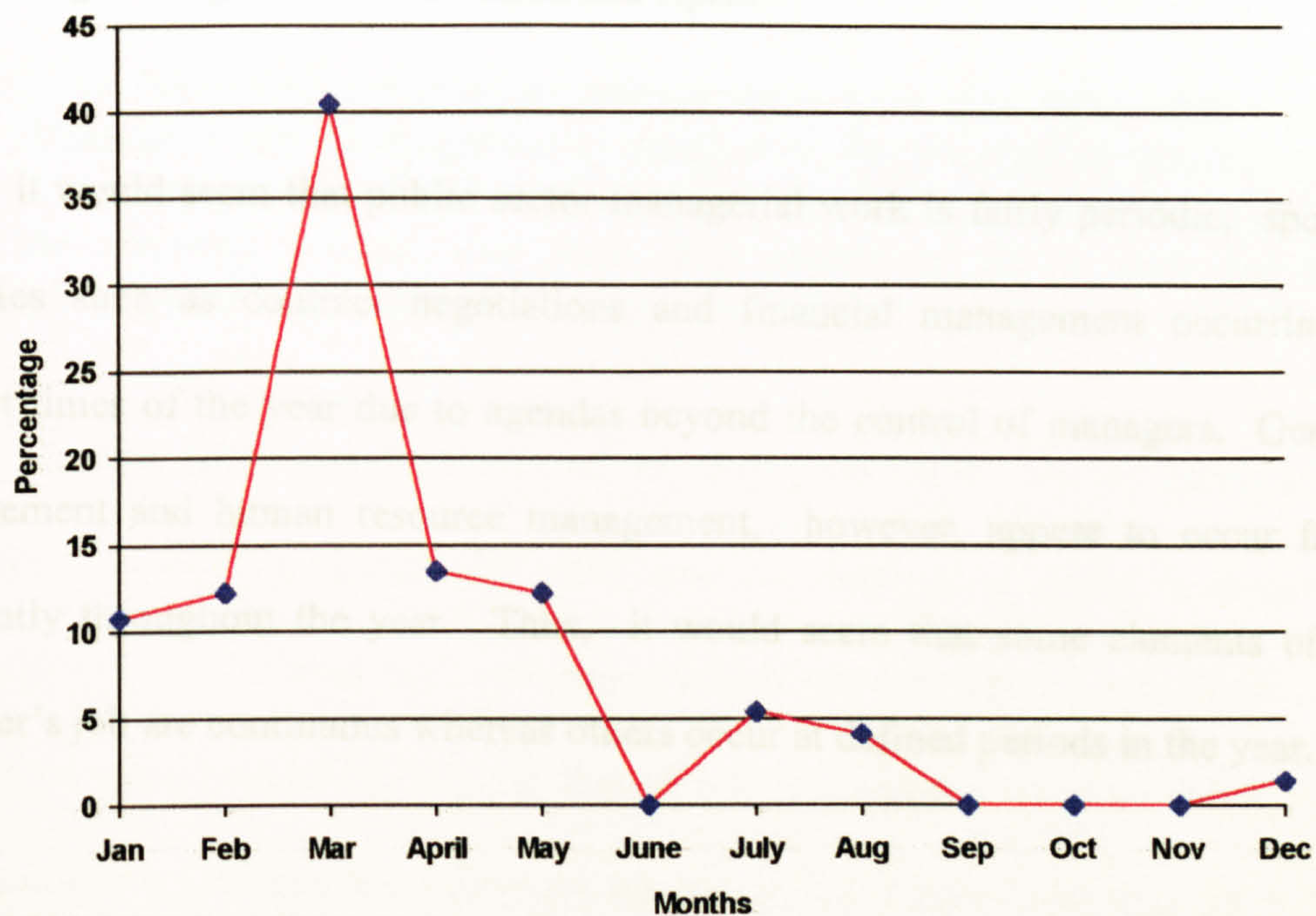
Unlike managers overall, chief executives spend the most time managing budgets in February, financial management falling gradually thereafter until July, where it

comes to a halt. Furthermore, directors differ from chief executives, beginning to spend small amounts of time on budgetary management from October onwards.[lxix]

The majority of managers contend that time spent on human resource management is fairly constant throughout the year. Of the remaining managers, there is a steep rise in human resource management between February and April.[lxx] Perhaps human resource management runs 'hand-in-hand' with the budgetary process, employees concerned about potential job losses and savings to be made. Interestingly, human resource management peaks at various points throughout the year in the work of chief executives and hospital trust managers.[lxxi] Furthermore, education directors differed from the majority of service directors, claiming that most of their human resource management occurs in August. The most likely explanation for this difference is that teachers are returning to school in August after a long summer break.

Again, the majority of managers contend that the time spent on general management is relatively constant throughout the year, tending to drop in the summer months.

Finally, the time spent on contract negotiations most obviously peaks in March. Whilst there is slight activity between June and September, no contract negotiations occur between September and November **(Figure 19)**.



Interestingly, Scottish Office Officers engage in no contract negotiations. Hospital trust managers conduct most of their contract negotiations in March, differing from local authority managers who also have a significant peak of activity in May, further negotiations also occurring between July and August.[lxxii] Furthermore, different local authority and hospital trust service directors appear to have different patterns of contract management, implying that the time of year at which contract negotiations occur is service specific.

Likewise, March is a more obvious peak of activity for chief executives than directors.[lxxiii] Of interest, although the majority of managers spend the most time

conducting contract negotiations in March, contract managers spend equal amounts of time negotiating contracts in March and April.[lxxiv]

Thus, it would seem that public sector managerial work is fairly periodic, specific activities such as contract negotiations and financial management occurring at distinct times of the year due to agendas beyond the control of managers. General management and human resource management, however, appear to occur fairly constantly throughout the year. Thus, it would seem that some elements of the manager's job are continuous whereas others occur at defined periods in the year.

6.3 MANAGERS' OPINIONS ABOUT PUBLIC SECTOR CHANGE

> *"In the environmental literature, discussions usually focus on choosing between so-called 'objective' and 'subjective' measures......'subjective' usually is applied to any measure that seeks somehow to tap participant's perceptions of their organisation's environments"* (Kirk Downey and Duane Ireland, 1979:631).

One of the main conclusions drawn from the observational research was that relatively little of the seven observed managers' work literally resembled that found in the private sector, the exceptions to the rule being the local authority and hospital trust contract director. By asking a wider sample of public managers about the effects of public sector change on their work, this research is attempting to tap into managers' perceptions of public sector change. Only by comparing questionnaire managers' perceptions of change with observation, can an understanding begin to be

gained into whether the introduction of business management methods has been fundamental or simply rhetorical.

> *"The importance of popular management texts has been widely noted. Although it may be dangerous to exaggerate the practical significance of the new management rhetoric, many key professionals seek legitimacy not from the electoral process, but from their ability to fit in with the latest management language"* (Cochrane, 1991: 295).

Given that the NPM can be criticised for doing no more than reproducing the genericism of existing managerial work studies, looking at public management irrespective of the different environments in which individual public managers work, it would be equally absurd to suggest that all public managers perceive public sector reform similarly. Hence the following assessment of public sector reform will be littered with examples of the ways in which different public managers have been influenced by Conservative government policy.

6.3.1 Managers' perceptions of today's public sector

> *"If Rip Van Winkle had fallen asleep in May 1979, he would have found much that is different about the public sector when he woke in 1997. He might have had an inkling that retrenchment was on the cards - as it had been since the oil crisis of the early 1970s - but would have been hard pressed to have predicted the precise effect this would have on public sector organisation, even if he went through the 1979 Conservative election manifesto with a fine tooth comb"* (Goldsmith and Page, 1997:152-153).

i. Does the public sector of the 1990s differ radically from that of the 1970s?

The NPM contend that *"from 1979, successive Conservative Governments determined both to transfer much of the public sector into the private sector and to*

introduce the attitudes and dynamics of the private sector across the rest of public sector" (Wilson and Doig, 1995:127), embarked on a large-scale project of public sector reform. Consequently, it is of no surprise that 96 percent of questionnaire respondents think that the public sector of the 1990s differs radically from that which existed in the 1970s.[lxxv]

The most frequently mentioned reason for this difference[lxxvi] is that the public sector has become *"less paternalistic and more business like"*, the consequence being a *"greater emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness"*. As one local authority chief executive argues, the public sector is *"now much more about value-for-money than public service"*, this opinion also shared by all of the Scottish Office officers who responded. The benefits of a focus on value-for-money were clearly recognised by contract directors. *"CCT has provided an essential motivating force which political considerations often dulled. DLOs have become more commercial, efficient and cost effective"*.

Nearly two-fifths of managers also maintain that the public sector has been affected by resource constraints. Consequently, public services are *"more cost conscious"*, managers becoming *"aware of the financial implications of actions"*. Resource constraints seem to have hit nursing the most, a staggering 71.4 percent of nursing directors identifying resource constraints as the consequence of public sector change.

Furthermore, 7.1 percent of questionnaire managers contend that the public sector has become much more politicised. As the chief executive of one hospital trust contends, the public sector is a *"political football used to prove political points"*.

It soon became evident from an analysis of managers' opinions about the ways in which the public sector has changed, that only a small minority of respondents actually view change positively. A mere 27.1 percent of managers insist that the public sector of the 1990s is much more *"user friendly"* and *"customer driven"*, 7.1 percent of respondents specifically identifying an *"improved standard of service delivery"*. Of interest, two-thirds more directors than chief executives think today's public sector has become increasingly user friendly. This is perhaps the consequence of directors being more directly involved in service provision than chief executives, the latter somewhat removed from this process. Moreover, 57.1 percent of nursing directors believe that their services have become more user orientated.

Only one-quarter of respondents think that today's public sector is now much more accountable, *" the public sector now realising that it is more accountable to those who provide its funding"*. Three-quarters of firemasters, however, contend that today's public sector is much more accountable than it was in the 1970s. Perhaps firemasters have a more positive view of public sector reform because their organisations have undergone the least radical change and are subsequently the most representative of a 'traditional' public sector organisation. Moreover, perhaps the

influence of devolved school management is behind one-half of the education directors' claims that the public sector is much more accountable.

A further 14.2 percent of managers identify other changes for the better, today's public sector being *"less bureaucratic"*, *"more focused"*, *"more open"*, *"more flexible" and "harder working (with) better management"*.

In spite of networking emerging as the management buzzword of the nineties, only 6.5 percent of respondents view public sector change as encouraging *"a greater willingness to work with others"*.

> *"Conservative attempts to reform the management of the public sector have been driven primarily by their ideological instincts and concerns"* (Hickie, 1995:124).

As chapter three demonstrated, the ideological background to Conservative government reform arguably lay in the theories of the New Right, public sector reform induced by a government committed to combating the inefficiency inherent in the public provision of services. Consequently, *"the forces driving managerial and organisational change.......are mainly (but not exclusively) external to the organisations"* (Talbot, 1994:23), the majority of questionnaire respondents contending that central government policies have driven public sector change.[lxxvii] Managers acknowledge *"a general shift to the right in UK politics"*, the

consequence of *"seventeen years of Conservative government and the philosophies it has brought to bear on the public sector"*.

Firemasters differ from managers overall, only one-quarter contending that government policy has driven public sector change. This is not really surprising given that the fire service has remained relatively free from government interference. Furthermore, local authority managers are one-quarter more likely than hospital trust managers to identify government policy as a reason for change. Local authority managers identify the *"political dismantling of local authority powers"*, *"restricted funding arising from political desire to transfer from public to private"*. This may simply be the consequence of these managers completing questionnaires seven months into local government reorganisation. Finally two-thirds of housing directors, 71.4 percent of social services directors and two-thirds of education directors, identify central government policies as driving public sector reform. Perhaps this is simply a reflection of the major legislation introduced into these services, for example, the sale of council housing, the implementation of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the implementation of community care.

One of the ironies of the questionnaire responses is that 28 percent of managers specifically identify an increased focus on the utilisation of business methods as the key force driving change, failing to recognise that these business methods are the consequence of central government policy. This misunderstanding is most apparent

when different levels of management jobs are examined, directors one-third more likely than chief executives to identify an increased use of business methods as driving public sector reform. Thus, perhaps it can be inferred that chief executives have a much broader policy-based understanding of the underlying reasons behind change, directors viewing the driving forces of change much more narrowly, simply as new working practices they have been required to implement. Moreover, an examination of the questionnaire responses by job type suggests that managers who identify an increased use of business methods work in services that appear to be less directly affected by central government legislation, for example, Roads and Transport.

Almost one-half of respondents feel that public sector reform is the consequence of the government's deliberate decision to reduce public spending. *"Increased needs have been coupled with reduced resources"*. Thus, *"the impact of political pressure for change.......clearly ranks alongside pressures for value-for-money as the strongest pressure for change in the UK public sector"* (Talbot, 1994:31). Of interest, hospital trust finance directors are one-third more likely than local authority colleagues to identify resource constraints as driving change, an opinion shared by all information technology, roads and transport and patient services directors.

Just more than one-third of respondents contend that public sector change has been driven by greater public expectations, managers highlighting *"community/individual*

demands", "higher aspirations" and *"a more informed public"* as being at the heart of public sector change. As one hospital trust contract director points out, *"years ago, patients did not question doctors and nurses. The quality drive through charters and indicators has led to greater awareness and desire to comment on services...Patients are complaining more than in the past......a good thing since it shows that the public are interested in the services provided".* This may be the reason why housing, education, social services and nursing directors are the managers most likely to identify increased expectations as driving public sector change, an opinion also shared by one-half of Scottish Office officers.

Furthermore, an additional 16.6 percent of managers contend that public sector change is the consequence of wider environmental influences surrounding their organisations, for example, *"low employment", "the economic climate", "media scrutiny", "improvements in technology", "more complex social problems"* and *"the wider world of international competition".* Not surprisingly, social services directors are most likely to see change being driven by external contingencies.

> *"All the evidence suggests that restructuring of the public sector has been accompanied by a downward shift in public esteem and consequent loss of morale among public sector managers themselves. On the whole, many managers feel undervalued and under appreciated"* (Public Money and Management, 1990:5).

Almost twice as many questionnaire managers feel that public sector reform has affected them adversely rather than positively,[lxxviii] differing from the majority of Talbot's(1994:64) managers who had a positive attitude to change. However, it

should be recognised that this research was conducted three years after Talbot's(1994) research, implying that the consequences of public sector reform are only now beginning to take their toll on those responsible for managing change. Interestingly, housing, education, social services and nursing directors are least likely to view change negatively. In comparison, it seems that directors working in central services such as law and administration, corporate strategy, finance and human resources, claim to be view change much more negatively.

The questionnaire managers highlight *"increasing work rates, personal pressures, unpopularity and ethical dilemmas"*. Recent reforms have *"destroyed careers, those unable to adapt unable to survive"*. Whilst *"the very very good have left to the private sector, the experienced have gone on early retirement schemes"*. Those remaining in the public sector have experienced an *"enormous increase in workloads"* as well as *"a threat to their traditional skills base"*. Thus, one Scottish Office officer sums up the views of many when he argues that public sector reform has led to *"a significant stress increase, longer hours and lower job satisfaction"*. Consequently, there is an *"increased risk that things will go wrong because insufficient attention has been paid to them"*.

Reforms have also been condemned for their *"wholesale alienation from public sector values"*. *"There is too much number crunching and not enough consideration of why we're here, what we do and how we do it - i.e., quality as opposed to*

measurement". As one local authority director of social services contends, *"public service is stigmatised - the welfare state is constantly undermined"*.

Consequently, it is of little surprise that only one-fifth of managers view recent public sector change positively. Local government managers believe that they are *"more aware of business pressures and more ready to respond positively to change and challenge"*. Local government is *"more dynamic"* with *"managerial staff being far more aggressive in the pursuit of excellence"*. Likewise, hospital trust managers have become *"more responsive and flexible"*, public sector reform giving them *"more challenges and creativity"*. Out of all the hospital trust directors, nursing directors are most likely to view public sector change positively. Furthermore, although education, social services and housing directors are least likely to view change negatively, only small percentages of these directors claim that change has been positive.

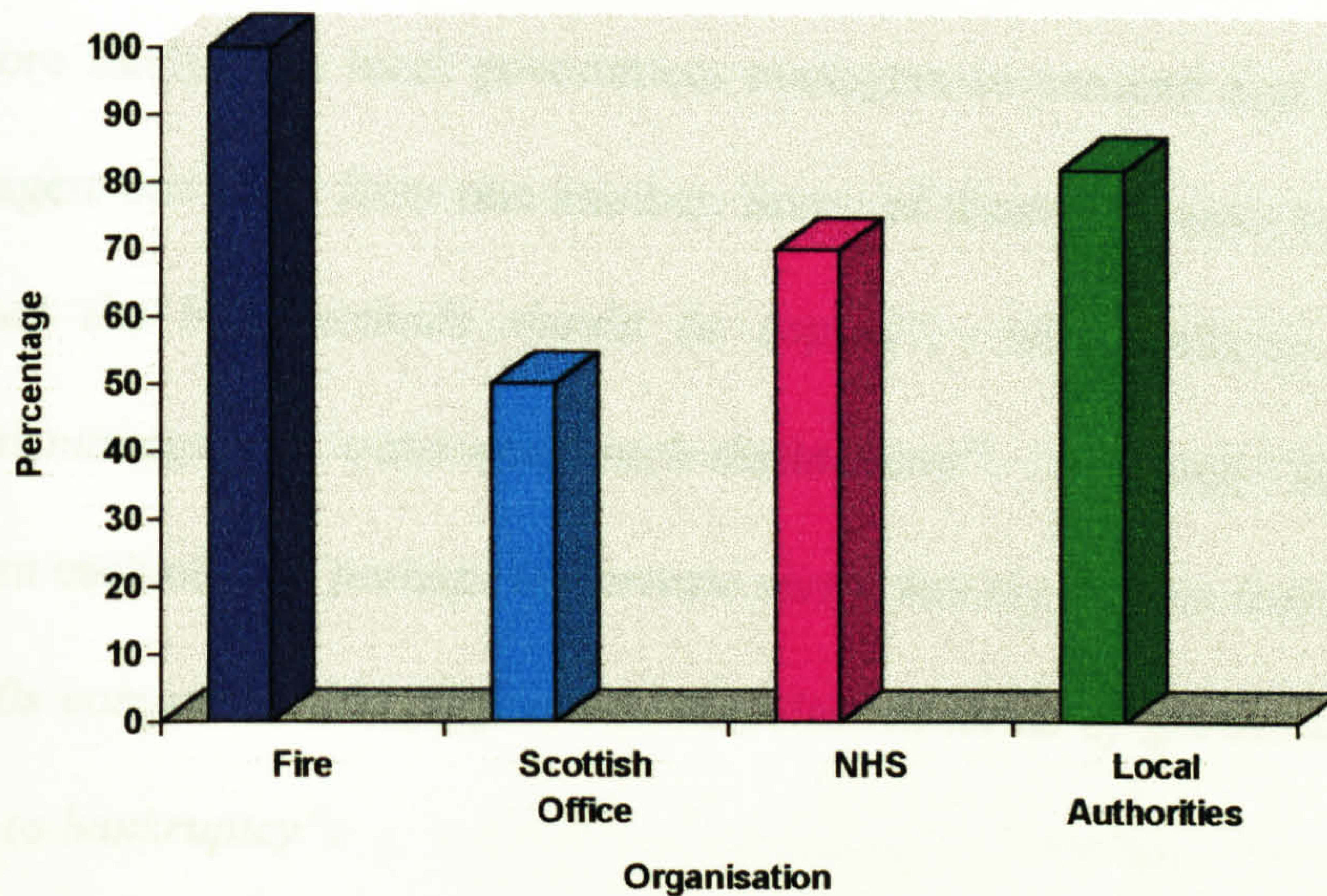
Just over one-fifth of managers profess that the consequence of change has been increased commercial awareness on their part, *"public sector reform ousting administrators in favour of managers"*. *"A new ethos has developed based on VFM and competition"*, *"bringing us a bit closer to a commercial management ethos"*, an opinion most likely to be adopted by social services and corporate strategy directors.

ii. Use of private sector management techniques

> *"Existing management practices are being relabelled with private management language......actual private management techniques are being imported into the public sector"* (Talbot, 1994:52).

85 percent of questionnaire respondents believe that managers in the public and private sectors are performing similar management tasks.[lxxix] It is not surprising that all contract directors share this opinion compared to 83.2 percent of colleagues managing traditional local authority and hospital trust departments.[lxxx] Of interest, all property and patient services directors do not think that public and private managers are performing similar management tasks.[lxxxi]

Only 77 percent of respondents, however, think that private sector management techniques should be introduced.[lxxxii] Again not surprisingly, contract managers look more favourably on the introduction of business methods than more traditional service directors. Furthermore, chief executives are approximately one-fifth more likely than directors to argue that private sector management techniques should be introduced. As **figure 20** demonstrated, all firemasters agree management practices should be transferred from the private to the public sector, even although these managers appear to be the public managers least likely to have been affected by change.



All directors working in central services such as roads and transport, law and administration and human resources think that business techniques should be introduced. This is in sharp comparison to three-fifths and two-fifths of corporate strategy and nursing directors who think that private techniques should be introduced.

Although the majority of managers think that private sector techniques should be introduced, two-fifths believe that they should only be introduced if they are adapted to public sector values, that is, *"if they are relevant and take account of particular circumstances"*. In local authorities, for example, *"the existence of elected members affects the degree to which private sector techniques can be transferred"*.

One-quarter of respondents also maintain that managers in public and private organisations can learn from each other. Interestingly, more than twice as many directors as chief executives share this view. Furthermore, hospital trust managers are one-third more likely than local government managers to contend that public and private managers can learn from one another. Some of these managers contend that *"whoever has the best methods should be copied"*, whilst others argue that *"professional management transcends such distinctions"*. Although both sectors can learn from each other, *"perhaps the private sector has the most to learn given the number of 80s companies that performed 'miracles' in terms of growth and profits on their way to bankruptcy"*.

Commercial skills used in the business world are deemed to be of use to one-fifth of respondents. Arguably, the public sector has much to learn in terms of performance measurement, quality techniques, customer care and budget monitoring. Of interest, twice as many local authority as hospital trust managers benefit from an awareness of commercial skills, perhaps because *"local authorities are increasingly being required to run themselves as businesses"*. However, hospital trusts are *"managing multiple million pound organisations"* and equally *"must learn from successful businesses with satisfied customers"*.

Finally, 17.5 percent of managers contend that private techniques have already been introduced. *"There is much greater convergence and sectors should be viewed as*

lacking any distinction". Consequently, *"both are now similarly trained and........the techniques are likely to be common across both sectors"*.

Nevertheless, although the majority of managers argue in favour of the introduction of business techniques, 15.3 percent of managers profess that private techniques have no place in public sector managerial work. This is principally because the *"ethos and culture in the public sector is different and should remain so"*, the public sector very *"open to political influence"*. Local government has a unique culture since *"service provision has to be about 'caring' as well as financial control and returns to shareholders which motivate private sector managers"*. Likewise, one director of nursing claims that unlike the NHS, *"the private sector is purely driven by patient numbers and income"*.

Given that 85 percent of respondents believe that managers in the public and private sectors are performing similar management tasks, it is of no surprise that 90 percent of questionnaire managers contend that there has been an increase in the use of private sector techniques in their work.[lxxxv] Interestingly, respondents are almost equally split between contending that these techniques have been introduced with little difficulty and with difficulty.[lxxxvi] A higher percentage of chief executives than directors contend that business techniques have been easily introduced. Not surprisingly, five times as many contract directors as directors of traditional hospital

trust and local authority services also contend that private sector techniques have been easily introduced.

As **figure 21** demonstrates, finance directors are most likely to contend that business techniques have been easily introduced. Perhaps not surprisingly, the majority of social services, patient services, nursing and housing directors contend that business techniques have been introduced with difficulty. However, only one-quarter of education directors think that business techniques have been introduced with difficulty.

One-half of the questionnaire managers highlight the main difficulty as conflicting cultures and a clash of objectives.[lxxxvii] Unlike the private sector, *"public service is bottom line. Not everything we do can be reduced to figures on a balance sheet"*. Furthermore, the public sector is bound by *"traditional employee rules and regulations"* and *"a political framework, where management is subject to a greater level of public scrutiny"*. Local authority managers are just over one-quarter more likely than hospital trust managers to share this opinion, perhaps due to the constitution of local government, important policy decisions made by elected members.

Figure 21 : The introduction of business techniques into service directors' jobs.

Job type	Introduction of business techniques (%)			
	Easily	Little difficulty	Difficulty	No reply
Local Authority				
Property			100	
Housing		40	60	
Information Technology		100		
Roads and Transport		100		
Corporate Strategy		57	43	
Law and Administration		100		
Finance	16.7	50	17	17
Education		75	25	
Human Resources		33.3	66.7	
Social Services		16.7	66.7	16.7
Hospital Trust				
Planning		100		
Patient Services			100	
Finance	14.3	28.6	57.1	
Operational		57.1	28.6	
Nursing		28.6	71.4	
Human Resources		66.7	33.3	

A further two-fifths of managers identify resistance to change at the heart of the difficulties experienced when implementing private sector techniques into their organisations. Managers have witnessed *"resistance from doubting Thomases"* and *"cynicism by staff"*, perhaps due to the possibility that *"the measurement of performance could highlight shortcomings"*.

Working in local authorities and hospital trusts, an additional one-tenth of managers identify practical difficulties in implementing private sector techniques. These difficulties include *"lack of understanding and tools"*, *"inadequate resources committed to change"* and the reality that *"training implications are not always taken into account"*.

iii. Can public and private sector managers learn from each other?

> *"Management is universal and whilst some organisations have more experience than others, the sector is irrelevant"* (Talbot, 1994:52).

95 percent of respondents believe that public sector managers can learn from private sector managers.[lxxxviii] Interestingly, one-third of local authority human resource directors, one-quarter of hospital trust finance directors and all patient services directors claim that public managers have nothing to learn from business managers.[lxxxix]

Almost one-half of respondents insist that both sectors can learn from each other,[xc] since *"management is management"*. In other words, *"whoever has the best methods should be copied"*, there being *"no monopoly of talent or experience"* in the private sector. Interestingly, it is the firemasters who are most likely to insist that both sectors can learn from each other, those very managers who appear to be least affected by change.

Nevertheless, just less than one-third of respondents think that public managers should develop commercial skills, learning from the *"more focused attention given to outcomes and outputs"* , the private sector *"better at focusing on outputs, rather than pre-occupation with process"*. Directors are almost four times as likely as chief executives to agree that what is needed is *"commercialism, a harder nosed approach and greater resilience"*.

An additional one-tenth of respondents think that they can learn to become more customer focused, appreciating that *"the failure to provide the service the customer wants will have significant effects"*. Finally, 5 percent of respondents contend that public managers have a vital lesson to learn from private sector colleagues, *"understanding that one cannot expect to have a job for life. To secure job satisfaction and ongoing employment, one's performance is vital to success"*.

> *"Learning here is a two way process, not just the transmission of information and experience from private to public sector"* (Chambers, 1988:48).

Contrary to Conservative government beliefs that *"the private sector (is) the model the public sector should emulate"* (Wilson, 1995:ix), almost identical numbers of respondents think that whilst public managers can learn from private managers, the reverse is also true,[xci] the majority view being that managers from both sectors can learn from one another.[xcii] Interestingly, one-quarter of local authority finance directors contend that private managers cannot learn from the public sector.

A further 15.8 percent of managers allege that private managers could learn how to manage people more effectively. Business managers should practice *"sensitivity to people"*, the public sector having a *"social responsibility to staff"*. Furthermore, 14.2 percent of managers think that private sector managers have a few vital lessons to learn from managing complex public organisations. *"Running and managing large multifunctional organisations is probably as well done in the public sector as in the private sector"*.

One-tenth of respondents also believe that private sector managers would benefit from an understanding of public accountability. *"The private sector do not understand the need for public accountability or the difficulties of a politically driven agenda"*. Furthermore, 8.3 percent of managers believe that they could teach colleagues in the private sector *"how to relate to the wider community in which the organisation operates"*, public managers *"often having a broader vision than their commercial equivalent"*.

The remaining managers contend that private sector managers could learn that *"the quality of service is equal in importance to the bottom line"*, *"the best solution is not necessarily the most financially effective"*. Furthermore, private sector colleagues *"need to learn how to deal with politicians"*. Finally, given that the *"public sector has very high standards of probity"*, private sector managers could learn *"more ethical management techniques"*.

6.3.2 To what extent has public sector managerial work been affected by the introduction of management practices common to the private sector?

An examination of managers' perceptions of today's public sector suggests that they are of the opinion that the organisations in which they work differ radically from those in existence in the 1970s, managers increasingly adopting techniques more commonly found in the private sector. It would seem that the questionnaire managers have been quick to 'jump onto the back of the NPM bandwagon', sharing Hood's(1991) vision of a public sector characterised by: professional management; budgetary responsibility; explicit standards and measures of performance; greater emphasis on output controls; shifts to disaggregation of units in the public sector; greater competition and stress on private sector styles of management practice, including stress on discipline and parsimony in resource use.

