

# The quality of working life and the intensification of work.

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Presented to the IER 25th Anniversary Seminar:  
Aspects of the British Economy and Society in the 21st Century  
7th December 2006, University of Warwick

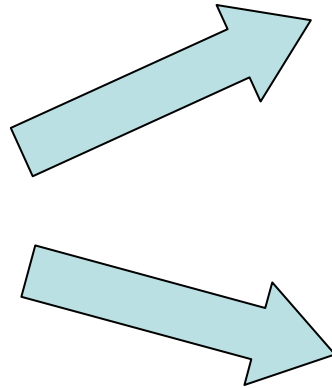
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# “More and better jobs”

Job quality on the agenda

Improving job  
quality



Raises productivity

Raises the employment rate

Better for workers

Twin Tensions:

- productivity versus employment
- productivity versus employees' needs

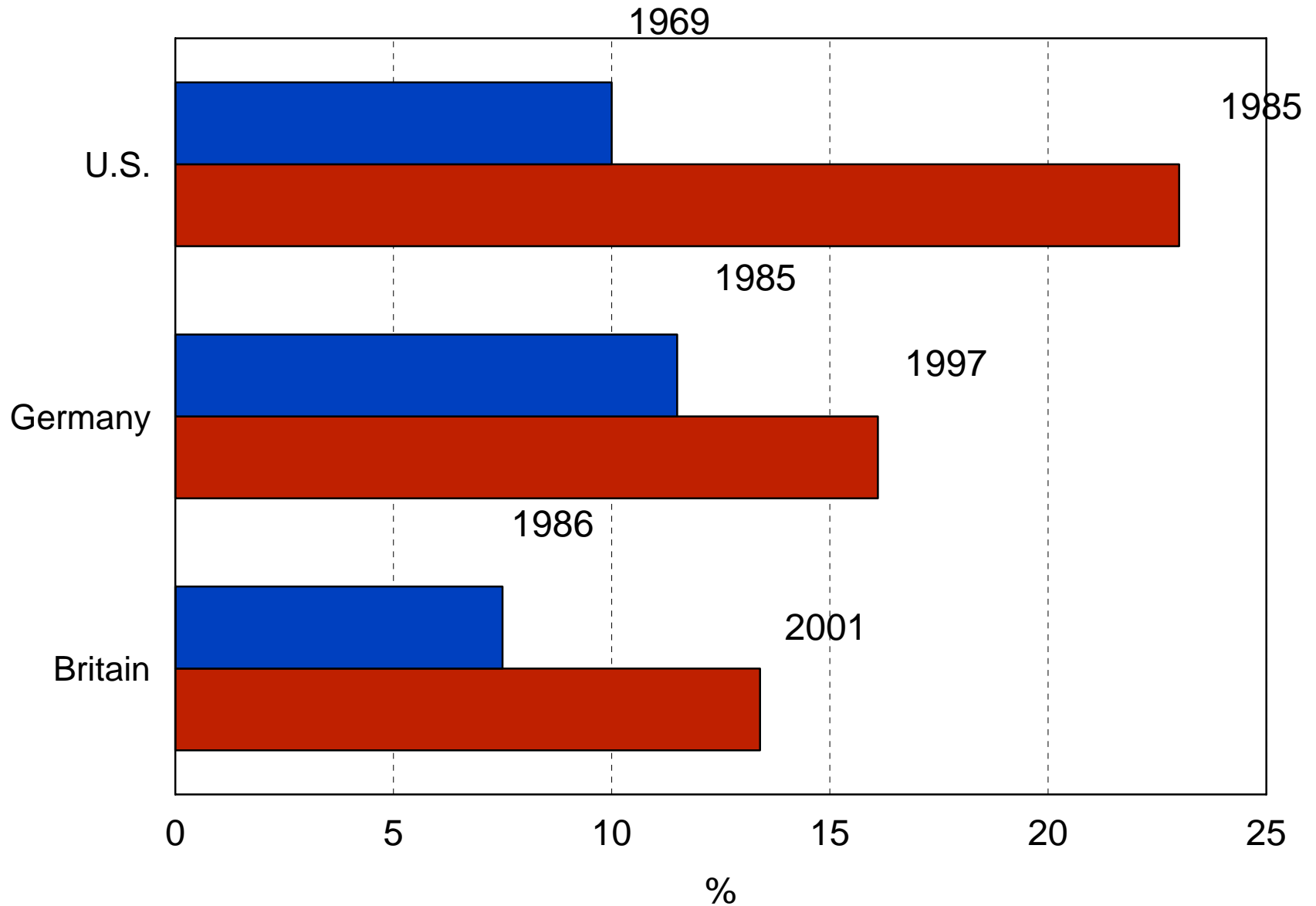
# The meaning of “quality”

- “job quality” should be needs based
  - Pay
  - Skills
  - Effort (extensive and intensive)
  - Risk
  - Autonomy
  - Working conditions
- Official EU thinking: reflects tensions and the limits of the nation state

# Twin Processes:

- Skill-biased technological change
  - link with “knowledge society” paradigm
  - evidence
- Effort-biased technological change

