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Foreword

This publication is the first summary report of the findings of the Quality of Work Life Survey carried out by Statistics Finland in 1997. This report also gathers together the series of the Quality of Work Life Surveys and analyses the changes that have taken place in working life in Finland. The series was started in 1977 in connection with the social indicator work done at that time. The fourth and, so far, the latest round of the survey was implemented in autumn 1997. Because the same concepts and methods have been applied in all the surveys, comparative data on changes in the quality of work life have been obtained for a period of two decades.

Co-operative partners from various research institutions, ministries and universities, in particular, have contributed to the designing of individual surveys in the survey series. Besides Statistics Finland, the Working Environment Division of the Ministry of Labour, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Centre for Occupational Safety and the Central Pension Security Institute also contributed to the financing of the latest Quality of Work Life Survey. By networking with external partners, Statistics Finland has attempted to respond to society's diverse information needs. Besides for the reporting of Statistics Finland itself, the survey material is also available for the reporting of the co-operative partners and other interested researchers.

The Finnish Quality of Work Life Surveys follow a strong Nordic co-operative tradition. Surveys on working conditions carried out in the Nordic Countries have served as examples for the European surveys on working conditions which have been implemented within the European Union in the past few years. Studies of the quality of working life will continue to occupy an important place in Statistics Finland's research into the living conditions of the population. The well-established research programme has comprised regular, extensive data collections implemented at 5 to 7-year intervals.

Findings of the latest, 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey, have been published as articles in Statistics Finland's periodical "Hyvinvointikatsaus" (Welfare Review). The covered topics have included time pressure and work-related stress, fixed-term employment relationships and workplace intimidation. This summary report will be followed later on by a report focusing on the gender equality aspect of working life, and a compendium of articles to be published jointly by the co-operative partners involved in the research.

The persons responsible for the 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey at Statistics Finland were Planner Anna-Maija Lehto, PhD, and Senior Statistician Hanna Sutela, who also compiled this report. The translation from Finnish into English was done by Aila Hanley. Assistant Statistician Kirsi Toivonen produced the lay-out of the publication.

Risto Lehtonen
Statistical Director
Statistics Finland

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Introduction

This report describes the findings of the Quality of Work Life Surveys of Statistics Finland in respect of some of their core contents for the total time period in which these surveys have been carried out. The graphics essentially describe the entire wage and salary earning population in Finland. In some of the graphics, gender has also been used as a background variable. This has only been done where it has not impaired the visual clarity of the presentation.

Quality of Work Life Surveys are extensive studies which involve between 3,000 to 6,000 persons and cover the entire wage and salary earning population in Finland. Up to now, Statistics Finland has carried out four of them, in 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997. The surveys have been implemented as personal, face-to-face interviews. The interview which, on average, lasts a little over an hour, includes questions on the physical, mental and social work environment and the employees' experiences relating to it, as well as questions on work experience, position in the labour market, conditions of employment, occurrence of physical and psychological symptoms, work motivation, job contentment, work orientation, and experiences relating to gender equality and fair treatment. Identical questions have been used in inquiring about these issues so that findings spanning two decades are now available on the main subject areas. Thus, the quality of work life surveys provide a very useful tool for assessing changes in the working life.

The complete survey series comprises the following:

- Working Conditions Survey 1977. Personal face-to-face interview, sample size 7,500 employed persons, 5,778 wage and salary earners in data.
- Working Conditions Survey 1984. Personal face-to-face interview, sample size 5,000 wage and salary earners, 4,502 persons in data.

- Quality of Work Life Survey 1990. Personal face-to-face interview, sample size 5,000 employed persons, 3,502 wage and salary earners in data.
- Quality of Work Life Survey 1997. Personal face-to-face interview, sample size 3,800 wage and salary earners, 2,979 persons in data.

The objective of the quality of work life surveys has been to produce data on the state of the working life for the purposes of labour policy decision making and development of work communities. The surveys aim to provide for public debate information about Finnish people's views about their working conditions and about how these conditions have changed. They also supply material for the research, training and communications activities related to working conditions which take place in diverse quarters of society.

Appendix 1. to this publication describes in more detail the data and non-response of the latest quality of work life survey, and the method used in its implementation. Appendix 2. contains the interview questionnaire of the 1997 survey. The questionnaire gives a good overview of the full extent of the survey. There is still a good number of questions and topics which are not covered by this first report.

For the first time, qualitative and quantitative research approaches were combined in the questionnaire design. In other words, the compilation of the questionnaire was preceded by a host of informal interviews with representatives from various occupations, and these were exploited in the designing and formulating of the questions. Anna-Maija Lehto considers more thoroughly the foundations of the adopted method in her 1996 doctoral dissertation "Working Conditions as a Research Subject".

Changed importance of work

Especially in the 1980s, it was quite generally forecast that the importance of paid work would diminish in Finland. Until then, strong commitment to work had been characteristic of the Finnish wage and salary earning population. Using a Swedish model, this subject was studied by asking the respondents to put values on a set of different areas of life and state which particular area they regarded as the most important. The areas of life were: gainful employment, home and family life and leisure time hobbies. The adjacent graphics illustrate the change that has taken place since 1984 in **how people rate the importance of gainful employment**.

Throughout the 1980s, the forecast declining trend prevailed in the way people rated the importance of gainful employment but, according to the latest 1997 survey, gainful employment seems to have started to grow in importance again in the 1990s. The growth is especially clear in respect of female wage and salary earners, but a slight increase in this is also discernible in respect of their male peers. It may well be that the economic recession and the growth of unemployment in the 1990s have again raised the value of gainful employment.

