

**DESIGNING AND CONTROLLING PEOPLE'S JOBS: THE SCOTTISH PRISON  
SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

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**Abstract:**

This paper identifies and discuss the impact of the Scottish Prison Service's Quality Management Programme in the job structure and organization control. The results are analysed based on two mainly thesis found on literature regarding the topic: a) flexibel specialization model; and b) control enhancement over the work force. The data were collected by means of open-ended interviews, informal interviews, documentary research, and participation in training sessions. The case studies were developed in the Headquarters of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and in two prisons: Perth and Dungavel, since they were the most advanced regarding the programme implantation. The data were analysed in a descriptive-interpretative form. The results demonstrate that the quality programme had significantly affected the job design in the prisons. However, this results support parcially both the flexibel specialization thesis, wich claims for a job enrichment, but also the control enhancement over the work thesis. It is also evidence the use of control over the workers' cognitive premises , wich shows that quality programmes can work as a cultural control device since it incorporates an adequated human resorces management policy.

## **DESIGNING AND CONTROLLING PEOPLE'S JOBS: THE SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

### **1 Introduction**

Most of the discussion on quality management in the organisation studies literature relates to the issue of the control variable which is a central issue in the area. There has been a polarisation of two basic thesis regarding the subject. The first one is based on the flexible specialisation model of organisation (Piore and Sabel 1984) which argues that new arrangements of work organisation based on this model will lead to greater autonomy of a multi-skilled workforce that will become involved in the decision-making process in a participative and high-trust-relationships in the work environment. The second thesis is based on the labour process literature and gained special strength after Braverman's (1974) work. It contends that new technologies, and quality management related ones, are introduced in the organisation by management to enhance control over the workforce.

The issue of control has always been a central one in organisation theory. As suggested by Kouzmin (1980:134) "organisation signifies a method of social control, a means of imparting a regularity to society or collective action".

More than a set of techniques to ensure that organisational performances will proceed according to pre-established standards, control has been analysed as having a relation with social development. Perrow (1986), for example, suggests that with the process of industrialisation of modern society, forms of control in organisations tend to go from direct control to bureaucratic, and ultimately to control of cognitive premises. The same basic argument can be found in the studies of Edwards (1983), Burris (1989), and Rosen and Baroudi (1992).

Quality management has been described as enhancing unobtrusive forms of control, since it has been regarded as a strategic issue related not only to technical but also to cultural changes. Dawson and Palmer (1993:116), for example, argue that "TQM is increasingly being used as a cultural control strategy which goes beyond the shopfloor to incorporate strategic human resource management and inter-company relationships".

Petelin (1992:140) also comments on the subject of quality management as a control device arguing that "the broad administrative focus on quality arises as a conventional bureaucratic palliative to economic problems - one that enables administration to evade addressing specific social ills through substituting them with an abstraction which legitimates tighter surveillance and behavioural control of

the workforce". It implies definitions of competencies by specification of performance criteria and by standardisation of production.

Based on empirical data, in this paper I identify and discuss the impact of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) quality management programme on structural aspects (job design, satisfaction and control) of the organisation.

It is not difficult to see the importance of quality management programmes like TQM in terms of the way in which they relate to organisational control and performance. They do this, obviously, through control over "quality", but this control can be achieved only by higher controls over different aspects of the organisation's structure and process. The understanding of the links between quality management practices and organisational dimensions is therefore fundamental in providing the basis for organisational practices (in all levels – from management to labour) and social action.

## **2 Organisation Studies and Quality Management: Job Structure and Control**

It is now widely accepted that, as an organisational variable, control has been historically developed. Perrow (1986) summarises the issue clearly. He suggests a typology based on three types of organisational control: 1) fully obtrusive or direct; 2) fairly obtrusive or bureaucratic; and 3) fully unobtrusive or control of cognitive premises.

Fully obtrusive control refers to direct surveillance, rules and regulation. This type of control is necessary in periods of instability and crisis in organisations, but it fails in trying to regulate the personal background of the subordinates. Rules are also inefficient in periods of continuous innovation. This type of control requires a great effort from management concerning time and costs. According to Perrow, bureaucratic control is more efficient. It is related to the degree of standardisation and specialisation of organisational activities. As many of as the activities are standardised and specialised, the subordinates have less chance of making decisions according to their personal interests. Control of premises or fully unobtrusive control is the more difficult to achieve and it is, in Perrow's opinion, the most effective. It is related to a voluntary normative attachment between the subordinate and the objective of his or her task, through a process of internalisation of the premises of the behaviour necessary for the development of the task.

