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‘Another one bites the dust’: En’gender’ing the problems of masculinity in the management of innovation**

The authors explore the masculine preoccupation with control in the historical context of the emergence of modern management. They then seek to contemporise the phenomenon in terms of the problem it poses for the management of innovations within the financial services sector. It is demonstrated that the theory underlying modern management panaceas such as TQM, culture change and BPR is embedded within a masculine discourse of control which is inconsistent with its concomitant concern to promote creativity, autonomy and trust within the employment relationship. Such inconsistencies are then illustrated by recourse to some empirical case study based research within a major retail bank. It is argued that the poor performance of recent management innovations cannot be understood purely as difficulties of implementation or design rather issues of gender are of critical importance both in understanding the problems of innovation but also the forms and condition of organisations and management. The central focus is the over-arching concern with control embedded within multiple masculinities and its incompatibility with innovations which emphasise quality or teamworking.


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** We acknowledge the financial support of the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Financial Services Research Centre in pursuing the research on which this paper is based. The inspiration for the paper was a draft of another paper (McCabe 1995).

Introduction

In this chapter our concern is to extend the critical analysis of management innovations (MacIntyre 1981; Wilkinson and Willmott 1995; Jacques 1996) to encompass a critique of the gendered nature of managerial thinking and practice. The history of managerialism is heavily bound up with masculine preoccupations of transforming everything and everyone into an object of control or conquest. This is not so surprising given that the development of managerialism has been almost coincident with the evolution of capitalism – an economic order that is also built upon the control and conquest of nature, machines and markets. It may be reasonable to conclude then that managerialism and masculinity are discursive practices that mutually reinforce a preoccupation with control and conquest, and that organizations in a capitalist society are a site for their reproduction (Kerfoot and Knights 1996).

At certain stages of capitalist development (e.g. frontier and colonial expansion), this transformation of everything and everyone into an object of control and conquest may have been a vital element of its success. But it sits very uncomfortably with recent managerial innovations, particularly those concerned with quality management. This is because the underlying purpose of quality programmes is employee cooperation, collaboration and consent in pursuit of the provision of products and services that meet customers’ expectations. A masculine preoccupation with control and conquest evident in much managerialism clearly contradicts the content of quality management programmes where there is a concern with empowerment, teamwork, and creative collaboration to continuously improve working practices and customer relations.

Such major contradictions may not be visible to managers since employee resistance to hierarchy is often covert or clandestine, and although strategies of control can stimulate resistance rather than consent, this very often takes the form of compliance (Sturdy 1992; Jermier et al. 1994). When most of what is demanded from employees is physical effort, an indifference to the work task may not be so crucial as long as the worker’s compliance to carry it out can be secured. However, recent innovations such as TQM (Total Quality Management) and BPR (Business Process Re-engineering) require an embodied commitment on the part of employees since they are expected to be wholly involved in their relations with both one another and customers (Ishikawa 1985; Oakland 1989; Hammer and Champy 1993; Davenport 1993). Mere compliance on the part of employees, therefore, is unacceptable for it will not only show in the product or service delivered but also customers will readily detect the indifference that often lies not far beneath the surface. But these contradictions also exist within the realms of organisation structure and management practice.

No matter how liberal and non-coercive the content of management innovations, the hierarchical framework in which they are implemented readily transforms them into technologies of control. This control reflects but also reinforces partly at least because of the domination of masculine discourses that are embedded in contemporary organisations and management (Jacques 1996:12). Masculine pre-occupations with control and conquest (see Kerfoot and Knights 1995; 1996) are routinely reproduced by structural (i.e. capitalist) demands for results in improved performance, productivity and
profitability. They are also reinforced by the existential insecurities of masculinity which derive from a sense of being separate or disembodied from the world. Both these tensions seem to have their resolution in a compulsive desire to extend the boundaries of control. For managers to ‘let go’ in these circumstances is not only to risk their own performance and career, (measured and allocated by hierarchical superiors) but also to release the limited existential security that being ‘in control’ seems to offer.

In the absence of management being prepared to relinquish a sense of their own power and the privileged trappings that go with it, the ‘new’ managerialism of distributed accountability and self-discipline associated with recent organisational innovations is unlikely to be realized. In such circumstances, we argue, delayering, empowerment, team working and continuous improvement will remain rhetorical devices that convince almost no one to engage wholeheartedly in the kinds of cooperation, commitment and accountability that such innovations demand.

The article is organised as follows. In the first section we seek to contextualise the embedded discourse of masculinity within modern management. Then in the second section we expand upon what may be meant by the masculinity of innovation. In doing so, we will seek to elaborate how the quality literature irrespective of the discourse of empowerment, creativity and flexibility is bound up with a masculine concern with control. Though we identify multiple forms of masculinity (Brittan 1989; Kerfoot and Knights 1993; Collinson and Hearn 1994), all of these share a common concern with control. After setting out our methodological approach, the third section explores through our case study based research, how this preoccupation with control in the innovation literature is mirrored within organisational practice – such that the multiple forms of masculinity eventually undermine the radical features of organisational innovations. Finally in a summary and conclusion, we draw the chapter to a close by indicating the main value of analysing management and organisation in this fashion.

**Contextualising the masculinity of management**

Prior to the development of industrial capitalism, subordinates within work settings were under legal or paternal obligation to fulfil the productive expectations of their masters or owner-manager. But once labour was transformed into a formally ‘free’ agent of production under economically organised systems of corporate capitalism, its obedience could no longer be guaranteed or taken for granted. While supply and demand mechanisms may be expected partially to ensure an element of conformity or compliance, the co-ordination and control of a diverse range of collectively organised work tasks requires some additional mechanisms or technologies. These begin to be fulfilled by a cadre of managers and this process is heavily reinforced by the development of the joint stock company and the emergence of absentee owners or shareholders. The growth of modern conceptions of management, then, can be seen as largely a response to the problems of supplementing the economic relation between capital and labour in conditions where it is seen to exhibit weaknesses or measurable limits. Although such limits are inherent within capitalist production, it may be

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1 This section draws heavily upon Kerfoot and Knights (1996).
suggested that they have increased in severity as economies and industries have entered
globally competitive markets and as consumers, driven by regulators, interest groups
and the media, have become more demanding in what they expect from productive
organizations.