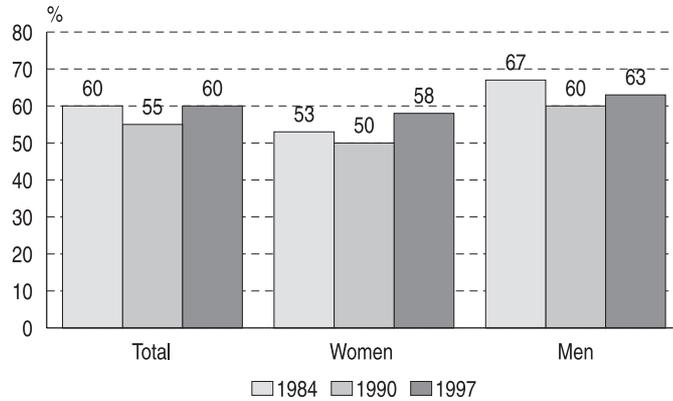
A similar development trend can also be seen in responses to the question of **how important or significant the respondents regard their own, current work**. The proportions of those who regard their work extremely important and significant have grown considerably. These proportions, too, had fallen sharply at the turn of the decade. It would seem that appreciation of one's own

work has seen a distinct increase in the 1990s, most evidently because employment has become more difficult to find. The change in the increase of the value of work is even more distinct in respect of women.

A so-called "**windfall**" question has traditionally always been included in the quality of work life surveys and has always been presented in the same format. With it, the salience of work is studied by asking the respondents what they would do if they got so much money from, for example, a lottery win, or as an inheritance, that they could live comfortably without having to work. The alternative of "Would stop working altogether" has grown in popularity since 1984, although only slightly. The number of those who "Would shorten their working hours fundamentally" has also grown to some extent. The statement "Would only do some work every now and then" has regained its earlier level of popularity of being supported by approximately one third of the respondents. A clear drop was evident earlier in the proportion of those who "Would continue working as now", in other words those very enthusiastic about their work. In the latest survey, this group had remained unchanged, comprising approximately one fifth of wage and salary earners. The graphics do not show the differences between the sexes, but the relative proportions of men prepared to stop working altogether have been larger than those of women in the last two surveys, while in the 1984 survey women selected this alternative more often than men. The work-centred disposition of women, especially, would therefore seem to have intensified on the basis on this question, too.

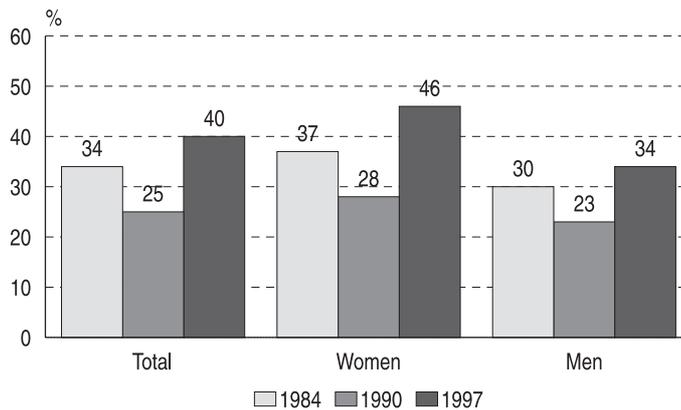
Gainful employment extremely important life content

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



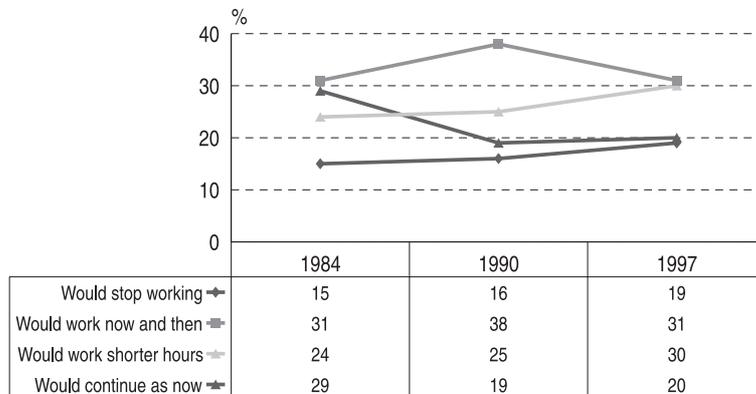
Regards own work as extremely important and significant

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Choice of action if had a windfall of money and would not need to work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Labour market position

The structure of the wage and salary earning population has changed in many ways in the two decades which the quality of work life surveys describe. These structural changes also have an influence on what kinds of changes can be observed in the experiences of working life. For example, improvements in working conditions do not necessarily arise from improvements that have been carried out at actual workplaces but from the fact that certain types of tasks have become more prevalent while certain others have grown less so. The clearest change in the structure of the wage and salary earning population is that it has been getting increasingly white-collared and better educated. The changing age structure, or ageing, of the wage and salary earning population is also frequently brought up. However, according to the quality of work life surveys, ageing has been quite a slow process. Especially in the 1980s, the average age of the wage and salary earning population has gone up slowly because the number of persons opting for early retirement has reduced the sizes of the oldest age groups. According to the quality of work life surveys, the average age of the wage and salary earning population has gone up as follows:

	Total	Women	Men
1977	36.2	36.6	36.0
1984	36.8	37.1	36.5
1990	37.3	37.4	37.2
1997	39.7	40.1	39.1

Changes in the labour market position are here examined on the basis of years of work experience, from the point of mobility between occupations and jobs, from the angle of unemployment experiences and the oc-

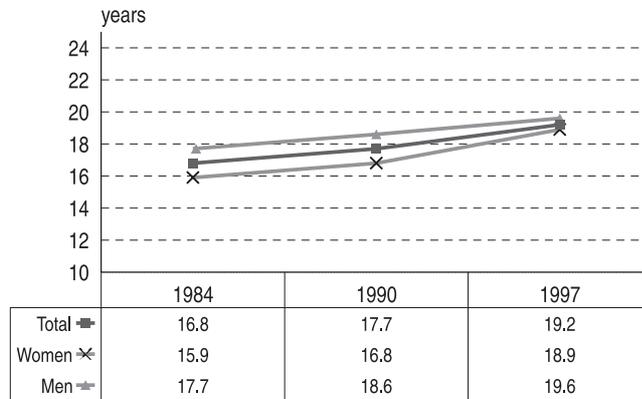
currence of so-called atypical employment relationships. Wage earners' **work experience measured in years** has been going up steadily since 1984. This phenomenon is connected with the ageing of the wage earning population. It is, however, worth pointing out that women's work experience has increased more than that of men which, in turn, is linked to women's growing work-centred disposition. An exceptional feature in Finland is that the difference in the average work experience between women and men is less than one year: women's average work experience is 18.9 years and men's 19.6 years. Women's participation in the working life has a very long tradition in Finland.