One important aspect of Perrow's (1986) argument about the transition to fully unobtrusive forms of control is that although unobtrusive forms are more evident nowadays the other two forms continue to be practised.

Palmer and Allan (1992:280) are among those who relate quality management and control in organisations: "narrowly speaking, quality management focuses upon the way in which commodities are produced to conform to user requirements. As such, quality management is concerned with the reorganisation, manipulation and control of material and social aspects of the production process".

Based on case studies of enterprises in Australia and New Zealand, Dawson and Palmer (1993) point out the issues that arise as being of special concern in the introduction of quality management initiatives. The first one is related to organisational flexibility. Quality initiatives are introduced to overcome rigidity problems faced by organisations. Employee empowerment and participation are used as means to achieve such ends. For the authors "it can modify work arrangements or to function as a discursive practice". They also argue that quality management "allows participation in low levels of decision making, but not levels that may have considerable significance to employees in terms of their work practices" (p.126). The cultural issue also appears to be very important in their findings, showing that prescribed homogeneity of quality management does not support cultural pluralism. As they point out "we saw some signs, in the case studies, that TQM was not well suited to build employee commitment within a workforce that was culturally very diverse. It proves a common problem, then in the culturally mixed environment of Australian business, the organisational assumptions of TQM may need to be adapted for our purposes" (p.135).

Dawson and Webb (1989) investigate some of the impacts of TQM and JIT principles of production on work organisation. In their case study of two different operating units on a single site of a UK Division of a US-owned high technology multinational corporation, they examine "the effects of a change in production on the job tasks and control responsibilities of managerial, supervisory and operative staff" (p.223).

Dawson and Webb (1989) conclude by arguing that their findings support the argument that TQM, to a certain degree, contributes to reversing the division of labour, increasing autonomy and providing greater employee involvement in the organisation of production. However, they also argue that these characteristics are not presented in the ideal conditions of the flexible specialisation thesis of Piore and Sabel (1984). Quality management entails a number of contradictions and results different from those anticipated by prescriptive literature in the field. For Dawson and Webb (1989:236) "the extent of discretion and autonomy introduced by the requirements to participate in incremental improvements is consistent with attempts to incorporate the workforce in the projects of capital without extending to any substantive control over business strategy or the dispersal of profits". Their results and conclusions are consistent with those of Dawson and Palmer (1993) who conclude that some quality

management techniques, particularly those related to the introduction of information technology, can be seen as promoting decentralisation and greater flexibility, whereas others enhance centralised decision making and control.

Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) address the issue of the change on the focus of control. Based on case study observation, the authors argue that a shift in control occurs due to two disciplinary aspects: control of one's peers and information technology systems. Sewell and Wilkinson (1992) comment that in one car manufacturing plant studied TQM/JIT included a "Neighbour-Watch System" and a "Vehicle Evaluation System". These systems make it possible to identify faults to specific individuals on the production line. In the case of a manufacturer of electronic consumer goods, it is based more on an information technology system. At the end of the production line an electronic test identifies the errors in the product and links them to each individual operator responsible. Peer control is supported by a flatter organisational structure associated to TQM and it is seen as a horizontal process of control, while information technology systems enhance vertical control mechanisms.

Based on two case studies, Wilkinson, Allen and Snape (1991:30) argue that "TQM might be seen as an attempt by management to control employees through internal discipline and self control. However, the workforce appeared to be reasonably enthusiastic about the TQM programme". The authors comment that the enthusiasm of the work force can be justified because TQM, as a form of involvement, seems to bring more immediate benefits to workers like more flexibility to work in groups and solve cross-functional problems, as well as certain degree of decentralisation of decision-making.

In terms of shopfloor workers Hill's (1991a:412) research shows that after the implementation of TQM "the labour force needed less supervision and worked more autonomously". Hill (1991a) also argues that team working, job rotation, more autonomy regarding the decision-making process and an environment of high-trust relationships are probably outcomes of TQM implementation. It implies employees' commitment towards organisational change, based on the importance of creating a positive culture in the organisation (Peters and Waterman 1982; Kanter, 1983 and 1990). This commitment can be achieved through a strong management ideology as well as a policy on human resource management (Oakland 1989; Hill 1991a).