However, given the innumerable articles about public sector reform appearing in professional journals and quality newspapers, combined with the ever increasing textbooks on the transformation of public sector management, perhaps it is not surprising that senior public managers have been 'brainwashed' into believing that more traditional methods of managing public organisations are under threat. In order to test the validity of the questionnaire respondents' opinions that public and private sector managerial work are converging, managers were asked to comment on the extent to which well documented elements of public sector reform - namely, the introduction of a focus on value-for-money and performance, increased devolution of

budgetary responsibility, an increased move to consumerism, managers being appointed for their business acumen rather than professional expertise and, finally, an increased requirement to network - had impacted on their work.

i. An increased focus on value-for-money

Almost two-thirds of questionnaire respondents strongly agree that an increased focus on value-for-money has affected their work,[xciii] undoubtedly stemming from resource constraints. Consequently, it is of no surprise that 61 percent of managers strongly agree that they have been affected by an increased stress on controlling costs.[xciv] *"Calling for efficiency improvements through the better management of performance allowed the government to cut public expenditure without necessarily advocating or, more significantly, being seen to advocate service level depletion, a process facilitated by the politically irresistible 'vfm' tag"* (Ball and Monaghan, 1996: 41).

The outcome of an increased focus on value-for-money is a growing concern with performance measurement, 88.8 percent of questionnaire respondents working in organisations with performance indicators/measures in use.[xcv] Whilst all respondents from hospital trusts, the fire service and Scottish Office have performance measures/indicators installed in their organisations, only 82.2 percent of local authority managers work in authorities which measure performance. Thus,

performance measurement has obviously not infiltrated local government to the same extent as other parts of the public sector.

Figure 22 confirms Talbot's(1994:50) findings that *"a new emphasis on outputs or outcomes (is) being seen as important".* As **figure 23** shows, all of the firemasters contend that their performance indicators measure outcomes. However, like managers overall, the majority of hospital trust and local authority managers' performance measures focus on outputs, closely followed by outcomes.

Of those managers whose organisations have performance measures in use, 81 percent feel that they are useful to managers.[xcvi] Interestingly, only one-half of firemasters contend that their performance measures, which focus on outcomes, are of any use to them.

Figure 22: Performance measures in use in organisations

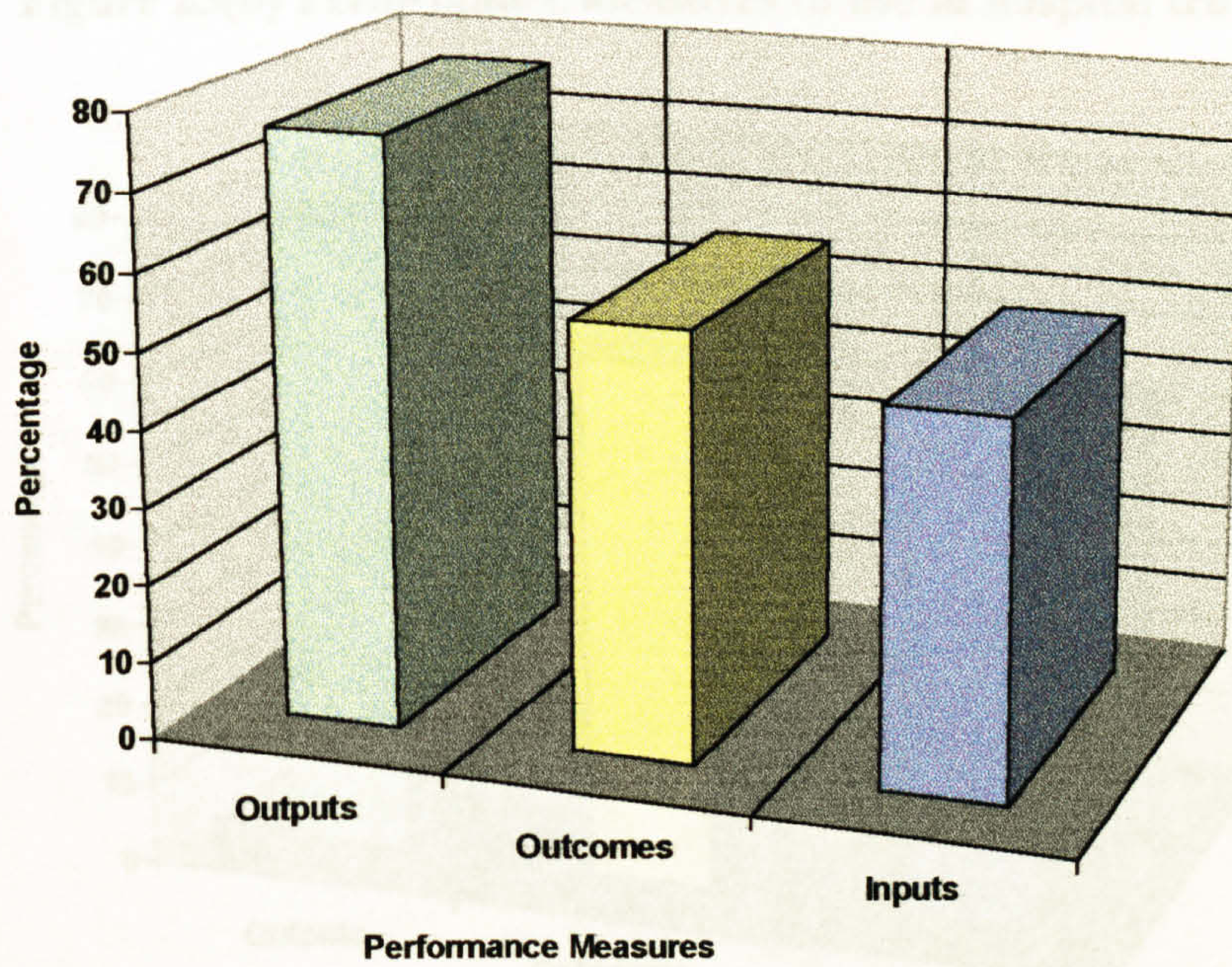


Figure 23(a) Performance measures in use in the fire service

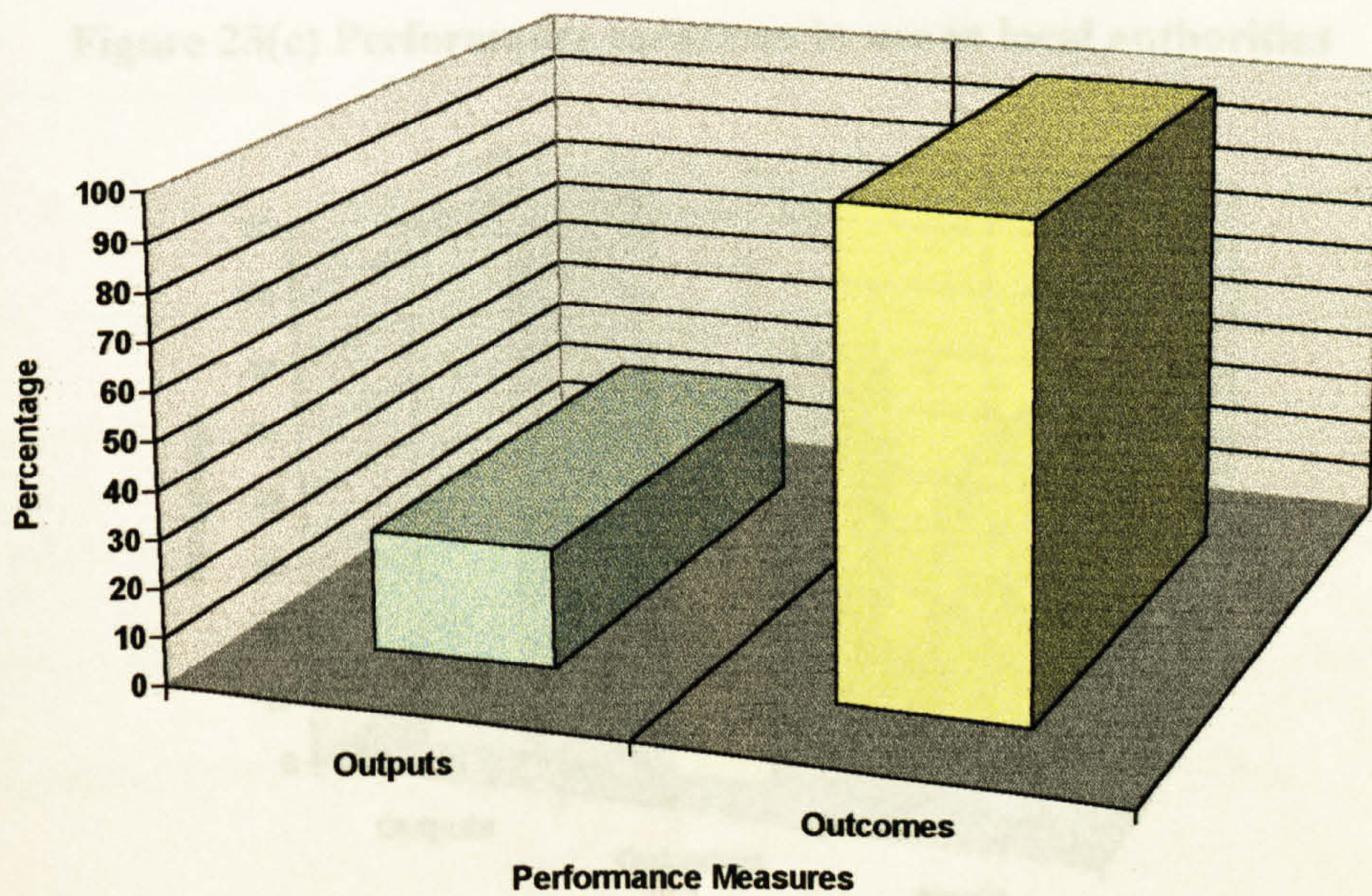


Figure 23(b) Performance measures in use in hospital trusts

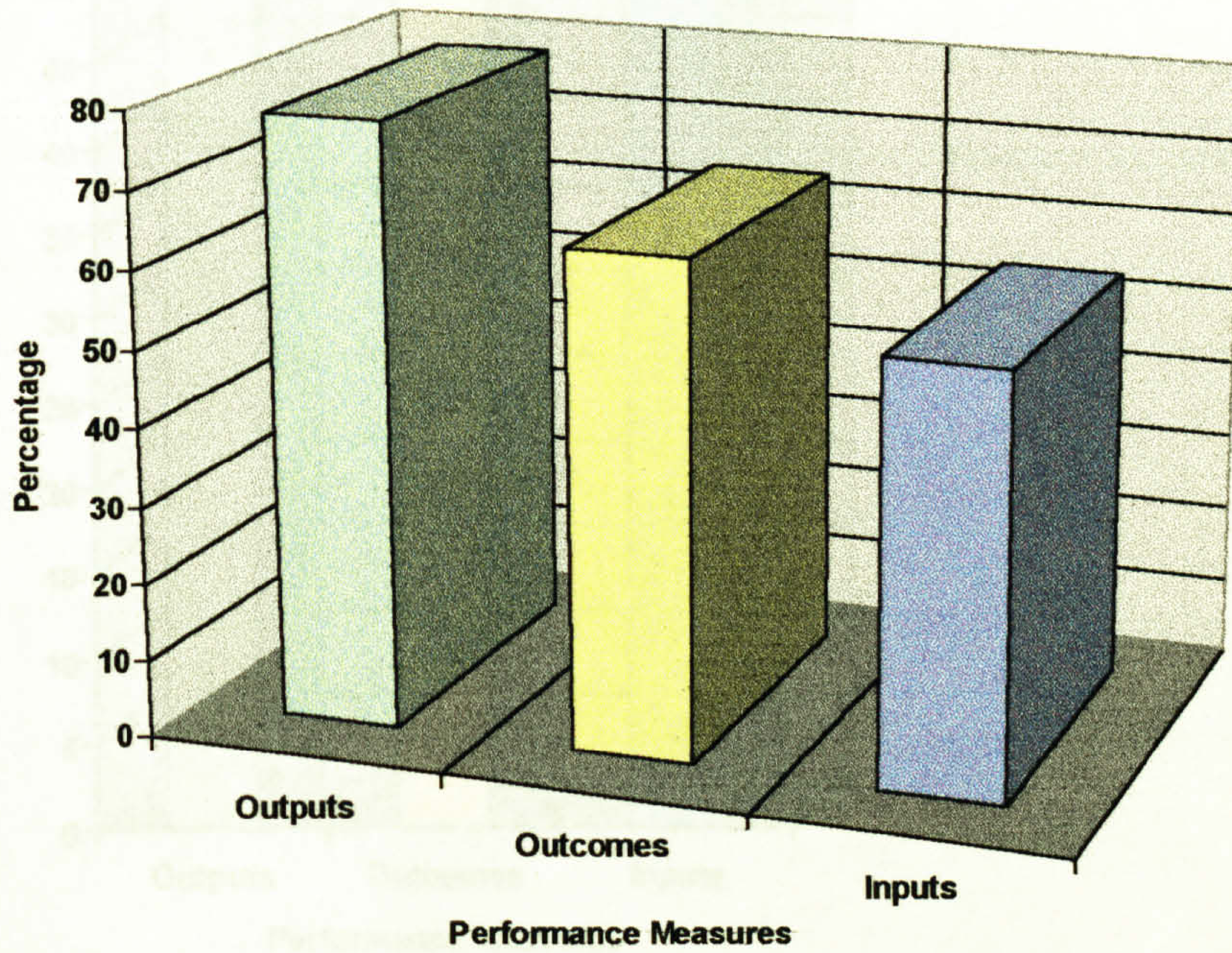


Figure 23(c) Performance measures in use in local authorities

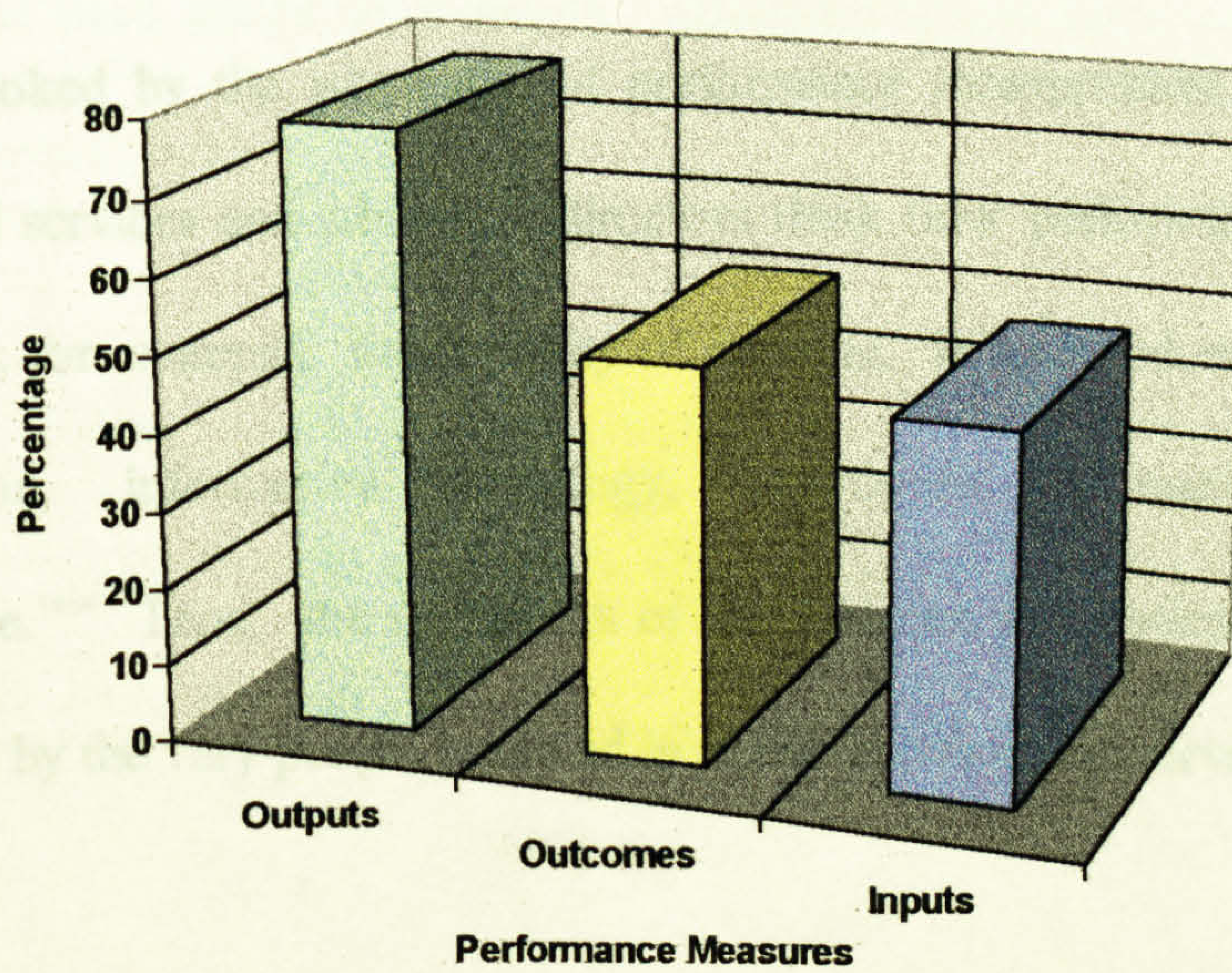
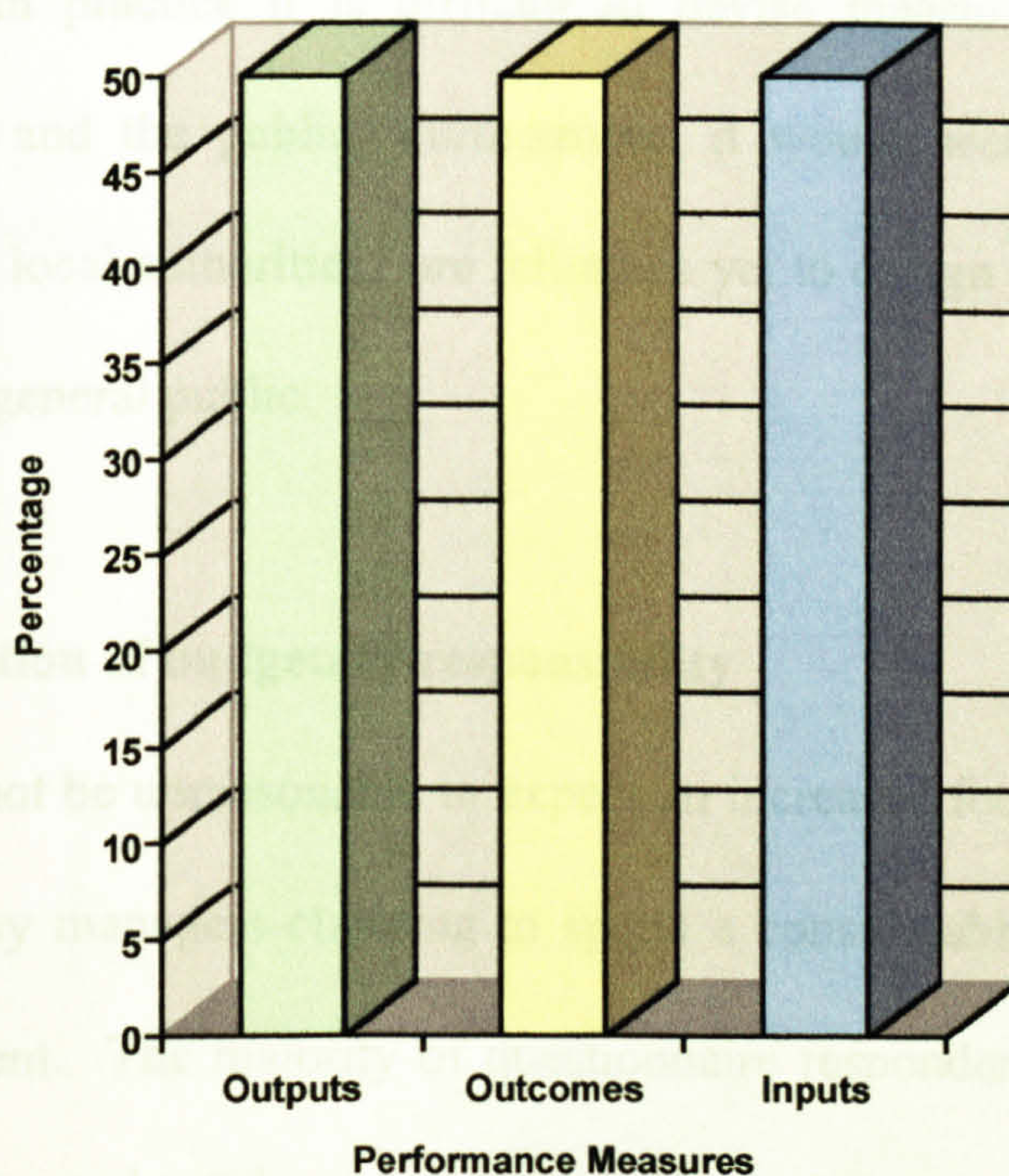


Figure 23(d) Performance Measures in use in the Scottish Office



Furthermore, although the majority of managers in this study believe that performance measurement as a whole is desireable,[xcvii] substantially fewer contend that the performance measures in use in their organisation benefit the public,[xcviii] a fact frequently overlooked by the advocates of performance measurement. Whilst the majority of social services and education directors think their performance measures benefit the public, for example, the majority of housing, leisure and recreation, law and administration, information technology, operations and nursing directors contend otherwise.[xcix] Thus, the usefulness of the Citizens and Patients Charters is surely questioned by the very people involved in public provision of services.

Consequently, it can be inferred that whilst performance measurement is ideal in theory, in practice it is difficult to devise measures which adequately satisfy managers and the public. Furthermore, it would seem that public organisations, especially local authorities, are failing as yet to design performance measures which assist the general public.

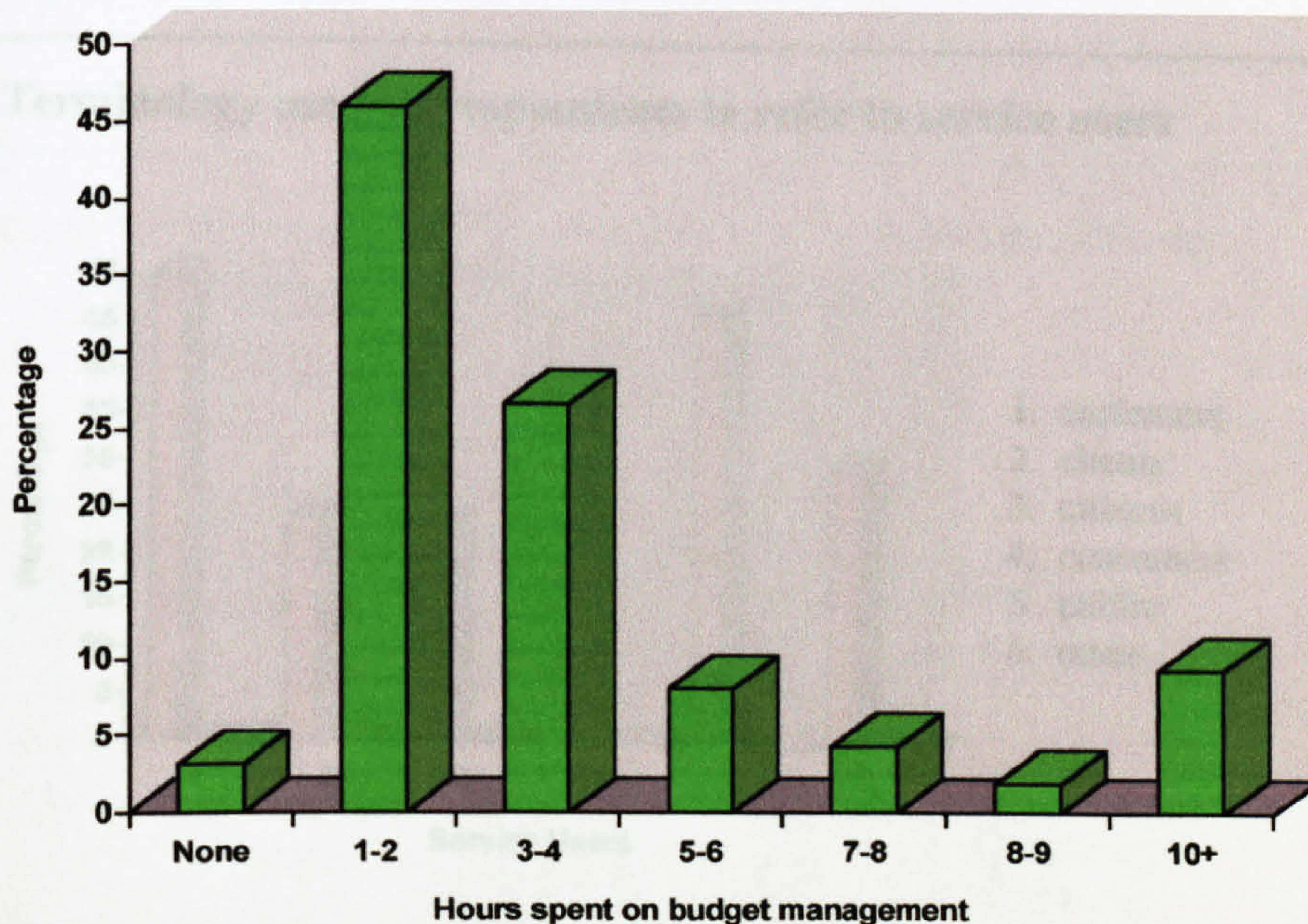
ii. Devolution of budgetary responsibility

It would not be unreasonable to expect an increased focus on value-for-money to be matched by managers claiming to spend a considerable amount of time on budget management. The majority of questionnaire respondents, however, claim to spend between one and two hours per week on budget management **(figure 24).** Moreover, it should be pointed out that perhaps the questionnaire managers estimated spending more time on budget management than usual, their estimations clouded by the fact that these questionnaires were issued in January. Several managers specifically noted that they were caught up in the budgetary process. Perhaps if these questionnaires had been issued after March, managers would have spent even less time on budget management.

Nevertheless, contract directors who responded to the questionnaire spent significantly more time managing budgets than colleagues managing traditional hospital trust and local authority services.[c] This is no doubt indicative of the

environment in which both work, contract directors required to negotiate financial issues with clients.

Figure 24: Number of hours respondents spend on budget management

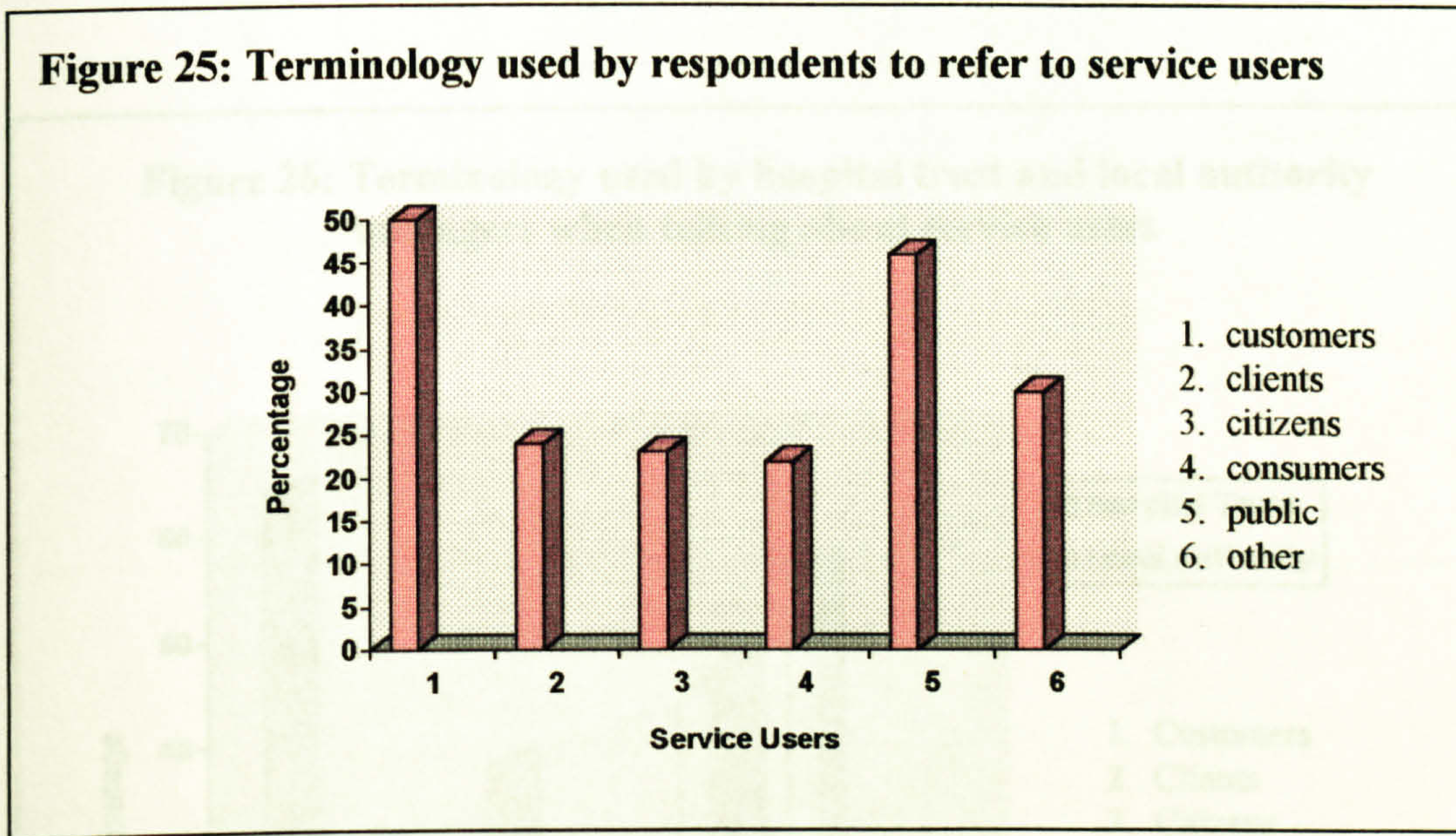


Although relatively little time is spent on budget management, just over one-half of the questionnaire managers contend that a lot of conflict exists between controlling costs and providing good quality services.[ci] This confirms Talbot's(1994:32) finding that *"cost effectiveness has become more important than care"*, decisions being short-term *"based purely on cost reductions rather than overall quality and performance"*. This differs from the opinions of three-quarters of firemasters and two-thirds of hospital trust directors who believe that a lot of conflict exists. Perhaps this is because the quality of service provided by both of these managers' organisations can very often mean the difference between life and death.

iii. An increased move to consumerism

Given the Conservative government's attempts to encourage public services to adopt the language of consumerism, it was thought interesting to ask public managers what terminology they used when talking about service users.