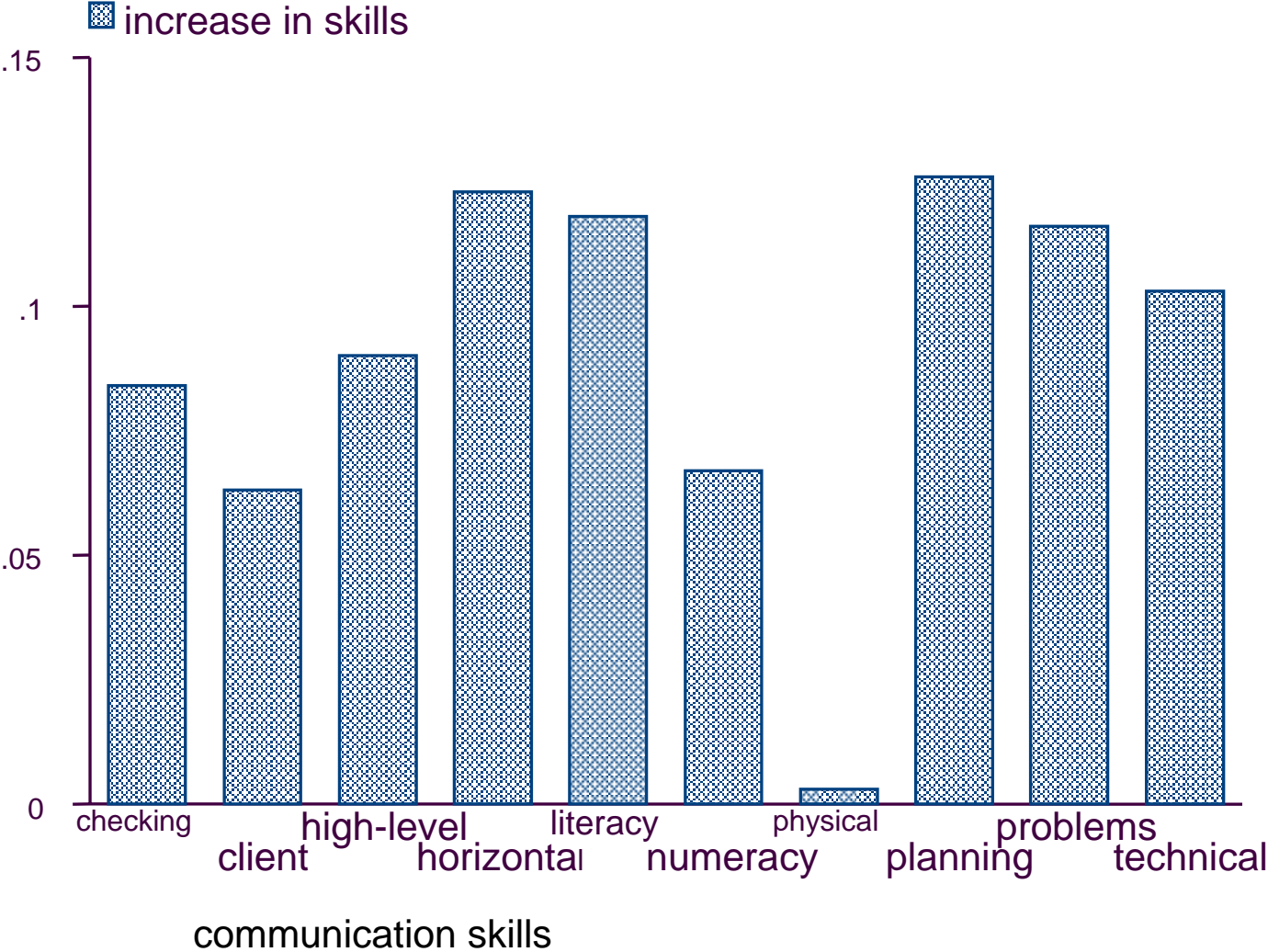
# Proportion of Jobs Needing University-Educated Labour



