Job Quality

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Concept of job quality

- Job quality is the extent to which a person's needs for work are met.
- Five main aspects:
  - Extrinsic: pay, hours & conditions (including WLB), security
  - Intrinsic: skills, autonomy, effort
- Competing models used by policy-makers:
  - "more and better jobs" (OECD and others) – usually meaning "better extrinsic features"
  - EC: from "quality in work" to "quality of employment" and "flexicurity"
  - "decent labour" (ILO);

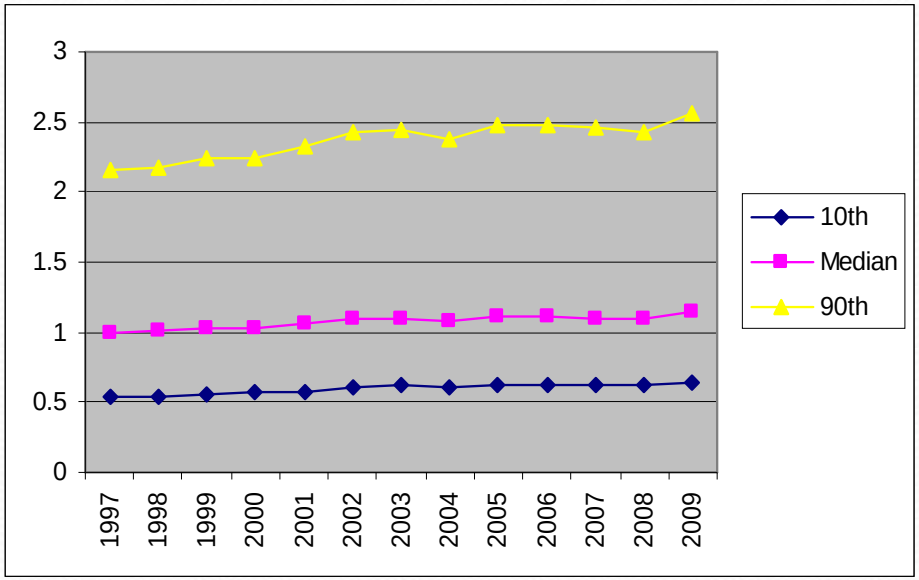
Why important?

- Individuals: their needs
- Employers
  - Skills and productivity; skills and the bottom line
  - Job quality and performance are positively related (though research is needed)
  - WLB practices: impact on employers?

Trends in UK

Extrinsic: positive, except for security in last year or so

- E.g. hourly pay:

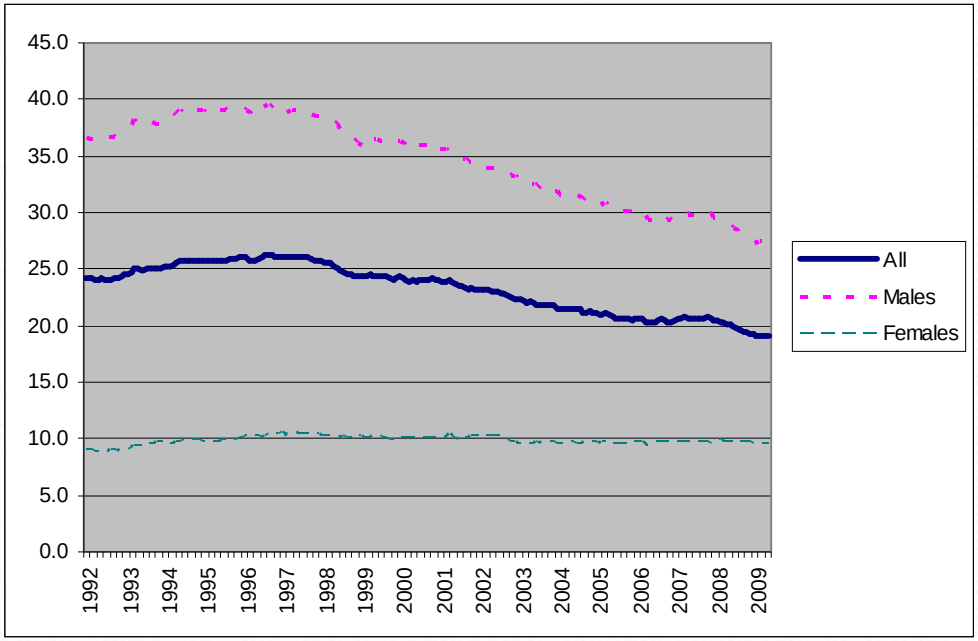


Trends in UK

Extrinsic: positive

- E.g. hours:

Percent of Employed People Working More Than 45 Hours Per Week.