Wilkinson, Marchington and Goodman (1992) studied the issue of employee involvement in TQM programmes. The authors, as well as Hill (1991a; 1991b) and others, argue that to base the implementation of TQM programme on the so-called "hard side" (techniques-based approach) without considering employee's involvement cannot lead to the necessary cultural changes and, as a consequence, lead to a degree of resistance. Wilkinson, Marchington and Goodman (1992) observe that

the problem of dualism or, in other words, the creation of a parallel structure of power, is likely to occur when TQM is not integrated into the existing organisational structure, as also described by Hill's (1991a) study of quality circles.

In their study concerning the relationship between TQM and human resource management in two financial sector companies, Kerfoot and Knights (1993) argue that in trying to adopt quality principles through a set of rationally planned techniques, the organisation itself can undermine the principles of quality. The authors explain that quality is related to creativity enabled by a wide range of complex human interactions and it can be conflicting within the TQM programme. Although TQM programmes have the theoretical potential to increase creativity "large scale rational programmes such as TQM, imposed on an organisation from 'above', are likely to corrupt the very content of quality in their appropriation of those features of creative interaction which it is believed can be measured, quantified and implemented through technical procedures" (Kerfoot and Knights 1993:13). In one of the case studies, for example, after one year of an operational TQM programme, the staff refused to cooperate with management. Kerfoot and Knights (1993:16) conclude that "TQM has a self-contradictory component because quality may depend upon some contradictory features of human interaction in organisations that TQM, in the interests of precision and control, might undermine".

### **3 Research Design and Method**

In order to achieve the main objective of this work, information had to be collected on key concepts and variables to allow the operationalisation of the research (Dixon, Bouma and Atkinson 1991). The concepts and variables involved in the study are defined as follows:

- Quality: it was defined and operationalised by the identification and description of the characteristics of the SPS quality management programme.
- organisational groups: in this research it relates to a certain number of people within the organisation pursuing the same basic objectives. It was operationalised by the categorisation of organisational members according to their professional position as governors, technicians and prison officers (based on Carvalho, 1993).
- control: in this research a distinction made by Child (1984:136) is assumed "between control as a general process and control as specific mechanism used within that process". In organisations, control is the process whereby groups of people are able to initiate and regulate activities toward the achievement of their specific aims. As specific mechanisms, control signifies the monitoring and evaluation process of behaviour or outputs (Ouchi 1977). The variable was operationalised

through a set of open-ended questions aiming at identifying supervision, subordination, performance evaluation methods, and rules and regulations (written or otherwise).

- Job Structure: in this research it is defined as a set of characteristics that determine both how jobs are to be performed, as well as how the workers relate to the established performances. It aggregates dimensions of job design and job satisfaction (based on Child 1984). Five dimensions were selected in the operationalisation of this variable: three as components of job design, and two of job satisfaction, as follows:

#### Job design

- 1) understanding of the function: the degree in which the dimensions of a specific social role within an organisation is perceived by its performer.
- 2) managerial skills: the ability to perform activities which involve some degree of organisation, planning, controlling and co-ordination (leadership).
- 3) delegation: "it is a particular meaning of the term decentralisation and describes a condition when the authority to make specified decisions is passed down to units and people at lower levels in the organisation's hierarchy" (Child 1984:146).

#### job satisfaction

- 4) job satisfaction: the degree of contentment with the activities performed (with respect to both the interviewee and his or her perception of the general level of job satisfaction among the staff).
- 5) morale: the mental and emotional attitudes of an individual to the tasks expected of him or her (with respect to both the interviewee and his or her perception of the general level of morale among the staff).

The research strategy adopted is a case study. Although mostly qualitative, this research also uses some basic quantitative analysis both to support qualitative findings and to provide a better visualisation of the results. As Martin (1990) argues, the qualitative vs. quantitative research is a false dichotomy. "It is essential to conceptualise the qualitative vs. quantitative distinction not as a dichotomy, but as a continuum, with mixed methods at the midpoint of the scale" (Martin 1990:31). She goes further, arguing that "the simple mono-method approach impedes the sharing of knowledge about organisational phenomena" (p.33).

Based on the initial information gathered in Scotland, as well as on the theoretical framework built for this research, the following techniques were chosen as appropriate to conduct the main part of the fieldwork: open-ended interviews, informal interviews, documentary research, and participation in training sessions.