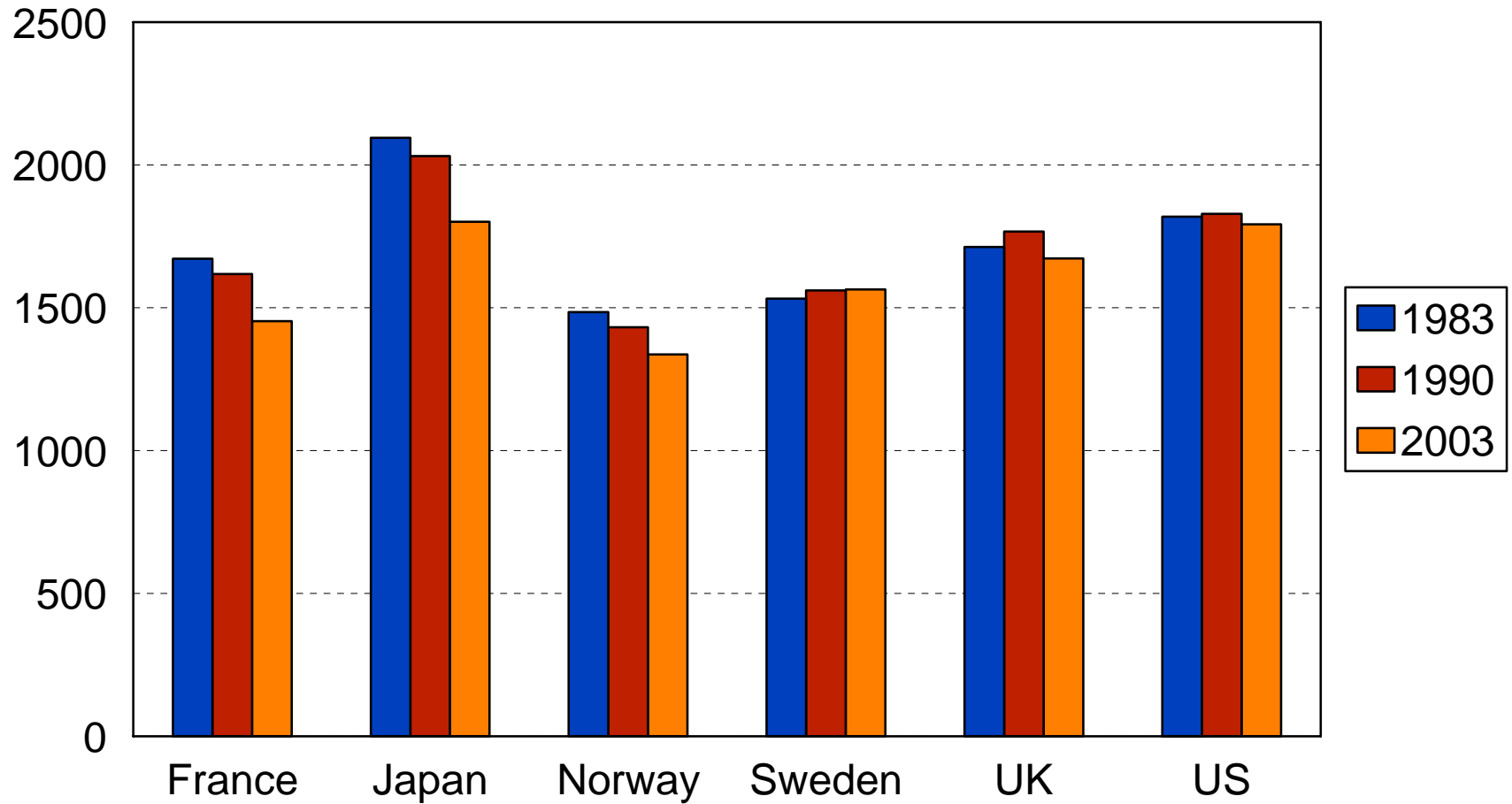
## Changes in Computing Skills, 1997-2001

	<b>1997</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>essential</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>very important</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>fairly important</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>not very important</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>not at all important</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b><i>total</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>	

# Increases in other generic skills



# Annual Hours in Selected Countries, 1983-2003





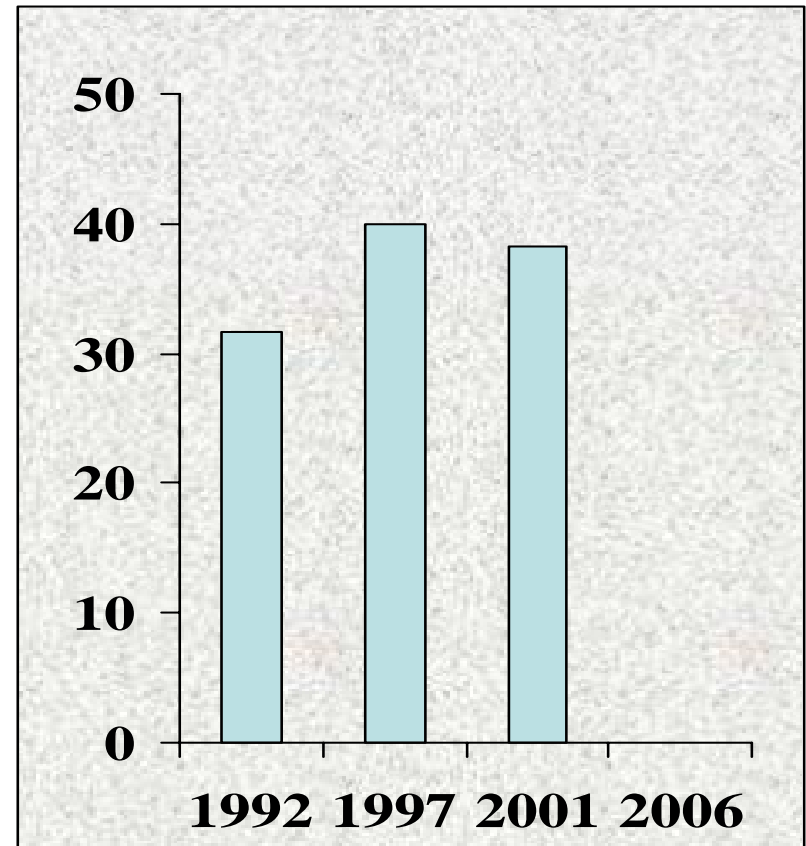
# Hours Concentration

Working hours of 2-adult households:

- Mean hours rose from 54 (1981) to 60 (1998) in Britain
- Proportion working more than 60 hrs rose from 35% (1985) to 47% (2002)
- Associated with work-life balance conflict and time pressure, especially for families with children (unsurprisingly)