Figure 25: Terminology used by respondents to refer to service users

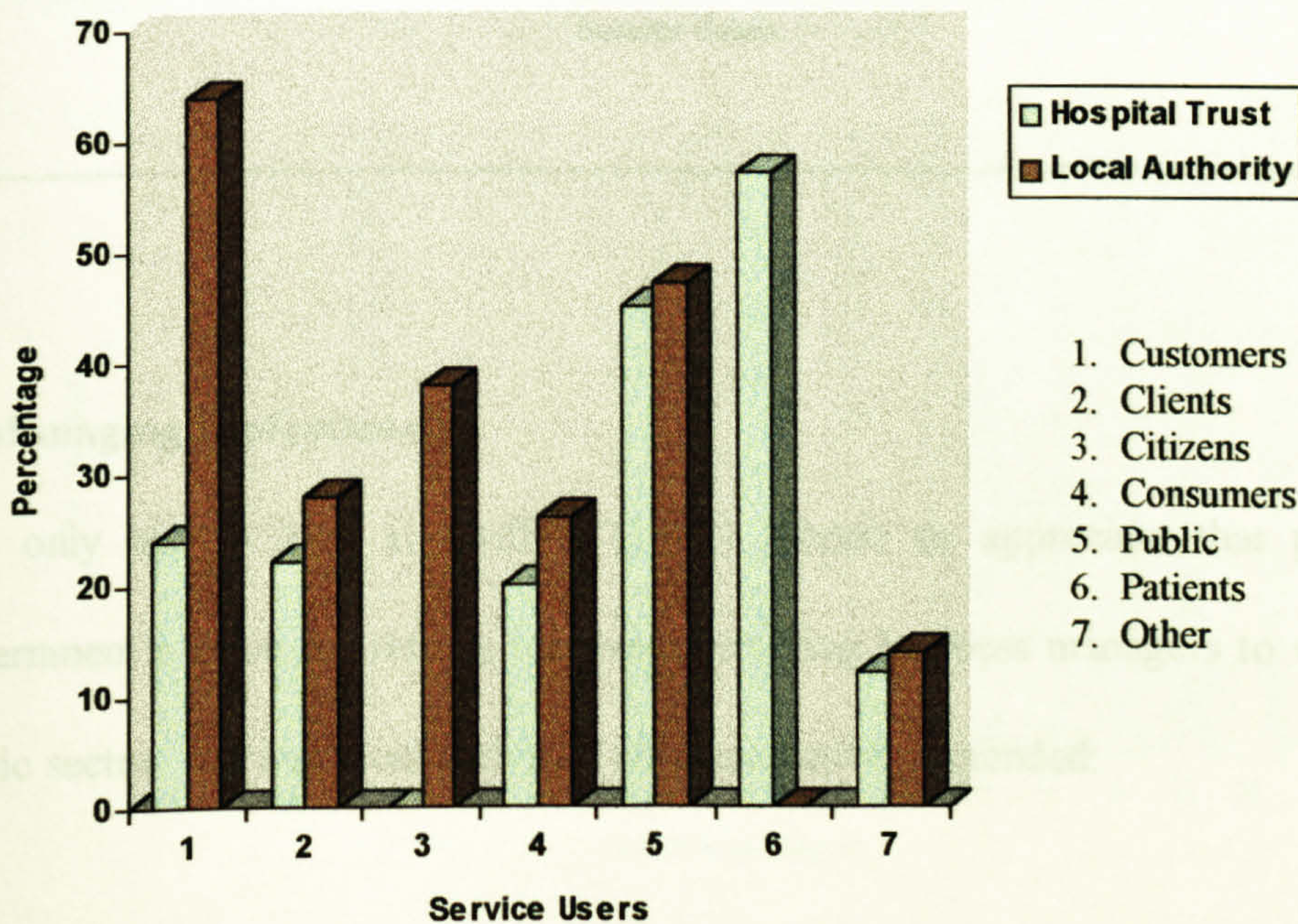


As **figure 25** shows, the majority of managers claim to use different terms in different circumstances, questioning the extent to which the ethos of the public sector is driven by consumerism.

All Scottish Office Officers refer to users as the 'public', as do the majority of firemasters. **Figure 26** highlights the different terminology claimed to be used by managers in hospital trusts and local authorities. Whilst the majority of hospital trust managers use the term 'patient', it would seem that the term 'customer' has infiltrated local government to a much greater extent than other public organisations.

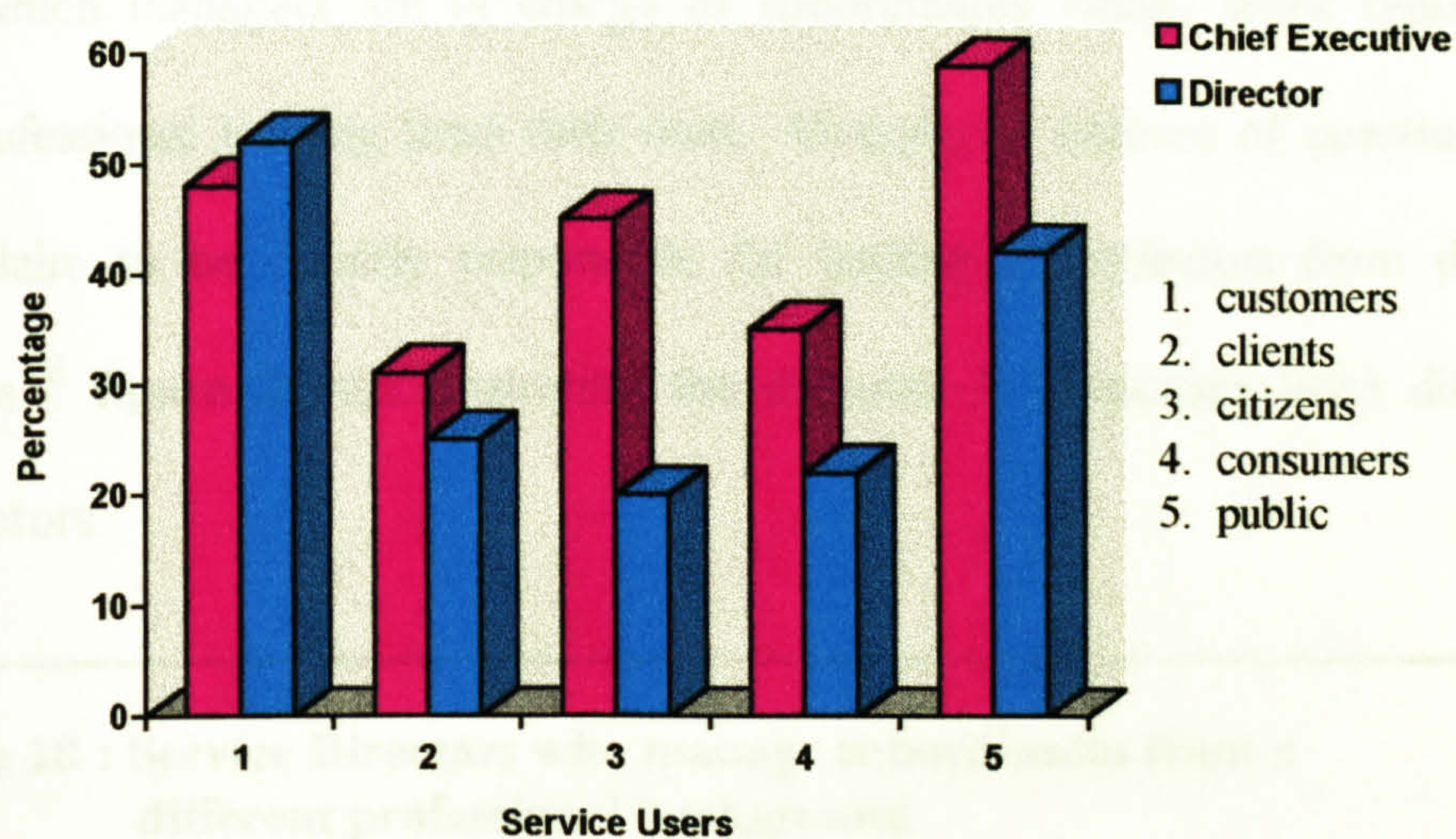
That said, however, local authority managers are the only respondents to refer to 'citizens', local authority chief executives three times as likely as directors to denote users by the term 'citizen'. *"We have placed the emphasis......on service users or customers. We made it clear, however, that local government is also concerned with citizens"* (SOLACE, 1994).

Figure 26: Terminology used by hospital trust and local authority managers when talking about service users



Finally, as **figure 27** shows, chief executives are more likely than directors to embrace traditional terminology when talking about users, adopting the terms 'public' and 'citizens'. Nevertheless, the former are also more likely to talk about 'clients' and 'consumers'.

Figure 27 : Terminology used by chief executives and directors when talking about service users



iv. Managing Professionals

One only has to look at Griffiths'(1983) Report to appreciate that part of the government's drive for reform involved attracting business managers to work in the public sector. As one local authority chief executive contended:

> *"the manager of an airport is not a pilot therefore in a local authority the manager of education services does not need to be a headteacher. We now need management not disciplinary skills. There has been a recognition that it is not necessarily essential, even a good thing, to have skills in a discipline you are managing. The role becomes instead one of making sure things happen - appropriate use of resources, ensuring services are delivered, monitoring what is happening and so on. It is nothing to do with the particular service and everything to do with management".*

Thus, in an era where it seems public managers are appointed for managerial skills rather than for professional expertise, it was considered interesting to investigate the extent to which managers are in charge of subordinates whose work requires a different professional training from their own. Overall, 83 percent of questionnaire managers claim to be directly responsible for leading subordinates from diverse backgrounds,[cii] **figure 28** demonstrating the diversity in responses from different service directors.

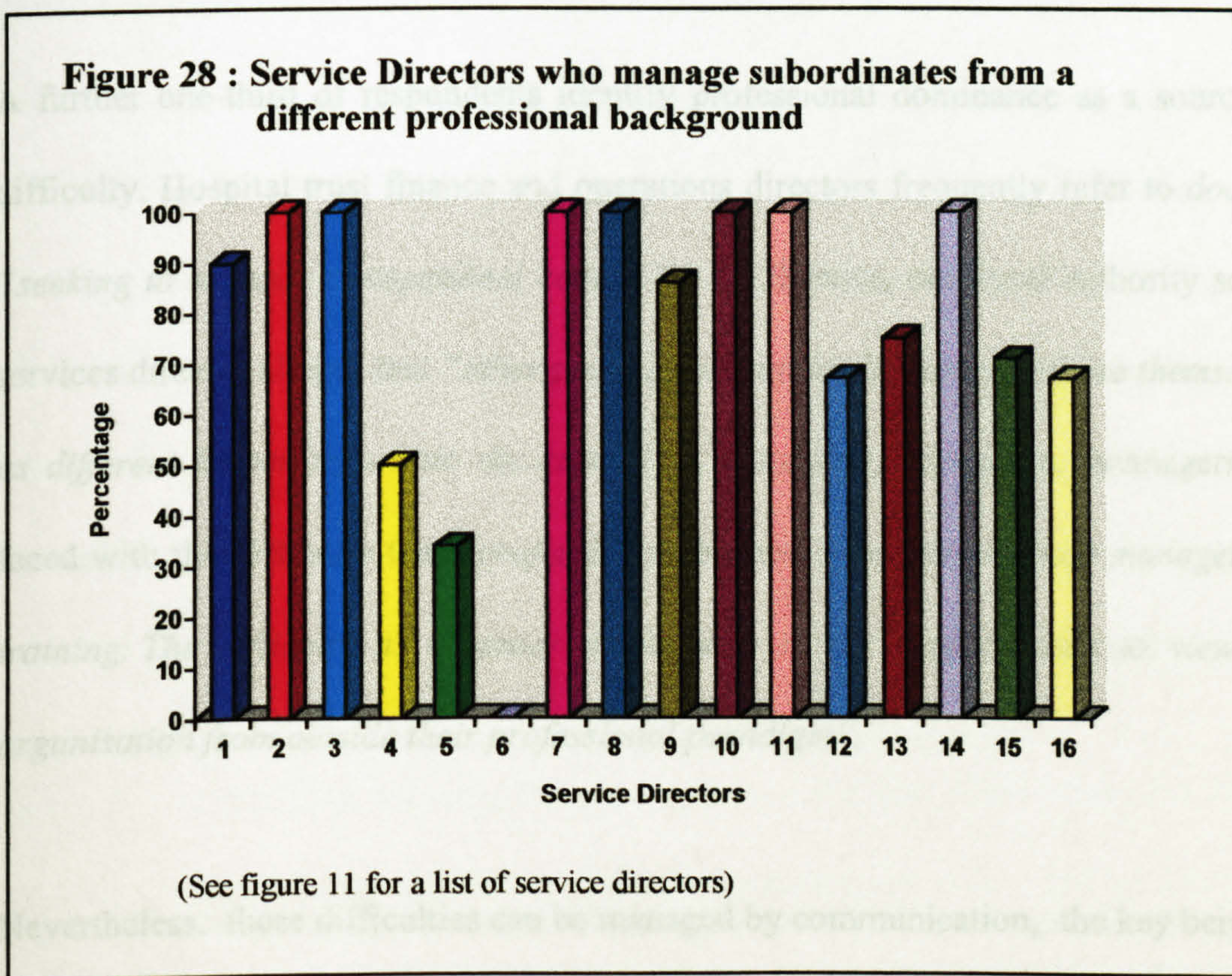


Figure 28 : Service Directors who manage subordinates from a different professional background

(See figure 11 for a list of service directors)

54.5 percent of respondents claim to have experienced no difficulties managing subordinates with different professional training.[ciii] Of the remainder, the majority refer to a lack of knowledge of their subordinates' work, resulting in *"an inability to*

discuss technical details on an equal footing". Given that there is a greater likelihood of hospital trust managers being in overall charge of specialist professionals, it is not surprising that they are nearly one-third more likely than local authority managers to refer to their lack of knowledge. *"I am a general manager therefore significant problems arise in managing professional issues".* Consequently, it is not uncommon for managers to have the *"wool pulled over (their) eyes".*

A further one-third of respondents identify professional dominance as a source of difficulty. Hospital trust finance and operations directors frequently refer to *doctors "seeking to exercise occupational control".* Likewise, one local authority social services director alleges that *"other professions (especially education) see themselves as different (superior) within the council".* In general, therefore, managers are faced with the difficulty that *"professionals become managers without management training. The difficulty as a senior manager is to get professionals to view the organisation from outside their professional paradigm".*

Nevertheless, these difficulties can be managed by communication, the key being to *"listen, discuss, analyse and resolve".* Respect must be given to *"individuals' professional attributes.......leave subordinates to contribute professionalist expertise to that agenda".* In other words, *"let him get on with his job - provide management support"* and accept that subordinates will *"give me the overall picture and the*

options". Furthermore, managers must *"emphasise one team spirit"* looking to *"joint problem solving".* Finally, conflicts of interest can be managed by *"occasionally pulling rank. The odd controlled explosion works wonders!"*

v. Networking

Like Gunn(1995), Walsh(1995) and LGMB(1996), 96 percent of questionnaire managers feel the need to network has increased.[civ] As one hospital trust's nursing director argues, *"staff expect me to be high profile within the organisation and I need to be because of my role, but I am also expected to be involved in community groups, provide professional advice to other organisations and contribute to national working groups etc. It is a skill to keep the balance right".* Interestingly, directors are more inclined than chief executives to argue that there has been an increased need to network. Perhaps this difference is due to the fact that chief executives, as heads of organisations, have always viewed networking as an essential part of their job, whereas directors have witnessed an increased need for networking since the implementation of CCT and community care.

Figure 29 outlines the percentages of time respondents claim to spend with public, private and voluntary organisations.

Interestingly, Scottish Office officers spend a staggering 95 percent of their contact time networking with public organisations. However, the local authority managers

differ remarkably from those in the LGMB(1996: 37) study, the latter managers more likely to work in partnership with voluntary organisations than other public and private organisations.[cv]

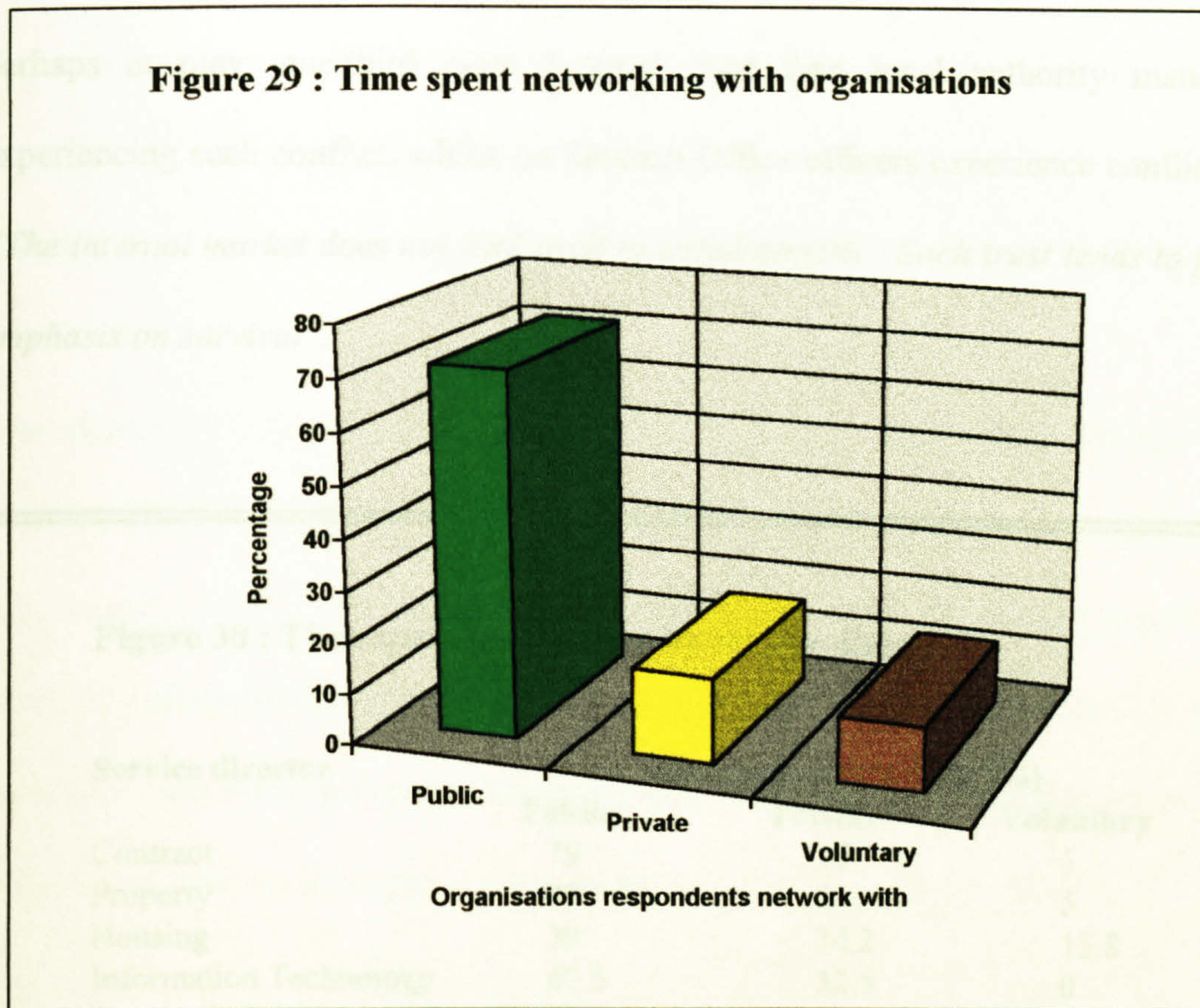


Figure 30 demonstrates the variety of time spent by different kinds of service directors with organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Whilst directors of leisure and recreation and social services claim to be most likely to work with voluntary organisations, colleagues in information technology, law and administration and planning departments appear to spend the most time with private organisations.

Although 95 percent of questionnaire respondents feel facilitating co-operation between their organisation and others is a key part of their management job,[cvi] 59 percent also contend that conflict exists between collaborating with fellow organisations and competing against them.[cvii] The influence of the internal market is perhaps at play, one-third more hospital trust than local authority managers experiencing such conflict, whilst no Scottish Office officers experience conflict.[cviii] *"The internal market does not lend itself to collaboration. Each trust tends to place emphasis on survival".*

Figure 30 : Time spent networking by service directors

Service director	Time spent networking (%)		
	Public	Private	Voluntary
Contract	79	16	5
Property	90	5	5
Housing	70	14.2	15.8
Information Technology	67.5	32.5	0
Corporate Strategy	66	16	18
Leisure and Recreation	56.7	16.7	26.7
Law and Administration	70	25	5
Finance	86.9	9.3	3.8
Education	78.6	10	11.4
Social Services	56	17	27
Hospital Planning	25	25	50
Nursing	67.5	15	17.5
Human Resources	80	20	0

The majority of respondents feel that competition is inevitable,[cix] due to the *"increasing competitive arena of public services provision"*. Competition has arisen with organisations *"chasing the same £ to survive"* and sharing resources. In the NHS, for example, medical staff are shared by competing hospital trusts which *"causes problems"*. Furthermore, within local authorities, not only are fellow departments competing for limited resources but also for *"elected members attention"*. Thus, managers are increasingly working in *"win-win"* environments.

Almost one-third of respondents blame the contracting environment for increased conflict. Whilst the *"NHS internal market undermines the collaborative culture in NHS work"*, CCT *"introduces some conflict of interest"*. As one local authority Head of Information Services contends, *"with the eventual evolution of CCT, authorities are wary of loosing advantage and of providing the private sector with information likely to be useful to competitors"*.

8.5 percent of managers contend that they work in organisations with unique priorities and interests, which may lead to conflict. For example, organisations have *"different political agendas or organisational aims and values"* and *"different methods of operation, different budgeting pressures and cycles, different Public Relations approaches"*.

Finally, of the remaining sources of conflict, local government reorganisation was mentioned in so far as there was a change in culture from regions to districts. Furthermore, *"policy in all agencies requires cooperation and partnership, but this is often a veneer, masking continuing self interest and pre set agenda by individual agencies".* Finally, one firemaster claims that although he collaborates with other emergency services, conflict arises because collaboration is *"at the expense of gaining credit for our input and therefore a diminishing of our public image".*

Nevertheless, 35.4 percent of managers have experienced no conflict collaborating with fellow organisations and competing against them, the majority view simply being that competition is absent. Not surprisingly, none of the Scottish Office officers or firemasters experience any competition. Furthermore, one-quarter of local authority managers claim that *"government departments aren't really in competition with each other",* whilst 16.7 percent of hospital trust managers *"are not in direct significant competition with any other NHS organisation for reasons of geography".*

Furthermore, one-quarter of respondents actually work in partnership with other organisations. *"Partnerships are essential. We are not a panacea for all provision".* Substantially more local authority managers work in partnership than hospital trust colleagues, perhaps *"due to local government reorganisation (where) such exchange of information is necessary until each new council improves its skills mix".* For

example, the Head of Corporate Policy in one local authority believes collaboration is a necessity because *"the unitary authorities are new and it is helpful to share best practice"*. However, one director points out that whilst *"policy in all agencies requires cooperation and partnership......this is often in veneer, masking continuing self interest and pre-set agendas by individual agencies"*.

Managers also contend that there is considerable common ground between organisations, given that there is *"one political/client to serve"*. Furthermore, competition may actually improve service provision. *"In health care the primary objective is to provide service to patients therefore it should be recognised that both competition and collaboration in different areas can be helpful"* . Finally, managers argue that it is necessary that they *"understand each others' organisations"*. However, as the Head of Planning and Development in one local authority points out, *"relationships are not necessarily consistent. On one issue we may collaborate with an organisation. On another we will be competing against the same organisation"*.

vi. Does the public sector still have a distinct ethos?

> *"Private sector techniques can't be expected to provide the panacea for modern public administration because, in spite of superficial likenesses, the public domain and the private sector are profoundly different from each other"* (Kingdom, 1990:22).

Although a reading of much of the recent public management literature suggests that *"the ethos of public service has been eroded; public service personnel are expected to embrace a new commercialised outlook irrespective of the service in which they are employed"* (Wilson, 1995:14), 92 percent of questionnaire respondents believe that the public sector still has distinct values.[cx] The majority characterise these values as public service, social responsibility, the public good and equity.[cxi] *"A social conscience exists which is often missing from the private sector".* Several managers highlight that *"provision is according to need rather than ability to pay".* Thus, *"there is a sense of duty to the community, especially helping people who are less advantaged and not part of the market forces world - the old, the poor, the disabled etc.".* Unlike the private sector, therefore, the public sector *"can't say 'no' to people".* Speaking on behalf of the majority of respondents, one local authority director identifies *"service, commitment and loyalty"* as distinct public values. Whilst *"old fashioned values they are still there".*

A further 23.9 percent of managers claim that the public sector has the unique values of *"openness", "integrity"* and *"honesty",* whilst 14.5 percent highlight the unique characteristics of *"democracy"* and *"accountability".*

Interestingly, similar proportions of contract directors and directors of traditional local authority and hospital trust services believe that the public sector still has distinct values. Thus, although the methods of service delivery have changed under

CCT and contracting-out, it would seem that traditional public sector values still hold.

Thus, whilst the questionnaire managers' language and perceptions of the public sector may have changed, they ultimately believe in the purposes underlying the formation of the public sector. Although the language used by public sector managers may reflect private sector terminology, it should not necessarily be assumed that their attitudes and outlook are comparative to colleagues managing private sector organisations.

Indeed, although the majority of questionnaire managers contend that they have witnessed an increased use of business management practices in their work, these managers also maintain that business and commercial skills are of least importance to them in their daily work. Instead, managers give greater weight to communication, decision-making, leadership, people management, analysis, political, problem solving and negotiation skills.

vii. Public sector reform: observation and questionnaire findings compared

Although 90 percent of questionnaire managers contend that there has been an increase in the use of private sector techniques in their work, an analysis of the work undertaken by the observation managers questions the actual impact of change. From the outset, the questionnaire managers identify resource constraints and

subsequently an increased focus on value-for-money as primary ways in which the public sector has changed. However, with the exception of the two observed contract directors, it would seem that although the availability of resources ultimately influenced just what managers could do, the impact of value-for-money on the day-to-day running of the organisation or department was relatively implicit.

Like the observation managers, the majority of questionnaire managers had performance indicators in use. Again, however, relatively little of the observed managers' daily work strictly revolved around performance issues. When performance issues arose, it was generally in the more traditional sense of the provision of quality services.

The majority of questionnaire managers claim to spend between one and two hours per week on budget management, perhaps slightly more than what was actually observed. However, it soon became clear from the observation research that the time spent on budget management ultimately depended on the time of year at which managers were observed. Consequently, the fact that the questionnaires were issued in January suggests that the questionnaire managers' judgement may have been clouded by the fact they were currently caught up in budgetary issues. Nevertheless, the questionnaire research demonstrated that contract managers thought they spent more time on budget management than directors of more traditional services, this finding supported by the observation research.