Whether one can trace the genesis of modern management as a distinctive
discourse and practice to a single source as does Hoskin (1990) is of less interest here
than displaying its rhetoric and uneven or discontinuous realization in everyday
organizational practices. This rhetoric which continues to be a project in search of its
own realization is what Hoskin and his colleagues define as managerialism or the
development and transformation of management practices into a written recorded and
calculable form (Hoskin and Macve 1986; 1988; 1993; Ezzamel et al. 1990). This
involves quantifying, examining and grading both people and events whereupon they
are brought readily within the disciplinary gaze and the techniques of surveillance of
those exercising power and constituting knowledge in organizations. Files on employees
are written, recorded and stored, and the activities and competence of labour are
continuously examined so that its behaviour is rendered calculable in terms of both
present and future prospects for the organization.

Managerialism for Hoskin and his various co-writers, is that form of management
discourse and practice whereby the control of work organizations is supplemented, or
made possible, by the use of written documents, rules and records (bureacracy)
combined with technologies of calculation (accounting). Bureaucratic and accounting
systems are brought into alignment with one another so as to turn everyone and
everything into an object of management control and conquest. It is in this sense,
amongst others, that management discourses and practices may be seen as
predominantly masculine. In its crudest form, managerialism becomes institutionalised
as a practice that seeks to deny any alternative ideas, beliefs, values or interests other
than those of a narrow managerial elite whose prerogative (i.e. right to manage) leaves
them oblivious to any dissent or disruption of their unitary conception of work
organizations.

But, as has been suggested, managerialism is a rhetoric – an odyssey that will
encounter numerous setbacks, trials and tribulations in its attempts to return to a stable
base. Of course, like all rhetoric, it seeks to constitute the reality it desires (Knights and
Willmott 1996) thereby ignoring or de-emphasising all obstacles in its chosen path.
However, as intimated, it is not just any ordinary rhetoric – it is one grounded in a
masculine preoccupation with control, conquest and continuity that derives from an
unacknowledged desire of managers to secure their fragile selves in orderly relations
and abstract, exhaustive knowledge (Knights 1996). It is therefore driven by the search
for, and adoption of, new innovations that promise not only to resolve the problems of a
previous technology but also to be the ultimate panacea in this pursuit of an illusory
security and totalizing knowledge.

Although most of these innovations are elaborations or variants on the same
managerial theme of control through bureaucratic procedures and accounting measures,
each is in part a response to a problem or failure relating to a previous belief or practice.
So, for example, in identifying informal shopfloor norms and behaviours that conflicted
with management goals, the human relations movement began to puncture the formal unitarist methods of scientific management. However, rather than work with conflicting interests, human relations theorists prescribed sophisticated training so that leaders could infiltrate workgroups and manipulate the norms and behaviour to coincide with the interests and objectives of management. Eventually as the growth and development of trade unions made it difficult to ignore the existence of significant alternative views to those of management, managerialism became more sophisticated in its acknowledgement of the polarised interests that may be seen as reflecting and reinforcing class conflict. Although having no intention of conceding to each and every demand arising from the shop or office floor, managerial prerogative began to be seen as a negotiated authority dependent on collective agreements between worker representatives and employers or their agents. During a short phase in the 1960s and 1970s, full employment enabled employees to extract considerable compensation in return for an acceptance of managerial prerogative. More recently labour markets have turned against labour and, in combination with a direct assault on trade unions from New Right governments, the negotiating power of employees has declined leaving management in the ascendancy once again.

This situation has provided the context for what may be described as a “New Managerialism” wherein management have introduced managerial innovations that encourage employee self-discipline without the mediation of collective bargaining and its wage inflationary effects. Although managerial prerogative is not threatened by these innovations, it is in an operational sense constrained by accountability requirements and this managerial accountability is in turn distributed or cascaded down the hierarchy so as to involve employees at the very lowest levels. Accountability and self-discipline are central to recent managerial innovations (cf. Du Guy and Salaman 1992; Sewell and Wilkinson 1992; Tuckman 1994; Wilkinson and Willmott 1995; Willmott 1993; Willmott 1995). Quality management programmes, for example, the ‘internal market’ involve everyone throughout a ‘value chain’ being a customer of someone else, leading ultimately to the end consumer of products or services. Such a chain when considered with team working and empowerment, and the obligation to report obstacles to efficiency and effectiveness all suggest accountability and self-discipline. These moves towards self-discipline we would argue are not a break with the past masculine preoccupation with management ‘control’. Rather it is a recognition that there are limitations in the extent to which management can control labour by external means (Ishikawa 1985; Oakland 1989). Moreover it also reflects an awareness that even if labour were not indeterminate and could be controlled that there is considerably more to be ‘tapped’ than labour’s physical abilities.

**The masculinity of innovation**

“Contemporary interest in new managerial initiatives such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and ‘empowerment’ presuppose an entirely different way of managing that may be antithetical to the masculine and hierarchical identities and notions of authority of conventional management” (Collinson and Hearn 1994: 17).
To varying degrees an emphasis on control is apparent in the work of all of the quality, BPR and cultural gurus. Some commentators suggest that Deming’s (1986) approach is more sophisticated than, for instance, Crosby’s (1979) as he focused more upon people as opposed to the cost based issues, and urged management to avoid financial short-termism (Spencer 1994; Dean and Bowen 1994). Moreover, Deming’s 14 points reveal an intention to ‘drive out fear’ and to ‘break down barriers’ within organisations. Nonetheless, these 14 points reflect a desire to attain control over employees and organisations, albeit in a less coercive way. Accordingly, some commentators conclude that Deming sought ‘to foster an open, trusting, and cooperative culture in which all employees from top-managers to blue-collar workers perform to achieve the common goal of firm survival’ (Anderson et al 1994:475-6). Despite these claimed attributes, few in principle and even fewer in practice release their grip on management control. The masculinity behind this preoccupation with control and mastery over the “world” is barely concealed within the quality discourse:

‘quality is the most important of the competitive weapons.....some organisations....have used quality to take the heads off their competitors’ (Oakland 1989:3; our emphasis).

At its most basic level we can see that TQM entails an elaborate structure which seeks to ‘institutionalise participation’ (Hill 1991), and through the generation of problems, management seek to attain control over areas which were once out of their control. For Grant et al (1994) TQM constitutes ‘a revolutionary philosophy that requires radical change within the firm (1994:34), and its problematics are explained by reference to the inconsistent way in which management have sought to introduce it in the past Yet, in our view, the problems facing TQM are far more fundamental than this analysis suggests. Few commentators have attempted to identify or understand what may ultimately prevent management from controlling their employees and organisations. Nor have they explored the problematical implications of control in relation to TQM’s concern to inspire creativity or teamworking. For us the question of gender is critical to these concerns. Thus control, whether by accounting means, productivity measures, empowerment or prescribing and monitoring employees’ behaviour, is essential to the managerial role and masculine identity of managers, which needs to be understood when considering the problems of innovation.