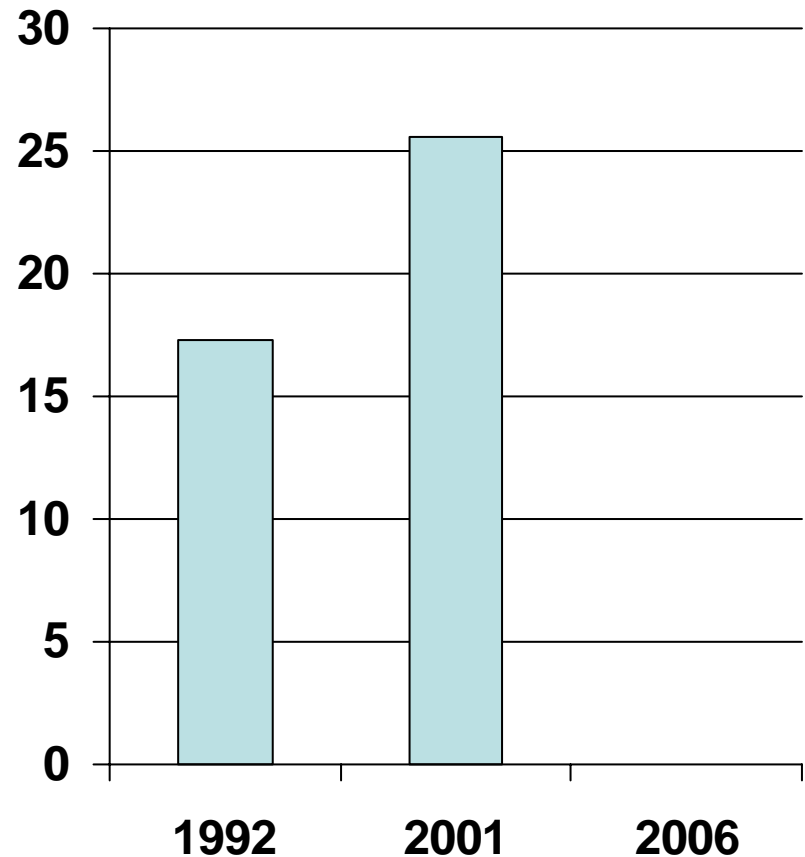
# Work Intensification 1

- The proportion of workers in Britain who strongly agree that: “My job requires that I work very hard”

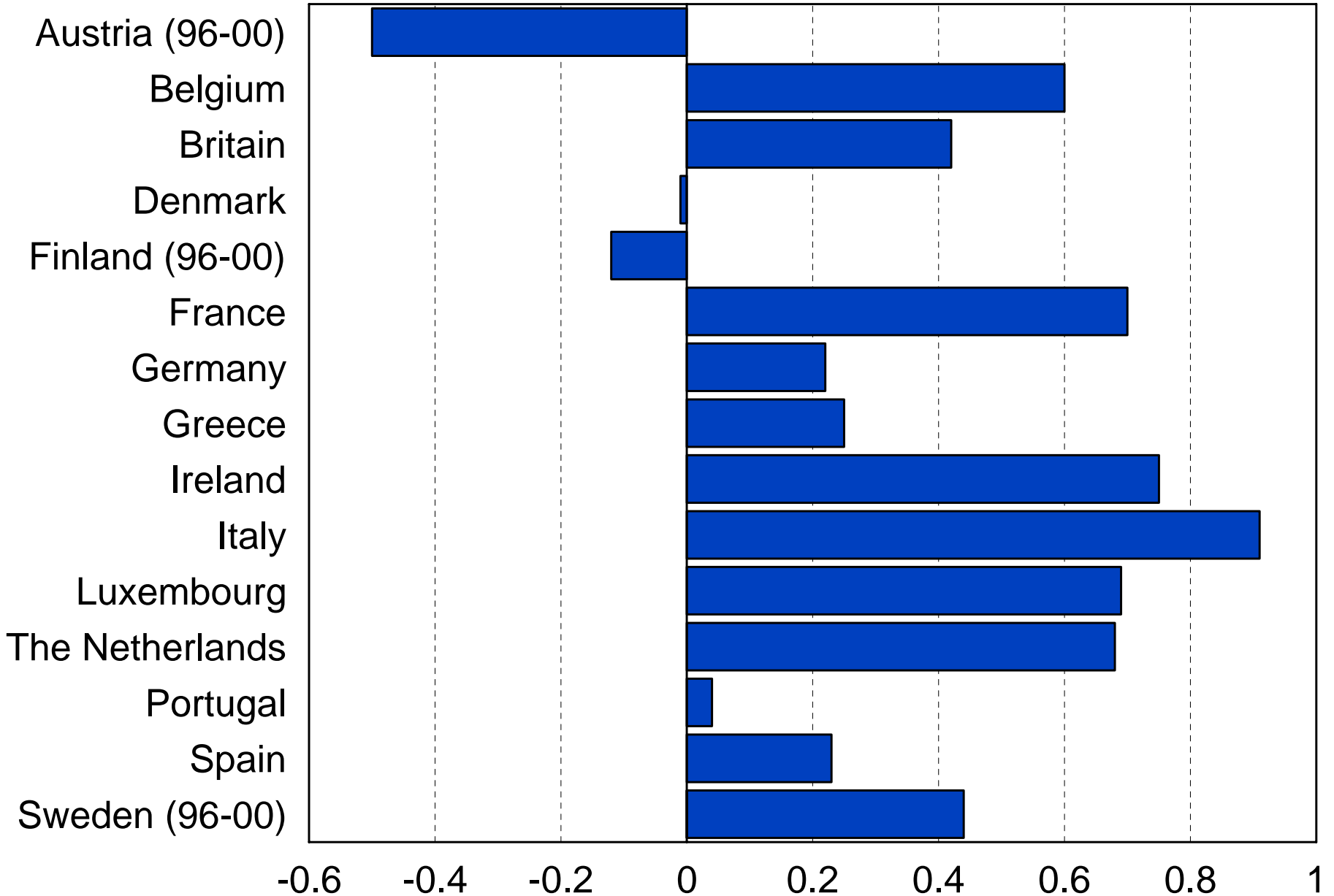


# Work Intensification 2

- The proportion of workers in Britain who “work at very high speed” all or most of the time.