However, managers' perceptions of public sector change and the observation findings begin to differ when the terminology used to refer to service users is examined. Although a significant proportion of questionnaire managers still claim to refer to service users as the 'public', the majority contend they use the more commercial term 'customer'. The experiences of observation, however, suggested that the observed managers continued to address service users as the 'public'. Moreover, the questionnaire research showed that of all the public managers questioned, local authority managers are most likely to adopt commercial terms when referring to service users. Observation, however, demonstrated that it was the hospital trust contract director who was most likely to deviate from traditional terminology when referring to patients, 'clients' and 'cases' frequently adopted.

Finally, whilst the questionnaire managers seem to be of the opinion that the need to network has increased, the experiences of observation showed that with the exception of the quango manager and the hospital trust contract director, managers spent insignificant amounts of time with persons outside their organisation. Moreover, although three-fifths of questionnaire respondents claim that conflict has arisen due to organisations being required to compete and collaborate with each other, in reality the hospital trust contract director was the only observed manager who explicitly highlighted this danger.

Thus, a comparison of the questionnaire and observation findings suggests that public sector reform has taken off at a more rhetorical rather than fundamental level. Although 90 percent of questionnaire managers claim that they have witnessed an increase in the use of business management techniques in their work, seven weeks of shadowing senior public managers came up with few indications that public managers were adopting business techniques in the day-to-day running of their organisations. Not surprisingly, the exceptions to the rule were the local authority and hospital trust contract directors, these managers working in jobs created by government legislation intent on injecting competition and value-for-money concepts into the public sector. For the remaining managers, it would seem that the impact of change has been much less radical, implicit rather than explicit. For example, although managers may not directly deal with performance issues in their day-to-day work, performance issues may underlie the decisions they make, given that an increasing number of public managers now face appraisals and performance reviews.

Nevertheless, whilst a comparison of the observation and questionnaire research suggests that public sector reform occurred at a rhetorical rather than at a fundamental level, it must be remembered that the conclusions drawn relate to the sample of managers chosen, care taken not to generalise for all public managers.

It should also be pointed out that this research was conducted in 1997, eighteen years after the election of the Conservative government which began a process of

public sector reform. As reform was being implemented, for example, the introduction of performance indicators, structures of devolved management and so on, the actual daily work of public managers would undoubtedly have been affected. For example, the hospital trust contract director underwent a change in role when clinical directorates were first introduced into their hospital trust, some of this manager's responsibilities passing to clinical directors. However, given that the majority of public organisations now have devolved management in place, systems of performance measurement in place and so on, public sector change has had time to settle down and managers have perhaps become accustomed to it. In other words, it would seem that the systems and structures of devolved management and performance measurement are in place without necessarily impacting on the daily work of managers.

6.4 CONCLUSION

By comparing managers' perceptions of their work with the characteristics and work patterns observed by the researcher, it soon became apparent that managers appear to over-estimate the number of hours that they work. Furthermore, although managers think they have a lot of control over the design of their working day and frequently determine the duration of their activities, observation suggests that the needs of others shape the public managers' working day.

Consequently, it would seem that public managers have been viewing their work through *'rose-tinted spectacles'*. Whilst they may think they determine the pattern of their work, reality suggests otherwise, lending support to earlier research presuppositions that managers are poor estimators of their time (Carlson, 1951; Burns, 1954; Horne and Lupton, 1965; Hartley et al, 1977). Moreover, the differences between what managers think they do and what was actually observed, supports Mintzberg's(1990) conclusions about the 'Folklore and Fact' surrounding managerial work.

As chapter two explained, one of the most profound criticisms of the existing managerial work literature is that little attention has been paid to the wider context in which managers work. Hence, the questionnaire was used as a tool to begin to examine wider environmental influences on the public sector managerial job. At the simplest level, an analysis of the similarities and differences in the responses of questionnaire managers showed that the patterns and characteristics of public sector managerial work were affected by the level and type of management job, the organisation in which the manager worked and the geographical location of their organisation. At a more complex level, managers were asked to comment on the effects broader environmental variances had on their work. Consequently, it soon became apparent that managers working in different public organisations and at different levels in the organisation were affected to differing degrees by, for example, demographic and technological change.

Thus, an analysis of the questionnaire responses demonstrated that the patterns and characteristics of managerial work were systematically linked to the wider context surrounding individual managers. Consequently, the so-called 'typical' public manager covers a diverse range of work patterns and characteristics. For example, the 'typical' questionnaire respondent spends 29.1 percent of their weekly working time with management subordinates, the time spent ranging from 0 to 85 percent. Furthermore, although the average questionnaire respondent spends 9.5 percent of their time in committees, anything between 0 and 50 percent of weekly working time could be spent in committees. Such disparities surely call into question any attempt to make generalisations about the nature and pattern of work of the 'typical' public manager.

Comparing the patterns and characteristics of public sector managerial work emerging from both the observation and questionnaire research with existing managerial work research undertaken in the private sector, began to indicate that perhaps the sector in which a manager works impacts on their work patterns. For example, private managers spent significantly more time than private colleagues in scheduled meetings. In addition, the public managers spent significantly less time conducting tours than the business managers. Finally, the public managers spent substantially more time working within their organisations, private sector managers much more likely to network outside their organisation.

However, it remains contestable whether public sector managerial work is as brief and fragmented as private sector work. Whilst experiences from observation suggest this is certainly the case, the managers themselves believe they have more control over their work than business colleagues. Interestingly, compared to directors of traditional hospital trust and local authority services, the contract directors who responded to the questionnaire had more control over their working day, experienced fewer interruptions and were twice as likely to direct attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time. Thus, contract directors, whose working environments are arguably representative of business environments, exhibited less brevity and fragmentation in their workloads than directors of traditional public services.

Consequently, it would seem that the sector in which a manager works does influence their work, although one must be careful about making generalisations given all that has been said before!

The questionnaire research quite clearly demonstrates that public managers believe the public sector they are working in today differs radically from the one that existed pre-1979, change driven primarily by central government policies and the introduction of private sector styles of management. Overall, managers are quicker to point to the negative rather than positive aspects of change, highlighting the difficulties of transferring business management practices into a sector whose culture and values are distinct from the private sector. Nevertheless, public managers'

perceptions of today's public sector appear to confirm NPM arguments that public and private sector managerial work is increasingly converging.

However convincing these managers' arguments may sound, perhaps change has merely occurred at a rhetorical rather than at a structural level. Managers' perceptions may well have been influenced by countless articles in professional journals, newspapers and public management texts which espouse the principles of NPM. Perhaps managers have merely 'jumped on the bandwagon', using 'business jargon' because that is what academics think effective managers are doing.

Consequently, a comparison of the questionnaire managers' perceptions of change with the content of the observed managers' work suggests that although the observed managers were generally working in environments which recognised the Conservative government's desire to become more businesslike, very few of the day-to-day tasks actually undertaken by these managers gave any inclination that their work was driven by business concerns. That said, however, the work undertaken by the two observed contract directors resembled many of the explanations given by the questionnaire managers as to the ways in which public and private sector managerial work had converged.

Nevertheless, a comparison of the questionnaire and observation research suggests that:

"There is value in a healthy scepticism about some new management reforms and for that matter the extent of change that has occurred....There is no doubt that fashion and glitzy marketing have played a part in the unfolding of the agenda of change. Hunch, guesswork and ill-considered promotion of 'best' practice from elsewhere have also played a role" (Stoker, 1997:233).

Finally, *"public management is not only about increasing effectiveness and efficiency but it is also a matter of legality and legitimacy, of more than strictly businesslike values"* (Kickert and Koppenjan, 1997:38). Even if claims are justified that public and private sector managerial work are converging, it does not necessarily follow that private management methods are superior. *"The entrepreneurial headmaster or hospital trust general manager acting in macho style are incongruous parodies of effective business managers"* (Jones and Stewart, 1995:8). The majority of questionnaire managers clearly point out that learning is a two way process, private managers equally as likely to learn from the experiences of public managers. Furthermore, the majority of respondents warn against the wholesale adoption of business techniques given that the public and private sectors have different cultures and values. Thus, yet another paradox of the NPM becomes apparent. Whilst public managers may use language commonly associated with business, it would seem that their outlook and attitudes diverge from those of private sector managers.

i	Appendix 4	Table 1
ii	Appendix 4	Table 2
iii	Appendix 4	Table 3
iv	Appendix 4	Table 4
v	Appendix 4	Table 5
vi	Appendix 4	Table 6
vii	Appendix 4	Table 7
viii	Appendix 4	Table 8
ix	Appendix 4	Table 9
x	Appendix 4	Table 10
xi	Appendix 4	Table 11
xii	Appendix 4	Table 13
xiii	Appendix 4	Table 14
xiv	Appendix 4	Table 15
xv	Appendix 4	Table 16
xvi	Appendix 4	Table 17
xvii	Appendix 4	Table 18
xviii	Appendix 4	Table 18
xix	Appendix 4	Table 21
xx	Appendix 4	Table 1
xxi	Appendix 4	Table 6
xxii	Appendix 4	Table 7
xxiii	Appendix 4	Table 8
xxiv	Appendix 4	Table 10
xxv	Appendix 4	Table 13
xxvi	Appendix 4	Table 15
xxvii	Appendix 4	Table 18
xxviii	Appendix 4	Tables 1-5
xxix	Appendix 4	Table 7
xxx	Appendix 4	Table 8
xxxi	Appendix 4	Table 9
xxxii	Appendix 4	Table 10
xxxiii	Appendix 4	Table 11
xxxiv	Appendix 4	Tables 13&14
xxxv	Appendix 4	Table 15
xxxvi	Appendix 4	Table 20
xxxvii	Appendix 4	Table 22
xxxviii	Appendix 4	Table 21
xxxix	Appendix 4	Table 1
xl	Appendix 4	Tables 3&5
xli	Appendix 4	Table 10
xlii	Appendix 4	Table 18
xliii	Appendix 4	Table 19
xliv	Appendix 4	Table 21
xlv	Appendix 4	Table 22
xlvi	Appendix 4	Table 1
xlvii	Appendix 4	Table 7
xlviii	Appendix 4	Table 8
xlix	Appendix 4	Table 10
l	Appendix 4	Table 15
li	Appendix 4	Table 19
lii	Appendix 4	Table 18
liii	Appendix 4	Table 12

liv	Appendix 4	Table 23
lv	Appendix 4	Table 23
lvi	Appendix 4	Table 23
lvii	Appendix 4	Table 26
lviii	Appendix 4	Table 24
lix	Appendix 4	Table 27
lx	Appendix 4	Table 25
lxi	Appendix 4	Table 25
lxii	Appendix 4	Table 25
lxiii	Appendix 4	Table 28
lxiv	Appendix 4	Table 29
lxv	Appendix 4	Table 30
lxvi	Appendix 4	Table 30
lxvii	Appendix 4	Table 30
lxviii	Appendix 4	Table 31
lxix	Appendix 4	Table 31
lxx	Appendix 4	Table 32
lxxi	Appendix 4	Table 32
lxxii	Appendix 4	Table 33
lxxiii	Appendix 4	Table 33
lxxiv	Appendix 4	Table 33
lxxv	Appendix 4	Table 34
lxxvi	Appendix 4	Tables 35&36
lxxvii	Appendix 4	Tables 37&38
lxxviii	Appendix 4	Tables 39&40
lxxix	Appendix 4	Table 41
lxxx	Appendix 4	Table 41
lxxxi	Appendix 4	Table 42
lxxxii	Appendix 4	Table 43
lxxxiii	Appendix 4	Table 46
lxxxiv	Appendix 4	Table 44
lxxxv	Appendix 4	Table 45
lxxxvi	Appendix 4	Table 47
lxxxvii	Appendix 4	Table 48
lxxxviii	Appendix 4	Table 49
lxxxix	Appendix 4	Table 50
xc	Appendix 4	Table 51
xci	Appendix 4	Table 52
xcii	Appendix 4	Table 53
xciii	Appendix 4	Table 54
xciv	Appendix 4	Table 55
xcv	Appendix 4	Table 56
xcvi	Appendix 4	Table 57
xcvii	Appendix 4	Table 59
xcviii	Appendix 4	Table 58
xcix	Appendix 4	Table 61
c	Appendix 4	Table 60
ci	Appendix 4	Table 62
cii	Appendix 4	Table 63
ciii	Appendix 4	Table 64
civ	Appendix 4	Table 65
cv	Appendix 4	Table 66
cvi	Appendix 4	Table 67

cvii Appendix 4 Table 68

cviii Appendix 4 Table 68

cix Appendix 4 Table 70

cx Appendix 4 Table 71

cxi Appendix 4 Table 72

CHAPTER 7

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

Where do we go from here?

"For management scholars.......the public sector remains an important site of analysis, despite a pattern of recent neglect by the discipline" (Ferlie et al, 1997:243).

7.1 THE JOURNEY

"There is much theorising about what the manager should be doing, both in private and public sector organisations, but little empirical evidence to demonstrate, or agreement on, what managers actually do" (Lawton and Rose, 1994: 197).

As chapter two demonstrates, one of the fundamental flaws of the managerial work literature is that no single, large scale empirical study has been undertaken on the nature of the public sector management job. Instead, research has been predominantly private sector based, public managers generally featuring in studies as 'token gestures'. Where research has taken place in the public sector, it is usually American and focuses on specific types of public managers, for example, education managers and naval executives. On the contrary, any accounts of public sector managerial work in Britain tend to rely on personal experiences and anecdotes rather than on empirical evidence. Moreover, such accounts are predominantly from the perspective of local authority chief executives.

Thus, in order to gain a previously neglected insight into the patterns and characteristics of public sector managerial work, seven senior public managers were observed in their workplace for a one week period. Moreover, three hundred and forty-seven questionnaires were issued to directors, chief executives and their

equivalent working in diverse public organisations, the aim being to examine managers' understanding of their work patterns and characteristics.

A second fundamental flaw with the managerial work literature is that researchers disregard the impact of wider environmental influences on the management job. Rather than examine the work undertaken by individual managers in relation to their own immediate contexts, existing managerial work studies tend to devise typologies of managerial work and assume that they apply to all managers, irrespective of the context in which they work. Breaking with tradition, therefore, an integral part of this research involved an exploration of the ways in which the public managers' surrounding context affected their work. In other words, an insight was gained into the extent to which the pattern, characteristics and content of the observed managers' work was contingent upon the wider context in which the managers worked.

Thirdly, by describing management activities and then subsequently categorising these in the form of a typology of roles, existing researchers do not engage in any explanation as to why managers 'do what they do in the way that they do'. Consequently, this researcher endeavoured to move away from the common practice of devising a list of managerial job types and stereotyping managers into a particular job type based on a one week observation of their work. Instead, a combination of observation and discussions with the observed managers began to shed some light

onto the content of the public sector managerial job, a number of key tasks identified that affected different managers to differing degrees.

Unlike the managerial work literature which neglects the wider context in which public managers work, chapter three demonstrates that the NPM is obsessed with context, identifying key elements of reform which have affected managers, such as the introduction of value-for-money and market mechanisms. However, the NPM fail to show how this context maps onto the actual work undertaken by public managers. In other words, no obvious connection is made between what managers do and the context in which they work.

Furthermore, context appears to be examined in the broadest sense, the NPM assuming that all public managers are equally affected by reform, failing to recognise that different managers are affected by reform in different ways, contingent on the specific environments in which they work. As chapter two concluded, the NPM arguably reproduce the genericism of the existing managerial work literature, neglecting the important point that management jobs differ.

Hence, a final objective of this research was to look at the extent to which managers working in diverse jobs in the public sector had been affected by public sector reform. Whilst observation provided the researcher with firsthand experience of ways in which reform had affected public managers, the questionnaires provided an

insight into managers' attitudes and values towards public sector reform, allowing conclusions to begin to be drawn as to whether public sector reform has been rhetorical or fundamental.

Thus, in order to fill the empirical and theoretical gaps in the managerial work and NPM literatures, this researcher embarked on a long journey five years ago, the eventual destination being to provide an insight into the previously neglected area of public sector managerial work. Throughout this journey, a conscious attempt was made to correct the main deficiency of the existing literatures, that is, the failure to examine managerial work and public sector reform in relation to the contexts in which individual managers work. Only by observing and communicating with the very people who run public organisations, can a full understanding be grasped of the nature of public sector managerial work.

In this concluding chapter, attention will initially be focused on examining the theoretical and research gaps in both the NPM and managerial work literatures. Thereafter, the focus of attention will turn to the practical implications of this research for those responsible for training public managers. This chapter will then conclude with an outline of some of the main issues that will confront future researchers who choose to examine public sector managerial work.

7.2 THEORY AND RESEARCH GAPS

7.2.1 The NPM Literature: A Critique

> *"Up to the mid-1980s the dominant problem in terms of management practice and theory was one of parochialism and isolation within the public sector. There was a too ready assumption of difference. Since the mid-1980s, the problem has been the overmechanistic transfer of practice and concepts from the private to the public sectors. There is here too ready an assumption of similarity"* (Ferlie et al, 1997:226).

Undoubtedly, the main downfall of the NPM literature is that inflated claims have been made about public management, without any substantial research ever having been undertaken. At most, case studies have emerged that look at particular parts of the public sector. However, as chapter three established, case studies selected by Farnham and Horton(1993) and Harrow and Willcocks(1992) do not *"fit happily with the definition given of major public sector organisations"* (Prior, 1993: 449). Consequently, the NPM appears to be no more than an abstracted empiricism of the ways in which public sector reform has affected managerial work. Grandiloquent generalisations have been made for all managers, regardless of the organisation in which they work, their job level and so forth.

Whilst much under the ambit of the NPM would appear to amount to a theorisation of 'new' ideas about public sector management, some NPM writings dangerously purport to define what public managers actually do, whilst others take a reflective stance and look at what public managers ought to do. Whatever account of managerial work is given, the NPM literature infers the nature of public

management by taking limited examples of public management, conflating these and then classifying them as NPM.

It therefore follows that Hood's(1991) seven doctrines of NPM are no more than misleading and synoptic statements, pulling together different managerial practices and contexts and lumping them together under the umbrella term 'NPM'. Indeed, Hood has been criticised by academics who contend that there is nothing 'new' about the NPM. Many of the management principles deliberated under the term NPM are, after all, similar to principles espoused by the Plowden Report(1961), the Fulton Report(1968), the Guillebaud Committee(1956) and the Cogwheel Report(1967). Nonetheless, although performance measurement, delegated management, value-for-money and so forth are not breathtakingly 'new' concepts, the key difference would appear to be that these aspects of management have been exposed to more scrutiny and publicity in the 1980s and 1990s.

As chapter three contended, the hype surrounding public sector reform in the 1980s and 1990s may well have been the consequence of a conscious decision by public administration academics to examine recent trends in public management to safeguard their livelihood. At a time when the Thatcher government was intent on subjecting the public sector to policies and procedures traditionally found in business organisations, academics replaced the outdated concept of 'public administration' with the in vogue title 'public management'. Indeed, one only has to

look at the number of 'public management' texts that were published in the last twenty years, to appreciate the change in focus from 'administration' to 'management'. Nonetheless, academics such as Midwinter(1990) contend that the change in terminology was superficial and many of the NPM arguments would have been equally at home in public administration courses.

Although Hood(1991) has been criticised by academics who contend that there is nothing 'New' about the NPM, these academics have not provided a more detailed, positive account of public sector managerial work. Thus, it can perhaps be inferred that an evolution of a positive account of public management is far more difficult and complex than simply refuting ideal types.

As chapter three sought to demonstrate, the public management literature has been quick to allege that public sector reform is the outcome of a verbalisation of interests of right-wing politicians and NPM academics. If a realistic account of public sector reform is to be adopted, this researcher strongly contends that public sector reform is viewed as the consequence of circumstances. Reform was ultimately driven by the 1970s economic crisis, which led to reduced resources and subsequently public expenditure cutbacks. The implication, therefore, is that public sector change would have occurred anyway, regardless of the publicity given to it by NPM academics.

Moreover, the observation research undertaken in this thesis demonstrated that public sector management practice does not necessarily accord with NPM claims. For example, Hood's(1991) second and third doctrines of the NPM were, respectively, *"explicit standards and measures of performance"* and *"greater emphasis on output controls"*. However, although the majority of observed managers were working in organisations with established systems of performance measurement in place, the only managers directly caught up in performance issues were the hospital trust and local authority contract directors.

Likewise, Hood's final doctrine was *"stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use"*. Although budget management was an essential function of the observed managers' jobs, a concern with resource allocation appeared to be secondary to most managers' work on a daily basis, the time spent ultimately depending on the time of year during which the manager was observed. Furthermore, whilst NPM rhetoric suggests that there has been a move to consumerism, evidence suggests that the change in language has been fairly limited, the observed managers still referring to service users as 'citizens', 'patients' and the 'public'.

In addition, although academics such as Gunn(1995) and Walsh(1995) contended that public managers were increasingly being required to network, the consequence of government reforms which bring together purchasers, suppliers and contractors in

an internal market, the experiences of observation show that managers spent relatively little time communicating with people outwith their own organisation.

When the observation and questionnaire findings were compared, it became immediately apparent that NPM claims would appear to have taken off at a rhetorical rather than a fundamental level. Although 90 percent of questionnaire respondents claim to have witnessed an increase in the use of business management techniques in their work, seven weeks of shadowing senior public managers came up with few indications that public managers were adopting business techniques in the day-to-day running of their organisations. Not surprisingly, the exceptions to the rule were the local authority and hospital trust contract directors, these managers working in jobs created by government legislation intent on injecting competition and value-for-money concepts into the public sector. For the remaining managers, it would seem that the impact of change has been much less radical, implicit rather than explicit.

Furthermore, there was a strong belief amongst questionnaire respondents that although they could learn from private sector managers, the reverse was also true. *"It's not necessarily a case of public verus private. Whoever has the best methods should be copied".*

Moreover, although the NPM literature suggests that the public sector ethos has been eroded, 92 percent of questionnaire respondents believe that the public sector still has distinct values. Of greater significance, similar proportions of contract and non-contract directors think that the public sector still has distinct values. Thus, although the methods of service delivery have changed under CCT, it would seem that traditional public sector values still hold.

Finally, although the majority of questionnaire respondents contend that they have witnessed an increased use of business management practices in their work, they also maintain that business and commercial skills are of least importance to them in their daily work.

Thus, whilst the language used by public sector managers may reflect private sector terminology, it should not necessarily be assumed that their attitudes and outlook are comparative to colleagues managing in private organisations. Public sector managers may use available and transactionable language to 'play the system', that is, to both defend their area of work and to get what they want, yet still believe in traditional public sector values.

By using a combination of observation and questionnaire research this thesis is, to date, the most comprehensive piece of research ever to be undertaken on public sector managerial work in Scotland. The empirical evidence emanating from this

research, an innovation in itself, strongly challenges the over generalised and unsubstantiated claims that NPM academics have made about public sector management practice.

Moreover, this research challenges the NPM's ignorance of the ways in which managers working in diverse parts of the public sector have been affected by reform. The NPM's examination of context simply amounts to the identification of key major elements of reform espoused by government. However, by focusing on the political/ideological context, the NPM overlook the ways in which the manager's context maps onto the work they undertake. In other words, there is no correlation between what managers do and the context in which they work. Thus, it would seem that the NPM's obsession with context amounts to no more than a generalisation of context, rather than a legitimate characterisation of public management practice.

For example, Farnham and Horton(1993,1996) and Willcocks and Harrow (1992)*"provide a general overview of the context of change in public sector management"* (Prior, 1993: 449). After giving a fairly descriptive account of the impact of government reforms on public sector management, using specialised parts of the public sector as case studies, *"the role of the public sector manager is simply reduced to an implementor of private sector practices"* (ibid:452). Thus, no attempt is made to look at the actual work undertaken by public managers, let alone

demonstrate the linkages between what managers do and the context in which they work.

Thus, the NPM can be criticised for identifying reforms and assuming that they affect the work of all public managers, irrespective of the type of work that they undertake. However, as the observation of seven public managers demonstrated, there would seem to be a direct link between the work of contract directors and the introduction of management practices from the private sector, a link which is much more subtle in the working practices of the other managers who were observed. Contract directors work in positions that have been created by change. These managers become caught up in performance measurement and management and the need to achieve value-for-money, the survival of their organisations clearly dependent on them producing high quality services at the lowest possible price. On the contrary, a senior local authority accountant's job will remain relatively unaffected by public sector reform, their primary role continuing to be one of monitoring accounts.

Thus, this research reduces the NPM to no more than a simplistic homogenisation of the variety and diversity of management practices within the public sector. Only by considering the wider contexts in which individual public managers work, will future research into public sector managerial work bring out the diversity and variety in the public sector.

Misguided generalisations about public sector management practice may well be indicative of the tradition of research methods used when studying public sector managerial work. In general, there has been a noticeable absence of empirical research, reliance placed on academics' perceptions of the impact of reform on the public sector managerial job. Where research has been conducted in Britain, it has tended to focus on one specific aspect of managing in the public sector, rather than on the content and characteristics of managerial work as a whole. Even then, case studies have tended to be undertaken in local government to the detriment of other public organisations. Thus, there is not a strong research tradition of looking across public sector management practice.

Where case studies and observation have been conducted, the researcher's ability to examine the impact of context on the management job is severely curtailed. Both research methods result in micro studies being undertaken, the researcher becoming immersed in a particular context, to the detriment of reflecting on context. The consequence is illustrative and exploratory studies, severely limited by what they can illustrate. The frequently quoted account of the hospital trust contract director's work explains this point succinctly. During the observation week, this manager spent a considerable proportion of time in contract negotiations. Had this manager been observed just two months later, the observer would have obtained a completely different picture of their work, contract negotiations completed and contract monitoring beginning. Given that each observed manager specifically made a point

of telling the researcher that there was no such thing as a typical working week, surely all that has been obtained from observation is a one-week snapshot of the public managers' work as it stood at the time of observation, a snapshot which leads to generalisations over time.

Furthermore, when micro studies have been undertaken to look at managerial work, the underlying objective of these studies has generally been to provide evidence to support pre-given theorisations. In other words, any examination of public sector managerial work has, to date, focused on verification. Future research into managerial work should, however, concentrate on falsification. Researchers must begin to take a destructive look at the inherited baggage of both the managerial work and NPM literatures, the underlying intention being to falsify those generalisations which imply general characteristics.

Although micro studies have a role to play in falsification, surveys should also be used because they allow researchers to cover a larger scale and, consequently, enable the researcher to look across a wider context. Whilst the information obtained from surveys is not as detailed as that obtained from observation and case studies, it is wider in scope and has an important role to play in interrogating the themes of the NPM and managerial work literatures. Furthermore, whilst micro studies are immersed in a particular context, the breadth of surveys provide an opportunity to look at the continuities and discontinuities in a large data set.

In order to facilitate falsification, samples should be deliberately chosen which consciously seek to falsify generalisations. For example, this research deliberately compared the work undertaken by managers in 'traditional' hospital trust and local authority departments with that undertaken by contract managers. Whilst it would not be unreasonable to expect the former to remain relatively unaffected by management reforms implemented since 1979, their role continuing to be one of formulating policy, the latter surely face the challenges associated with competition.

The research undertaken in this thesis is again unique in the study of public sector management practice, the depth from observation balanced with the breadth of questionnaires.

> *"The management literature has largely been based on a priori assumptions about what managers actually do and what they should do to be successful......when the activities of practising managers are directly observed in their natural setting, the resulting profile differs markedly from the one reported in textbooks, periodicals and even sophisticated research using indirect measures such as questionnaires or interviews"* (Luthans et al, 1985:255-256).

As chapter four demonstrates, observation was initially favoured because it is one of the few methods that immediately struck as getting at 'real life' in the 'real world'. *"Although most often used as a qualitative technique, (observation) can also be standardised and systematised in a highly quantitative way"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993:118). Thus, whilst detailed numerical data was collected on the

characteristics of public sector managerial work, fuller, more descriptive accounts of the content of managerial work were also obtained.

Whilst the observation research provided an in-depth understanding of the content and characteristics of particular public sector managerial work, this researcher was concerned that they were gaining a relatively limited understanding of public sector managerial work as a whole, this understanding based on the work of only seven managers.

Consequently, the depth obtained from observation was balanced with the breadth of a questionnaire study, three hundred and forty-seven questionnaires issued to chief executives, directors and their equivalent working in public organisations throughout Scotland.