Quality requires that ‘everyone must work together at every interface to achieve perfection’ (Oakland 1989:19). However, if only modest improvements are achieved in service delivery and production, then without a concomitant rise in market share, jobs are likely to be threatened. This in turn undermines the likelihood of people working ‘together’. Thus quality innovations involve an internal drive for control over processes and people, and for this to be realised, there must likewise be a drive for control directed externally at the ‘heads’ or markets of competitors. It is difficult to reconcile this focus upon control and constant improvement with the trust, teamworking and creative processes that are also asserted to be the condition of Quality Management. This was expressed by Ishikawa (1989) in his call for ‘voluntarism’ in the setting up of and involvement in quality circles, whilst Oakland (1989) highlighted the flaws in mechanisms of control which are external to the individual as these tend to demotivate
employees. This indicates that there is a requirement and a belief amongst the quality gurus that control can be and will be shifted ‘from outside the individual to within’ (Oakland 1989:31). Intriguingly for Davenport (1993), a guru of BPR, the question is ‘how much’ internal commitment management must generate, not whether management can do so. One must assess ‘the required depth of penetration of individual attitudes and behaviours’ (Ibid 1993:171) when considering ‘process-innovation’ oriented change. Yet, aside from these overly rationalist assertions, it is rarely considered that the conditions of innovation are simultaneously contradicted by managements’ preoccupation with control, and the internal and external competitive pressures that promote employment insecurity.

Within the existing quality or innovation based literature management are offered few opportunities to reflect upon these inconsistencies and instead are exhorted to provide ‘obsessional’ commitment (Oakland 1989:25). These inconsistencies are mirrored, and are called into even sharper relief within the BPR literature and prescriptions, reflecting its demands for even more tough management and radical change. Davenport (1993) tells us that ‘process innovation can only be accomplished when the leaders of an organisation believe and can demonstrate that current modes of operation are a threat to the survival of the company’ (1993:171). It is argued that ‘the sense of organisational „pain“ can be manipulated’ (Davenport 1993:172) by management to secure change; though management must simultaneously offer „hope“ for the future. Little attention is given to the contradiction between a top down, manipulative approach towards change and the concurrent demand for employee trust. Or to the contradiction between BPR’s implications for job cutting and its simultaneous emphasis upon teamworking (Hammer and Champy 1993).

A masculine assumption pervades the innovation type literature that managers can wrest control over the organisational universe providing that they are sufficiently committed, and act in a rational and planned way. Such rationality is behind all of the statistical techniques the quality gurus offer, such that Ishikawa (1985) ‘began to feel that by studying quality control, and by applying QC properly, the irrational behaviour of industry and society could be corrected’ (1985:3). In the more populist guru literature these rationalist and control oriented arguments are all the more apparent. Thus, Tom Peters (1990, 1991) has argued that management should ‘get innovative or get dead’. Here companies are exhorted to ‘inject the market violently into’ (Peters 1991:21) the company ‘no matter how rough the fit (The rougher the better, to some extent)’ (Peters 1990:14). So, for example, at IBM to resolve conflicts over product development we are told that „shootouts“ occurred between competing teams so as ‘to settle upon the eventual winner’ (ibid 1990:11). Peters rails management to ‘cannibalise’ their most profitable products: older products are to be removed through ‘aggressive’ strategies to make way for the new. He asserts that management must ‘subcontract anything and everything...(which is)...ever more necessary in today’s volatile environment’ (ibid 1990:13).

Of course, such ranting invariably ascribes to management a rationality which is to find its fulfilment in the masculine drive for competitiveness. Yet, this ignores the implications for people’s working lives of such imposed market-oriented changes. To
put the point plainly, we have to ask the question whether concerted drives towards greater uncertainty and insecurity are the most appropriate midwives of creativity, risk-taking, trust, or teamworking? Can we assume, as Peters does, that only ‘thoughtless’ firms may subcontract the basis of their strategic advantage, whilst the ‘wise’ do otherwise? The assumption is of rational managers who are able to foresee, plan, and organise so as to accommodate the future. Although Peters acknowledges that the outcomes of innovation are unpredictable in the sense that it is ‘hit and miss’ as to whether one picks a winner, he does not question whether ‘wise’ management can control things, and he continues to rant for change based on such an assumption. What could be more masculine, controlled and authoritarian than the ‘lean and mean’ or ‘no-nonsense, quick-change organisations’ he exalts. Importantly these assertions fit uncomfortably with the ‘autonomous’ world of ‘freedom’ that he argues ‘projectized’ organisations are able to offer employees. ‘Thriving on Chaos’, the title of one of his recent books, displays a further masculine belief in heroism in the face of adversity, determination and struggle against the elements – no longer nature but a world constructed by human design in and through competition, individualism and the success ethic (Peters 1992).

Masculine beliefs, language and imagery pervade Peters’ prescriptions for a ‘renegade atmosphere’ where ‘we shoot people who don’t take risks’ (ibid 1991:9). Yet, aside from the assertions that failures are to be celebrated, of abandoning hierarchy in favour of horizontal structures and project based teams, or the need to clearly communicate business goals, the ultimate approach and goal remains one of top-down control over the organisation. Peters’ analysis is intriguing, as a number of perspicacious insights reveal an awareness of the world as an uncertain place, where innovation occurs in a messy, irrational and complex way, the success or failure of which, is a matter of luck. Nonetheless, such uncertainty is presented in the form of a masculine managerial challenge to match it with creating an organisational culture of continuous change and innovation:

‘Those who would stay the innovation course almost automatically come with disruptive genes. But unless you buy in to innovation’s/innovators’ inherent, ugly at times traits, you are unlikely to be successful in creating an innovation-hungry corporate culture’ (Peters 1991:18).