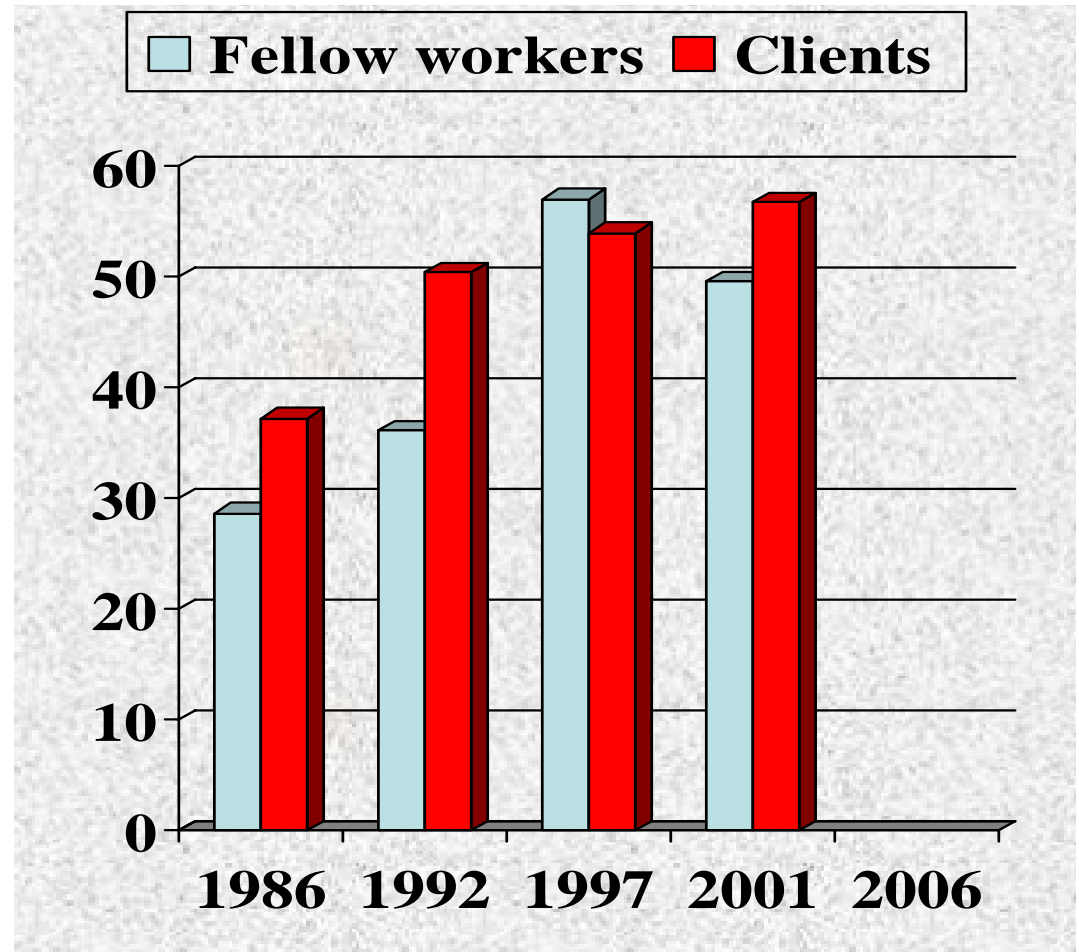


# Work Intensification in the EU during the 1990s

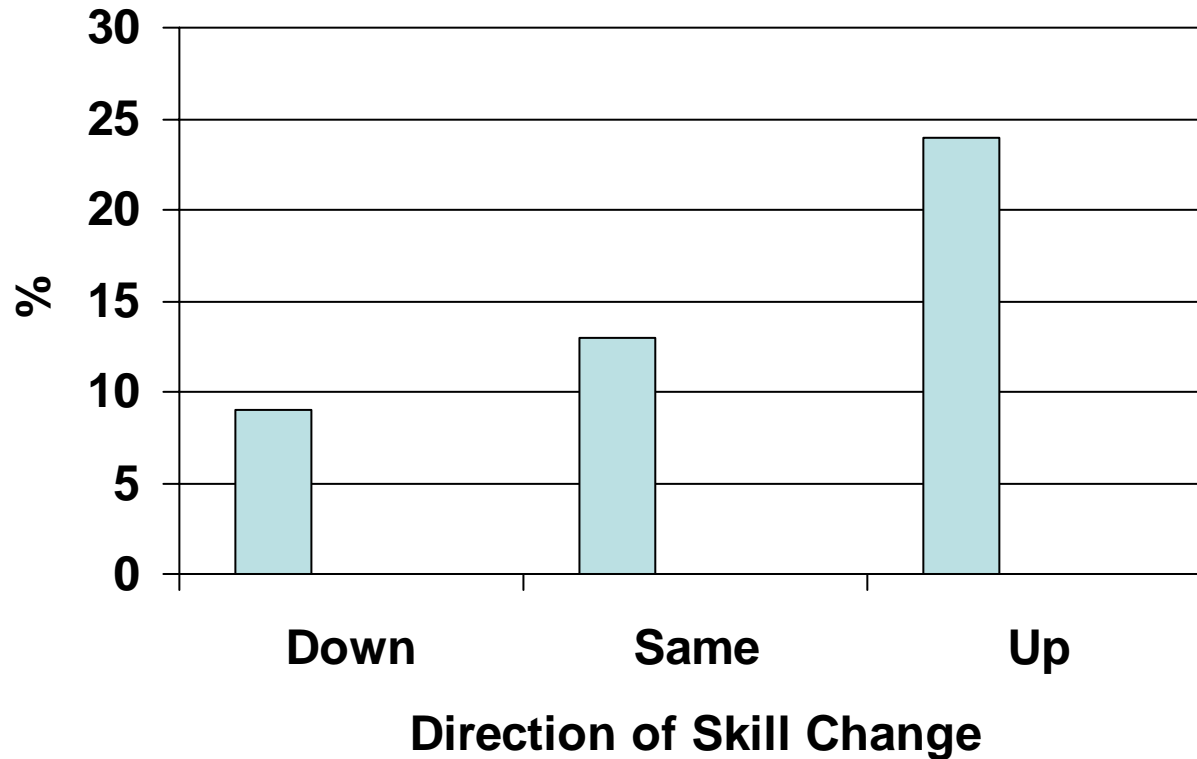