The observation and questionnaire research were given equal weight in this research study, triangulation pursued in order to negate the adverse effects of both methods. However, both methods were systematically linked and were not as separate as triangulation would seem to suggest. Given that relatively little concrete research had been undertaken into public sector managerial work, observation was initially undertaken to provide the researcher with an otherwise unobtainable account of just what public managers actually did during a working week. Based on the substantial amount of interpretative knowledge gained from the direct observations of seven

senior public managers, a questionnaire was devised which sought managers' opinions on their work patterns and characteristics, as well as on their perceptions of public sector reform. For example, observation suggested that public sector managerial work was characterised by periodic work cycles, allowing questions to be drawn up which examined whether managers believed that the pattern and content of their work differed at defined times in the year. Likewise, observation showed that managers spent the majority of their time working within their organisation, the questionnaire used as a tool to see whether managers believed that they were networking with others outwith their immediate organisation. Thus, the observation and questionnaire research were explicitly linked, the questionnaires used to interrogate the observational research across a wider context.

The research undertaken in this thesis should, therefore, set the precedent for future research undertaken into public sector managerial work. Only by balancing the depth obtained from observation and case studies with the breadth of survey research, can a pragmatic account of public sector managerial work be attained. Devising a framework for good research design must surely be at the forefront of future investigation into public sector management practice.

Part of good research design should involve looking at other elements to the research battery. Discourse analysis will provide an insight into the extent to which managerial ideas have permeated the language managers choose to use about

themselves. As this chapter has already argued, public managers may use available and transactionable language to get what they want, yet still believe in traditional public sector values. Only by rigorously analysing the discourse used by managers will an insight be gained into the extent to which public managers have absorbed the language of the NPM.

An examination of the language used in the questionnaire responses suggests that public sector managers have been acquiring a business vocabulary throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Words such as efficiency, value-for-money, economy, networking, markets and contracts frequently featured in the questionnaire responses. Thus, it may well be the case that across another nineteen years, the vocabulary used by public sector managers will structure their values and the way in which they work. Discourse analysis should, therefore, be a central tool in the design of future research projects into public sector managerial work. By examining the language used by managers an insight will be gained into whether the NPM is no more than a *"short-term managerial fad which will soon blow itself out......a limited managerial bubble with little enduring significance"* (Ferlie et al, 1997:245).

> *"What should come first:the theory or the data.......In the latter case there is the approach known as grounded theory"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993 : 35).

In future, research into public sector managerial work must move away from sustaining generalisations. Instead, attention should be focused on attaining an understanding of the diversity and complexity within the public sector. In order to

gain this analytical understanding of public management, empirical research must be undertaken, moving on from the current practice where much of the NPM is derived from a statement of intent as a statement of observation.

A combination of micro and macro research studies will allow diversity to emerge as well as allowing depth and immersion. By approaching research in this way, there will be a better chance of moving away from developing 'grand theories' to 'grounded theory'.

> *"For grounded theory first we GENERATE the data in the field and then start coding, constantly comparing incident to incident and incident to codes, while analyzing and generating theory. When the theory seems sufficiently grounded in a core variable and in an emerging integration of categories and properties, then the researcher may begin to review the literature in the substantive field and relate the literature to his own work in many ways"* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 39).

In spite of the fear that grounded theory *"may take more time, and researchers often have to live with the fear that nothing of interest will emerge from the work"* (Easterby-Smith et al, 1993: 36-37), it cannot be stressed enough that future research into public sector managerial work must evolve long range theories based on tentative generalisations, moving away from the 'grand theories' which currently exist. Furthermore, it is equally important that these grounded theories emanate from firstly, a greater diversity of research methods than those used in the managerial work literature and secondly, are more research orientated than the NPM literature.

> *"Public sector reform is very much on the political agenda in the 1990s. In an OECD survey all countries reported various ongoing efforts at public sector restructuring"* (Lane, 1997(a):283).

Although this research has attempted to provide an understanding of the effects of Conservative government reform on the work of public sector managers, the findings are in many respects already outdated, further public sector change is on New Labour's agenda. For example, Sam Galbraith was responsible for delivering a White Paper destined to reach the statute book in the year 2000, which *"included plans to scrap the internal market, removing the right of any GPs in Scotland to buy into secondary services"* (MacLeod, 1997).

Currently, local authorities are perhaps facing one of the biggest challenges in their existence, New Labour requiring them to demonstrate 'Best Value', *"the continuous search by a council to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of all its activities for the public"* (LGIU, 1997:5). Thus, Best Value can be seen as an extension of what has gone before, amounting to a *"system of service planning and delivery that will eventually replace CCT"* (Alexander, 1998: 8). Alexander (1998:8) identified five key characteristics of Best Value which clearly reinforce many of the ideas put forward by politicians in the 1980s and early 1990s:

1. a clear corporate view of what the authority seeks to achieve, how achievements will be measured, and what is expected of the authority by its stakeholders;
2. a requirement that authorities should review a proportion of their service activity each year on the assumption that the poorest performing areas should be reviewed first;
3. a fundamental review to establish performance and efficiency targets, with a presumption in favour of the continued use of competition and an acceptance of the value of benchmarking and user surveys;
4. a requirement to publish and report back on performance and to share performance information with other authorities;
5. a key role for the audit process ensuring the integrity of reviews and in certifying the information provided by councils.

Finally, 1999 will be remembered in history as the year in which a Scottish Parliament was established. Again, the public sector will undoubtedly be faced with changes and challenges, local authorities are already concerned that a Scottish Parliament will remove education from their domain of responsibility.

Thus, it would seem that public managers are currently being faced with a new set of challenges. However, much of New Labour's managerialist agenda would appear to be a continuation of policies promoted throughout the 1980s and early

1990s under the Conservative governments. For example, Best Value reads value-for-money. Consequently, attention should be focused on clarifying just what the NPM now stands for. Should the NPM be seen as an historical account of the challenges facing the public sector, or is New Labour thinking an extension of the management ideas initially brought to our attention in the 1980s and early 1990s by NPM academics?

7.2.2 The Managerial Work Literature: A Critique

> *"Management is more than the mechanical application of a set of competencies which take no account of the context within which organisations operate and the values that they espouse"* (Lawton and Rose, 1994 : 216).

What becomes immediately apparent from an examination of the managerial work and NPM literatures is that they are deeply flawed in complimentary ways, both neglecting the impact of the managers' wider context on their work.

> *"Managerial work is enormously complex, far more so than a reading of the traditional literature would suggest"* (Mintzberg, 1973:5).

Research into managerial work would appear to have begun out of a misconceived judgement of what the classical school of management was attempting to achieve. Although Fayol was initially criticised for 'armchair theorising', he arguably observed managerial work in as much, if not more depth, than researchers such as

Stewart and Mintzberg. Being a company managing director for a lengthy period would have given Fayol firsthand experience of the kinds of functions undertaken by managers.

Research into managerial work was also instigated by academics who criticised the classical school of management for focusing on what managers ought to do, rather than on what they actually do. Mintzberg was, however, flawed in his criticisms of classical theory, Fayol *"concerned not to list observable features of managers' behaviour, but to set out the management functions required by an undertaking"*(Hales, 1993:3).

In order to overcome the perceived deficiencies of classical theory, Mintzberg's underlying objective was to capture the essence of managerial work. Mintzberg's aspirations, however, amounted to no more than the emergence of a specialisation of managerial roles which exist in organisations. Thus, by providing an insight into what 'typical' managers do as opposed to the nature of managerial work, general conclusions have been preferred over more guarded and specific conclusions. Indeed, the tradition of research on managerial work downplays the variety, diversity and context of management jobs, observation limiting the researchers' ability to examine the impact of wider environmental influences on the management job.

"The researcher must recognise that he can generalise with certainty only for the universe which he has sampled" (Parten, 1950:404).

Just as the NPM is a body of literature that appears to be no more than an abstracted empiricism of the ways in which public sector reform has affected managerial work, the managerial work literature is no more than a timeless generalisation of the patterns and characteristics of managerial work. Undoubtedly, the main downfall of the managerial work literature is that researchers use in-depth studies of a small number of managers to make grand statements about the pattern and characteristics of managerial work in general. In other words, generalisations have been abstracted from small studies of private sector managers, researchers uninterested in the impact of the wider context on the management job. Consequently, generalisations drawn from small studies of private sector managers are deemed to be equally applicable to managers in the public sector.

However, it would seem that there is a more fundamental problem with the managerial work literature than its oversight of the context of the public sector. Existing studies do not even paint a representative picture of managerial work in the private sector, given that researchers have neglected the variety of management jobs prevalent in the private sector. For example, Kotter's(1982) research centred on the work of general managers, whilst Mintzberg(1973) discussed the 'typical' management job, rather than breaking jobs down into specific job types. Just as this research demonstrated the wide differences between jobs in diverse parts of the

public sector, there are equally wide variations between management jobs in the private sector, variations which have been neglected in the literature as it stands at present. For example, sales managers will undoubtedly have different tasks to perform than production managers. Likewise, managers working in manufacturing industries will have different roles to fulfil than colleagues in service industries. Thus, it would seem that generalisations abstracted from small studies of private sector managers are not even representative of the full range of private sector management jobs, let alone public sector managerial jobs.

Furthermore, this research demonstrated that differences in work patterns and characteristics also appeared between a group of managers with identical job titles. For example, only 57.1 percent of social services directors claim to face constant interruption, the remainder disagreeing. Likewise, whilst 25 percent of hospital trust finance directors think that they have little control over the design of their working day, the remainder believe that they have a lot of control.

Thus, even where the effects of environmental influences on the management job have featured as an integral part of a research study into the nature of managerial work, the patterns of work vary even for managers with the same job responsibilities. However, disaggregating managers by job responsibilities does at least begin to demonstrate the different patterns of work and contrasting beliefs of a diverse range of managers.

Evolving from such generalist studies of managerial work are frameworks of role typologies, deemed to be capable of universal application since *"the basic characteristics of managerial work know no national boundaries"* (Mintzberg, 1973: 104). Although role typologies are likely to appeal to researchers and managers alike, given that they provide a 'catchy tick-list' of roles managers should be fulfilling, role typologies provide little of substance on managerial work. Indeed, the typologies are so vague that it would be possible to parcel data about public sector managerial work under the work typologies devised by Mintzberg(1973) and Stewart(1976). For example, the quango manager could be pigeonholed into Stewart's emissary job type, at the same time as they fulfil the requirements of Mintzberg's contact man.

This thesis has demonstrated that classifying roles into types ignores the possibility that managerial work changes throughout the year, due to cyclical work patterns, unforeseen events and environmental variables. Thus, whilst the hospital trust contract director fulfilled the requirements of Mintzberg's contact man at the time of observation, he would have been classified as an expert manager two months later, when his job changed from negotiating to monitoring contracts.

Thus, although Mintzberg and Stewart are seriously informed about managerial work, the outcome of their research is, paradoxically, generalisations which go beyond the data. Thus, the managerial work literature does little justice to an

understanding of work by those engaging in it. All that has been obtained since research into managerial work began is timeless generalisations of managerial work, generalisations which chapters five and six of this thesis have shown to be indefensible.

It is therefore ironic that Mintzberg's(1973) research, the underlying intention of which was to break away from the rationalistic perception of management postulated by Fayol(1916), is an equally generalist account of managerial work.

> *"Any organisation needs to pay some attention to the outside world, for that is where context, opportunities and threats may be found. This is especially true for public organisations as they are influenced by outside bodies to a greater extent than those in the private sector"* (Hughes, 1994:215).

Although this thesis contends that future research into managerial work must move away from the current practice of generalising about the patterns and characteristics of managerial work, this does not necessarily mean that researchers should be breaking jobs down into individual job types. The desired level of abstraction will ultimately depend on what the researcher wants to know.

It is apparent that Mintzberg produced work that was of a high level of abstraction. Based on the patterns and characteristics of work undertaken by only five senior managers, Mintzberg produced a typology of roles which was deemed to reflect the work of all managers. Over time, researchers (Lau et al, 1980; Kurke and Aldrich, 1983; Dargie, 1998(a)) have attempted to slot their research subjects into

Mintzberg's highly abstracted typology of roles. Only this year, Dargie's(1998(a):164) research was used to *"assess whether (Mintzberg's) roles capture the important features of managerial work in the public sector".*

However, as this thesis has consistently argued, Mintzberg's role typologies are so vague that it would be almost impossible not to categorise managerial work under them. Consequently, the real question is surely not whether managers can be slotted into role typologies, but rather, what is the utility of slotting managers into role typologies.

Furthermore, the key difference between the research undertaken in this thesis and that undertaken by Mintzberg, is that this researcher deliberately set out to look at the wider context in which public managers worked. Unlike Mintzberg who had no justification for choosing the managers he did, this researcher deliberately picked seven public managers who worked in diverse parts of the public sector and, subsequently, were driven by different priorities and concerns. In other words, this researcher made a calculated commitment to look at environmental influences and, not surprisingly, found variations in public sector managerial work.

Thus, although Mintzberg and Stewart's research may be useful at a high level of abstraction, this thesis has demonstrated that their findings were of limited use when examining public sector managerial work. By breaking public sector managerial

jobs down into contract and non-contract jobs, chief executive and director level jobs and so forth, variations in the patterns and characteristics of managerial work soon became apparent. These variations would not have become apparent had this research followed suit and adopted a high level of abstraction.

Unlike studies by Lau et al(1980), Kurke and Aldrich(1983) and, most recently, Dargie(1998(a)), the research undertaken in this thesis divorces itself from the high level abstractions adopted by Mintzberg(1973). By looking below the level of abstraction adopted by Mintzberg and Stewart(1967,1976), the research provides a more grounded account of public sector managerial work than currently exists.

7.3 RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

> *"In the early years of this century, various writers made suggestions about the principles which should guide how managers built up the formal structure of organisations and how they ought to administer it in a rational way. Their movement was labelled 'classical' because it attempted to offer simple principles which claimed a general application"* (Huczynski and Buchanan, 1991: 430).

Arguably, the need to train and develop managers was first identified by Fayol(1916), who identified a composite set of functions that would assist managers in the management of their organisations. However, this focus on management training and development would appear to have taken a backseat in later studies on managerial work. Indeed, one of the oddities of Mintzberg's work is the implicit reference to training and development. Instead of using the information on work

patterns and characteristics to identify where managers needed training, Mintzberg focused his attention on fitting people into the roles he had identified. In other words, Mintzberg contended that selecting people with the right personalities was the key to producing better managers, not general management training. "*....we must learn how to select those candidates who demonstrate the special skills that the job of managing requires*" (Mintzberg, 1973: 195).

Before embarking on any management development training scheme, common sense dictates that trainers must surely decide what the underlying purpose of training actually is. Should trainers accept what managers currently do and reinforce this through training, or should they challenge what managers currently do, opening their eyes to alternative working practices?

If the first option is pursued, the outcome would surely be that Mintzberg's, Stewart's and Kotter's findings on the patterns and characteristics of managerial work would be reinforced through training. In other words, trainers would discipline managers to carry out their work in a brief and fragmented way, at an unrelenting pace and using predominantly verbal methods of communication. However, accepting what managers currently do and reinforcing this through training would appear to be untenable when speaking to managers themselves. For example, although the observed managers were kept informed of developments by snippets of information gained through unexpected interruptions, they frequently

mentioned that they would welcome guidance on effective time management to minimise these interruptions and to enable them to prioritise their workloads.

Consequently, this researcher would argue that the most favourable approach to training public managers is to go down the route of challenging what managers are currently doing. Only by challenging how managers have worked in the past will new ways of working for the future be identified. If this is the accepted approach to training, trainers will need to know where managers are just now, what their work patterns and characteristics are, what values they hold and so forth.

To date however, one of the fundamental problems with the emergence of typologies of roles from studies based on predominantly private sector managers is that these typologies are used in the context of training public managers. As this research has consistently demonstrated, the work undertaken by public managers is contingent on the particular contexts in which managers work. Given that the research undertaken in this thesis provides a previously neglected account of the patterns, characteristics and tasks of public sector managerial work, as well as an insight into the values held by a substantial number of public managers, it may be invaluable to trainers as a starting point for challenging the current working practices of public managers.

An alternative to challenging what public managers are currently doing may well be to provide training that will equip managers with the skills likely to be essential to them in the future. As chapter three demonstrated, the future of public organisations depends on the outcomes of general elections, which can lead to policy changes over a short timespan. For example, the Conservative government introduced Compulsory Competitive Tendering in the early 1980s, which has subsequently been replaced by New Labour's policy of Best Value. The upshot of this change in policy is that local authority managers, especially those working in contract departments, are faced with yet another change in their roles and responsibilities. Perhaps future policy changes would be better managed if public sector trainers attempted to 'second guess' these in advance and provide the necessary training.

Finally, as has already been documented, the observation research demonstrated that the work undertaken by each individual manager was contingent on the context in which they worked. Consequently, this poses the question of whether training should be tailored to the departmental needs of senior public managers or whether senior management training should be corporate.

7.4 FINAL REFLECTIONS

> *"The spelling out of your contribution is the final element in the PhD form. It is concerned with your evaluation of the importance of your thesis to the development of the discipline. It is here that you underline the significance of your analysis.........your successors now face a different situation when determining what their research work should be since they now have to take account of your work"* (Phillips and Hughes, 1994: 59-60).

A reading of both the managerial work and NPM literatures demonstrates that this thesis has broken new ground, providing a previously neglected account of the pattern, characteristics and content of public sector managerial work. Research into public sector managerial work has been noticeable by its absence, most accounts of the public management job being practitioner based, reliance placed on personal experiences and anecdotes. Likewise, the NPM literature often amounts to a series of inflated claims about public management, with no substantial research ever having been undertaken on the nature and patterns of public sector managerial work.

> *"The management literature has largely been based on a priori assumptions about what managers actually do and what they should do to be successful......when the activities of practising managers are directly observed in their natural settings, the resulting profile differs markedly from the one reported in textbooks, periodicals and even sophisticated research using indirect measures such as questionnaires or interviews"* (Luthans et al, 1985: 255-256).

Consequently, it is of no surprise that the empirical research undertaken in this thesis, a novelty in itself, demonstrated that public management practice does not necessarily correspond with NPM claims. This research was also instrumental in showing that NPM claims appear to have affected managerial work at a rhetorical rather than at a fundamental level. For example, although 90 percent of questionnaire respondents claim to have witnessed an increase in the use of business techniques, seven weeks of shadowing public managers came up with few indications that public managers were working to a business agenda.

Thus, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a rapid growth in the public management literature, the majority of which has since been challenged by this thesis for its inconclusiveness. Consequently, if progress is to be made in the provision of an accurate account of public sector managerial work, it will no longer be acceptable to simply talk about public sector managerial work or rely on the books and papers that are currently in circulation. Building on the research undertaken in this thesis, time and money must be invested in designing research projects that will further enlighten academics and managers alike, as to the nature of public sector management work.

This good research design will involve looking further afield than observation or case studies, currently the most popular methods for examining managerial work. In the past, research into public sector managerial work has tended to focus on verification, the end product of which is a series of generalisations. If progress is to be made, future research into public sector managerial work must concentrate on falsification. That is, researchers must begin to take a destructive look at the inherited baggage of both the managerial work and NPM literatures. In other words, they must set out to falsify those generalisations that imply general characteristics.

The combination of research methods used in this thesis, unique in the study of public sector management practice, aid the move from verification to falsification. Breaking with tradition, the depth obtained from observation was balanced with the breadth of questionnaires. By combining macro and micro research, this researcher

had the opportunity to become immersed in a particular observational context, in addition to looking across the wider context provided by the questionnaires. Thus, future research into public sector managerial work must learn from this example and actively encourage the triangulation of macro and micro research methods.

Furthermore, this research briefly touched on the type of language used by those managers who responded to the questionnaire. However, only by rigorously analysing the discourse used by managers will an insight be gained into the extent to which public managers have absorbed the language of the NPM. Moreover, discourse analysis will provide an insight into the extent to which New Labour's managerialist agenda of Best Value has been incorporated in the day-to-day language of public managers.

Thus, this thesis has recognised the need for future research projects into public sector managerial work to go beyond the current practice of observation and case studies. As well as devising surveys, researchers should also be including discourse analysis as one of the primary research tools.

By demonstrating the differences in the work undertaken by contract and non-contract managers, this research has reduced the NPM to no more than a simplistic homogenisation of the variety and diversity of management practices within the public sector. Only by considering the wider contexts in which individual public

managers work will future research into public sector managerial work bring out the diversity and complexity of the management job.

Likewise, this thesis has consistently criticised the managerial work literature for categorising managerial work as a typology of roles. Unlike fellow researchers, this researcher broke away from the temptation of classifying the work of their managers under Mintzberg's role typologies. Looking below the level of abstraction adopted by Mintzberg, this researcher deliberately set out to look at the wider context in which public managers worked and, not surprisingly, found variations in public sector managerial work.

Thus, by following the above example and concentrating their efforts on moving away from sustaining generalisations, future researchers will have more chance of changing the focus from one of developing 'grand theories' to one of developing 'grounded theory'. This research will hopefully provide the impetus for the development of long range theories based on tentative generalisations, moving away from the 'grand theories' which currently dominate the public management literature.

Finally, this thesis has proved to be an invaluable tool for this researcher, who is currently involved in developing the second phase of a management development programme in one of Scotland's local authorities. An understanding of the patterns, characteristics and tasks of public sector managerial work, as well as an insight into

the values held by public managers, has aided this researcher in the development of a training programme that, under the leadership of the chief executive, challenges current working practices. Hopefully, the information about work patterns and characteristics will aid fellow trainers in the development of training programmes that challenge how managers currently manage.

In conclusion, by providing an empirical account of the pattern, characteristics and content of public sector managerial work, as well as an insight into the values held by public managers, this thesis has made a distinctive contribution to both the managerial work and NPM literatures. Moreover, in sharp contrast to the majority of published work in the managerial work and NPM literatures, the role of environmental influences on the management job was deemed to be essential, not peripheral, to the entire research process.

It would seem that after years of neglect, a substantive and empirically supported insight into the nature of public sector managerial work has at last been attained. This researcher will regard their enjoyable, but sometimes turbulent journey as a worthwhile venture if further empirical research into public sector managerial work is put firmly on the academic agenda. Although this research has provided a much needed insight into public sector managerial work, this thesis recognises that there is still a long way to go before the journey is completed.

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APPENDIX 1: DIARY RECORDING FORM

Description of Activity ______________________

Duration of Activity ______________________

Activity done alone ❑ With 1 person ❑ With 2+ persons ❑

Participation	Place	Media	Subject	Action
1. Initiated Activity Yes No 2. Who? Boss Councillor Customer Mixed status Peers Press Professional Public Sub.(mgt.) Sub. (non-mgt.) Secretary Supplier Superiors Other 3. Internal External	INTERNAL Boardroom Own office Other internal office Secretary's Office Staff room Other EXTERNAL Another organisation Home Travelling Other	Business Lunch Conference Committees Dictation Face-to-face discussion Fax Formal meeting Interviewing Reading (int.) Reading (ext.) Social Telephone Thinking Travelling Writing Other	Finance General management Performance Personnel Planning Production Public Relations Purchasing Other	Advising Confirming decisions Giving information Giving orders Inspecting Making decisions Receiving information Other

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Managerial Work in the Public Sector.

Questionnaire.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. All responses will remain completely confidential and no comments will be attributable to individual respondents.

Please complete the following information:-

Job title ________________________________

Name of organisation ________________________________

Please return the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided:-

Sarah Gadsden
Department of Human Resource Management
University of Strathclyde
50 Richmond Street
Glasgow
G1 1XT

Tel: 0141-552-4400 ext. 4466

A. WORK PATTERNS AND ACTIVITIES.

The following questions aim to gather information about your work patterns and activities. Please tick the appropriate box.

1. What is the average number of hours you work per week?

<29 ❑
30-39 ❑
40-49 ❑
50-59 ❑
60-69 ❑
70+ ❑

2.(a) Do you work weekends?

Yes ❑
No ❑

(b) If yes, how many weekends in a month do you work on average?

1 in 4 weekends ❑
2 in 4 weekends ❑
3 in 4 weekends ❑
4 in 4 weekends ❑

3.(a) Do you work during the evening?

Yes ❑
No ❑

(b) If yes, how many evenings do you work on average?

1 evening ❑
2 evenings ❑
3 evenings ❑
4 evenings ❑
5+ evenings ❑

4. What level of control do you have over the design of your workday?

- No control ☐
- Very little control ☐
- Little control ☐
- A lot of control ☐

5. How often do you determine the duration of the activities you perform?

- Never ☐
- Occasionally ☐
- Frequently ☐

6. What is the average number of people you come into contact with per working day?

- 1-4 ☐
- 5-9 ☐
- 10-14 ☐
- 15-19 ☐
- 20-24 ☐
- 25-29 ☐
- 30+ ☐

7.(a) On average, how many telephone calls do you make per day?

- 1-4 ☐
- 5-9 ☐
- 10-14 ☐
- 15-19 ☐
- 20-24 ☐
- 25+ ☐

(b) On average, how many telephone calls do you receive per day?

- 1-4 ☐
- 5-9 ☐
- 10-14 ☐
- 15-19 ☐
- 20-24 ☐
- 25+ ☐

8. Does your work schedule allow time to sit back and reflect on what is happening?

Yes ☐
No ☐

9. Do you face constant interruptions during an average working day?

Yes ☐
No ☐

If yes, how do you manage these interruptions? ______________________

____

____

____

____

10. How often does your job direct your attention on one issue for an hour or more at a time?

Never ☐
Occasionally ☐
Frequently ☐

11. How often do you have to deal with two or more issues simultaneously?

Never ☐
Occasionally ☐
Frequently ☐

12. Is the level of work you perform constant throughout the day?

Yes ☐
No ☐

13. Even when you are not working, would you say your 'mind is on the job'?

Yes ☐
No ☐

For question number 14, please estimate as accurately as possible time spent on various activities.

14.(a) In a typical working **day**, estimate the percentage of time spent

alone	------
with one other person	------
with two or more persons	------
Total	**100%**

(b) In a typical working **day**, estimate the percentage of time spent with people

internal to the organisation	------
external to the organisation	------
Total	**100%**

(c) In a typical working **day**, estimate the percentage of time spent with

boss	------
councillor(s)	------
customer(s)	------
peer(s)	------
press	------
public	------
subordinate (mgt.)	------
subordinate (non-mgt.)	------
secretary/personal assistant	------
supplier(s)	------
superior(s)	------
other (please specify) ________________	------
Total	**100%**

(d) In a typical working **day**, estimate the percentage of time spent

planning your work	------
reacting to issues as they arise	------
Total	**100%**

(e) In a typical working <u>week</u>, estimate the percentage of time spent conducting your work by

business lunch	------
conferences	------
committees	------
dictation	------
face-to-face discussion	------
fax	------
formal meetings	------
reading material from within the organisation	------
reading material from outside the organisation	------
combining business with a social activity	------
telephone	------
thinking	------
travelling	------
writing	------
other (please specify) ____________________	------
Total	**100%**

15. How many hours a week, on average, do you spend on budget management?

- None ☐
- 1-2 ☐
- 3-4 ☐
- 5-6 ☐
- 7-8 ☐
- 8-9 ☐
- 10+ ☐

16. What level of conflict exists between controlling costs and providing good quality services?

- No conflict ☐
- Some conflict ☐
- Alot of conflict ☐

17. Do you operate an open door policy?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

18. (a) Are you in charge of subordinates whose work requires a different professional training from their own?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(b) If yes, would you identify particular difficulties with this?

____

____

____

____

(c) How do you manage these difficulties? ______________________________

____

____

____

____

19. (a) Do you currently have any performance indicators/measures in use in your organisation?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, go to question 20.

(b) What do your performance measures focus on?

inputs ☐

outputs ☐

outcomes ☐

other (please specify) ☐

(c) Do you think that the performance measures currently in use in your organisation are useful to managers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

(d) Do you think that the performance measures currently in use in your organisation are useful to the public?

Yes ☐
No ☐

(e) Do you think that performance measurement as a whole is a desirable policy to follow?

Yes ☐
No ☐

Questions 20-23 look at the role networking plays in your job. For the purpose of this questionnaire, networking is the process by which information, contacts and experience are exchanged between yourself and other people and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Please tick the appropriate box.

20. Has the need to network in the public sector increased in recent years?

Yes ☐
No ☐

21. What percentage of time do you spend, in an average week, networking with organisations from

the public sector	------
the private sector	------
the voluntary sector	------
Total	**100%**

22. Do you think facilitating cooperation between your organisation and others is a key part of your management job?

Yes ☐
No ☐

23. Do you feel conflict exists between collaborating with fellow organisations and competing against them?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer ______________________________

____

____

____

____

B. VALUES

The following questions aim to give an insight into the values that you hold. Please tick the appropriate box.

24(a). Do you think that the public sector of the 1990s differs radically from that of the 1970s?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, go to question 25.

(b) In what ways do you think the public sector has changed?

____

____

____

____

(c) What are the key forces driving this change? ______________________________

____

____

____

____

(d) How have the changes affected managers in the public sector?

____

____

____

____

25. Do you think that managers in the public and private sectors are performing similar management tasks?

Yes ❑
No ❑

26. Should private sector management techniques be introduced into the public sector?

Yes ❑
No ❑

Please explain your answer _______________________________

____

____

____

____

27.(a) Has there been an increase in the use of private sector techniques in your work?