Thus the argument is that in an uncertain world survival is contingent on managers being man enough to take on the challenge, adapt to each new change as it comes, and innovate so as to anticipate and be ahead of change. The underlying paradox is that while everything is complex, irrational and uncertain and success largely a matter of luck, managers must be innovative and the way to ensure this is by ‘creating an innovation-hungry corporate culture’ (ibid). First, if everything is complex, irrational and uncertain how can Peters be so certain of his single imperative that managers must be innovative or that an innovation-hungry culture can be created? Surely uncertainty extends to management and organisations rather than just residing in some external ‘market’ or ‘environment. Second, if uncertainty is ontologically given, how can being innovative make any difference? Maybe it can, psychologically, just as protestants sought to please God by doing ‘good’ works for purposes of salvation, despite
subscribing to a doctrine of predestination which insists that nothing can influence one’s chances of being saved. But Peters does not seem to be arguing the case for psychological comfort in a sea of ontological uncertainty; rather, and paradoxically, he constructs the problem of uncertainty for purposes of offering his own prescriptions about corporate innovation as a solution to it. In effect, everything is uncertain except his own descriptions of, and prescriptions for, uncertainty. Social or organisational uncertainty is the new beast to be captured and tamed and Peters provides managers with the symbolic weapons to ensure the conquest will be successful.

From the ‘knowledge organisation’ (Drucker 1992) to the ‘postentrepreneurial organisation’ (Kanter 1989), the message is the same, change, change and change again. The tools of change whether downsizing, delayering, merging, restructuring, rationalization or streamlining all require ‘tough’ decisions detached from any sentiment about their human implications that could only be made by managers steeped in macho-masculinity. There is, of course, nothing new about this form of masculinity; yet what is new and broadly inconsistent with it is the simultaneous attention to the less coercive side of management. The „new“ ‘manager has not only to be ruthless but also caring, nurturing, and empathetic. Thus the new manager must operate ‘without the crutch of hierarchy...work synergistically with other departments.....tapping into sources of good ideas’ (Kanter 1989:88). This does not, however, abandon managements’ obsession with control, for as Kanter tells us, it simply ‘implies very different ways of obtaining and using power’ (ibid:89). Symptomatic of the ‘double-speak’ within modern management (Willmott 1993), such a shift is argued not to be about controlling a set of subordinates, but how to juggle a set of constituencies (Kanter 1989:88).

Likewise, in the same breath that Drucker (1992) talks about factory closures and redundancy, he tells us that ‘every organisation must assume full responsibility for its impact on employees’ (ibid 1992:99). Yet, however, „nice“ the new ‚manager may sound, the older man/masculinity is never far behind, for such ‘responsibility’ is subject only to the organisation meeting its competitive task. In other words, managers can be nice and think about jobs providing that it does not affect profitability. Here then we can see some of the inconsistencies which are to be explored below. Firstly, there is the incompatibility of the masculinity of control with the ‚New Man‘ masculinity of empathy, equality, trust and creativity. Such a ‘New Masculinity’ is no more than a rhetoric when autocratic practice simply belies notions of equality and trust. Alternatively, it is deployed as a means of securing a more effective form of control, by reducing hierarchy through delayering, empowerment and teamworking. Secondly, there is the self-defeating nature of the masculine need for ‘control’; the more preoccupied management are with controlling outcomes the more frequently things turn out differently. For it is almost impossible to control for every eventuality largely because of the unintended consequences of individual action.

There are, however, other problems surrounding issues of control that result from the competitive aspects of management and masculinity. Innovations are inevitably linked to the ‘careerism’ of their advocates and initiators (Collinson and Hearn 1994) but individual careers are in competition and conflict with one another. Career systems reflect the diverse and competitive concerns of individuals for success (Marchington et
al 1993) for purposes of maintaining control over their lives and the organisation of employment (Watson 1993). Quality innovations are invariably a condition of, and location for, the exercise of control that reflects the masculine identities and power based structures within organisations, and the capitalist context within which organisations operate. Our case study is a site for multiple and shifting masculinities that help us to understand not only the complexity of organisational relations, but also the contradictions and tensions within masculinity itself. We proceed now to illustrate some of these arguments about multiple masculinities and control through field work in Supabank.

**Field Work in Supabank**

The research forms part of a larger study of this and several other companies examining the development and impact of management innovations. Research of a more general nature in Supabank has been ongoing over several years providing substantial background material for the study of innovations such as TQM and BPR. Following such classics as Dalton’s (1959) ‘Men Who Manage’, we adopt a single case study approach. The intention was to ‘get as close as possible to the world of...[TQM]...and to interpret this world and its problems from the inside’ (Dalton 1959:1). The strength of the case study approach is ‘to highlight a construct by showing its operation in an ongoing social context. The result...becomes a much more coherent, credible, and memorable story’ (Dyer and Wilkins 1991:616). The method of research employed was initially documentary investigation combined with interviews. A programme of two day interviewing of senior quality personnel and management was conducted by two researchers during September 1993. These entailed semi-structured interviews with senior management that helped to establish the context and content of the TQM programme. These visits yielded access to documentation such as company reports, TQM management and staff guides, training manuals and newsletters. Subsequently, during April-June 1994, research was conducted into quality within the bank’s branch network, which entailed both observational and interview based research. This paper concentrates its attention on the content and outcome of three one-day meetings of a Quality Partnership which spanned a five month period from September 1993 to January 1994, that the researchers attended as observers. The researchers’ made copious notes and sought to capture the running dialogue of the meetings through manually recording the conversations that ensued. The aim was ‘to gather first-hand information about social processes in a naturally occurring way’ (Silverman 1993:11). We would argue that this combination of methods is vital in the study of organisational innovation (See Denzin 1978). This is because the meaning of the context, the content and the politics of any organizational event or activity will invariably change when participants are given an opportunity to provide a posthoc account. By observing the events as they unfold, the precarious, shifting and political nature of change with respect to TQM that Dawson and Palmer (1994) detect from their interviews, can be observed in all its diverse detail. In the following section we will first contextualise TQM within Supabank. Then we will present some empirical material on the rise and fall of a Quality Partnership.
**Supabank: A case study**

The largest part of the bank is its retail banking business. In 1989 operating costs were rising rapidly and rising faster than income. Between 1986 and 1989 the cost/income ratio had risen from 65.5% to over 75%. Activities were duplicated across the group and there was a legacy of under-investment. The Chief Executive described the organisation at that time as having a 'many-layered management'. The traditional branch manager ran his or her branch as a micro business unit, with responsibility for administration and paperwork, service levels and branch profit and loss. A strategy was put in place in 1989 of which TQM is a part, to 'drive costs down and increase quality, sustainable income' (Chief Executive). Between 1990 and 1995, 8,500 jobs were removed following substantial restructuring. The company closed 19% of its branches between 1989 and 1994 against 16.8% for all banks; the company lost 37% of its 1989 staff complement against 20% for all banks (Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics, British Bankers Association). As well as downsizing this entailed removing 15% of in-branch work from the branches to back office processing centres.