The interviews were conducted in the Headquarters of the Scottish Prison Service, in Perth Prison and in Dungavel Prison. At the Headquarters the interviews were conducted with key informants as follows: three employees on the higher hierarchical levels of the organisation. Two of these employees were responsible for the strategic planning, and one for the human resource management. In the prisons studied the interviews were conducted with governors, technicians (psychologists and social workers) and prisons officers. Nine out of sixteen governors (7 in Perth and 2 in Dungavel) were interviewed, covering all functional areas. Four out of eight technicians were interviewed (3 in Perth and 1 in Dungavel). The interviews with prisons officers were conducted in different circumstances. Officers were allocated to the interviews by the organisation due to their availability. Security was the reason alleged by the organisation for such a procedure. These interviews were undertaken in groups which varied in size according to officers disposability. The choice of group interviews was due to the possibility of accessing a larger number of officers. Most of the interviews were conducted after training sessions when officers were available. This procedure was seen by the organisations as being the most appropriate for them. It was possible to interview a minimum of 10% of all officers in each prison (39 officers in Perth Prison, 12 in Dungavel). Considering the nature of the organisations studied, which offer difficult access to data, these numbers of formal interviews together with other techniques (participation in training sessions and informal interviews) were considered appropriate for the establishment of a general picture of this professional category in relation to the concepts and variables under analysis. The period of interviewing in Scotland was carried out between September 1993 and March 1994<sup>1</sup>.

Data was analysed mostly in a descriptive form. Some basic quantitative analysis was also performed. The interviews with governors and technicians were transcribed, and the results were quantified and presented in tables. The respondents were asked to identify if a specific situation concerning job structure was higher, lower or had no significant change after the implementation of the quality management programme. The data related to prison officers could not be quantified, due to the circumstances in which the interviews were held. They were presented in content matrix. Nevertheless, it is believed that they provide a reliable picture of prison officers' vision on these issues. These results were then discussed and compared with findings reported in the literature.

#### **4 Results**

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<sup>1</sup> These data represent part of a comparative study on the nature of quality management among Brazilian and Scottish institutions. Data in Brazil were collected between April 1994 and July 1994. Results of this comparison can be found in Vieira (1997). Nevertheless, the results presented in this paper are original.



#### **4.1 Quality Initiatives in the Scottish Prison Service**

The initial changes towards quality in the SPS represented basically a shift in the emphasis in the objectives of the Service in order to achieve a better balance between custody and rehabilitation, which originated the document named “Opportunity and Responsibility” (SPS 1990a). However, to the shift in the emphasis in the objectives of the Service was added a set of managerial principles regarded as quality principles. This occurred due to a momentum of greater change in the British public sector, as part of governmental policy. The new approach emerged then within an environmental framework of neo-liberal ideas in the political and managerial arenas, particularly in the public sector where pressures for cost-cutting, efficiency and separation of politics and management of operations started to occur.

In order to establish a further consciously quality-driven approach to change the SPS had to deal with some key issues, like the definition of quality and the adaptation of the concept and techniques from manufacturing/private sector to a service/public sector organisation. The SPS (1993b) has then defined quality in the Service in terms of seven basic characteristics as follow: a) top management commitment to quality and visible leadership; b) they know their business and who their costumers are; c) knowing and meeting customer needs is a priority; d) employees are empowered and encouraged to take ownership of services to be provided; e) clear and effective communications; f) high priority to training; and g) set clear targets, seek continuous improvement.

#### **4.2 Quality and Job Structure: design, satisfaction and control**

Data in this section is presented in two separate subsections because of the degree of accuracy of the data, due to the circumstances in which the interviews were allowed to be conducted.

The first sub-section presents data collected from the group of governors and technicians in each prison. These interviews were performed individually and the duration of each interview was not pre-established by the organisation. The only constraints regarding time were those imposed by the researcher aiming to get the best results possible, avoiding fatigue and other aspects that could jeopardise the results (e.g. governors and technicians time schedules). Moreover, the number of governors and technicians interviewed are representative of the total number of members in each of these groups, which allows generalisations to be made by the whole category. It was also possible to quantify respondents and related answers, once interviews were performed individually. The quantification in the terms that was done in this section provides a more accurate picture of the situation of the groups regarding the variables studied.