Yes ❑
No ❑

If no, go to question 28

(b) How readily do you think private sector management techniques have been introduced in the public sector?

easily ❑
with little difficulty ❑
with difficulty ❑

(c) What difficulties have arisen when implementing private sector techniques into the public sector? ______________________________

____

____

____

____

28. Do you think public sector managers can learn anything from private sector managers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer ______________________________

____

____

____

____

29. Do you think private sector managers can learn anything from public sector managers?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer ______________________________

____

____

____

30. What do you refer to the public as?

customers ☐

clients ☐

citizens ☐

consumers ☐

public ☐

other (please specify) ______________ ☐

The following is a set of statements about changes occurring in the public sector. For each statement please state whether you agree strongly, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree that these changes have affected your work.

31(a) The introduction of market mechanisms

- Agree strongly ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neither ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

(b) An increasing focus on value-for-money

- Agree strongly ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neither ☐
- disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

(c) Shift to greater competition

- Agree strongly ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neither ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

(d) Stress on private sector styles of management

- Agree strongly ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neither ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

(e) Stress on controlling costs

- Agree strongly ☐
- Agree ☐
- Neither ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

32. Why did you choose to work in the public sector? ____________________

____

____

____

____

33(a). Do you think the public sector has distinctive values?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

(b) If yes, how would you characterise these key values? ____________________

____

____

____

____

34. Do you have any immediate plans to leave the public sector?

- Yes ☐
- No ☐

Please explain ____________________________

____

____

____

C. SKILLS

The following questions aim to uncover those skills you feel are particularly important when performing your job.

Question 35 is a list of general management skills. For each skill please state whether it is very important, important, neither important or unimportant, unimportant, very unimportant to your work.

(a) Skills of analysis

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(b) Business and commercial skills

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(c) Ability to change

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(d) Ability to communicate

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(e) Decision making skills

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(f) Ability to influence others

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(g) Leadership skills

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(h) Negotiation skills

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(i) Political skills

- very important ☐
- important ☐
- neither ☐
- unimportant ☐
- very unimportant ☐

(j) Problem solving skills

- very important ❑
- important ❑
- neither ❑
- unimportant ❑
- very unimportant ❑

(k) People management skills

- very important ❑
- important ❑
- neither ❑
- unimportant ❑
- very unimportant ❑

(l) Strategic management skills

- very important ❑
- important ❑
- neither ❑
- unimportant ❑
- very unimportant ❑

36. Are there any other skills you feel are important in the proper performance of your job?______________________________

____

____

____

____

37. What are the two most important aspects of your job?

1. ______________________________

____

2. ______________________________

____

D. PERIODICITY OF WORK.

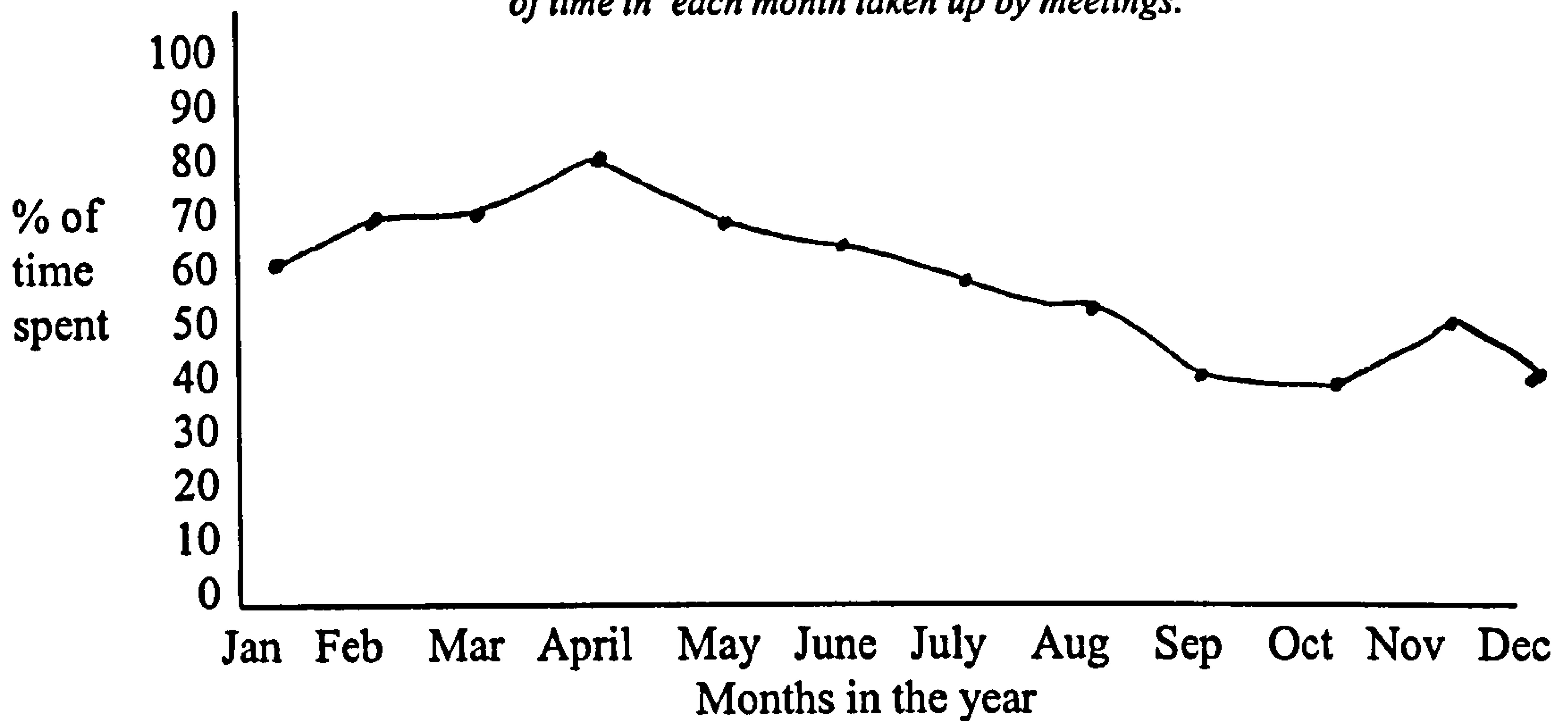
The following questions aim to gain an insight into the periodicity of your work.

38. Would you categorise your work as being periodic, with different priorities existing at certain times in the year?

    Yes ☐

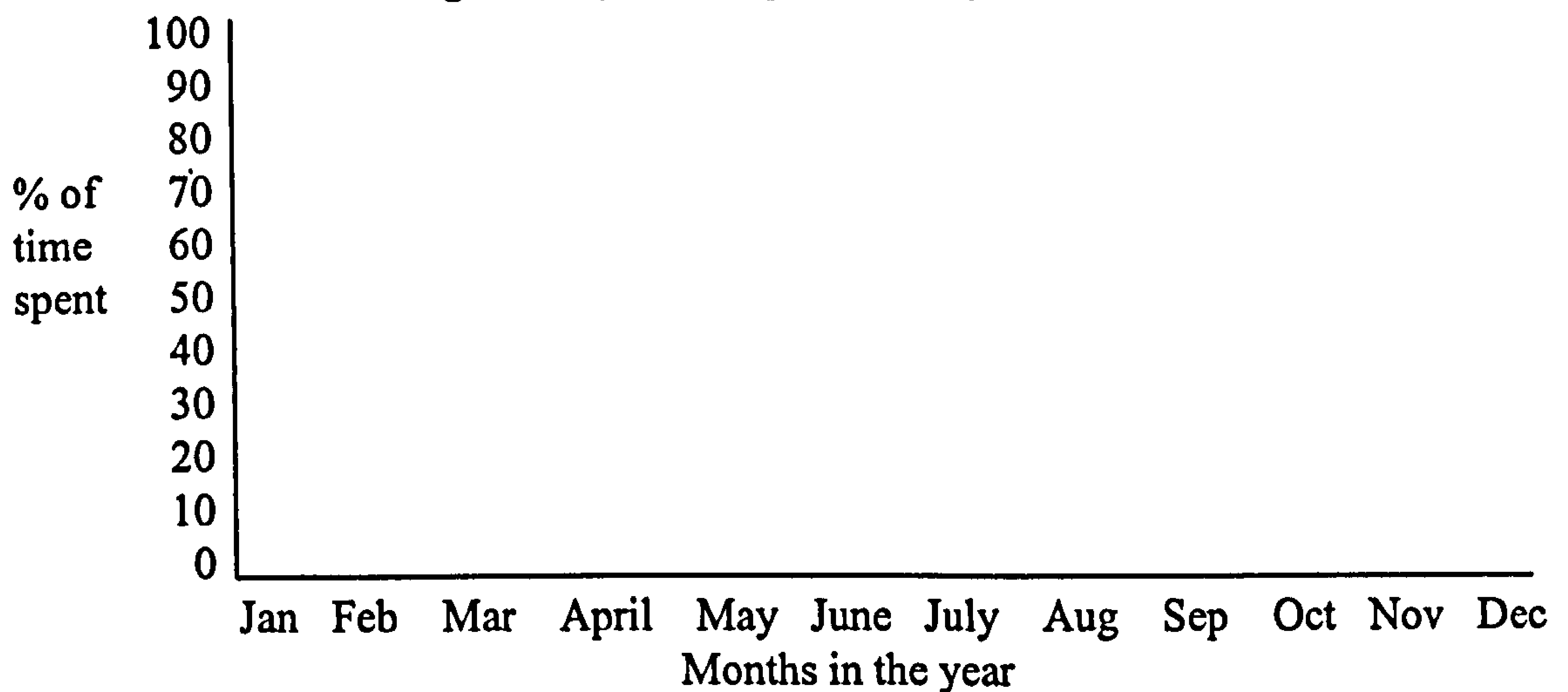
    No ☐

For question 39 please complete the graphs by drawing a line, charting the percentage of time spent performing the given activity in each month of the year. For example:

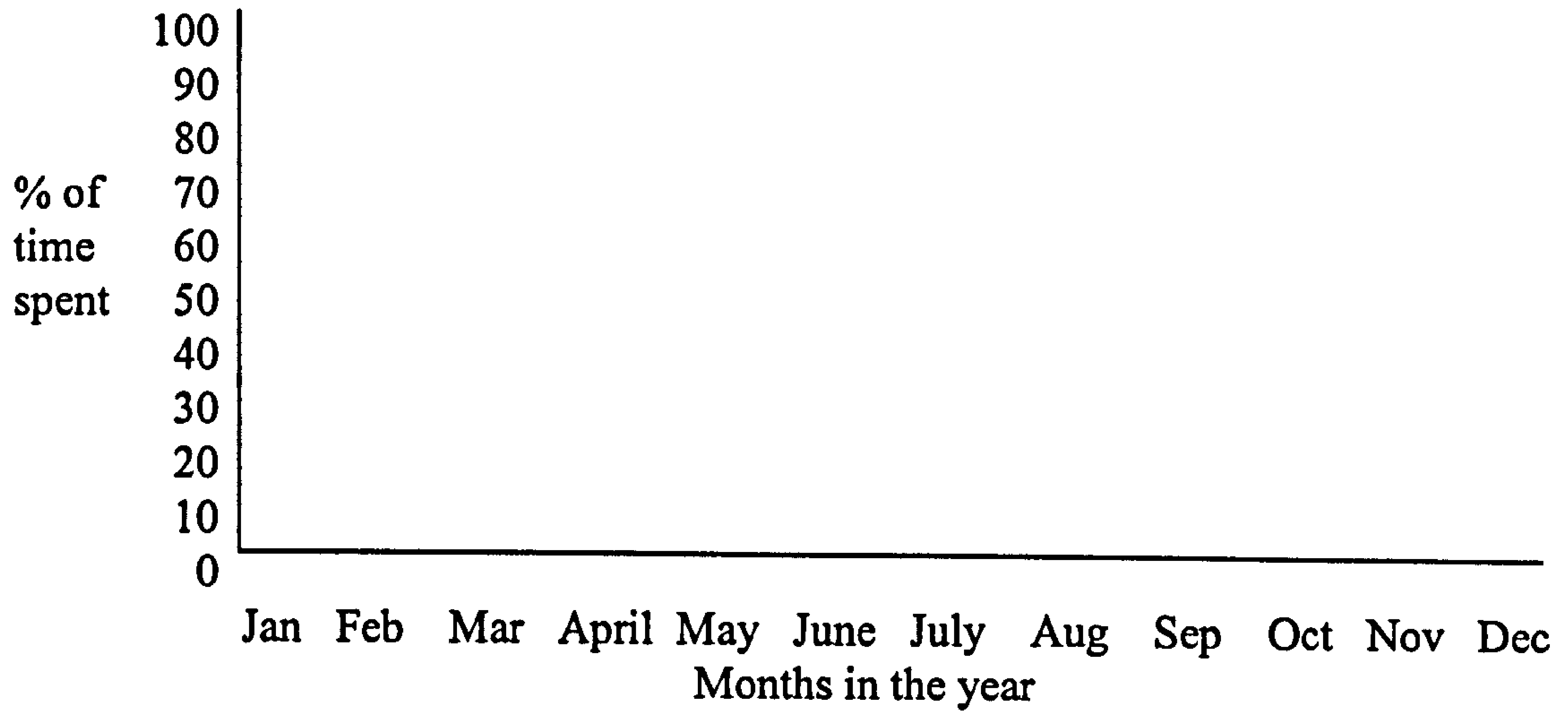


39. Complete the following graphs by drawing a line which reflects the percentage of time taken up by the given activity in each month of the year.

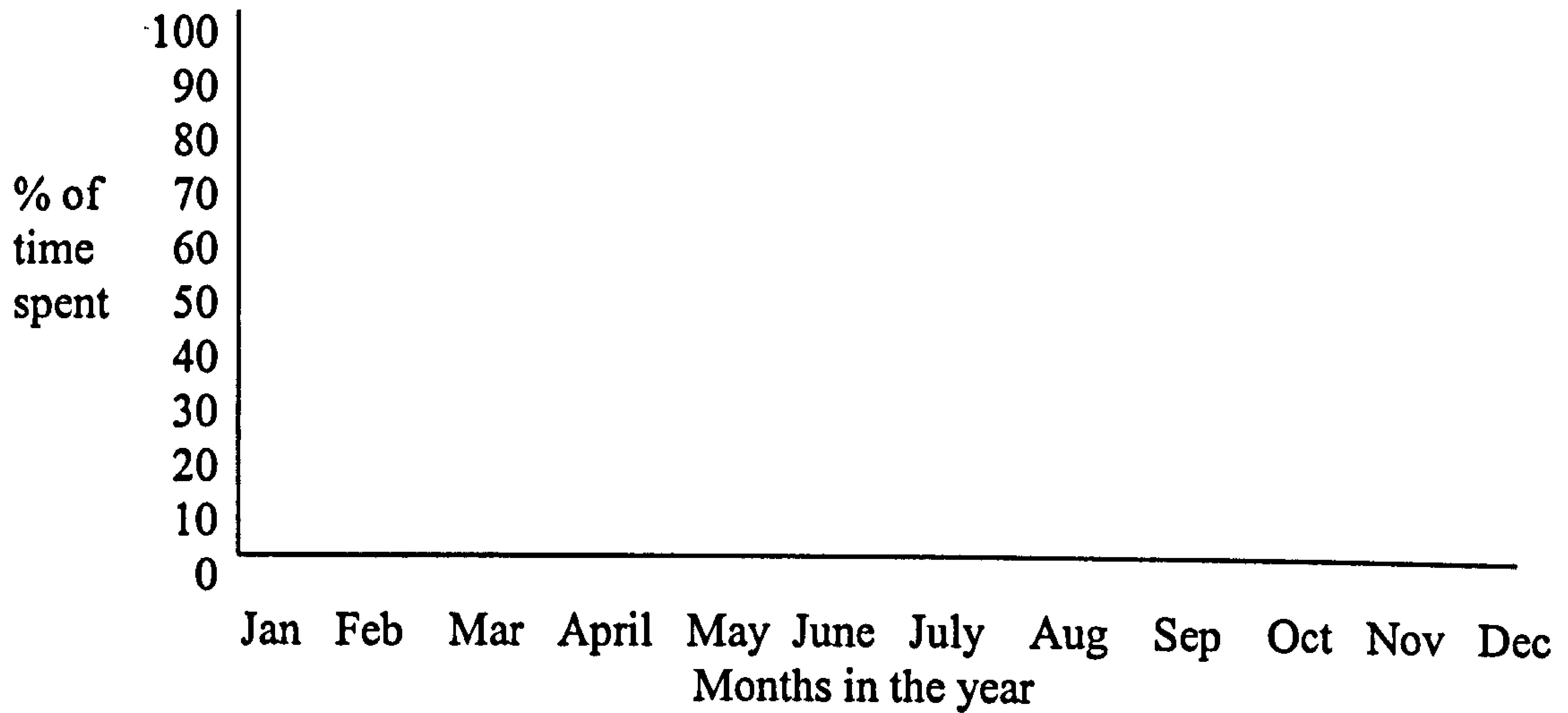
1. **Financial Management (including budgeting)**



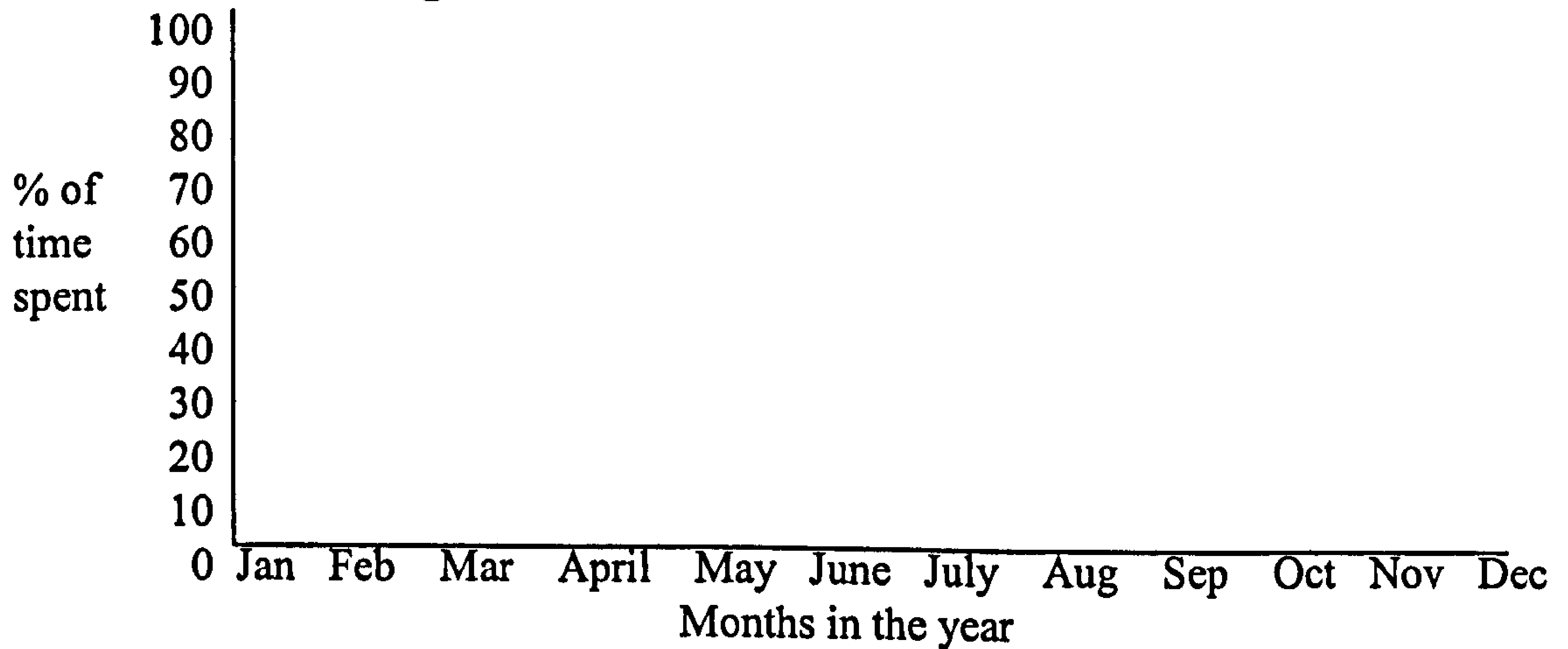
2. **Human Resource Management**



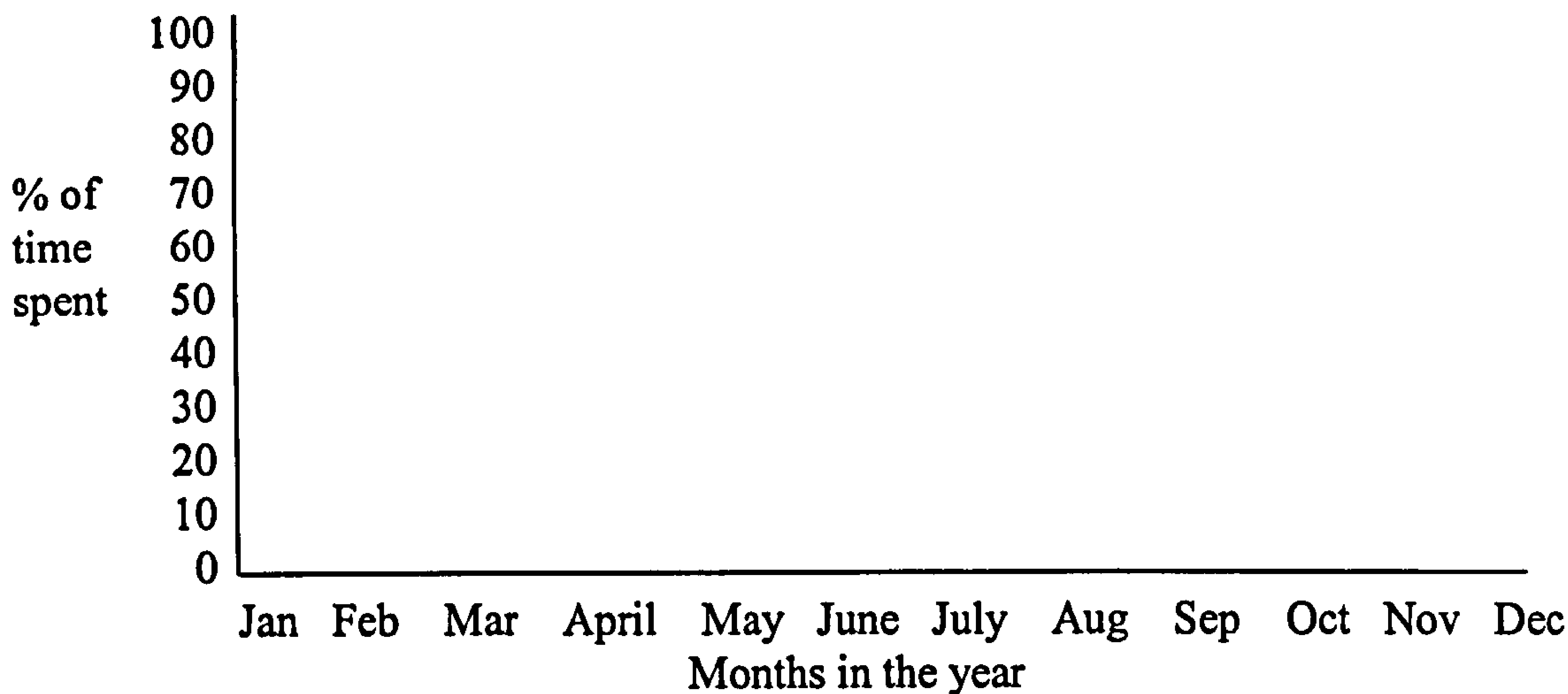
3. **Contract Negotiations**



4. **General Management**



5. Any activity you think is vital to your work which has not been covered. Please name the activity ______________________



E. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following questions require information about the organisation in which you work.

40. Number of staff in organisation ______________________

41. Number of people under your control ______________________

42. Please give a brief description of your functions ______________________

____

____

____

43. This question is looking at the influence of various external events on your job. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being of no effect whilst 5 is of considerable effect, please circle the number which best reflects the extent the following external events directly affect your job.

demographic change	1	2	3	4	5
technological change	1	2	3	4	5
economic change	1	2	3	4	5
change in government policy	1	2	3	4	5
change in customer	1	2	3	4	5
change in supplier	1	2	3	4	5
other (please specify) ________	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, some background questions about yourself. Please tick the appropriate box.

44. Age

- 20-29 ☐
- 30-39 ☐
- 40-49 ☐
- 50-59 ☐
- 60-69 ☐

45. Sex

- M ☐
- F ☐

46. Salary

- £10,000-£19,999 ☐
- £20,000-£29,999 ☐
- £30,000-£39,999 ☐
- £40,000-£49,999 ☐
- £50,000-£59,999 ☐
- £60,000-£69,999 ☐
- £70,000-£79,999 ☐
- £80,000-£89,999 ☐
- £90,000-£99,999 ☐
- £100,000+ ☐

47. Qualifications

- O-Grades/O-levels ☐
- Highers/A'levels ☐
- Degree ☐
- Other (please specify) ________________ ☐

If there is anything you would like to add which would give an insight into your job, but which has not been covered, please note this down here.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX 3: THE OBSERVATION FINDINGS

For the purposes of table 1 to table 14 :

Manager A : Pre-reorganisation Chief Executive
Manager B: Hospital Trust Contract Director
Manager C: Social Work Director
Manager D: Quango Manager
Manager E: Local Authority Chief Executive
Manager F: Local Authority Contract Director
Manager G: Chief Constable

TABLE 1 : WEEKLY WORKING HOURS

	Manager						
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**
Weekly Hours Worked (excluding time spent travelling)	36 hrs. 55 mins.	52 hrs. 20 mins.	35 hrs. 9 mins.	33 hrs. 34 mins.	44 hrs.. 20 mins.	49 hrs. 12 mins.	29 hrs. 19 mins.
Time spent travelling	7 hrs. 31 mins.	1 hr. 26 mins.	2 hrs. 40 mins.	3 hrs. 36 mins.	4 hrs. 58 mins.	1 hr. 23 mins.	2 hrs. 21 mins
Time spent in evening meetings	1 hr. 19 mins.		2 hrs. 20 mins.		2 hrs. 45 mins.		
Time spent working at home during the evening		8 hrs. 30 mins.			2 hrs. 39 mins.	1 hr.	
Number of evenings worked (including meetings)	1	3			2	1	
Number of lunch breaks taken	4/6		1/5	5/5	2/5	2/5	2/4
Number of activities undertaken during the week.	242	185	119	145	131	124	85

TABLE 2 : THE INITIATION OF CONTACTS

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. % of weekly contacts initiated by:								
a. manager	57.4	59.7	61.3	52.3	51.6	65	60.8	42.4
b. other person	39.2	33.8	36.1	43.2	46.8	33	36.3	57.6
c. mutual	2.1	4.6	1.3	1.1	1.6	1	2	0
d. clock	1.3	1.9	1.3	3.4	0	1	1	0
2. % of weekly working time spent in contacts initiated by:								
a. manager	50.4	53.8	52.4	51.4	52.7	60.1	39.3	39.7
b. other person	38.7	32.5	30.7	39.7	47	33.3	38.5	60.3
c. mutual	3.9	3.9	0.3	1.1	0.3	1.2	21.9	0
d. clock	6.9	9.8	16.7	8.8	0	5.4	0.4	0

TABLE 3 : DURATION OF ACTIVITIES

	Manager							
% of activites:	**All**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**
less than or equal to 9 minutes	65	78.1	68	60.8	69	58.9	55.6	48.9
less than or equal to 5 minutes	51.3	59.5	55.8	52.5	58.2	45.9	38.3	38.3
less than or equal to 1 minute	14.1	17.4	15.2	15.8	16.5	6.2	13	11.7
one hour +	6.9	2.9	10.2	9.2	4.4	7.5	8	8.5

TABLE 4 : CONTACT WITH PERSONS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANISATION

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
% of total time spent with persons:								
internal to the organisation	69.4	60.5	61.5	66	53.9	77	79.5	78.3
external to the organisation	15.1	28.4	16.6	16.5	14.1	16.4	14.4	10.6
internal & external to the organisation	15.5	11.1	21.9	17.5	32	6.6	6.1	11.1
% of activities spent with persons:								
internal to the organisation	79.6	81.5	80	84.1	60. 3	95	80.4	78.8
external to the organisation	16.1	15.3	14.8	9.1	33.3	4	17.6	13.6
internal & external to the organisation	4.3	3.2	5.2	6.8	6.3	1	2	7.6

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ALONE AND WITH OTHERS

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Time spent alone:	20.4	9.8	11.4	16.3	16.7	29.6	36.9	19.3
Time spent with others	79.6	90.2	89.7	83.7	83.3	70.4	63.1	80.7