Now there is a constant pressure to reduce costs and increase income through increased sales volumes and ever greater profits. In 1990 income increased by 18%, costs rose by just over 5% and profits before tax rose by 40%. In 1991, income went up by almost 19%, costs by 3.8% and profits by 17%. In 1992 income went up by 2.7%, costs fell by 1.4% and profits increased by 7.5%. These pressures have continued to increase throughout the 1990s both in Supabank and across the financial services sector following large scale restructuring and job losses (Cressey and Scott 1992). Moreover, the financial services are in the midst of a merger mania which forces companies to think first and foremost about 'bottomline' profitability. Within Supabank it has meant that any managerial innovation such as TQM has to be shown to reduce costs and this short term expediency seems to have undermined much of the long term potential of the programme. Indeed this is the intention behind TQM as a quality document explains:

'The price of nonconformance (PONC) is what it costs if work fails to conform to requirements. It includes the cost of a lost sale, a lost customer, re-work, wasted time, effort and materials....Our aim in quality is to reduce PONC and this reduction is a useful measure of our progress.'

The company launched TQM in 1990/1991 by training all of its 23,000 staff over two years in 'knowing what is required and meeting that requirement first time, every time' (Chief Executive). Costing in excess of £ 8 million, the TQM programme involved an elaborate and hierarchical problem-solving structure, consisting of quality improvement and quality action teams designed to improve practices and procedures that staff identified as problematic. According to a corporate quality document TQM involves: *Changing the way we all think and work....it involves a change in attitudes and culture.*

Homeco is the mortgage supplying arm of Supabank and has been in existence since 1990, it has 320 staff and utilises teams of workers headed by a team leader, to process mortgage applications from receipt to completion. In 1989 it was decided to centralise Supabank's previously regionally organised mortgage business by setting up
Homeco. Its remit was to deliver a 25% improvement in productivity in 3 years assuming no investment in technology. It was decided that the customer interface would remain at the branch level and therefore Homeco would regard the branch as its customer. With the principle of ‘customer service’ it was felt important that customers (branch staff) contacting Homeco should be able to fulfill all their requirements at a single engagement. To facilitate this the Homeco operating departments were divided into 22 multiskilled operating teams to serve the bank’s 22 areas. The 22 teams are accessed via a unique telephone number and a unique postal address. According to a document submitted by Homeco for a quality award:

‘Homeco recognises the importance of social intercourse within the working environment...22 operating teams performing the same operation for 22 areas of the bank facilitates comparisons and results in improvements. Management information in numeric form, is published in the categories – costs, quality, productivity and morale to facilitate comparisons. The production of management information under the four headings facilitates empowerment (our emphasis).’

Here empowerment means that Homeco’s General Manager is able to set ‘objectives and targets’ in these four areas for his four unit managers (North, South, East and West) who in turn set ‘objectives’ and ‘targets’ for team leaders in each of the 22 areas. Productivity at Homeco for application processing increased by 103% from 1990 to 1993 with a policy of fixed staffing levels. Under the regional structure mortgages often took 5 days to be offered following receipt of an application. Now Homeco provides service levels of the same day issue upon receipt. A management document describes Homeco as having ‘been built using the principles of TQM’.

Partnership meetings were introduced so as to reduce tensions between Supabank and Homeco over mortgage applications and processing. A document outlining the purpose of Quality Partnerships described it as ‘a way for internal customers and suppliers to improve the way they work together’. Its aims as follows:

‘The process, which is relatively simple, is aimed at supplementing existing quality improvement activities. It does this by focussing on problems being encountered by you and your customers/suppliers....The process itself is designed to be flexible and consistent for both parties....The key to overall success is the understanding of each others problems.’

The intention behind Partnerships is to provide a highly rational approach towards problem solving. Yet, given that the Partnership aims to address tensions between functional groupings within the bank the process is likely to be far more fraught with politics and power plays than traditional problem solving in-branch. Nonetheless, such organisational „dysfunctions“ are not even acknowledged let alone considered within the „quality Partnership“ document which outlines how they are to operate. The document provides a guide to be followed by the Partnership members which is designed to chase out emotions by prescribing, for instance, such neutralities as „listing the services that are supplied by your department“. The focus is upon „rationally“ establishing control over what are „emotionally“ and „politically“ charged issues. So, for instance, the document states:
Ask yourself what requirements/service standards are you currently working to? How should you measure the quality of your service? eg. Number of complaints, customer satisfaction surveys or meetings, rework/rejections, etc. Do you calculate the PONC for problem areas.

The Partnership

Having developed a basic understanding of the TQM programme in Supabank, the project moved on to researching one of the quality partnerships that had been established to manage problems that Supabank was experiencing with the mortgage department in relation to rejections and what they considered to be undue delays with some mortgage applications. Attending a preliminary meeting of branch managers, it was the view of some of the managers that an ‘us’ and ‘them’ polarization had arisen between the branches and the mortgage department (Homeco) which is located at a considerable physical distance from a majority of bank branches. The branch managers believed that the mortgage department followed a „narrow interpretation of quality“. For example, they argued that under the auspices of the TQM programme Homeco had instigated a scheme whereby junior staff were measuring the errors on mortgage package applications and, as a result, managers in the branches were being appraised on the basis of this information. The complaints of the managers was that they were not only subject to being appraised by ‘lowly’ clerical workers but that they had no opportunity to appraise the competence of those self-same workers in terms of their mortgage granting activity. This was partly because of the dependence of the branches on the cooperation of the mortgage division to secure smooth and speedy acceptances as a crucial element of achieving their business targets. While the mortgage division could readily criticise the branches, there was always the danger that the reverse would meet with retaliation and an inferior service from Homeco. The branches were frustrated on two accounts then. First they were concerned about losing business to competitors because of what they saw as a rigid and inflexible application of rules in the granting of mortgages. But second and adding insult to injury was the way in which the mortgage division was deploying the quality programme to pass judgement on their seniors in the branches. Managers clearly did not take kindly to power reversals of this kind.