Survey findings about the **number of occupations during life** depart somewhat from presuppositions. The proportion of the wage and salary earning population of those who have always worked in roughly the same occupation has diminished only slightly and, in respect of men, the trend is approaching growth rather than reduction. The second graphic on this subject shows that the proportion of those who have worked in several different occupations has remained quite unchanged, at just over ten per cent, throughout the examination period. Long-term examination of the proportion of those who have worked in two or three occupations shows a slight decrease. So far, at least, the findings do not lend support to the claims that employees have to change their occupation several times during their lives.

It should be noted, however, that the concept of occupational change is quite vague: a person may keep the same occupational title even if the tasks involved change. Other findings of this survey tell of considerable changes in tasks and working implements, in particular, which is reflected in, among other

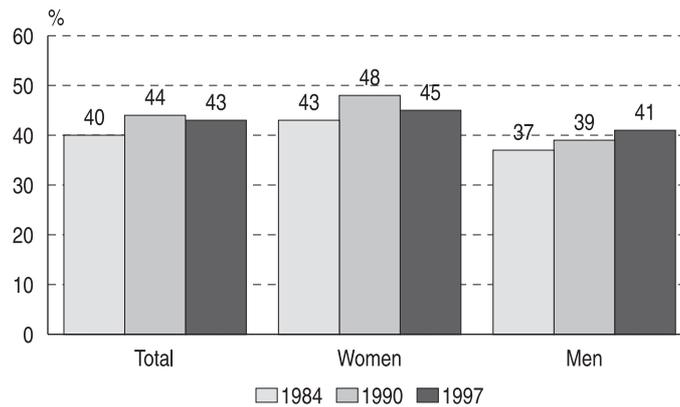
Years of work experience by gender

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



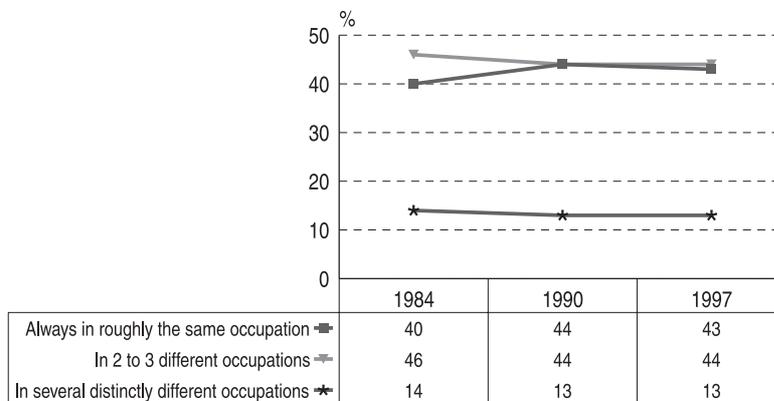
Number of occupations during life

Always in roughly the same occupation, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Number of occupations during life

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



things, the introduction of information technology. Because of the vagueness of occupational change, this kind of very rough occupational experience division has been adopted in the quality of work life surveys.

A distinct change for the worse has taken place in labour market positions since the previous, 1990 quality of work life survey. If **experiences of unemployment in the last 5 years** is used as the indicator of labour market position, it becomes obvious from the adjacent graphics that the data for 1997 differ essentially from earlier findings. In 1997, 33 per cent, or one third of Finnish wage and salary earners had been unemployed or temporarily dismissed at least once in the last five years. In 1990, the corresponding proportion was only 16 per cent. Men had experienced unemployment even more often than average: 36 per cent had been unemployed or temporarily dismissed in the last five years. Fewer women had experienced unemployment, but the total percentage among them was also as high as 30: 15 per cent had experienced it once and 15 per cent more than once.

These figures represent the proportional division that prevailed in unemployment in Finland, in other words, men have been unemployed more often than women. However, a reversal has quite recently occurred in these statistics, for in 1998, the average female unemployment rate was 12.0 per cent and the male one 10.9 per cent.

The latest quality of work life survey included questions on many things relating to experiences of unemployment which were not asked in the previous surveys. Time series comparisons in respect of them are, therefore, not possible here. The questions concerned, for example, unemployment security during the latest unemployment period. Women were on earnings-related daily allowance more often (63%) than men (58%), who were more often on the basic daily allowance. Almost equal numbers,

that is 9 per cent of women and 8 per cent of men, had been on no support at all. The most typical answer from both women (31%) and men (30%) to the question "How did you become re-employed last time?" was "By going back to my old place of work." Job offers from the labour exchange offices had been received by 17 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men.