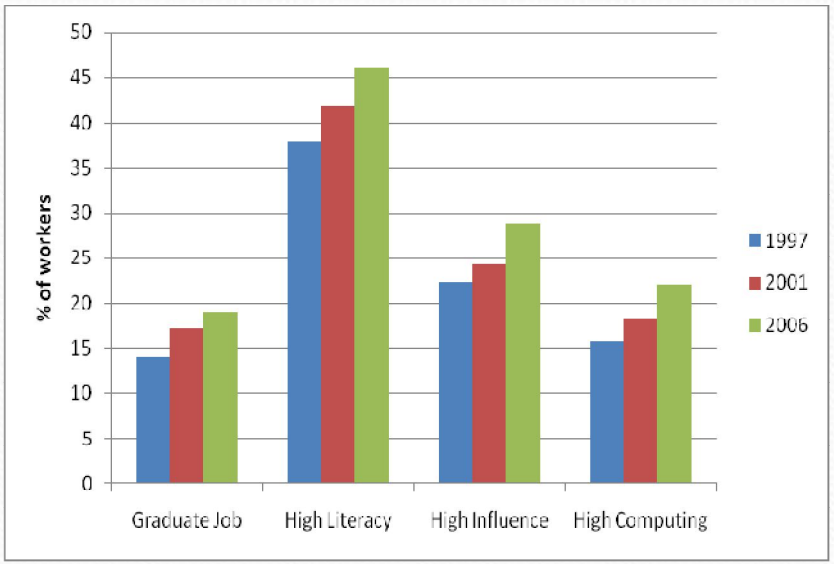


Trends in UK

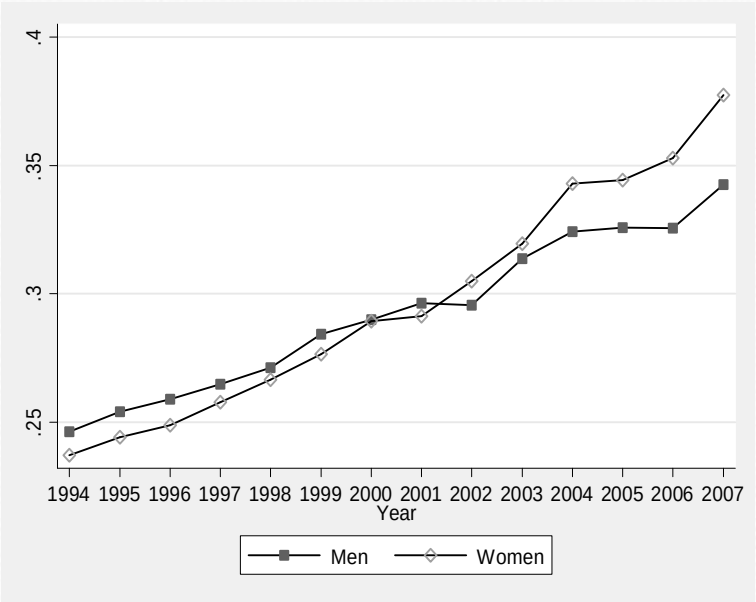
Intrinsic: mixed / negative

- E.g. Skills:

High Skills Requirements in British Jobs



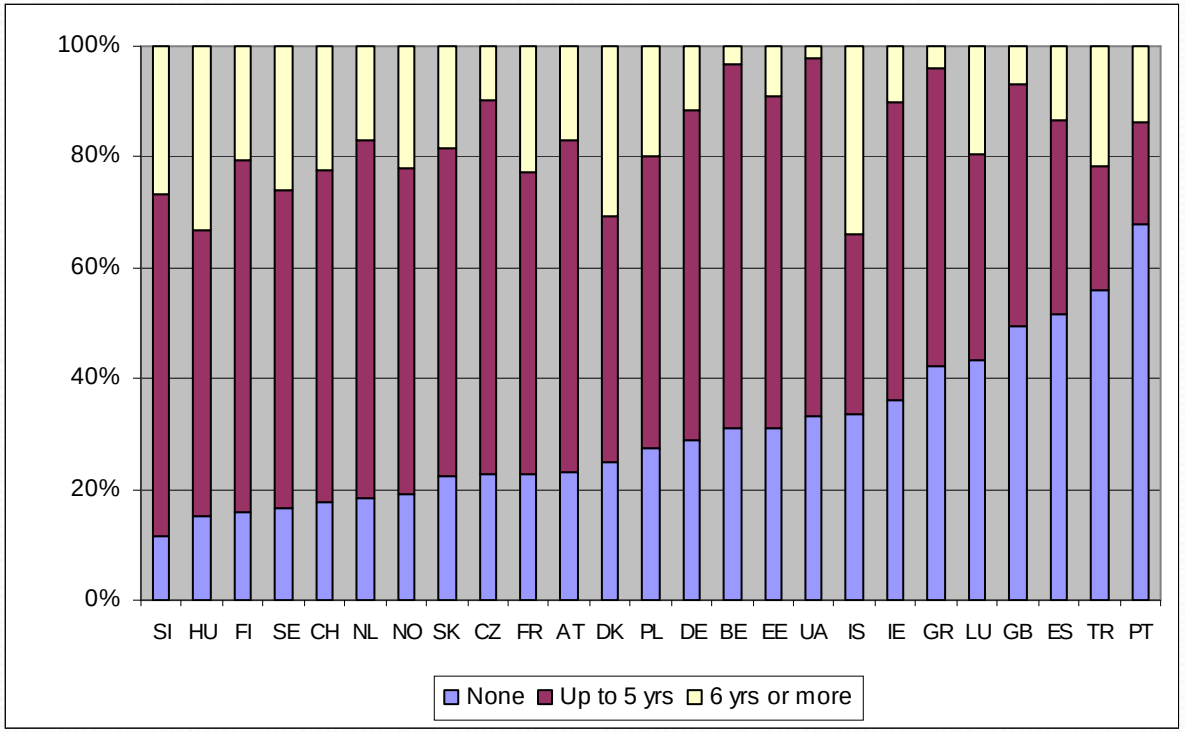
Share of graduates in the labour force.