In the belief that the quality management programme provided them with the space to voice difficulties that could not be resolved individually or even through the procedures of corrective action, a decision was made by the branch management to instigate a quality partnership between themselves and representatives from Homeco. Recognising that the situation was turning into an ‘us’ and ‘them’ polarisation, the business managers were convinced that the mortgage department had little “understanding” of the problems experienced by branches, especially with regard to their concern to meet business targets on mortgages. Aside from the structural and geographic distancing of the two divisions, this belief on the part of the branches is the result of the mortgage department being in receipt of service quality questionnaires. These questionnaires are completed by the branches and largely provide positive feedback to Homeco, because the branches do not wish to „get on the wrong side“ of the mortgage staff for fear of future unfavourable treatment (i.e. delays in processing
mortgages or in responding to enquiries, or ultimately a rejection of the mortgage application).

The first meeting of the quality partnership took place on the 27th September 1993 and involved 2 representatives from the mortgage department, 3 business managers from the Western region, the regional Quality Manager and a facilitator from Head Office. The agenda was set as principally one of establishing agreement about, and priorities concerning, the improvement of the various services provided by the mortgage department as used by the business managers. Utilising a technique for quality training, the facilitator first established the ground rules as follows:

- Privilege the external customer’s viewpoint;
- An injunction to participate but on the basis of equality, not rank;
- Be objective rather than subjective; translated as quantify everything;
- Spelling isn’t important;
- It should be fun;
- There should be no personal attacks (no blame culture of TQM).

Without questioning the validity of some of these ground rules, at a commonsense level many of them were breached within a very short period of time. While criticisms about Homeco from the business people may not have been directly personal, it did appear to be taken so. Participation was very hierarchical and gendered throughout the meeting but especially at the outset when the two women (representing Homeco) were under some degree of attack from the all male, and more senior, business side. It certainly did not seem like much fun for them and there is little doubt that these women felt constrained by the highly mechanistic and masculine framework created by the facilitator. This derived from a recently adopted training procedure to encourage participation of staff in quality meetings. It involves each member listing the services that they believe themselves to provide for their customers (in this case internal customers). These were then listed on a flip chart and everyone was asked to rank them in terms of importance and how well the service was performed. The process was highly bureaucratic and aimed to encourage Partnership members to:

- Determine if there is a need for improvement;
- Agree the detailed requirements of both parties;
- Measure the Performance Gap between the branches and Homeco in terms of how each currently delivers its service;
- Establish a Plan to improve service delivery.

This approach continued for a considerable period without much ‘progress’ since almost every issue was ranked very important and the facilitator knew that the list was, at this length, unmanageable. It was at this point that the mechanism of proceeding in this way broke down. It had clearly prevented strongly held views from being fully expressed. This seemed to affect the 2 women from Homeco more than the men, which can be accounted for, on the basis of gender and hierarchical subordination, which no claim to equality can remove at a stroke. However, it was also reinforced by the falsely mechanical constraints imposed on the interaction by the facilitator. It was apparent that
the formally rational and goal oriented character of the exercises was conducive to masculine norms of achievement and control.

Once the partnership members began to interact without this rational, game-like structure standing between the participants, the two women began to express exactly how they felt about the issues. In particular, they retaliated against the implicit criticisms that the men had managed to communicate despite the formal constraints. They complained that branch staff encouraged customers to ring Homeco rather than deal with the problem themselves. This was strictly forbidden, but was seen by the branch staff as the only way to bypass the system in order to produce more speedy decisions. There were strong feelings that business staff could not get information by contacting Homeco via the telephone so that, in desperation, they would release the Homeco telephone number to customers. The discussions became quite passionate and heated and raised substantive problems. This was in contrast to the mere semblance of such in the abstracted generalisations that had been previously listed. As the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) Coordinator for the Western Region expressed it after the meeting: ‘some useful material came out’. However, it did not conform with the facilitator’s programme. Therefore it was more or less dismissed by the facilitator who stated that there was a lot of emotion in the issues which needed to be taken out, so that the partnership could become more ‘objective’. Yet it was only during this short but intense period of interaction that there had been any semblance of equal participation. The issues really troubling both functions only began to be expressed, and a desire to reconcile some of the differences surfaced only when the participants become emotional and stepped outside of the formal straightjacket of pseudo-participation imposed upon the group by the facilitator.

The facilitator nonetheless pushed the group back into the mechanical format presuming this to be the only vehicle for attaining a measurable performance in the partnership. He continued with the long and somewhat laborious process of trying to put scores on the lists of services. This eventually had to be abandoned as it did not generate sufficient discrimination to enable the number of items to be reduced to manageable proportions. This approach follows the control-oriented focus of the TQM programme and the Partnership document specified that improvement goals need to be: specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, timely.

Further discussions generated a new list of priority areas for improvement which related to the general field of communications. Out of 10 items, a voting system to establish the importance of the issues made it possible to reduce them to three principal areas upon which the partnership would concentrate in future meetings. These were:

1. Decisions on mortgage applications – the concern of the business people was that these were sometimes arbitrary or certainly not sensible in terms of the current competitive market for loans. For this reason, the second area of importance was

2. Appeals – here business people felt that anomalies that were occurring did not secure adequate treatment in appeals
3. Telephone communication with the stress that this is a two-way process where Homeco could get information that was required speedily and business staff could secure information and advice on the progress of applications.

The outcome inevitably favoured the branches as the three areas of importance for improvement were all related to branch concerns, and only the third issue of telephone communication was of some importance to Homeco. Branch management could determine the parameters of the discussions not only because the meeting was at their instigation, but also by virtue of its ‘rigged’ nature in terms of numbers (3 business and 2 Homeco), seniority (Area Director and his PA, Branch Manager on the business side against a team leader and a Quality Improvement Team (QIT) coordinator on the Homeco side), and gender (2 women from Homeco, the rest men including the 2 facilitators and a researcher).

In these circumstances all talk of equality of participation and the irrelevance of rank was largely rhetorical, since the two more junior women have already had a long work experience of subordination largely to men. Thus in the absence of strong countervailing influences, it is very easy for mixed sex meetings like this to revert to a conventional form in which men and masculinity dominate the proceedings. This was the case and, as has been indicated, the participation of the women was minimal especially during the period when the facilitator insisted on adhering strictly to a rigid and mechanical format quite alien to the participative equality reflective of feminine discourse. Moreover, once a measure of spontaneity and more passionate involvement was evident, it was marginalised as not being very useful for it contradicted masculine norms of order, rationality and control. Although it was never expressed directly in the meeting, the Homeco QIT Coordinator declared during the coffee break that both sides had different motivations. Yet it is only through expressing and critically examining such differences that the partnership can achieve anything other than a superficial ‘fix’. Although oblivious to itself, a masculine form of management exercises its power so as to prevent such conflicts being articulated. It presupposes conflict to be emotional and what masculinity avoids at all cost are emotions. For emotions are not only difficult to control and get in the way of what are seen as effective, rational decisions but they also threaten the sense of what it is to be a man. Masculinity therefore operates to define such conflicts out of existence and TQM proves useful in providing an imperative that facilitates this by arguing that, regardless of how people actually feel, staff should all have the same motivation which is to serve both internal and external customer needs.