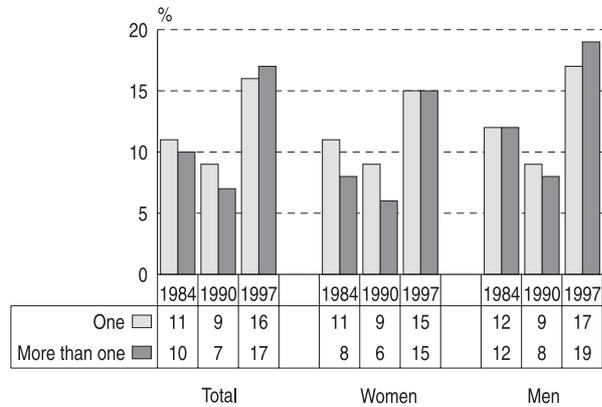
In the 1997 survey, respondents who had been unemployed or temporarily dismissed were also asked to compare their present job to the job they had prior to their unemployment period. Compared to their old job, the respondents generally regarded their present job as either equal or better. In respect of the size of pay, there was no difference between the sexes. 18 to 19 per cent of both men and women said their pay was now worse than it had been before their unemployment.

Aggregated length of unemployment periods is an item that can be compared right from the 1984 quality of work life survey. The adjacent graphics show clearly that as unemployment becomes more widespread the periods of unemployment also grow longer. The average length calculated for a five-year period is approximately 12 months, in other words one year. There is very little difference between women and men in this respect. It is appropriate here to point out that the aggregated length of unemployment over the last five years was only calculated as an average for those respondents who had experienced unemployment.

Following the radical weakening of the employment situation after 1990 it is logical for the **membership of trade unions** to have increased, as it has the deciding influence on the size of the daily unemployment allowance. Membership of trade unions has increased especially in respect of women but, according to the survey findings, nearly 80 per cent of all wage and salary earners now belong to trade unions. This is a very high proportion by international comparison.

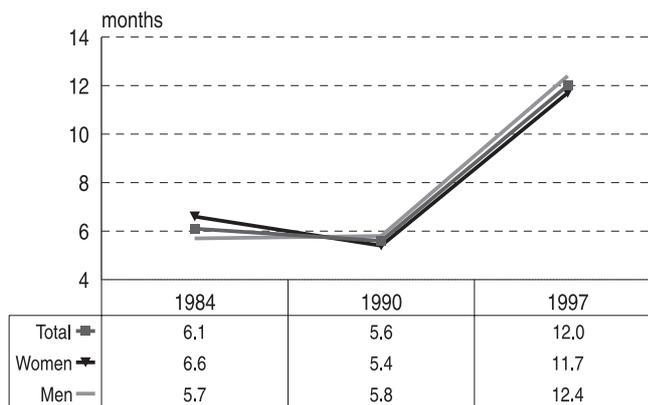
Experiences of unemployment in the last 5 years

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



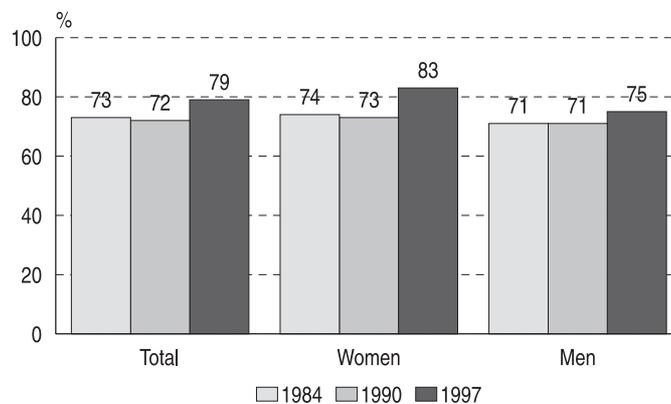
Months of unemployment in the last five years

Average for those who had been unemployed, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Membership of trade unions

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



During the recession, employment relationships have grown insecure on the one hand, but more permanent on the other. In other words, fewer employees have changed jobs and there has been less mobility than in the years before the recession. The average time in the same employment is nearly ten years, while in the 1984 quality of work life survey the corresponding average was 8.3 years. At the same time as the **lengths of time in the same job** have increased, the differences between women and men in this respect have grown smaller. With women, the current employment relationship had lasted, on average, 9.4 years, while the corresponding average with men was 9.9 years.

This revelation contradicts the view often presented in debates about labour market position claiming that an increase has taken place in all kinds of mobility. Similarly, the foregoing graphics describing occupational changes also support the notion of permanency. The proportions of all wage and salary earners of those who had always worked in roughly the same occupation had remained unchanged and, in men's case, even increased.

The reduction in mobility is also depicted by the adjacent graphics on how many respondents had **changed jobs in the last 5 years**. In the 1997 survey, this proportion of the total wage and salary earning population had decreased to 34 per cent from the 42 per cent it was in the 1990 survey. For women,

the proportion was only 33 per cent, so the change in respect of them points slightly more towards the direction of permanency.

To a large extent, these figures are explained by the fact that getting a job has simply become more difficult. When the employment situation is bad and unemployment is growing, it is usual to try to stay with the same employer for as long as possible. According to the respondents' own assessment, the **likelihood of getting a new job** has clearly worsened. In 1997, as many as 37 per cent still regarded their possibilities as good, but in 1997, the percentage had dropped to just 23. It is possible that this percentage dipped even lower at some point of time during the 1990s, even though it does not become evident from these survey findings. It is, nevertheless, indicated by the Barometer of Working Conditions which the Ministry of Labour has been producing annually in the 1990s. According to the Barometer, confidence about being able to find work from elsewhere to correspond with own professional skills reached its lowest point in 1993. Since then, confidence has been going up slowly (Ylöstalo et al. 1997, 159).