But:

- Supply side:
  - Education levels not growing as fast as many other advanced industrial nations
  - Training not increasing; if anything participation has peaked
- Demand side:
  - Fewer employers in Britain tend to require education beyond the compulsory stage from their recruits
  - The rise in prevalence of skilled occupations is the third slowest among all OECD countries.

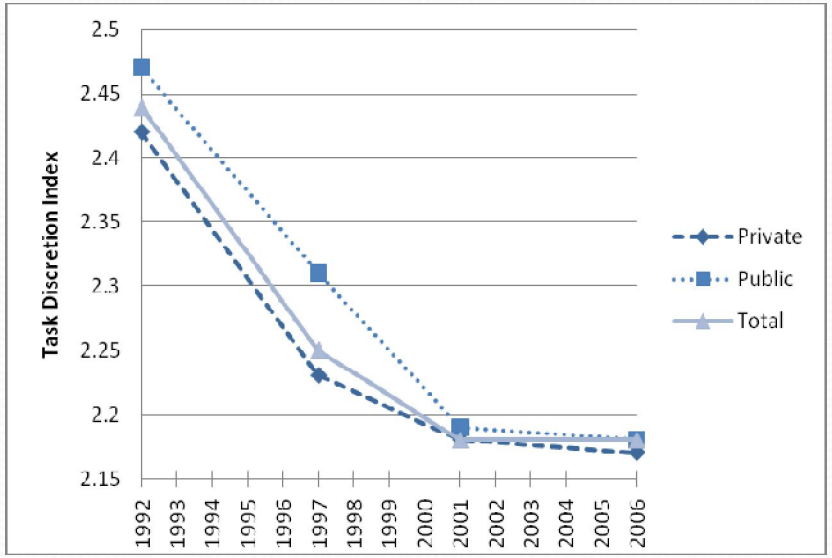
Required Post-Compulsory Years of Education for Recruitment across Europe, 2004



Trends in UK

- Intrinsic: mixed / negative
- E.g. workplace autonomy

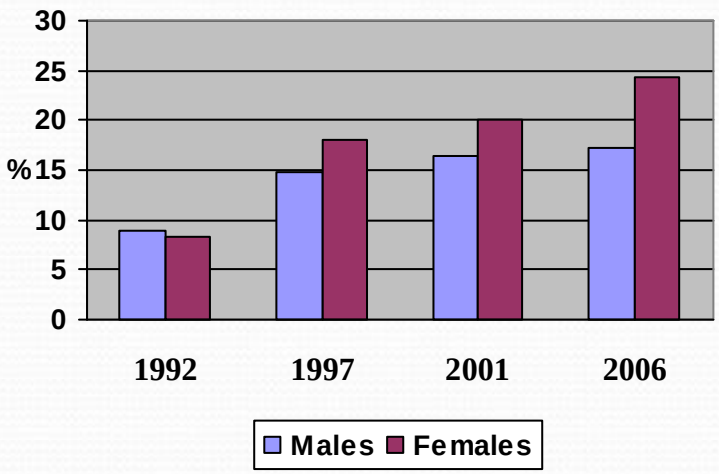
Employees' Task Discretion



Trends in UK

- Intrinsic: mixed / negative
- E.g. workplace stress

Proportion of "High-Strain" Jobs, GB, 1992-2006



Conclusions: unfinished business?

- Decade has seen much change in:
  - Entitlements: NMW, holiday rights etc.; rights to request flexible working, etc.
  - Institutional infrastructure: LSC, SSCs, UKCES etc.
- Ongoing improvements in <u>extrinsic</u> job quality
- But still major issues with <u>intrinsic</u> job quality:
  - Skills still a major problem across economy
  - Lack of trust and autonomy in British workplaces
- Vulnerable workers may also be a growing issue

Sources of Data on Job Quality

- UK Quarterly Labour Force Survey
- UK Skills Surveys, 1997, 2001, 2006
- European Social Survey
- ASHE