The partnership continued for another 2 meetings before virtually collapsing with the branch staff convinced that Homeco was not instigating any of the changes and the latter feeling that their mortgage service to the business was adequate. As the meetings progressed the failure to address the political and emotional aspects of the problems prevented agreement as to how they could be solved. The meetings tended to go around in circles with the representatives from Homeco and the branches tending to define the problems in relation to one another. Once one of the parties identified ‘the problem’ the other party would offer a counter interpretation and the meeting would collapse into disarray. Throughout these tumultuous exchanges the facilitator emphasised the importance of quick fixes, results, deliverables and measurement of the problems.
Individuals heeded or disregarded his exhortations according to their own vested interests. The final meeting of the partnership began with an authoritarian concern with „results“ and the facilitator began by stating that: Senior management want to know what’s been achieved after five months?

Management’s preoccupation with bottom-line results posed a perpetual obstacle to solving the difficulties between the branches and Homeco. It prevented a deeper level of problem solving analysis, discussion and understanding that the Partnership members needed to engage in. The emphasis on measuring problems and attaining „specific measures“, which the facilitator called for, is clearly difficult to attain in the context of an emotionally charged meeting, where issues are linked to the status and identity of the participants. Nonetheless, that the facilitator was so concerned with „end results“ and „facts“ is clearly linked a masculine concern to attain control. Currently the partnership is seeking to revive itself but with extremely limited expectations.

Instead of recognising that part of the problem of the partnership was the very absence of any genuine equality of participation, which was largely a result of the comparative domination of the meetings by an implicit and often explicit masculinity. The branch managers either blamed the Homeco representatives, or senior management for its failure. Before the Partnership could be revived, one of the chief instigators of the partnership- the Area Sales Director- resigned following another of the company’s restructuring programmes. Prior to this event he expressed his reservations and frustrations at the failure of Head Office to deliver on Quality Management whilst preaching to the regions and branches to do so. He believed that TQM was a solution to the company’s problems but considered that a lack of commitment overall, and especially at Head Office, was undermining TQM’s potential. He did not identify that a major obstacle to TQM was the concurrent emphasis upon control or that his own masculine identity precluded him from recognising its disruption to the quality approach.

Since we attended these meetings ongoing research into BPR and organisational innovations has revealed that the perennial obstacles to trust, equality and creativity within Supabank remain. TQM after 1994 began to lose favour and instead BPR has gained a new prominence within management circles. Considerable investment into a BPR programme was thwarted once a new strata of senior management began to impose their own agenda upon the bank and this is as much about masculinity as the search for greater bottom line results.

**Discussion**

In the case study it is possible to identify a multiplicity of masculinities (Britten 1989), including those which Collinson and Hearn (1994) have discussed as authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurialism, informalism and careerism. ‘Authoritarianism’ refers to an approach which is intolerant, coercive, dictatorial and aggressive, based on bullying, the creation of fear and unquestioning obedience. ‘Paternalism’ eschews coercion and emphasises trust and cooperation. Here men legitimise the exercise of power on the basis that it will benefit everyone, and is thereby in the corporate interests. Senior managers may act in a ‘gentlemanly’ [sic] (Kerfoot and
Knights 1993) and protective way towards less senior males and women; being polite, civilised, courteous and humane. ‘Entrepreneurialism’ is characteristically hard nosed, competitive, performance oriented via budgets, targets, profits and costs. Here individuals work hard and endure long hours which is symptomatic of younger control-focused males in the new insecure world of the 1980s and 1990s. ‘Informalism’ refers to the way men ‘bond’ or build informal work-based relationships and alliances. These may be formed through shared interests such as sex, sport and drinking which are linked to and inform work relations. Finally, ‘careerism’ encapsulates the way in which competition between men can lead to a preoccupation with hierarchical advance, and the differentiation and elevation of the self.

Collinson and Hearn (1994) argue that such masculinities may be manifestly in alliance or in conflict within the workplace. We are able to trace elements of these masculinities in our case study, indicating that masculinity is a dynamic, fluid entity and forever shifting in intent. Even the use of these categories tends to over-compartmentalise and suggest more stability and permanence than is ordinarily the case (see also, Kondo 1990). Nonetheless, they are useful for it is possible to glean a shift in the overall management approach within our case study company; initially from what could be described as paternalism towards a harder, ‘strategic’ future oriented (Kerfoot and Knights 1993) or entrepreneurialist (Collinson and Hearn 1994) approach. For prior to the mid to late 1980s, Supabank was far more parternalistic in its management style and staff enjoyed relatively secure forms of employment. The late 1980s witnessed a shift towards greater cost considerations and there has been considerable restructuring and downsizing within Supabank ever since.

A rationalist preoccupation with control permeates the organisation in that management initially restructured its organisation into separate branch and mortgage divisions. Subsequently, separate regional mortgage divisions were centralized so as to form Homeco. The belief behind this was that through the division of labour, task specialization and advanced telecommunications technology, a more efficient system would result. It was not anticipated that conflict would arise between mortgage selling and mortgage administration, despite there being a structurally embedded tension between sales and credit security. An ‘authoritarianism’ can be seen behind this shift as it has forced through a shift from paternalism towards entrepreneurialism. Moreover, it is authoritarian demands by senior managers for ‘sales’ from the branches and ‘safe’ or ‘secure’ mortagages from Homeco which renders the tensions within the partnership intractable; especially given the concomitant staff reductions. Thus, a masculine concern with control prevails, as does the related rationalist belief that problems can be solved, as enshrined in the setting up of the partnership.