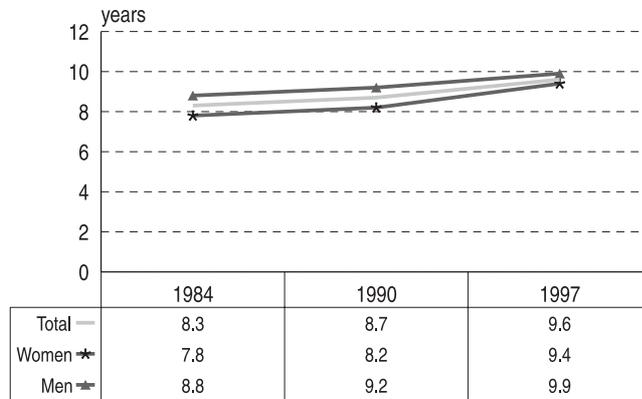
The graphics included here do not present data by age group. However, the likelihood of getting a new job is the kind of factor describing a person's labour market position in which age is of particular significance. Confidence about the likelihood of being able to change jobs weakens drastically with age.

Good likelihood of getting a new job:

	Total		Women		Men	
	1990 %	1997 %	1990 %	1997 %	1990 %	1997 %
Total	37	23	35	16	40	30
15 to 24-year-olds	53	36	52	31	54	41
25 to 34-year-olds	50	41	48	32	52	50
35 to 44-year-olds	37	22	32	14	41	30
45 to 54-year-olds	19	10	18	7	20	14
55 to 64-year-olds	8	4	9	3	7	5

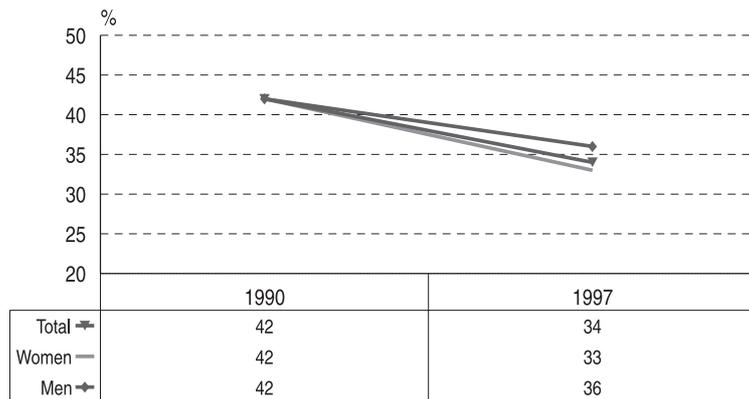
Length of time in same job

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



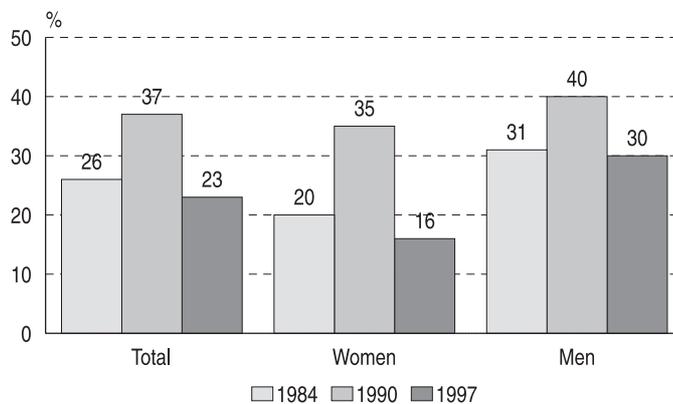
Changed jobs in the last 5 years

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



Likelihood of getting a new job

Considers likelihood to be good, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



The quality of the employment relationship is a further important element describing a person's labour market position. Debates about the need for flexibility in the working life have paid a lot of attention to so-called atypical employment relationships referring to, among others, temporary, i.e. fixed-term, and part-time relationships. Working at home and working diverse exceptional working hour patterns have also been seen as manifestations of this flexibility. Working at home, or teleworking, is discussed later on in this report in connection with the use of information technology, while matters relating to exceptional working hour patterns are covered in the chapter on working hours. The adjacent graphics describe essentially the development of fixed-term and part-time employment on the basis of the findings of the quality of work life surveys.

Articles about the findings of the autumn 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey have been published in Statistics Finland's *Hyvinvointikatsaus* (Welfare Review). The first few of them have dealt with fixed-term employment relationships on the one hand, and time pressure and work-related stress on the other. Hanna Sutela's articles on fixed-term employment relationships (*Hyvinvointikatsaus*, 2/1998, 24–32) give a detailed account of how fixed-term employment relationships have changed, who the persons working in such relationships are and how they themselves see their own situation and how they have experienced the attitudes of the other employees at their places of work.

In an increasing number of cases the fixed-term employee is a well-educated woman aged over 30. Examined through the quality of work life surveys, the **proportions of fixed-term employees of all wage and salary earners** have been growing continuously since 1984. These kinds of employment relationships have always been more typical with women, but

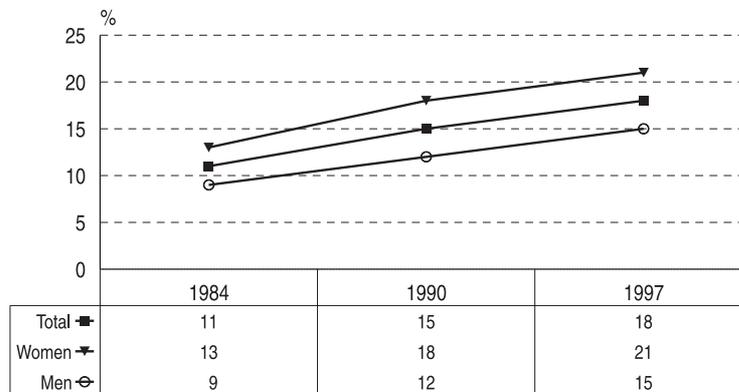
today every fifth female employee already works in an employment relationship agreed for a fixed term. Even with men, the proportion of those in a permanent employment relationship has grown distinctly smaller. Fixed-term employment relationships are no longer clearly associated with young age and the beginning of a working career, but apply to an increasingly wide sector of employees regardless of age and years of work experience. In respect of women, for example, the proportion of employees over 30 working on fixed-term employment contracts has more than doubled in just over ten years. With women, fixed-term employment relationships are most typical among those with tertiary level education, of whom 25 per cent are employed on fixed-term basis. The corresponding most typical educational level category among men are those with secondary education, of whom 17 per cent work in employment relationships with fixed-term contracts.