The second subsection presents data collected from the group of prison officers. The circumstances in which these interviews were undertaken did not allow any quantification of data. Due to the nature of the organisations studied it was not possible to perform a random sample of officers to be interviewed. They were allocated by the organisation to the interviews due to their availability. Security was the reason alleged by the organisation for this procedure. Nevertheless, it was possible to interview a minimum of 10% of the total of officers in each organisation. The formal interviews had to be performed in groups which varied in size in accordance to officers availability. It was not possible then to keep regularity on the number of, for example, new and old officers, or any other category that seemed to be important beforehand. Although formal interviews could contain some bias, once the officers were specially allocated by the organisation, some informal contacts during intervals and observation techniques were used by the researcher to decrease this possibility. It was not possible to determine quantities or percentages of opinions related to new and to old officers. However, it was possible to identify tendencies of opinion among them and to allocate these opinions to old or new officers during the time of the interviews and informal talks, which allows one to describe a general picture of the officers group as a whole. Preliminary information was also given by different members of staff in both prisons about a major distinction between new and old prison officers in the way they perceive quality management and the process of change in their jobs. It helped answers to be allocated to each of the groups.

The results in the second subsection thus identified tendencies of opinion among new and old officers. Although representing tendencies instead of precise generalisable results, they are believed to have enough degree of reliability to be taken into consideration as the basis for future research in the area.

#### **4.2.1 Governors and Technicians**

This subsection presents data related to the effects of the SPS quality programme in aspects of job design, satisfaction and control among governors and technicians in Dungavel and Perth Prison. Six main variables were chosen to describe the situation of jobs within each prison: understanding of the function, managerial skills, delegation, number of team-working activities, job satisfaction and morale of the staff. For each of these variables it was intended to identify if the implementation of the quality programme in each prison made "no significant change" (NSC) on the way people perceived and performed their functions, or if it changed and how. Table 1 shows the results for the first variable analysed, that is the scope of the understanding of the function performed by each respondent.

**Table 1:** Effects of the Quality Programme on the Understanding of the Function

Groups	Understanding of the Function							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	1	1	0	(N=7)	5	2	0
Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	3	0

It can be observed that most governors affirm the need for a broader understanding of the function performed, is now higher. It was attributed by governors to the new role of the prison as a customer-oriented service organisation.

Competition with the private sector through market-testing and the threat of privatisation was the main reason appointed for the need of a broader understanding of the function. Governors think that the Service should not be privatised. Since the prisons are going to be market-tested the governors need to understand in depth all the elements involved in the process in order to be prepared for the coming competition.

One governor in Dungavel and two governors in Perth stated that their jobs did not change significantly in terms of the need for a broader understanding of the function. Among the possible explanations for these results, two seemed to be the most likely : a) possible lack of commitment to the quality approach being implemented; and b) the functional area of activity of the governor is not to be so affected by the programme due to the nature of the activities developed in such an area.

All of the technicians interviewed in both prisons stated that the quality programmes of their organisations were not affecting their jobs in terms of the understanding of their function. This is probably due to the level of specialisation required for this function which makes a managerial quality approach have little or no impact on their jobs. The idea of a quality prison for this group is not related to managerial techniques, but to tasks that will lead to the achievement of the rehabilitation objectives of the prison. The only aspect mentioned by the technicians relating to their jobs due to the implementation of the quality management programme was the increase in the amount of paper-work. In fact, this aspect was mentioned by almost everybody in each of the groups studied.

Alterations in the need for managerial skills was the second variable chosen for analysis of job design, satisfaction and control. The results of the analysis of this variable for governors and technicians can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Effects of the Quality Programme on Managerial Skills

Groups	Managerial Skills							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	1	1	0	(N=7)	6	1	0
Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	3	0

Most managers argue that the need for managerial skills is now higher than before the implementation of the quality programme. Again, they were delegated tasks like budget control, strategic planning and performance measures for each functional area. These tasks were not performed before the quality management programme by governors of functional areas, as they were centralised in the Headquarters.

The position of a governor involves, by definition, possession of managerial skills. According to governors in both prisons the quality management programme made them more professional in this sense. Some governors started in the Service as prison officers. This is a position that requires different skills than those of a governor. Quality management then made them more aware of this fact. Some of them realised that they would have to improve their managerial skills to perform the job properly under the new overall policy of the Service.

Exceptions among governors (1 in Dungavel and 1 in Perth) were likely to have occurred for the same reasons stated before, that is, singularities of the functional area or lack of commitment to the quality programme.

Technicians stated once more that managerial skills required for their jobs were the same as before the implementation of the programme.

Table 3 shows the results of the effects of quality management in the delegation process. Delegation here is considered for both activities and the scope of decision-making in relation to those activities.