# Work Pressure Sources

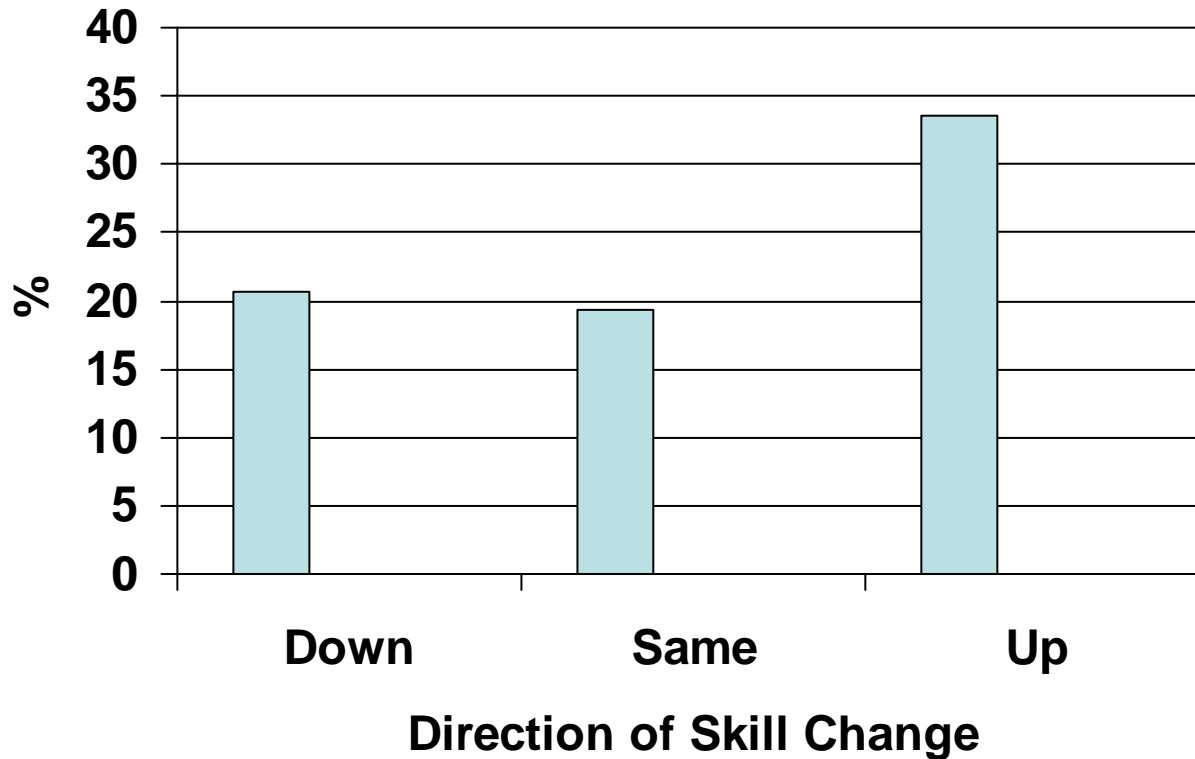
- % of employees feeling pressure to work hard from *fellow workers or colleagues*, and from *clients or customers*