It is also descriptive of the difference between the sexes in respect of the so-called short-term employment contracts that the **number of employment relationships at current place of work** is higher for women than for men. In other words, stringing up of employment relationships, or successive renewal of a fixed-term contract, is more typical of women's employment relationships. For 24 per cent of the surveyed women, the latest fixed-term employment relationship was at least the fifth successive one in their present job at the time of the survey. The corresponding proportion among the surveyed men in fixed-term employment relationships was only 10 per cent, and over one half of the men were in their first fixed-term employment relationship.

The last of the factors presented here as one affecting a person's labour market position is the development that has happened in part-time employment relationships. In the 1984 survey, the **proportion of part-time employees of all wage and salary earners**,

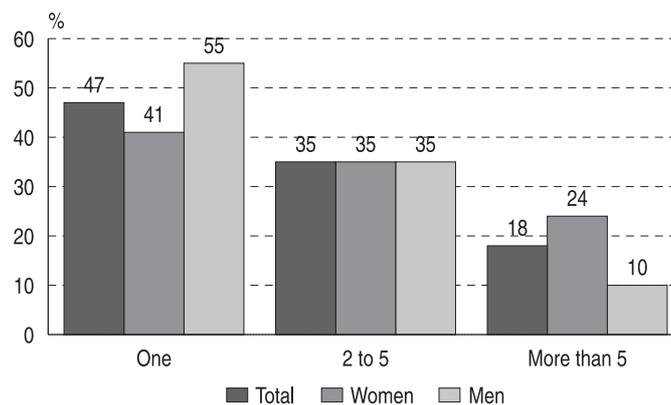
Proportions of fixed-term employees of all wage and salary earners

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



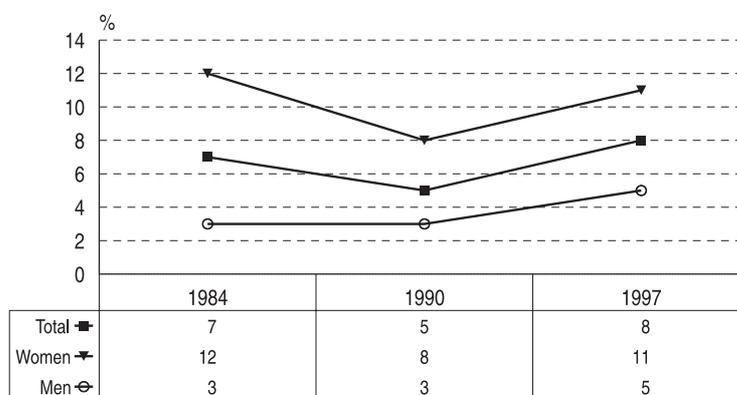
Number of employment relationships at current place of work

Fixed-term wage and salary earners, Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



Proportion of part-time employees of all wage and salary earners

Working less than 30 hours per week, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



i.e. those employees working less than 30 hours per week, was at most 12 per cent of all female wage and salary earners. Subsequently, the standing of part-time employment relationships as typically female forms of employment relationships fell slight, but has been gaining ground again in the 1990s. All in all, part-time employment relationships are of relatively minor significance in Finland compared to the other EU

countries. The leading EU countries in part-time employment are the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, where over 30 per cent of female employees work on part-time basis. If full-time employment is to be interpreted as signifying a good labour market position, then the position of female wage and salary earners in Finland has remained relatively stable despite the economic recession.

Changes in work organisations

Changes that take place at workplaces determine strongly the employees' working conditions and their perceptions of them. The changes can relate to organisational structures, work organisation, personnel numbers or the financial standing of the workplace. Many studies of the psychological and social factors affecting work have observed that these changes are strongly associated with the occurrence of, for example, work-related stress and exhaustion, and even mental violence, at a workplace. From the employees' point, the way in which the different changes are implemented is crucial.

The adjacent graphics show how common various changes are in today's working life. In the 1990s, the major contributors to stress and insecurity have been **changes in the number of personnel**, i.e. redundancies, temporary dismissals and diverse other measures aimed towards numerical flexibility in personnel. In the three years preceding 1997, which the question relates to, the biggest years of personnel cut-backs had already been passed. Nevertheless, 24 per cent of wage and salary earners still stated that personnel numbers had mostly been reduced at their places of work. There is a clear difference between the sexes here in that a clearly

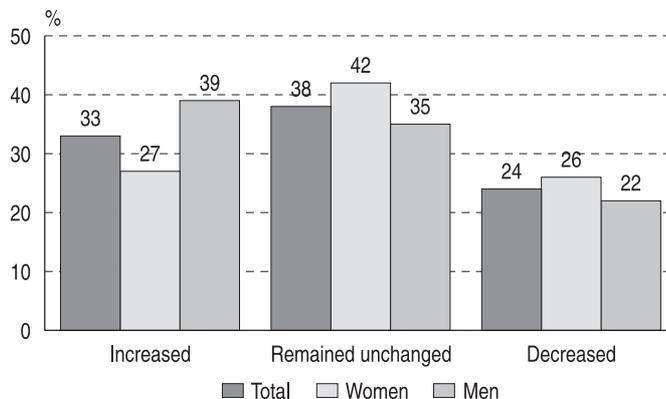
larger proportion of men than women stated that personnel numbers had mostly been increased at their places of work. Knowing that occupations and jobs are strongly segregated according to gender, this finding indicates that men's job opportunities have increased faster than women's. The same phenomenon can also be seen in the development of the unemployment rate: male unemployment has been going down faster than the female one.