**Table 3:** Effects of the Quality Programme on the Delegation Process

Groups	Delegation							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	2	0	0	(N=7)	7	0	0

Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	3	0
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The results show that all governors stated that they were delegated new tasks and that they had more scope of decision-making. The emphasis on delegation can be seen in most of the documents in the SPS, where it is stated that employees are empowered and encouraged to take ownership of services to be provided. In fact, there has been a delegation process. The Headquarters have been delegating tasks to the prisons' governors and they, in turn, are delegating to the officers' levels. The process of delegation is changing the content of jobs in the prisons.

In terms of managerial work, there is a consensus among the governors in Dungavel and Perth that the quality management programme is affecting their jobs because they are now more accountable. Within the prisons everything now is set to targets, measures etc. By the time of the field-work governors were starting to be involved in it more directly and intensively because of market-testing and the threat of privatisation, as stated before. They feel that now they have to justify what they are doing each working hour of work and it represents new pressures that are making jobs more demanding and stressful.

Governors need to make sure that all these activities are monitored. They have to make sure that the staff are kept busy at all times and that they are doing their work to the standards that are expected, according to the targets that were previously set. Apart from being involved on budgets, planning and supervision of delegated tasks to lower levels under their responsibilities, governors must also deal with some new operational issues.

It seems that jobs have become more demanding but also more enriched as a consequence, once power for decision making was also delegated to middle level governors (or governors of functional areas) together with their new activities. It gives them more control of their activities.

No significant changes occurred in relation to the jobs of technicians regarding delegation. The increased amount of paper-work caused by the introduction of the quality programme seems, in this specific case, to represent job enlargement. New tasks have to be performed by technicians that relate specifically to fulfilment of forms and written reports. The increase in the number of tasks does not represent in this case any kind of delegation of authority for decision-making.

The number of team-working activities also increased among governors in the Service but remained without any significant change among technicians, as can be observed on Table 4.

**Table 4:** Effects of the Quality Programme on the Amount of Team-Working Activities

Groups	Team-Work Activities							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	2	0	0	(N=7)	7	0	0
Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	3	0

Governors take part in different kinds of team-working activities like quality circles, team-briefings and others.

Technicians, on the other hand, did not have their jobs affected in great deal in relation to team-working. The activities in which they were involved before, the nature of their tasks and the small number of members of this group, can be taken as factors that enabled them to have already been involved in different kinds of team-working. After the implementation of the quality programme they started taking part in few other group tasks with other organisational groups, but mostly on an *ad hoc* basis.

The aim of such growth in the number of team-working activities seems to be consistent, with the managerialist rationale of quality definition identified in the SPS, particularly in Perth Prison, towards continuous improvement in the services. Many team-working activities are also related to the elaboration of the strategic planning for each prison.

The results of the impact of quality management on job satisfaction demonstrates an increase in the level of satisfaction among governors. Among technicians the results show a division between the categories "no significant change" and "lower", as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Effects of the Quality Programme on the Job Satisfaction

Groups	Job Satisfaction							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	2	0	0	(N=7)	7	0	0
Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	1	2

All governors interviewed stated that they were more satisfied with their jobs. They stated that although jobs were now more demanding, the delegation process represents enrichment of their jobs.

It seems that although quality made jobs more demanding for governors it also increased the degree of job satisfaction among them. It seems to be explained by an increase in the degree of discretion regarding their activities.

Among the technicians the position in relation to job satisfaction is mixed. Fifty per cent of them stated that their satisfaction in the job was still the same, as the content of their jobs had not changed significantly. The other 50% stated that although their jobs were still the same, they disliked the fact of the increase in the amount of paper work originated by quality management.

It is interesting to note that although job satisfaction increased significantly among the governors in the organisation, the morale decreased significantly, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 6:** Effects of the Quality Programme on Staff Morale

Groups	Morale							
	Dungavel			Perth				
	Higher	NSC	Lower	Higher	NSC	Lower		
Governors	(N=2)	1	1	0	(N=7)	1	0	6
Technicians	(N=1)	0	1	0	(N=3)	0	1	2

Although employees expressed an increase in the degree of job satisfaction, the decrease in the morale of staff is explained by the lack of job security in the Service.

A general sense of insecurity within the Service was caused by a plan to restructure the organisation in order to make it more flexible. For the SPS administration, the structures of their Headquarters and their prisons are not adequate to the quality approach. There was an ongoing study on the restructuring of the Service whose objective was to make the SPS structures more flexible. This fact was causing insecurity and it was contributing to lowering the morale of the staff, since nobody in the Service knew exactly what would happen to their jobs.