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT WITH OTHERS

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Superior	2.1	n/a	9.6	0.1	0.5	n/a	0.2	n/a
Peer	3.9	n/a	8.1	0	13.3	n/a	3.5	n/a
Management subordinate	32.2	27.8	13.7	38.1	4.2	40.6	51.8	45.7
Non-mgt. subordinate	3	0.1	0.6	0.6	19.4	0.4	1.6	0.7
Personal Assistant	9.3	23.7	8.7	1.1	n/a	15.7	3.3	11.3
Elected members	2.2	3.2	n/a	1.2	2.6	6.9	2	n/a
Mixed Status	16.7	6	20.7	25.1	13.9	13.4	17.2	20.6
Mixture of internal & external	15.5	11.1	21.9	17.5	32	6.6	6.1	11.1
External	15.1	28.4	16.6	16.5	14.1	16.4	14.4	10.6

TABLE 7 : PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT USING DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION METHODS

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Scheduled meetings	42.2	22.4	52.5	64.6	35.3	42.2	30.6	42.3
Unscheduled meetings	13.6	15.1	16.1	7.7	24.2	6	14.9	11.4
Telephone calls	6.6	10.2	9.2	1.7	10.1	2.5	7.9	3.8
Pre- and post meetings	1.9	3.4	2.4	1.7	3	2	0.5	0
Brief face-to-face contact < or = 5 min	2.6	4.3	1.8	3.3	5.4	2	1.1	0.8
Tours	1	1.7	0	2.2	0	0	0.7	4
Secondary	3.4	9.4	0	1.6	5.3	0	4.1	7.1
Working with P. A.	9.3	23.7	8.7	1.1	n/a	15.7	3.3	11.3
Desk Work	20.4	9.8	11.4	16.3	16.7	29.6	36.9	19.3

TABLE 8 : PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Managers' office	54.7	41.9	44.4	55.2	62.7	59.1	56.4	69.5
P. A.'s office	4.5	24.3	4.4	0.7	n/a	1.9	0.3	0.1
Other internal office	11.1	2.4	15.5	13.1	18	11	15.6	6
Board room	14.6	4.3	32.6	12.1	0	10.7	20.3	10.8
Council Chambers	2.7	11.6	n/a	6.4	n/a	0	1.9	n/a
Corridor	0.4	0	0.8	0.2	1.5	0.5	0	0
Canteen	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	2.6	1.7
External	11.5	15.5	2.9	12.3	17.9	16.8	3	11.9

TABLE 9 : UNDERLYING PURPOSES BEHIND MANAGERS' CONTACTS

% of time spent in:	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. Information Contacts	40.9	43.7	31.8	44.9	44	42.5	45.5	38.1
a. Reviews	24.8	17.7	19.9	35.4	18	20.9	40.1	21
post-meetings	7.5	28.8	1.1	5.6	7.6	7.6	2	0
pre-meetings	11.3	30.7	13.1	7.7	8.9	9.1	0	9.5
board meetings	23	0	85.7	0	48	0	27	0
community	12.7	28.8	0	22.5	0	37.6	0	0
policy	5.3	0	0	28.2	0	0	9.2	0
deputy	35.9	12.8	0	35.9	35.4	14.8	61.9	90.5
other	4.4	0	0	0	0	30.9	0	0
b. Giving info.	8.6	19.3	4.3	4.2	21.8	9.2	2.3	1
instant	17.7	4	8.7	82.4	24.9	1.4	22.7	0
update/brief	20.1	0	83.5	0	17.8	13.2	72.7	0
advice	13.1	9.7	2.6	0	23	13.9	4.5	0
plans&policies	23.6	5.7	5.2	0	32.5	65.3	0	100
lecture	22.8	80.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	2.8	0	0	17.6	1.9	6.3	0	0
c. Receiving info.	6.4	4.3	7.6	4.7	4.2	12.4	2	10.4
instant	19.5	42.4	4	14.5	30	17.9	55.3	21.2
update	10.4	53	0	19.3	10	2.6	42.1	2.3
briefing	54.7	5.3	42.8	66.3	45.7	79.6	0	76.5
other	15.4	0	53.2	0	14.3	0	2.6	0
d. Tours	1.1	2.4	0	0.6	0	0	1.1	5.7

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2. Decision Making Contacts	27.1	16.4	45.4	28.6	19.3	28.7	18.8	20.1
a. Strategy	18.2	16.4	21	20.5	1.8	28.7	18.1	20.1
key decisions	48.1	42.3	77.2	36.5	100	0	88	33.7
open-ended strategic planning	18.1	0	22.8	0	0	38.3	0	41.7
operational planning	4.2	0	0	0	0	7	0	24.6
budgeting	14.3	0	0	20.1	0	54.6	0	0
council meetings	13.8	45.1	0	43.5	0	0	12	0
dealing with crises	1.4	12.6	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. Negotiation	8.9	0	24.4	8.1	17.5	0	0.7	0

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
3. Request Contacts	22.9	25.7	21.6	20.8	25.2	14.8	24.6	29
a. Action	11.6	13.1	15.4	8.5	13	2.8	5	24.5
current info.	86.8	58.3	99	96.7	76.3	100	97.8	86.6
authorisation	2.7	8.3	1	2	1.8	0	2.2	2.9
media interviews	10.3	32.8	0	0	21.9	0	0	10.4
initiate	0.1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	0.8	0	0	1.3	0	0	0	0
b. Manager	11.2	12.3	6.2	12.3	12.2	12	19.6	4.5
info. & advice	78	67.5	82.2	89.8	73.2	84.2	71.5	94.7
delegating	21.8	32.5	17.8	10.2	26.8	14.2	28.5	5.3
other	0.2	0	0	0	0	1.6	0	0
c. Status	0.3	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Secondary Contacts	9.1	14.4	1.1	5.6	11.8	13.9	10.6	12.8
external	2.2	4.5	0	0	0	12.6	0	0
ceremonial	2.1	0.9	0	4	0	0	5.4	5.8
personal	1.3	2.7	0.9	0.1	4.3	0	0.5	0.3
scheduling time	0.8	1.1	0	1.5	1.4	0.9	1.1	0.3
general discussion	0.7	2.3	0.2	0	0.7	0.4	0.2	2.4
business lunch	2	2.9	0	0	5.4	0	3.4	4

TABLE 10 : UNDERLYING PURPOSES BEHIND MANAGERS' CONTACTS

% of contacts:				Manager				
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1. <u>Information Contacts</u>	32.4	34.2	22.1	35.5	33	43.8	29.4	33.2
a. Reviews	9.4	9.8	4.6	15.8	6.3	10.9	12	14.8
post-meetings	27.4	50	20	25	25	28.6	18.2	0
pre-meetings	16.1	21.4	40	8.3	12.5	28.6	0	20
board meetings	5.7	0	40	0	12.5	0	9.1	0
community	4.8	7.1	0	8.3	0	14.3	0	0
policy	4.8	0	0	25	0	0	9.1	0
deputy	37.1	21.4	0	33.3	50	14.3	63.6	80
other	3.2	0	0	0	0	14.3	0	0
b. <u>Giving info.</u>	10.5	7.7	9.2	7.9	17.3	18.8	8.7	8.7
instant	32.9	27.3	40	33.3	40.9	8.3	50	0
update/brief	21.4	0	40	0	27.3	16.7	37.5	0
advice	14.3	18.2	10	0	18.2	16.7	12.5	0
plans&policies	10	27.3	10	0	4.5	8.3	0	100
lecture	5	27.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	17.1	0	0	66.7	9.1	50	0	0
c. <u>Receiving info.</u>	11.3	15.4	8.3	10.5	9.4	14.1	6.5	6.5
instant	56	59.1	44.4	50	58.3	55.6	66.7	55.5
update	23.9	36.4	0	37.5	16.7	11.1	16.7	11.1
briefing	13.4	4.5	11.1	12.5	8.3	33.3	0	33.3
other	6.7	0	44.4	0	16.7	0	16.7	0
d. <u>Tours</u>	1.2	1.4	0	1.3	0	0	2.2	6

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2. Decision Making Contacts	9.3	4.2	18.3	10.4	3.2	7.8	5.4	6
a. Strategy	6.7	4.2	8.2	7.8	0.8	7.8	4.4	6
key decisions	44.1	33.3	77.8	33.3	100	0	50	33.3
open-ended strategic planning	14.7	0	22.2	0	0	40	0	33.3
operational planning	5.9	0	0	0	0	20	0	33.3
budgeting	8.8	0	0	16.7	0	40	0	0
council meetings	23.5	50	0	50	0	0	50	0
dealing with crises	2.9	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. Negotiation	2.6	0	10.1	2.6	2.4	0	1	0

	Manager							
	All	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
3. Request Contacts	42.5	36.4	54.1	31.6	41	37.5	53.3	42
a. Action	18.5	14	22.9	17.1	20.5	12.5	16.3	30
current info.	82	70	88	76.9	84.6	100	93.3	66.7
authorisation	9	20	8	15.4	3.8	0	6.7	6.7
media interviews	6.6	5	0	0	11.5	0	0	26.7
initiate	1.6	5	4	0	0	0	0	0
other	0.1	0	0	7.7	0	0	0	0
b. Manager	23.9	21.7	31.2	14.5	20.5	25	37	12
info. & advice	77.8	83.9	73.5	90.9	69.2	81.2	79.4	66.7
delegating	21.5	16.1	26.5	9.1	30.8	12.5	20.6	33.3
other	0.6	0	0	0	0	6.3	0	0
c. Status	0.1	0.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Secondary Contacts	17.1	25.2	5.5	22.3	22.8	11	10.9	16
external	1.8	7.7	0	0	0	1.6	0	0
ceremonial	1.7	2.1	0	2.6	0	0	2.2	8
personal	4.4	4.9	2.8	2.6	11.8	0	1.1	2
scheduling time	5.4	2.8	1	17.1	6.3	6.3	5.4	2
general discussion	3.2	7	1.7	0	3.9	3.1	1.1	2
business lunch	0.6	0.7	0	0	0.8	0	1.1	2

TABLE 11 : A COMPARISON OF THE UNDERLYING PURPOSES OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY MINTZBERG'S CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND THE OBSERVED PUBLIC MANAGERS

	% of total contacts		% of total contact time	
	Mintzberg	**Observed**	**Mintzberg**	**Observed**
1. Informational	**36**	**32.4**	**40**	**40.6**
Review	10	9.4	16	24.8
Giving information	10	10.5	8	8.6
Receiving information	14	11.3	16	6.4
Tour	2	1.2	1	1.1
2. Requests	**34**	**42.5**	**18**	**22.9**
Status	5	0.1	1	0.3
Manager	12	23.9	5	11.2
Action	17	18.5	12	11.6
3. Decision-making	**7**	**9.3**	**21**	**27.1**
Strategy	6	6.7	13	18.2
Negotiation	1	2.6	8	8.9
4. Secondary	**23**	**17.1**	**21**	**9.1**

TABLE 12 : A COMPARISON OF THE UNDERLYING PURPOSES OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY MINTZBERG'S CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND THE OBSERVED HEADS OF ORGANISATIONS

	% of total contacts		% of total contact time	
	Mintzberg	**Heads**	**Mintzberg**	**Heads**
1. Informational	**36**	**36.9**	**40**	**41.7**
Review	10	10.1	16	19.8
Giving information	10	9.3	8	10.4
Receiving information	14	15.6	16	9
Tour	2	1.9	1	2.5
2. Requests	**34**	**37.7**	**18**	**22.8**
Status	5	0.4	1	0.1
Manager	12	20.6	5	10
Action	17	16.7	12	12.7
3. Decision-making	**7**	**5.4**	**21**	**21.9**
Strategy	6	5.4	13	21.9
Negotiation	1	0	8	0
4. Secondary	**23**	**19.9**	**21**	**13.7**

TABLE 13 : A COMPARISON OF THE UNDERLYING PURPOSES OF WORK UNDERTAKEN BY MINTZBERG'S CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND THE OBSERVED CONTRACT DIRECTORS

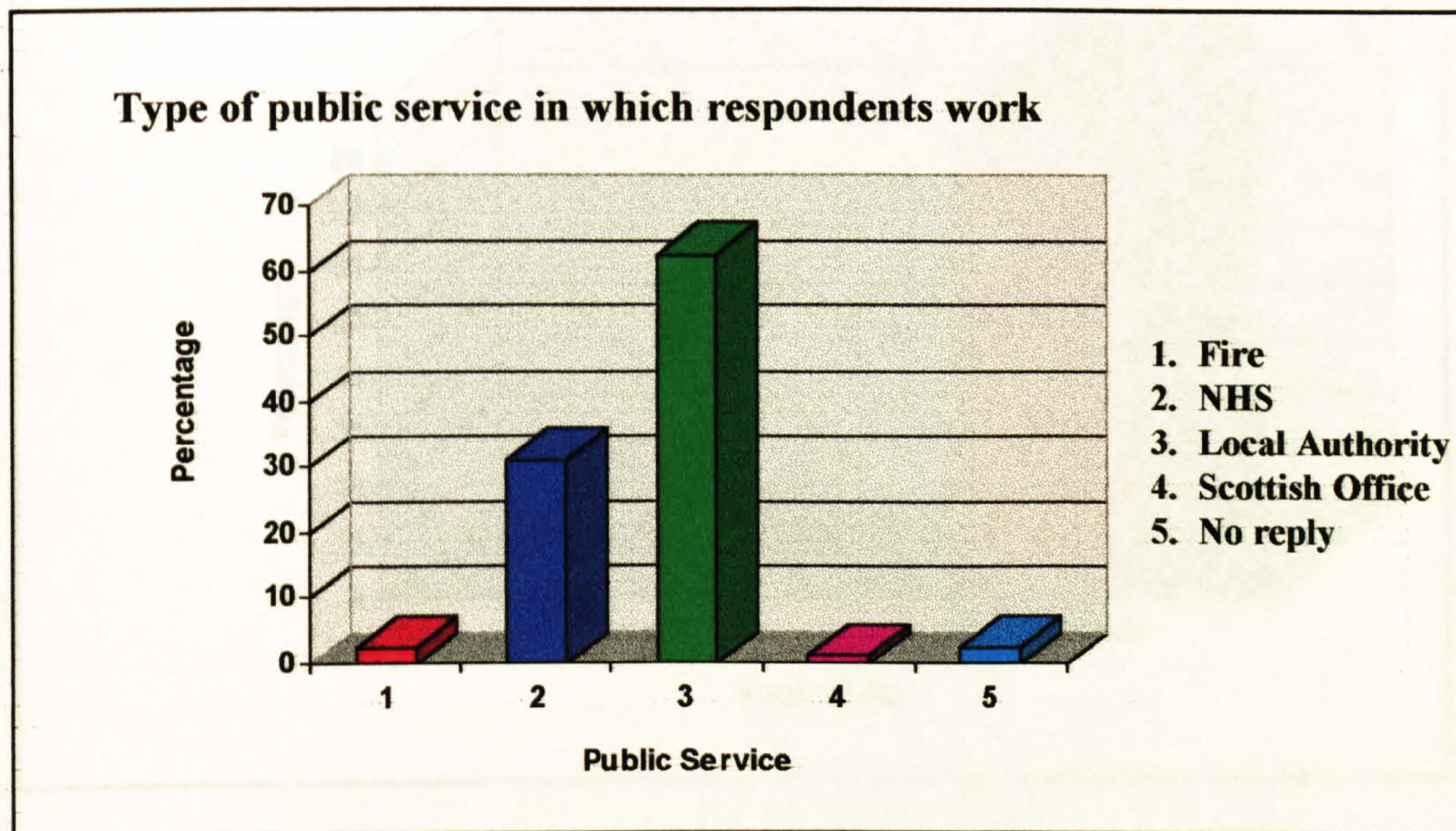
	% of total contacts		% of total contact time	
	Mintzberg	Contract	Mintzberg	Contract
1. Informational	36	25	40	37.4
Review	10	8	16	28.2
Giving information	10	9	8	3.5
Receiving information	14	7.5	16	5.3
Tour	2	0.5	1	0.4
2. Requests	34	54.2	18	23.1
Status	5	0.5	1	0.2
Manager	12	33.8	5	11.7
Action	17	19.9	12	11.2
3. Decision-making	7	12.5	21	34.4
Strategy	6	6.5	13	19.8
Negotiation	1	6	8	14.6
4. Secondary	23	8	21	5

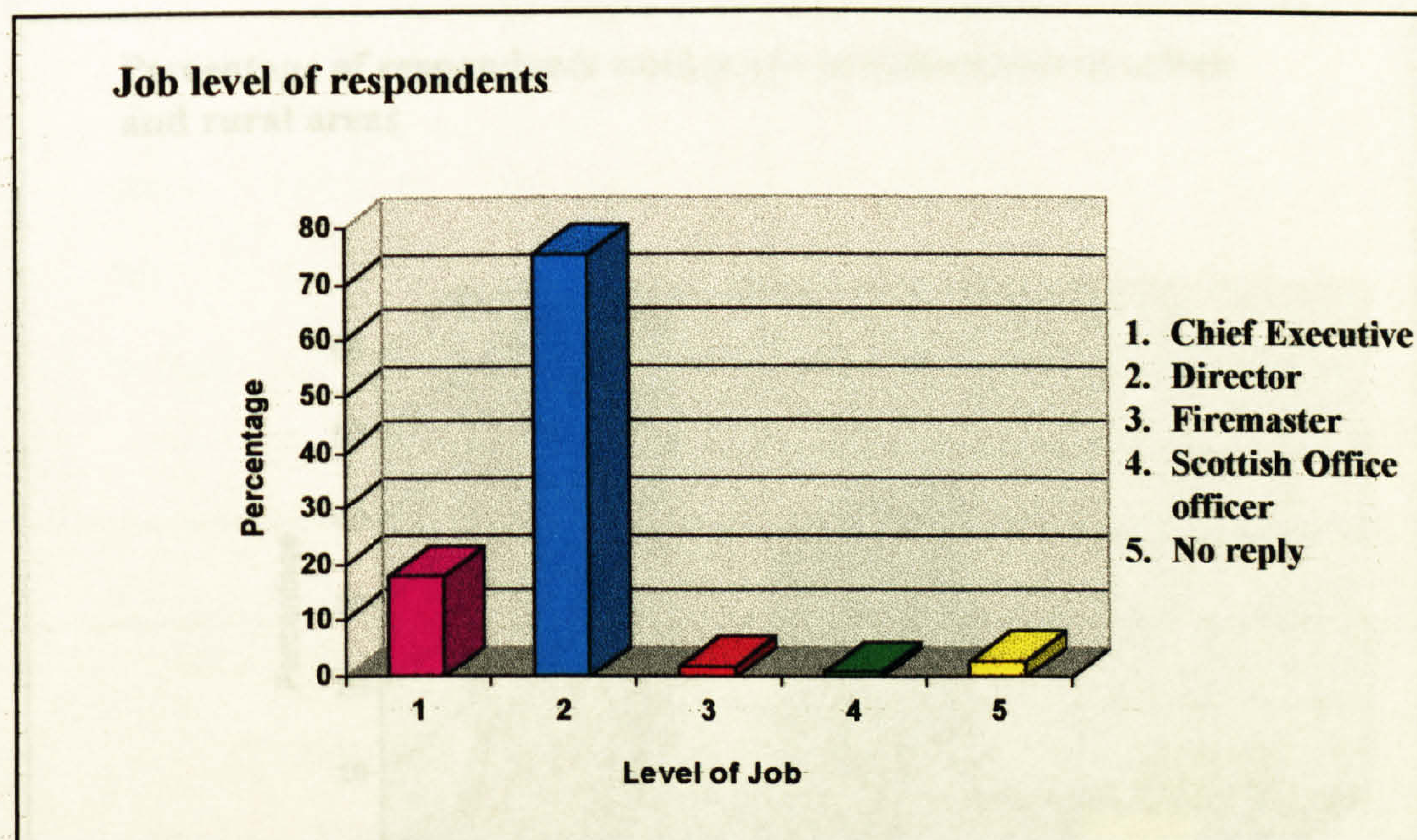
TABLE 14: PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT NETWORKING WITH OTHERS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	All
1. Own organisation	80	65.8	79.9	59.3	78.8	82	74.8	74.4
2. Other public organisations	17.5	10.1	15.9	31.5	4.8	12.1	18.4	15.8
3. Voluntary organisations	2.5	0	4.2	0.2	16.4	0	0	3.3
4. Private organisations	0	24.1	0	9	0	5.9	6.8	6.5

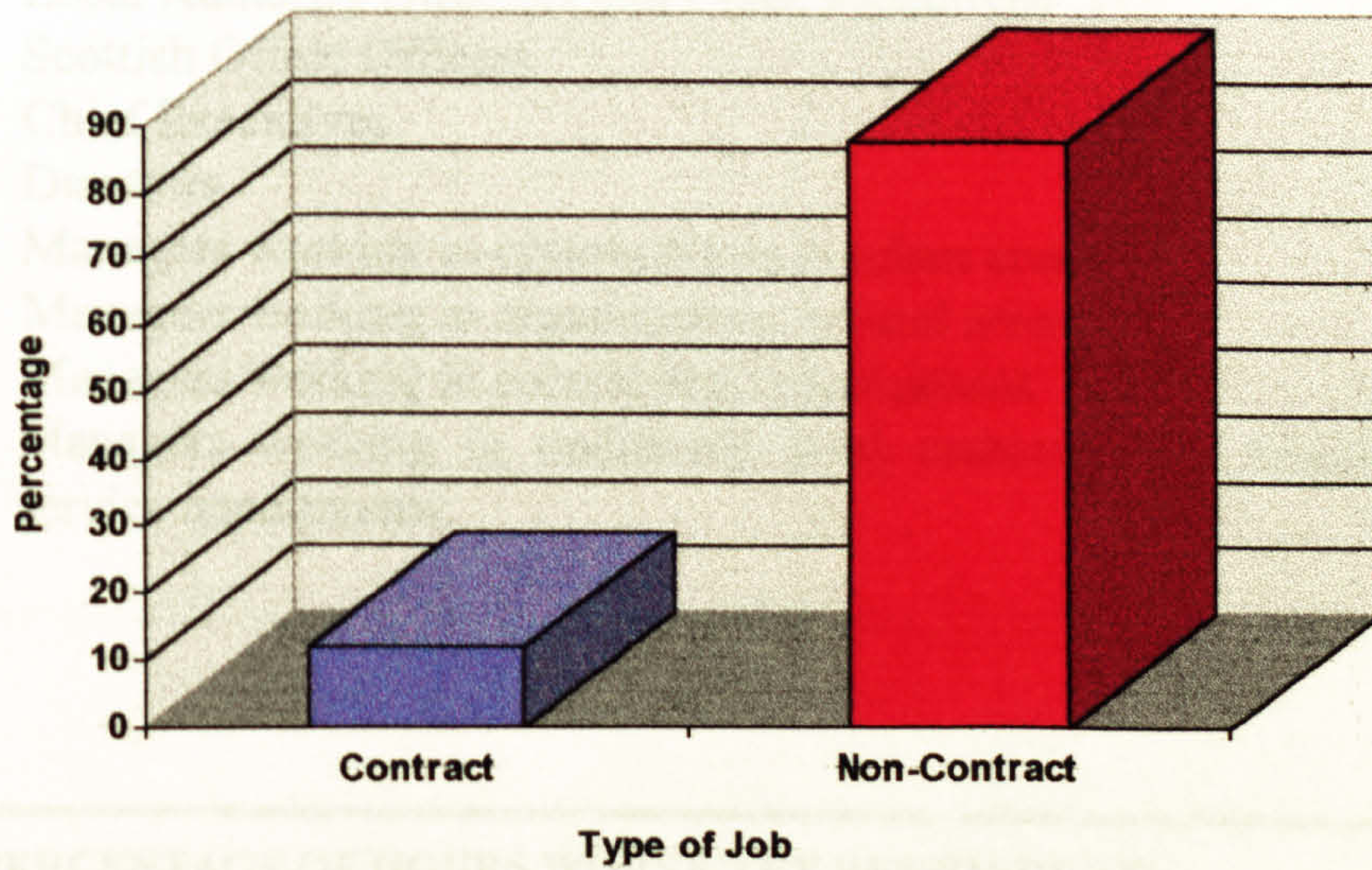
APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

The following four graphs break respondents down into the categories used in chapter six.

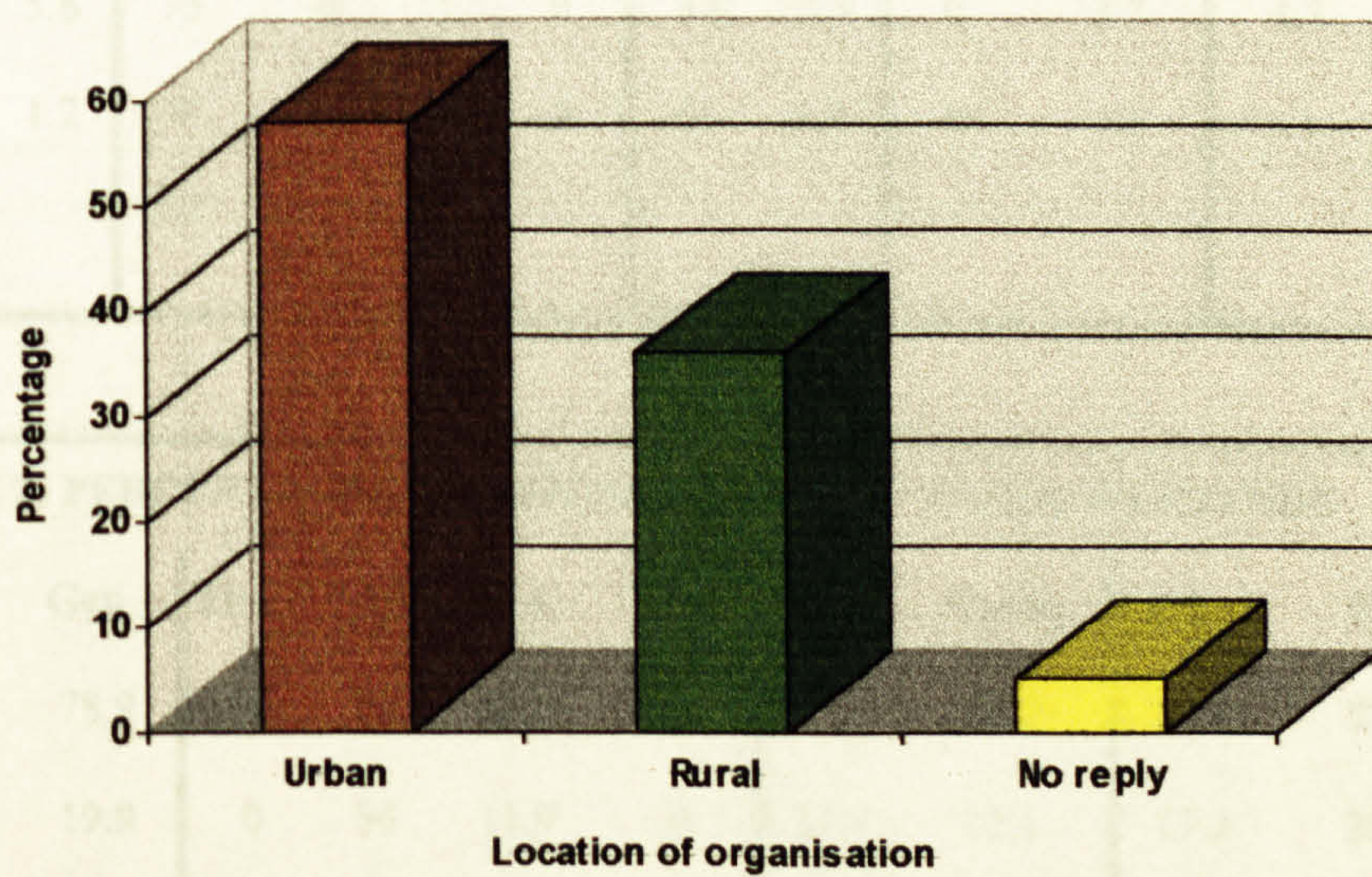




Percentage of respondents who work in contract departments and traditional local authority and hospital trust departments



Percentage of respondents working in organisations in urban and rural areas



For the purposes of Table 1 to Table 72:

Gen :	Figures for respondents overall
Fire :	Firemasters
NHS:	Hospital Trust Directors and Chief Executives
LA:	Local Authority Directors and Chief Executives
SO :	Scottish Office Officers
CE :	Chief Executives
Dir :	Directors
Urb:	Managers working in organisations in urban areas
Rur:	Managers working in organisations in rural areas
Con:	Managers working in contracting organisations
Non-con:	Managers working in traditional local authority and hospital trust service departments.