The proportion of those respondents at whose workplace personnel had been cut back with the so-called natural wastage method, i.e. not hiring new employees to replace those who had left, was now smaller (65%) than in the previous surveys. In the 1990 survey, the corresponding proportion was 72 per cent. This means that straight redundancies have been exploited more in the past few years. It is likely that the natural wastage capacity has already been depleted at many workplaces.

In the quality of work life surveys, wage and salary earners were also asked to give their assessment of the **financial standing of their own workplace**. In this respect, the statements of the male and female respondents differed only slightly: 18 per cent of the women and 13 per cent of the men felt that the financial standing of their workplace

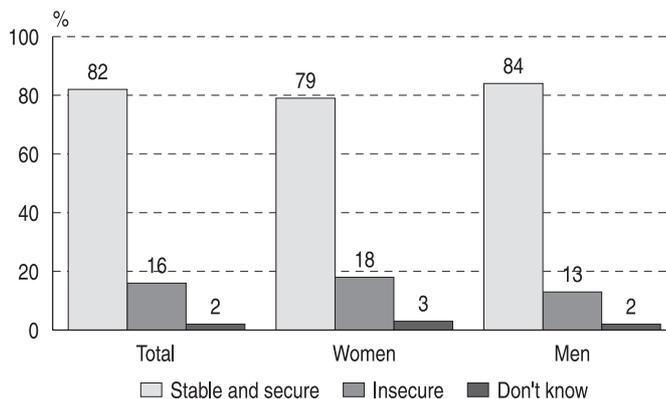
Changes in the number of personnel

Changes in the last three years, Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



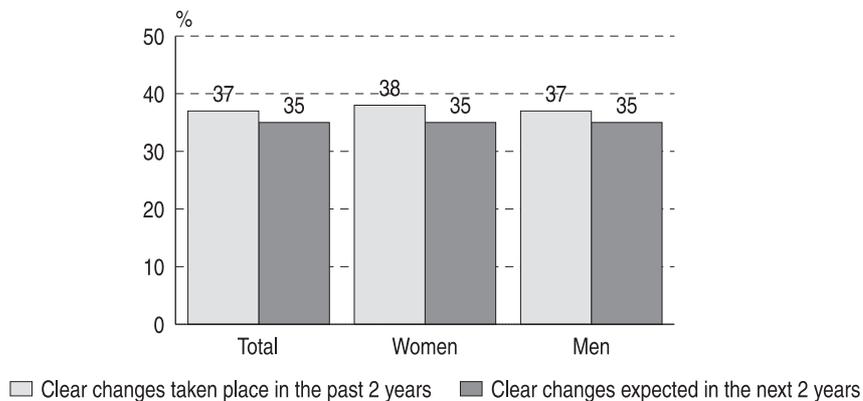
Financial standing of own workplace

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



Clear changes in the organisation or methods of work at workplace

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



was insecure. However, this finding is only indicative, exposing the differences between the respondent groups – in questions of this type, the respondents have a tendency to view their own situation in a positive, rather than negative light.

The fact that changes take place continuously at workplaces also becomes obvious from the adjacent graphics on **clear changes in the organisation or methods of work at workplace**. Over one third of employees had noticed that clear changes had taken place in the work organisation or methods at their workplace in the last two years. One third also expected that such changes would happen within the next two years. Changes at workplaces differentiate hardly at all between women and men, for both sexes share this experience. Differences between occupations and industries are also only slight. Only persons employed in management and administration had noticed and also expected more changes than did the other occupational groups.

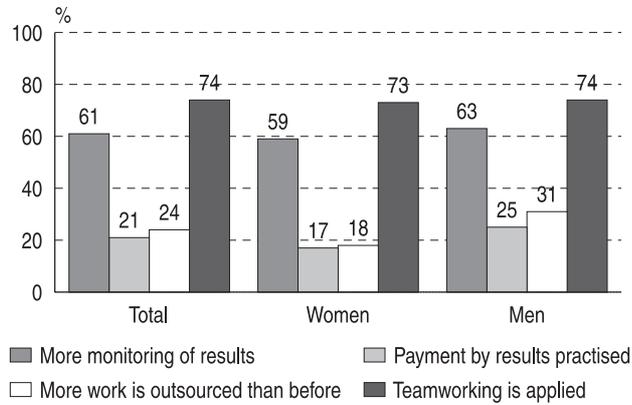
Besides for finding out how the respondents experience their working lives, the quality of work life surveys have also been used for getting as much information as possible about the organisational factors most likely to affect working conditions. These include, above all, different organisational development measures, and management strategies in general. The objective in the last two surveys, especially, has been to study diverse measures associated with management by results and to find out how common they are becoming at Finnish workplaces and how they are linked with working conditions. The problem with an interview inquiry directed at employees is that it is difficult to obtain reliable information about issues of organisational level, such as management practices, forms of work organisation, quality management or management by results, by asking the employees. The quality of life surveys, therefore, focus on certain core questions of as concrete nature as possible.

In the 1990 and 1997 surveys the question groups about changes in the organisation of work varied slightly from each other in their contents. In addition to introducing questions about intensified monitoring of results and payment by results, the 1990 survey also studied the setting up of profit centres (see e.g. Lehto 1992, 14). This part was omitted from the 1997 survey and the questions covered the topics shown in the adjacent graphics. Increasing assessment of work on the basis of its profitability and productivity still commands the leading position as far as **changes in the organisation of work** are concerned. Over 60 per cent of wage and salary earners said that this had happened at their place of work. A less common change had been the introduction of payment by results, which had only happened at the workplace of one in five employees, as well as the outsourcing of work to subcontractors, which about one quarter of all wage earners – but one third of male wage earners – had experienced. In contrast, the adoption of group, or team-like work organisation would seem to have become very widespread at Finnish workplaces according to the findings of the latest survey, for three out of four respondents said that it was applied at their place of work. However, this is a typical example of a question where the respondents' own perceptions and definitions can vary a great deal. Nevertheless, the finding can be considered as indicative. The second European Survey on Working Conditions carried out in 1996 also indicates the same (Paoli 1997). The survey found that job rotation, for example, is more widespread in Finland (65%) than in the EU countries on average (55%). Similarly, receiving co-worker support is also more common in Finland – and in the Nordic Countries in general – than in the EU on average.