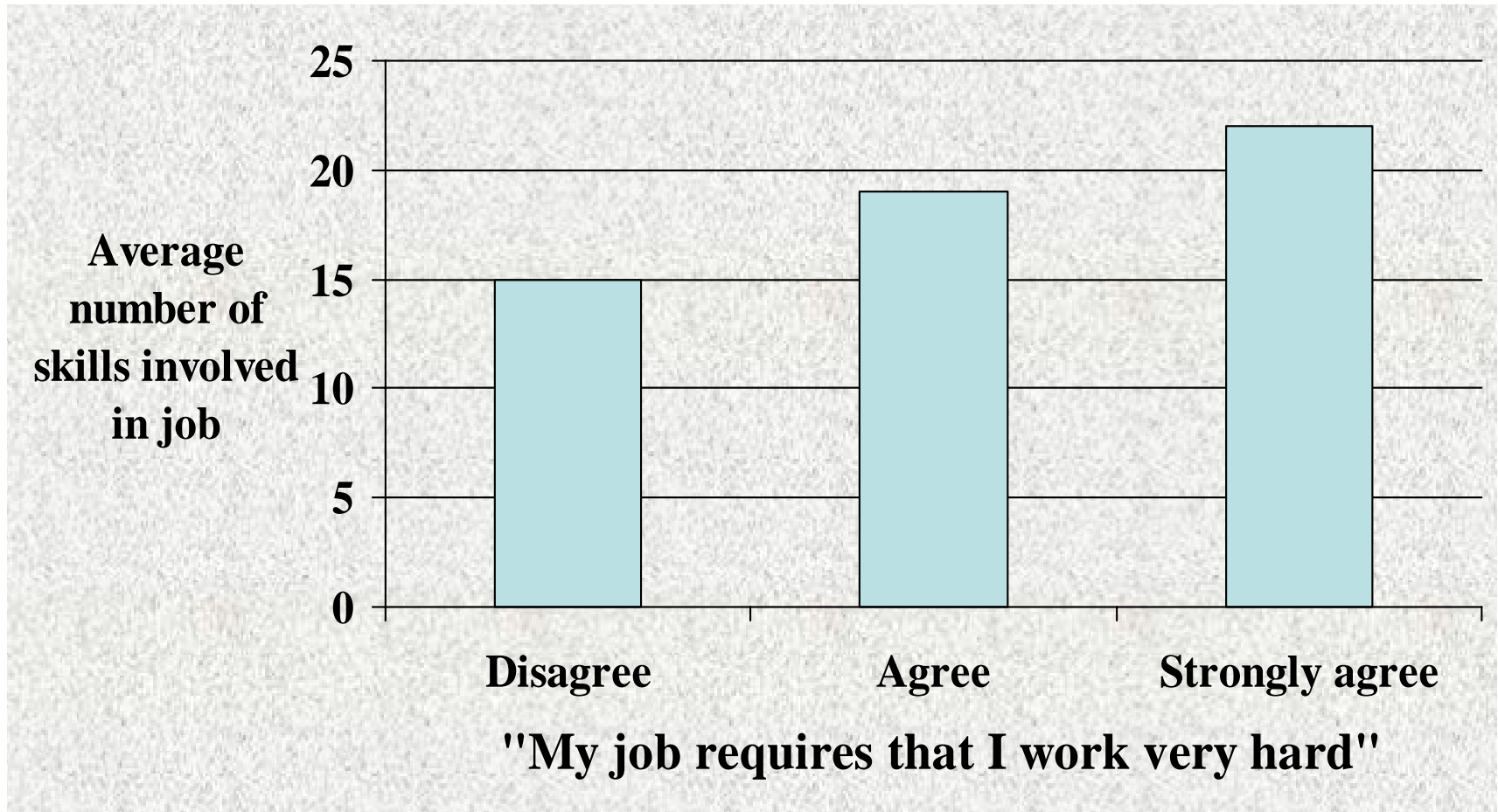
# Proportion of Workers Experiencing Work Intensification, 2001