TABLE 1 : PERCENTAGE OF HOURS WORKED BY RESPONDENTS

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Cont	Non-Con	Urban	Rural
30-39	1.2	0	4	0	0	0	1 .1	0	1.9	2.1	0
40-49	32.9	0	28	35.6	100	24.1	36.4	42.9	35.5	32.3	32.8
50-59	45.3	25	54	42.6	0	37.9	47.1	50	46.7	44.1	46.6
60-69	13.7	0	10	16.8	0	34.5	9.9	7.1	10.3	16.1	12.1
70+	5.6	75	4	3	0	3.4	3.3	0	3.7	4.3	6.9
No reply	1.2	0	0	2	0	0	1.7	0	1.9	1.1	1.7

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WORK WEEKENDS

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	Rural	Urban	CE	Dir
Yes	78.9	100	64	86.1	100	75.3	86.2	82.8	77.7
No	19.9	0	36	11.9	0	23.7	12.1	17.2	20.7
No Reply	1.2	0	0	2	0	1.1	1.7	0	1.7

TABLE 3 : NUMBER OF WEEKENDS WORKED BY RESPONDENTS (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Urban	Rural
1	31.5	25	31.5	31.3	50	29.2	31.3	32.9	30
2	33.9	0	36	31.3	50	12.5	40.6	30	40
3	15.7	25	15.7	12.5	0	16.7	14.6	17.1	10.8
4	18.1	50	14.6	21.9	0	41.7	10.4	18.6	18
No reply	0.8	0	2.2	3.1	0	0	3.1	1.4	2

TABLE 4: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WORK EVENINGS

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Urban	Rural
Yes	97	100	98	98	100	96.6	96.7	97.8	97
No	3	0	2	2	0	3.4	3.3	2.2	3

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF EVENINGS WORKED BY RESONDENTS(%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Urban	Rural
1	12.1	0	9.1	16.3	50	10.7	12.1	15.6	5.4
2	29.5	50	29.3	26.5	50	17.9	30.2	22	37.5
3	34	0	39.4	26.5	0	28.6	37.9	35.6	33.9
4	18.6	25	16.2	24.5	0	32.1	16.4	22	16.1
5+	5.8	25	4	6.1	0	10.7	3.4	4.4	7.1

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL THAT THEIR MIND IS ALWAYS ON THEIR JOB.

	Gen	CE	Dir
Yes	90	79.3	92.6
No	10	20.7	7.4

TABLE 7: RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEVEL OF CONTROL THEY HAVE OVER THE DESIGN OF THEIR WORKING DAY (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con
Very Little	2.5	0	2	3	0	0	3.3	7.1	2.8
Little	29.8	0	28	32.7	50	31	30.6	14.3	32.7
Alot	67.1	100	70	63.4	50	69	65.3	78.6	63.6
No Reply	0.6	0	0	1	0	0	0.8	0	0.9

TABLE 8: THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH RESPONDENTS DETERMINE THE DURATION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con
Never	1	0	2	0	0	3.4	0	0	0
Occasionally	32	0	22	36.6	50	20.7	33.9	35.7	33.6
Frequently	67	100	76	63.4	50	75.9	66.1	64.3	65.4

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE TIME TO SIT BACK AND REFLECT ON THEIR WORK

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Yes	41	100	30	43.6	50
No	58.4	0	70	55.4	50
No reply	0.6	0	0	1	0

TABLE 10: PERCENTAGE OF MANAGERS WHO FACE CONSTANT INTERRUPTION

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con	Urb	Rur
Yes	82.6	50	86	84.2	50	79.3	85.1	78.6	85.9	86	79.3
No	17.4	50	14	15.8	50	20.7	14.9	21.4	14.1	14	20.7

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONTACTED BY RESPONDENTS DURING THE WORKING DAY (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
5-9	8.1	0	8	8.9	0
10-14	34.8	75	38	31.7	50
15-19	22.4	25	16	25.7	50
20-24	15.5	0	14	16.8	0
25-29	3.1	0	2	4	0
30+	15.5	0	22	11.9	0
No reply	0.6	0	0	1	0

TABLE 12 : PERCENTAGE OF SERVICE DIRECTORS WHO FACE CONSTANT INTERRUPTION

	Yes	No
Local Authority		
Property	100	0
Housing	83.3	16.7
Information Technology	100	0
Roads and Transport	100	0
Corporate Strategy	87.5	12.5
Leisure and Recreation	100	0
Law and Administration	100	0
Finance	87.5	12.5
Education	87.5	12.5
Human Resources	100	0
Social Services	57.1	42.9
Hospital Trusts		
Planning	100	0
Patient Services	100	0
Finance	100	0
Operational	85.7	12.5
Nursing	100	0
Human Resources	100	0

TABLE 13: NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CALLS RECEIVED BY RESPONDENTS DURING THE WORKING DAY (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir
1-4	0.6	0	2	0	0	0	0.8
5-9	26.1	0	34	23.8	0	27.6	26.4
10-14	41.6	0	40	43.6	100	44.8	42.1
15-19	19.9	75	16	20.8	0	17.2	19.8
20-24	8.1	25	4	7.9	0	10.3	5.8
25+	3.1	0	4	3	0	0	4.1
No reply	0.6	0	0	1	0	0	0.8

TABLE 14:NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CALLS MADE BY RESPONDENTS DURING THE WORKING DAY (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir
1-4	1.9	0	6	0	0	0	2.5
5-9	34.2	50	40	32.7	0	41.4	33.9
10-14	34.8	0	34	34.7	100	31	34.7
15-19	19.3	50	14	20.8	0	17.2	19
20-24	5.6	0	2	7.9	0	6.9	5.8
25+	4.3	0	4	4	0	3.4	4.1

TABLE 15: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON ONE ISSUE FOR AN HOUR OR MORE

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con
Never	2.5	0	2	3	0	6.9	1.7	0	1.9
Occasionally	56.5	50	62	54.5	50	65.5	55.4	21.4	59.8
Frequently	41	50	36	42.6	50	27.6	43	78.6	38.3

TABLE 16 : PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO CLAIM THEIR WORK IS CONSTANT THROUGHOUT THE DAY

	General
Yes	46
No	54

TABLE 17: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO DEAL WITH TWO OR MORE ISSUES SIMULTANEOUSLY

	General
Occassionally	5
Frequently	95

TABLE 18: PERCENTAGE OF TIME RESPONDENTS SPEND ALONE AND WITH OTHERS

	Gen	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con	Urb	Rur
Alone	29.1	26.9	28.3	33.5	27.7	27	32.6
One person	28.5	28.7	29.2	29.9	29.1	28.8	29
Two + persons	42.2	44.4	42.2	36.7	43	44	38.4

TABLE 19 : PERCENTAGE OF TIME RESPONDENTS SPEND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TO THE ORGANISATION

	Gen	CE	Dir	Urban	Rural	Contract	Non-contract
Internal	79.2	78	80	80.5	77.5	83.9	78.8
External	20.8	22	20	19.5	22.5	16.1	21.2

TABLE 20 : PERSONS WHOM RESPONDENTS COME INTO CONTACT WITH (%)

	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Councillors	1	0.6	11.1	0
Customers	3.3	6	6.3	5
Peers	1.7	16.5	12.3	10
Personal Assistants	5.3	11.4	11.5	10
Press	0.3	0.9	1.7	0
Public	1.7	2	4.1	0
Management subordinates	45	31.8	27	30
Non-management subordinates	10.3	13.1	12	20
Superiors	0	8.4	5.4	5
Suppliers	1	1.1	1.2	0
Other	30.4	8.2	7.4	20

TABLE 21: PERCENTAGE OF TIME RESPONDENTS SPEND PLANNING AND REACTING

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	Urban	Rural
Planning	31.3	11.8	30.8	32.6	12.5	29	35.3
Reacting	68.6	88.2	68.8	67.4	87.5	70.8	64.7

TABLE 22 : METHODS OF COMMUNICATION USED BY RESPONDENTS (%)	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	Urb	Rur
Business Lunch	0	3.4	1.4	2.5	1.9	2.3
Conference	0.5	2	1.5	2.5	1.9	1.3
Committees	5	11.8	8.8	5	9.3	9.9
Dictation	1	5.5	5.8	5	5.5	5.9
Face-to-face discussion	27.5	21.3	20.8	22.5	22.2	19
Formal meeting	7.5	18.7	15.6	27.5	17.1	15.2
Reading	35	15.1	15.9	15	15.4	17.2
Social contact	0	0.3	1.1	0	0.6	1.1
Telephone	8.5	6.7	8.5	5	7.9	8.1
Thinking	10	3.8	5.9	10	5.3	5.5
Travelling	0	3.5	4.2	0	3.1	5.3
Writing	5	6.6	8.3	5	7.6	8
Other	0	1.3	2.2	0	2.2	1.1

Tables 23-29 use a scale of 1-5, 1 being of no effect whilst 5 is of considerable effect.

TABLE 23: EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE ON THE RESPONDENTS' JOBS (%).	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con	Urban	Rural
1	6.5	15.3	21.4	13.3	13.6	13.2
2	38.7	24.3	35.7	22.4	30.7	18.9
3	19.4	23.4	35.7	22.4	25	20.8
4	29	26.1	7.1	29.6	22.7	34
5	6.5	10.8	0	12.2	8	13.2

TABLE 24: EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON RESPONDENTS' JOBS (%)

	General
1	3
2	11
3	30.5
4	40.9
5	14.9

TABLE 25: EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON RESPONDENTS' JOBS (%)

	General	CE	Dir	Contract	Non-contract
1	0	0	0	0	0
2	0.6	0	0.9	0	1
3	3.9	0	4.3	7.1	4
4	26	25	25.2	21.4	25.7
5	69.5	75	69.6	71.4	69.3

TABLE 26 : EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE ON SERVICE DIRECTORS' JOBS (%)

	1	2	3	4	5	No Reply
<u>Local Authority:</u>						
Contract	27.3	27.3	36.4	9.1	0	
Property	0	0	0	50	50	
Housing	0	0	16.7	66.7	16.7	
Info. Technology	67.7	33.3	0	0	0	
Roads & Transport	0	100	0	0	0	
Corporate Strategy	25	25	12.5	0	25	
Leisure and Recreation	0	0	0	66.7	0	33.3
Law & Administration	66.7	0	33.3	0	0	
Finance	37.5	50	12.5	0	0	
Education	0	25	12.5	37.5	12.5	12.5
Human Resources	33.3	0	33.3	0	0	33.3
Social Services	0	0	14.3	42.9	42.9	
<u>Hospital Trust</u>						
Contract	0	66.7	33.3	0	0	
Planning	0	0	0	50	0	50
Patient Services	0	0	100	0	0	
Finance	0	62.5	12.5	25	0	
Operational	0	42.9	28.6	28.6	0	
Nursing	14.3	0	28.6	57.1	0	
Human Resources	0	33.3	0	33.3	0	33.3

TABLE 27 : EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON SERVICE DIRECTORS' JOBS (%)

	1	2	3	4	5	No Reply
Local Authority:						
Contract	9.1	27.3	27.3	36.4	0	
Property	0	0	0	100	0	
Housing	0	0	66.7	16.7	16.7	
Info. Technology	0	0	0	0	100	
Roads & Transport	0	0	0	0	100	
Corporate Strategy	0	25	25	25	25	
Leisure and Recreation	0	0	0	66.7	0	33.3
Law & Administration	33.3	0	66.7	0	0	
Finance	12.5	12.5	37.5	25	12.5	
Education	0	0	37.5	50	0	12.5
Human Resources	0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0	
Social Services	0	14.3	28.6	57.1	0	
Hospital Trust						
Contract	0	0	66.7	0	33.3	
Planning	0	0	0	50	0	50
Patient Services	0	0	0	0	100	
Finance	0	0	37.5	62.5	0	
Operational	0	0	28.6	57.1	14.3	
Nursing	0	14.3	0	71.4	14.3	
Human Resources	0	0	66.7	0	0	33.3

TABLE 28 : EFFECT OF A CHANGE IN CUSTOMER ON RESPONDENTS' JOBS(%)

	General
1	13.9
2	23.2
3	34.4
4	21.1
5	7.2

TABLE 29: EFFECT OF A CHANGE IN SUPPLIER ON RESPONDENTS' JOBS (%)

	General
1	38.9
2	33.6
3	21.5
4	4.7
5	1.3

TABLE 30: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THAT THEIR WORK IS PERIODIC

	General	CE	Dir	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Yes	70.2	75.9	67.8	100	62	73.3	100
No	19.3	17.2	19.8	0	24	16.8	0
No reply	10.6	6.9	12.4	0	14	9.9	0

TABLE 31: THE PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON BUDGET MANAGEMENT IN EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR.

	CE	Dir	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
January	8	21	25	2.8	24.4	0
February	36	19	0	19.4	24.4	50
March	28	32	25	44.4	26.7	0
April	16	11	25	22.2	7.8	0
May	4	1	0	5.6	0	0
June	4	0	0	2.8	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	2	0	2.8	1.1	0
September	0	0	25	0	0	0
October	0	3	0	0	2.2	0
November	4	5	0	0	6.7	50
December	0	6	0	0	6.7	0

TABLE 32: THE PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR (EXCLUDING 75% OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONTEND THAT THE TIME SPENT IS CONSTANT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR)

	Gen	CE	Dir	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
January	5.4	0	7.4	0	0	7.7	0
February	5.4	0	7.4	0	14.3	3.8	0
March	10.8	0	14.8	0	0	15.4	0
April	21.7	25	22.2	0	14.3	26.9	0
May	18.9	25	14.8	33.3	0	19.2	100
June	2.7	0	3.7	0	0	3.8	0
July	8.1	25	7.4	0	14.3	7.7	0
August	10.8	0	11.1	33.3	0	11.5	0
September	8.1	25	3.7	33.3	14.3	3.8	0
October	8.1	25	7.4	0	42.9	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE 33: THE PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS IN EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR

	Con	CE	Dir	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
January	0	15.4	9.1	0	15	3.6	0
February	0	15.4	12.7	0	12.5	14.3	0
March	44.4	46.2	4	33.3	47.5	32.1	0
April	44.4	15.4	10.9	33.3	15	7.1	0
May	0	7.7	12.7	33.3	5	21.4	0
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	11.1	0	0	0	2.5	10.7	0
August	0	0	7.3	0	0	10.7	0
September	0	0	5.5	0	0	0	0
October	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	1.8	0	2.5	0	0

TABLE 34 : PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF THE 1990s DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE 1970s

	General
Yes	96
No	3
No reply	1

TABLE 35: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS CHANGED SINCE 1979 (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con
More business orientated	56.1	25	59.6	54	100	55.2	56.4	58.3	56.2
Resource constraints	38.7	0	38.3	40	0	20.7	43.6	33.3	44.8
Increased networking	6.5	0	4.3	8	0	6.9	6.8	0	7.6
More politicised	7.1	0	6.4	8	0	6.9	7.7	0	8.6
Increased accountability	25	75	17	19	0	10.3	20.5	16.7	21
Increased user friendliness	27.1	25	21.3	29	0	10.3	30.8	8.3	33.3
Service delivery improvements	7.1	0	12.8	5	0	10.3	6.8	0	7.6
Negatively	17.9	0	14.9	20	0	24.1	17.1	8.3	18.1
Positively	14.2	0	12.8	15	0	24.1	12	16.7	11.4

TABLE 36: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS CHANGED SINCE 1979 (%)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
More business orientated	0	83.3	100	62.5	62.5	50	57.1	100	71.4
Resource constraints	0	33.3	0	50	62.5	50	42.9	0	71.4
Increased networking	0	0	0	12.5	25	0	0	0	0
More politicised	0	0	0	12.5	0	37.5	0	0	0
Increased accountability	50	16.7	0	12.5	25	50	28.6	0	14.3
Increased user friendliness	50	66.7	0	12.5	50	37.5	28.6	0	57.1
Service delivery improvements	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	14.3	0	14.3
Negatively	0	0	0	12.5	0	25	14.3	0	0
Positively	0	16.7	0	25	12.5	0	0	0	14.3

Manager A : Local Authority Director of Property

Manager B: Local Authority Director of Housing

Manager C : Local Authority Director of Roads and Transport

Manager D : Local Authority Director of Corporate Strategy

Manager E : Local Authority & Hospital Trust Directors of Finance

Manager F : Local Authority Director of Education

Manager G : Local Authority Director of Social Services

Manager H : Hospital Trust Director of Patient Services

Manager I : Hospital Trust Director of Nursing

TABLE 37: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FORCES DRIVING PUBLIC SECTOR CHANGE SINCE 1979 (%)

	Gen	Fire	LA	NHS	SO	CE	Dir
Financial constraints	48.4	50	36.2	53	50	48.7	44.8
Public Expectation	35.7	25	31.9	38	50	36.8	34.5
Government Policy	56.8	25	46.8	63	0	60.7	48.3
An increase in business methods	28	50	27.7	28	0	24.8	37.9
External influences	16.6	0	12.8	20	0	19.7	10.3
Increased accountability	5.1	0	10.6	3	0	4.3	10.3

TABLE 38 : RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FORCES DRIVING PUBLIC SECTOR CHANGE SINCE 1979 (%)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Financial constraints	50	16.7	100	100	50	37.5	57.1	100	28.6
Public Expectation	50	66.7	0	0	25	37.5	42.9	0	57.1
Government Policy	100	66.7	0	66.7	62.5	75	71.4	0	57.1
An increase in business methods	50	0	100	66.7	12.5	25	28.6	0	14.3
External influences	0	33.4	0	0	25	12.5	42.9	0	0
Increased accountability	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	100	14.3

Manager A : Hospital Trust Director of Planning

Manager B: Local Authority Director of Housing

Manager C : Local Authority Director of Roads and Transport

Manager D : Local Authority Director of Information Technology

Manager E : Local Authority & Hospital Trust Directors of Finance

Manager F : Local Authority Director of Education

Manager G : Local Authority Director of Social Services

Manager H : Hospital Trust Director of Patient Services

Manager I : Hospital Trust Director of Nursing

TABLE 39: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM ON THEIR WORK (%)

	General	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Positively	21.3	25	10.6	27	0
Negatively	39.4	0	38.3	39	100
Increased financial focus	15.5	25	10.6	17	0
Increased customer awareness	12.3	25	8.5	14	0
Increased commercial awareness	21.1	0	14.9	23	0
Increased accountability	12.3	25	14.9	10	0
Pressure to perform	6.3	25	6.4	4	50
Managers not administrators	4.2	0	8.5	1	0

TABLE 40: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM ON THEIR WORK (%)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Positively	33.3	16.7	100	66.7	25	12.5	0	0	28.6
Negatively	100	33.3	100	66.7	50	37.5	42.9	100	42.9
Increased financial focus	33.3	0	0	0	25	25	0	0	0
Increased customer awareness	0	16.7	0	0	25	0	14.3	0	14.3
Increased commercial awareness	0	0	0	33.3	12.5	12.5	42.9	0	0
Increased accountability	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	42.9	0	14.3
Pressure to perform	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3
Managers not administrators	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	0	0	0

Manager A : Local Authority Director of Law and Administration

Manager B: Local Authority Director of Housing

Manager C : Local Authority Director of Roads and Transport

Manager D : Local Authority Director of Human Resources

Manager E : Local Authority & Hospital Trust Directors of Finance

Manager F : Local Authority Director of Education

Manager G : Local Authority Director of Social Services

Manager H : Hospital Trust Director of Patient Services

Manager I : Hospital Trust Director of Nursing

TABLE 41: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS ARE PERFORMING SIMILAR MANAGEMENT TASKS

	General	Contract	Non-contract
Yes	85	100	83.2
No	11	0	12.1
No reply	4	0	4.7

TABLE 42: PERCENTAGE OF SERVICE DIRECTORS WHO THINK MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS ARE PERFORMING SIMILAR MANAGEMENT TASKS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Yes	67	100	0	100	94	100	85.7	0	100
No	33	0	100	0	6	0	14.3	100	0

Manager A : Local Authority Director of Law and Administration

Manager B: Local Authority Director of Housing

Manager C : Local Authority Director of Propoerty

Manager D : Local Authority and Hospital Trust Directors of Human Resources

Manager E : Local Authority & Hospital Trust Directors of Finance

Manager F : Local Authority Director of Education

Manager G : Local Authority Director of Social Services

Manager H : Hospital Trust Director of Patient Services

Manager I : Hospital Trust Director of Nursing

TABLE 43 : PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED.

	General	Con	Non-con	CE	Dir
Yes	77	85.7	72.9	89.7	74.4
No	13.7	7.1	15.9	6.9	14.9
No reply	9.3	7.1	11.2	3.4	10.7

TABLE 44 : REASONS WHY PRIVATE SECTOR TECHNIQUES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED (%)

	Gen	CE	Dir	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Only if adapted to public sector values	40.4	40.9	38.8	50	35.5	41.6	100
Private techniques already introduced	17.5	27.3	16.5	0	19.4	18.2	0
Public and private sector can learn from each other	25.4	13.6	30.6	0	35.5	23.4	0
Commercial skills are beneficial	21.1	17.2	18.8	50	12.9	22.1	0

TABLE 45 : PERCENTAGE OF MANAGERS WHO THINK THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE USE OF PRIVATE SECTOR TECHNIQUES IN THEIR WORK.

	Gen
Yes	90
No	6.8
No reply	3.2

TABLE 46: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED

	Yes	No	No reply
<u>Local Authority:</u>			
Property	50	50	0
Housing	83.3	16.7	0
Info. Technology	33.3	66.7	0
Roads & Transport	100	0	0
Corporate Strategy	62.5	37.5	0
Leisure and Recreation	0	0	0
Law & Administration	100	0	0
Finance	75	12.5	12.5
Education	87.5	0	12.5
Human Resources	100	0	0
Social Services	71.4	28.6	0
<u>Hospital Trust</u>			
Planning	100	0	0
Patient Services	100	0	0
Finance	75	25	0
Operational	71.4	14.3	14.3
Nursing	42.9	28.6	28.6
Human Resources	66.7	0	33.3

TABLE 47 : HOW EASILY HAVE PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES BEEN INTRODUCED? (%)

	Gen	CE	Dir	Con	Non-con
Easily	7.3	14.8	4.4	14.3	3
Little difficulty	44	44.4	47.8	50	47.5
Difficulty	45	40.7	42.5	28.6	44.4
No Reply	3.7	0	5.3	7.1	5.1

TABLE 48: DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS WHEN IMPLEMENTING PRIVATE SECTOR TECHNIQUES INTO THEIR WORK (%)

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
No difficulties	7.3	0	2.1	7.6	0
Conflicting cultures	50	0	33.3	41.6	100
Resistance to change	42.3	100	29.2	35.9	100
Practical difficulties	11.8	0	10.4	8.7	0
Applying techniques in a political framework	9.1	0	2.1	9.8	0
Other	10	0	12.5	5.4	0

TABLE 49: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

	General
Yes	95
No	5

TABLE 50: PERCENTAGE OF SERVICE DIRECTORS WHO THINK THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

	Yes	No
<u>Local Authority:</u>		
Property	100	0
Housing	100	0
Info. Technology	100	0
Roads & Transport	100	0
Corporate Strategy	100	0
Leisure and Recreation	100	0
Law & Administration	100	0
Finance	100	0
Education	100	0
Human Resources	66.7	33.3
Social Services	100	0
<u>Hospital Trust</u>		
Planning	100	0
Patient Services	0	100
Finance	75	25
Operational	100	0
Nursing	100	0
Human Resources	100	0

TABLE 51: WAYS IN WHICH RESPONDENTS THINK THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO	CE	Dir
Learn from each other	48.4	75	53.1	45.1	50	30.8	37.6
Managing change	2.5	0	6.3	1.2	0	3.8	1.7
Developing commercial skills	30.3	0	21.9	36.6	0	7.7	29.9
Becoming customer centred	9.8	25	15.6	7.3	0	18.5	5.1
Improving self-performance	5	0	6.3	3.7	0	0	4.3

TABLE 52: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

	General
Yes	94.4
No	3.1
No reply	2.5

TABLE 53 : THE WAYS IN WHICH RESPONDENTS THINK THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN LEARN FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

	General
Learn from each other	34.2
Managing complex organisations	14.2
People management	15.8
Service ethic	5
Public accountability	10.8
Political dimension	6.7
Probity/openness	4.2
Awareness of the outside world	8.3
Not everything can be reduced to money	8.3
Working within tight financial constraints	3.3
Other	7.5

TABLE 54: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK AN INCREASED FOCUS ON VALUE-FOR-MONEY HAS AFFECTED THEIR WORK

	General
Strongly Agree	64
Agree	33.5
Neither	1.9
Disagree	0.6

TABLE 55: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK AN INCREASED STRESS ON CONTROLLING COSTS HAS AFFECTED THEIR WORK

	General
Strongly Agree	61
Agree	34.8
Neither	3.1
Disagree	1.1

TABLE 56 : PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE PERFORMANCE MEASURES IN USE

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Yes	88.8	100	100	82.2	100
No	9.9	0	0	15.8	0
No reply	1.2	0	0	2	0

TABLE 57: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK PERFORMANCE MEASURES ARE USEFUL TO MANAGERS

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Yes	81.1	50	86	80.7	100
No	15.4	50	12	14.5	0
No Reply	3.5	0	2	4.8	0

TABLE 58: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK PERFORMANCE MEASURES BENEFIT THE PUBLIC

	General
Yes	51.7
No	45.5
No Reply	2.8

TABLE 59: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT IS DESIRABLE

	General
Yes	97.2
No	2.8

TABLE 60: HOURS SPENT ON BUDGET MANAGEMENT (%)

	Contract	Non-contract
None	0	2.8
1-2	28.6	51.9
3-4	28.6	23.6
5-6	21.4	9.4
8-9	7.1	0.9
10+	14.3	6.6

TABLE 61: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THEIR PERFORMANCE MEASURES BENEFIT THE PUBLIC.

	Yes	No	No reply
<u>**Local Authority:**</u>			
Contract	45.5	27.3	27.2
Property	0	0	0
Housing	33.3	66.7	0
Info. Technology	0	66.7	33.3
Corporate Strategy	25	37.5	37.5
Leisure and Recreation	33.3	66.7	0
Law & Administration	33.3	66.7	0
Finance	37.5	50	12.5
Education	87.5	12.5	0
Social Services	42.9	28.6	28.5
<u>**Hospital Trust**</u>			
Contract	100	0	0
Planning	50	50	0
Patient Services	100	0	0
Finance	62.5	25	12.5
Operational	42.9	57.1	0
Nursing	42.9	57.1	0
Human Resources	100	0	0

TABLE 62: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THAT THERE IS CONFLICT BETWEEN CONTROLLING COSTS & PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY SERVICES

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
None	4.3	0	0	6.9	0
Some	42.2	25	34	47.5	50
Alot	52.8	75	66	44.6	50
No Reply	0.6	0	0	1	0

TABLE 63 : PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO MANAGE SUBORDINATES FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

	General
Yes	83.2
No	15.5
No reply	1.2

TABLE 64: DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING SUBORDINATES WITH A DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
No difficulties	54.5	50	52.6	56	100
Lack of knowledge of subordinates' work	49.1	25	28.9	18.7	0
Professional dominance	33	0	18.4	13.3	0
Different approaches to work	7.3	0	0	5.3	0

TABLE 65: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THE NEED TO NETWORK HAS INCREASED

	Gen	CE	Dir
Yes	96.3	89.7	98.3
No	1.2	6.9	0
No reply	2.5	3.4	1.7

TABLE 66: PERCENTAGE OF TIME RESPONDENTS SPEND NETWORKING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Voluntary	10	6	15.4	2.5
Public	73.3	78.9	66.8	95
Private	16.7	15.1	17.8	2.5

TABLE 67: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK FACILITATING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THEIR ORGANISATION AND OTHERS IS A KEY PART OF THE MANAGEMENT JOB

	General
Yes	95
No	3.1
No reply	1.9

TABLE 68: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THERE IS CONFLICT BETWEEN COOPERATING WITH FELLOW ORGANISTIONS AND COMPETING AGAINST THEM.

	Gen	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Yes	59	50	80	48.5	0
No	35.4	50	18	43.6	100
No reply	5.6	0	2	7.9	0

TABLE 69: REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS THINK THERE IS CONFLICT BETWEEN COOPERATING WITH FELLOW ORGANISATIONS AND COMPETING AGAINST THEM (%).

	General	Fire	NHS	LA	SO
Competition prevails	47.6	50	48.5	45.7	0
Working in a contracting environment	32.9	0	48.5	23.9	0
Working to different agendas	8.5	0	0	15.2	0
Other reasons	14.6	50	6.1	19.6	0

TABLE 70: REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS DO NOT THINK THERE IS CONFLICT BETWEEN COOPERATING WITH FELLOW ORGANISATIONS AND COMPETING AGAINST THEM (%)

	General
No competition	30.6
Working in partnership	25
Working with common objectives	13.9
Competition improves service provision	13.9
Organisations must understand each other	13.9
Other reasons	11.1

TABLE 71: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO THINK THE PUBLIC SECTOR HAS A DISTINCT ETHOS.

	General	Con	Non-con
Yes	92	92.9	91.6
No	6	7.1	6.5
No reply	2	0	1.9

TABLE 72: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE DISTINCT VALUES OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR (%)

	General
Equity, social responsiblity, service ethic	84
Democracy and accountability	14.5
Openness, integrity and honesty	33
Other	6.7