The general expectation was that the biggest changes would occur in the managerial levels. It was believed that the number of governors were too high and the organisation could operate better, in a more flexible way, with a decrease especially in the middle levels of the hierarchy.

There is disagreement among the governors about these changes. Despite the lack of security and even facing the possibility of moving to another position, some governors think that it is unnecessary to have so many middle levels of managers.

Some other governors do not have an established opinion about this issue. It has to be considered that it was a new issue in the SPS. Therefore, governors and staff in general had relatively little information about the real nature of the changes that were being prepared. The only consensus was that it was causing great insecurity which was responsible for the low morale among the staff during the time of the field-work.

Technicians also stated concerns about their jobs. They were also likely to be affected by the restructuring project.

Prison officers were also affected by quality management. The next section examines the effects of the SPS quality approach in prison officers' jobs, particularly in aspects related to job design, satisfaction and control.

#### 4.2.2 Prison Officers

As stated in the beginning of this section it was not possible to quantify the results of the impact of quality management in prison officers' jobs due to the circumstances in which the data was allowed to be collected. It was possible, however, to identify the general perception of officers about the issues raised. It was also possible to identify a divergent position within the group which could be related to two sub-groups, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7:** Quality Management and Aspects of Job Design, Satisfaction and Control

Among Prison Officers

Aspects of Job Design, Satisfaction and Control	Organisational Groups	
	New Officers Dungavel and Perth	Old Officers Dungavel and Perth
understanding of the function	higher	higher
managerial skills	higher	higher
delegation	higher	higher
team-working	higher	higher
job satisfaction	higher	lower
morale	lower	lower

Officers interviewed in both prisons stated that their jobs became more demanding since the need for a broader understanding of their function, the need for managerial skill and the amount of activities and decision making they were doing was now higher than before the implementation of quality management.



Officers have been given new activities and responsibilities within the prisons. As far as governors are receiving new activities they are also delegating some others to lower levels in the organisational hierarchy. One example of one of the activities that has been delegated is concerned with solving operational problems in the galleries. Before quality management all problems in the galleries had to be reported to the senior and principal officers or even to the governors for a decision to be made. Now, if there is a complaint about an issue like the quality of the food, for example, the prisoners have to report to the gallery officer. He or she has to deal with that complain within 24 hours and if the prisoner is not satisfied with the answer he can go to the principal officer and discuss the complaint. There is, then, a new deadline of 24 hours for an answer. After this process such a complaint could go to the governor, if necessary.

Officers also received other responsibilities, such as looking after materials, recreational equipment, furniture, etc. Their new responsibilities on this matter is not limited to the care of the material. Officers are also encouraged to develop ways of managing materials efficiently (e.g. developing ways of saving money in purchases). This involves, therefore, a certain degree of managerial skill. It also demonstrates that the delegation process to officers does not involve only job enlargement, but in fact an enrichment of the tasks.

Officers are also becoming involved in the planning of the halls' activities as well as they are becoming aware of budget availability. They have to learn to deal with costs efficiently. The scope of activities they can perform and the decisions they can make are dependent upon the amount of money predicted in the budget and allocated to each activity.

There are two different points of view among officers in relation to their new activities and the changes in their jobs. New officers tend to accept more easily their new tasks, even with a certain degree of enthusiasm. According to the interview with a technician, the major problem in accepting changes is among the old ones. Although they are not the majority in both Perth and Dungavel they still have some influence among the new ones. Nevertheless it was possible to identify an increase in the level of job satisfaction among new officers and a decrease in the level job satisfaction among old prison officers.

Some of the officers are resistant to engaging themselves in new tasks. One of the technicians interviewed has attributed the background of some of the prison officers, particularly the old ones, as being the main source of resistance to change in the content of their jobs.

The more favourable vision of the new officers about the issue is due to the more professional background that the SPS has been looking for during the selection process and an intensive training programme.

In order to achieve the change in officers' perceptions of their jobs, the SPS is using two major strategies: training and early retirement. It is not a short-term process because it involves a general cultural change in the Service.

There is a great degree of uncertainty among officers, as well as the other organisational groups, about the future of their jobs since they were still in the middle of a changing process. Other changes are to come, especially related to careers, job designs and payment system as an outcome of the ongoing studies on restructuring. This fact seems to be responsible for the indication of a low level of morale among officers, as occurred among governors and technicians.

Officers did not know what would happen with their jobs but most of the new ones stated that changes would be mostly in the content of their activities and not in the number of positions. They stated then that the restructuring review could change things for the better. According to new officers, in general, there are too many governor levels. However, when officers discussed the possibility of changes in their positions their opinions changed radically and there seemed to be no difference between new and old officers.