# Proportion of Workers Experiencing Increased Working Hours, 2001, by Direction of Skill Change



# Work Intensity and Multi-Skilling

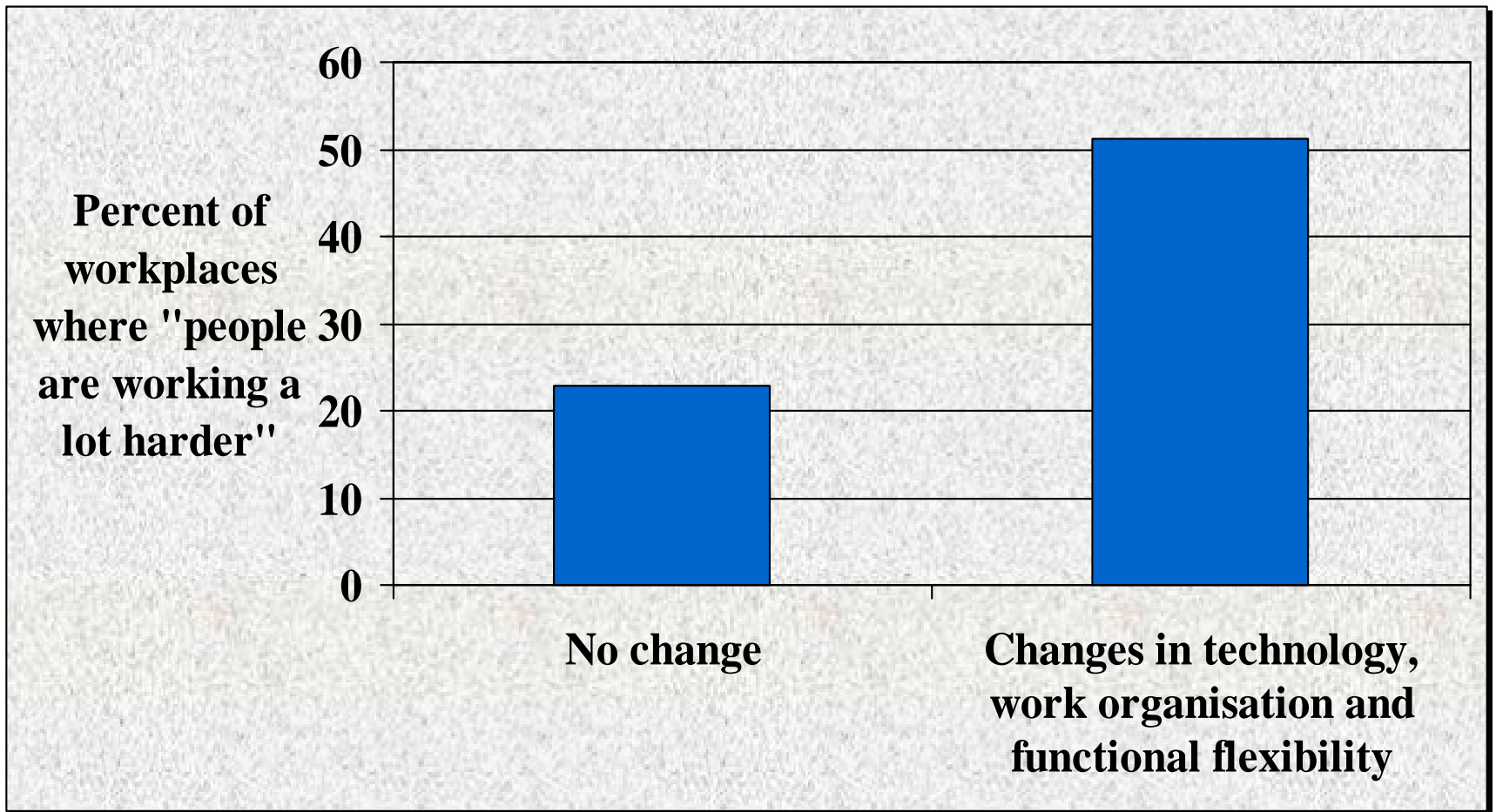




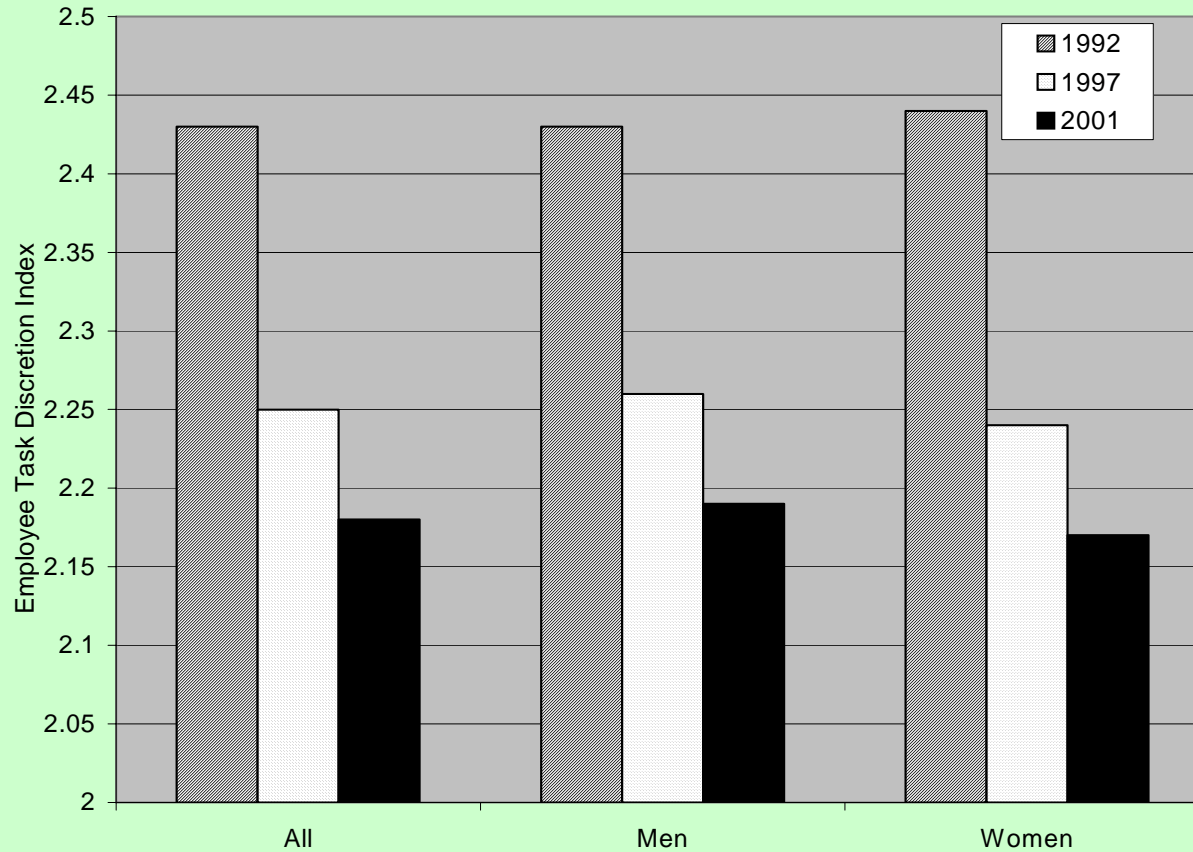
# Why?

- Technological/organisational change?
  - “hard worker is easier to arrange”
  - “big brother”
- Reduced worker power?
  - minor explanation
- Trade?
  - Not directly
- High-commitment policies:
  - small establishments only
- Consumerism? – probably not
- Insecurity? -- probably not

# Work Intensification and Technological Change



# Task Discretion Index: 1992, 1997 & 2001



# Conclusion

- work has been intensifying and concentrating in Britain; elsewhere too
- evidence of a plateau in recent years. Is this a turning point?
- evidence of twin processes: SBTC and EBTC
- Can we find a way to “work smart, but not too hard” in the modern knowledge economy?