It is abundantly clear that management’s concern continues to be one of control, albeit within the professed liberalism of a TQM initiative. As it has been introduced within this organisation, TQM is imbued with an ‘entrepreneurial’ concern for cost calculation, measurement, the generation and prioritising of snags, and cost cutting staff reductions. Irrespective of the partnership’s remit of participation on the basis of ‘equality’ or for the meetings to be ‘fun’, hierarchical, structural and bottom line pressures remained dominant. A preoccupation with solving the organisation’s
problems was apparent, but not in a creative, relaxed or high trust environment, conducive to in-depth problem solving. Instead the meetings were regimented, rule-based and hierarchical, and pressures for quick-results predominated. Thus, the masculinity of the problem solving mechanisms, and power structures undermined the creative potential of the group. We can see that contrary to the rationalist belief that underlines masculinity and management innovations, the problems confronted were often emotive. Thus the branches were afraid to upset Homeco’s staff by providing negative feedback when completing questionnaires, and branch manager’s ego’s were offended by lowly clerks appraising their mortgage applications. The problems were also conflict-based and far from rational, at least in terms of the company’s goals and policies. For it was apparent that the branches gave out Homeco’s telephone number despite this being against company policy, yet they did so in order to vent their frustrations. Moreover, in the final analysis it was clear that the partnership was unable to identify, let alone solve the problems confronted, which beggars belief in the supremacy of rationality.

The ‘entrepreneurial’ focus of the branches upon meeting sales targets, was reflected in their concern to initiate the partnership meetings. It was apparent that the branches animosity was fuelled by ‘authoritarian’ managers who felt that their authority and positions of power were threatened by ‘lowly’ clerical workers appraising their mortgage applications. The setting up of the partnership itself reflects an ostensible ‘paternalist’ belief that through cooperation and trust, problems can be solved. However, as one could see during the partnership meetings, this sat uncomfortably with the ‘authoritarian’ concerns of the branches to bend Homeco to their will. The facilitator sought to impose a highly rational and mechanical structure upon the meetings proceedings of the meetings by establishing ground rules, such as ‘objectivity’ rather than ‘subjectivity’, that seeks to chase out emotions. In doing so, the facilitator sought to assert his own masculine identity upon the group; combining elements of his own ‘careerism’ but also ‘entrepreneurialism’, as he endeavoured to establish control in a hard-headed, measurable and pragmatic way. Yet simultaneously, the facilitator is also the embodiment of paternalism, as the partnership is supposed to establish order through consent and cooperation. Aspects of ‘informalism’ and ‘careerism’ were apparent during the groups interactions as the males tended to bond and attacked the females, though the latter responded likewise. Clearly, each group endeavoured to advance their interests beyond those of its competing faction which belies the cooperative assertions of the Quality Programme within which the initiative was launched.

It could be argued that this brief example of a male dominated partnership can be understood as just another example of patriarchal power where men ensure that they remain in control despite a rhetoric of equality. What value then does the concept of masculinity add to the analysis? By contrast to the discourse of patriarchy, the value is largely that it provides an account of how men and some women cannot help themselves from dominating even when there are explicit attempts to undermine such control. This can be understood as an issue of identity and power that the concept of patriarchy fails to capture because of its totalizing embrace of social relations. Even though the company continually espoused the rhetoric of culture change, there is a gender myopia,
which fails to recognise how the organization is steeped in masculine discourses and practices, that undermine or render incoherent many organisational innovations. Although the paper has only focused on one illustration of this incoherence, there are numerous other situations where the organization’s culture reveals its masculine credentials in ways that contradicted quality innovations. This is evident in the numerous restructuring programmes that have occurred with undying regularity in the past six years. Against a background of redundancy and involuntary job changes, the rhetoric of empowerment, team working and customer service ring somewhat hollow. Apart from the inconsistent message of declaring that our greatest asset is our staff and then announcing redundancy notices, these cost cutting exercises eventually resulted in staff shortages. This created considerable difficulties for branches trying to meet the expectations of customers, and providing the service that quality management demanded. It also hindered Homeco’s ability to provide speedy mortgage advice to the branches.

Another example of the ‘entrepreneurial’ masculinity in the company is the way that relations and activities are all structured around control through targets, budgets and deadlines. Interestingly a recent presentation to several of the most senior executive managers in the company, made a distinction between ‘cost conscious’ and ‘customer conscious’ organisations. It was suggested that many organisations are located half way between the two ideal types. This was met with some animation and peals of laughter which was eventually expressed verbally by a number of the managers, who argued that Supabank was so extremely cost conscious as to be off limits on the left hand side of the diagram. The only person not to join in the laughter was the Chief Executive who looked decidedly uncomfortable.

**Conclusion**

Supabank sought to introduce TQM against a background of major restructuring, redundancy, involuntary job moves, and a preoccupation with cutting costs. Such innovations are introduced as if there were no inconsistency between the control ideology of a masculine dominated management and empowerment, team working and employee involvement. This, it may be argued, is because in one form or another masculinity renders men and women oblivious of their control strategies. In the not too distant past within Supabank, masculinity more broadly took the form of paternalism, where employees enjoyed employment security. Moreover, women and some men, were ‘protected’ from any kind of decision making and a false sense of intimacy was generated. Currently the approach is much more strategic or ‘entrepreneurial’, celebrating the hard, instrumental goal oriented style of managerial masculinity. Thus the emphasis is upon cost-cutting, restructuring and downsizing. Maybe this can explain why at present the most popular organisational innovation is Business Process Reengineering, for it is the most technological intensive of all the recent managerial innovations. Its engineering credentials render it more compatible with the hard, physical, instrumental and technicist characteristics of masculinity. Yet, as we have sought to illustrate, this and other forms of innovation concerned with shaking the roots
of corporate bureaucracies, are incompatible with concurrent calls for teamwork, creativity and empowerment.

It may be thought that this chapter has been too negative in its critical assessment of management innovations and organisational change as pretentious and insincere in their claims to support employee-centred policies of empowerment, creative opportunity and teamworking. This is not our intention or is it our view that strategies of innovation are unnecessary; clearly the rigidity of bureaucratic organisation frustrates employees as much as customers. What we are suggesting, however, is that whether or not there is a concern for a transformation of organisational life within new managerial innovations, in the direction of greater employee participation, this is undermined by a masculine preoccupation with control. As has been argued, a preoccupation with control is not something about which individuals are necessarily conscious, nor openly display especially when managerial innovations espouse employee-centred ideologies. For then, regardless of a control mentality, decisions are always presented as if they promoted empowerment and employee autonomy. Yet, as we have seen in the case study presented here, such innovations collapse in the face of the control culture of targets, budgets and deadlines all structured around ‘bottom line’, balance sheet results.

References