Officers also link the low level of morale among staff to market-testing and to the threat of privatisation.

Quality management changed jobs at officers' levels. It was observed that jobs became more demanding and enriched. The effects of job changes on the morale and satisfaction of officers seemed to be different among old officers and new officers. The former group seemed to reject the changes acknowledging that they caused a decrease in job satisfaction and morale. The latter group seemed to be in favour of the changes and prepared to accept them. Their stated low degree of morale is said to be due to the general insecurity about the future of their positions in the organisation and not related to new responsibilities.

## **5 Discussion and Conclusion**

The results presented and analysed in this paper show that quality management significantly modifies the work activities, as also argued by Procter et al. (1994), Dawson and Palmer (1993), Hill (1991a), Hill (1991b), and Dawson and Webb (1989), among others. Therefore, the empirical evidence presented in this research contradicts the arguments that quality management as a strategy in the

pursuit of flexibility does not represent, in general terms, significant changes in the work practices (Pollert 1991; Tomaney 1990; Pollert 1988).

The extent in which changes affect jobs varies according to groups of professions and tasks performed. This is consistent with Dawson and Webb's (1989) findings. Governors and prison officers' jobs were the most affected while technicians' jobs seem not to be affected significantly. This can be explained by: a) the degree of importance attributed to technical work for the achievement of organisational goals; and b) the degree of professionalisation and specialisation of the functions.

Regarding jobs that were affected to a greater degree, it could be observed that quality management made them more demanding, since it was asked from the workers an increase in the need for the understanding of the function performed, an increase in the need for managerial skills, and an increase in the delegation process. The nature and content of these changes in the jobs of governors and prison officers, as described in section 4.2, represents an enrichment of jobs and a reverse in the process of de-skilling. Workers become more aware of their entire function and of the role of the function in the whole set of organisational activities. Moreover delegation of authority occurs and it increases significantly the scope of decision-making, as also noted by Dawson and Webb (1989). Nevertheless, some variation was observed in relation to the degree of such empowerment for different functions. Officers in the galleries, for example, seemed to be more empowered than those responsible for escort activities.

Empowerment and job enrichment does not necessarily lead to a better participative work environment of trust relations, as argued by Hill (1991a); Hill (1991b), Piore and Sabel (1984). The results of this research show that although there was an increase in job satisfaction among most employees, the morale of the staff decreased significantly. This result also differs from that of Dawson and Webb (1989). These authors argued that the "no redundancy policy", favourable rates of pay and employment security of the organisation they studied contributed to a relatively harmonious environment in which quality management operates. In contrast, within the SPS there is a high level of insecurity about the future of the jobs in all organisational groups due to an ongoing study on the restructuring of the organisation, as stated before. This fact was indicated as responsible for the low level of morale among the staff.

Control over tasks has increased with the delegation process. However, delegation is being accompanied by an increase in the amount of paper-work, mostly in the form of reports, due to the establishment of targets and performance measures for a wide variety of activities. This represents an emphasis on output control.

Quality management is therefore affecting the control strategies used by an organisation. Direct and personal supervision is still largely used due to the nature of the organisation studied but there seems to be an attempt to establish more precise and "hard" output measures for organisational activities.

The process of delegation discussed before is accompanied by the establishment of targets and performance measures. It allows management to keep some degree of control of the activities that they delegate. It can be said that it represents centralisation through a decentralisation process, as pointed out by Child (1984). Workers become more free to find a better way to perform specific tasks towards the achievement of a specific target, but the targets to be achieved are set in accordance with the objectives established by managers for the organisation as a whole. The results of this research also suggest that delegation and job enrichment caused by quality management are limited to the operational levels. Managers at the higher levels of the organisation and, in this specific case, politicians, remain accountable for the control over policy and strategy (Dawson and Palmer 1993; Dawson and Webb 1989).

There is a clear attempt to create a stronger identification with management values and goals. This is being done by a massive training programme and changes in the profile of the people that the Service aims to contract through the selection process. Initial training is done through a quality awareness package which is introduced to the staff, followed by specific training for each of the main points of the quality ideology within the organisation. This finding supports Kerfoot and Knights' (1995) argument that a human resource policy is important to promote a higher degree of success of quality programmes. It can be argued, as Dawson and Palmer (1993) suggest, that quality management works as a cultural control device since it incorporates a human resource management policy.

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