DEVELOPING UNDER PRESSURE:
EXPERIENCING ISSUES RELATED TO PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT IN LONDON'S PUBLIC PARKS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of issues related to personal, professional and management development of a small number of people working in London's Public Parks and Green Spaces sector. The study takes a dialogic perspective (Deetz, 1996), using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), which is in contrast to a positivist, HRD/sector/organisational research perspective. IPA is concerned with exploring people's '*lived experience*' of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, rather than studying the phenomenon through the use of a predetermined or abstract theoretical framework.

Through the IPA analysis, a number of Master Themes are developed. Most participants report having found themselves working in the sector by chance. Once in office based, supervisory or management roles, some participants found their line managers to be at best unsupportive, and found exposure to micro and office politics to be a challenge. The study identifies that for the participants who participated in the research, working in the sector is certainly not a '*walk in the park*'. The study also highlights a disconnect between some participants and their line managers on development issues, which is in contrast to the expectations of mainstream HRD practice. Possible causes for the disconnect are explored in the discussion, including line managers' concerns for their own job security. Based on the findings from this study, a substantive model '*Managing under Pressure in London's Public Parks sector*' is offered, which contrasts with Mintzberg's (1997) model of '*Managing on the Edges*' at Banff National Park, Canada.

The study concludes by offering a range of potential implications and possible interventions for parks and green space practitioners, their managers and HRD practitioners working in London's public parks sector. These include recognition that Green Flag Judging can contribute to professional development, coaching at a sector level and provision of confidential support for public sector parks managers who are faced with learning how to handle organisational and party politics.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations used in the thesis

CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CABEspace	CABE's open spaces advisory team
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CIPD	Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DTI	Department for Trade and Industry
DMS	Diploma in Management Studies
DTLR	Department for Transport, London and the Regions
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLC	Greater London Council
HND	Higher National Diploma
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resource Development
Int.	Interviewer
ILAM	Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LANTRA	Landbased Training Sector Lead Body
LCC	London County Council
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBW	Metropolitan Board of Works
MCC	Middlesex County Council
MM	Middle Managers
NAO	National Audit Office
NDPB	Non Departmental Public Body
NGO	Non Governmental Body
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SA	Single Case
SO	Senior Officers

Definition	
Charge-hand	Traditionally : a person who leads a small team of horticultural practical workers and carries out practical horticultural work at the same time, within a local authority or horticultural organisation - nowadays more often called a supervisor

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