Compared to the 1990 survey, **increasing assessment of work by productivity** has grown even more widespread. Intensified monitoring of results has affected both women and men. However, at both points of time it has been more typical at men's

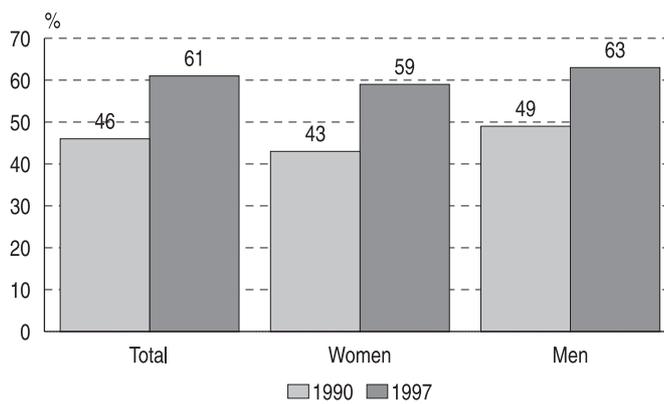
Changes in the organisation of work

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



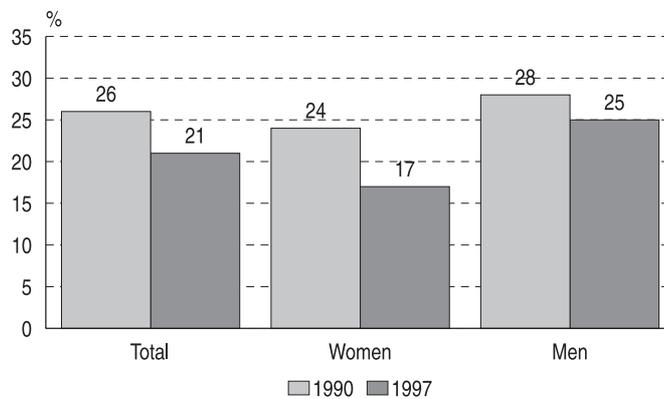
Assessment of work by productivity has increased in recent years

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



Has been rewarded by productivity of work

Proportion of wage and salary earners, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



workplaces than women's. This may be due to the fact that assessing of results is, on average, easier in typical male jobs, i.e. production work in general, than in service-oriented jobs.

In the past few years, there has been a lot of debate about the introduction of different performance-based pay systems. These systems have also been introduced in the service fields and in the public sector, although the assessment of results is more difficult in them than in production work. However, according to the adjacent

graphics, there would appear to have been less **rewarding by productivity of work** in 1997 than in 1990. It may be that due to the recession these kinds of additional incentives had to be pruned off, or that assessing the productivity of work proved a more difficult task than anticipated. The latter assumption would seem to be supported by the fact that the use of results-based pay systems is less common in central (16%) and local (8%) government in the public sector than in the private sector (27%).

Opportunities for development in own work

From the very first survey in 1977, the quality of work life surveys have included questions on how diverse opportunities for advancement, development and training are experienced at workplaces. The lowest score of the three is given to **opportunities for advancement**. At all points of time women, especially, have considered their opportunities to be worse than men's. The latest survey even shows a slight regression as regards women in this respect. Admittedly, the differences in percentual proportions are quite minor and it is additionally also not quite clear what exactly is meant by opportunities for advancement. In many of the studies women, in particular, have questioned this concept. For many it is more important to develop in one's own work than to ascend on the hierarchical ladder. Instead, the trend today is to oppose hierarchical systems and minimise management layers.

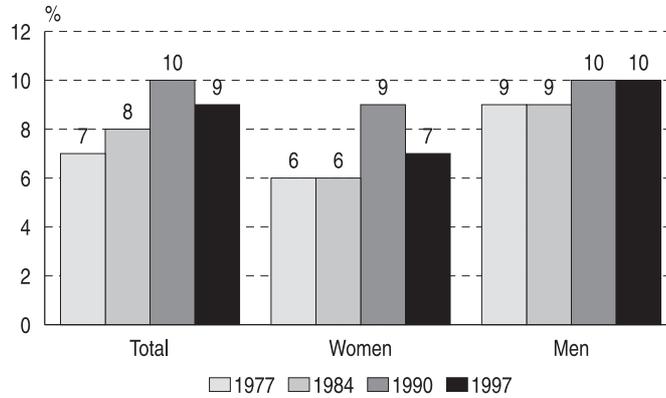
The only occupational group in which opportunities for advancement are clearly considered as good is that of men in business occupations, of whom as many as 25 per cent see their opportunities as good. The number

of wage and salary earners considering their advancement opportunities as good are generally found in the municipal sector. Differences by age group and educational level are, again, minor.

Perceptions about **opportunities for development** are considerably more positive. The topic has been studied in three quality of work life surveys and in this respect the prevailing trend also appears to be towards the better. Women have experienced even more significant increase in their opportunities than men. Most of this increase did not happen until the 1980s, though, and the findings of the latest survey do seem to indicate that men have again taken over in this. An examination by occupation shows that opportunities for development are especially good for men in administrative management work. Of all the men in this group, 68 per cent regarded their opportunities as good. Examined by sector, the central government is the leader in this respect, followed by the municipalities. According to the response, the private sector offers the least opportunities for development. Seeing one's opportunities for

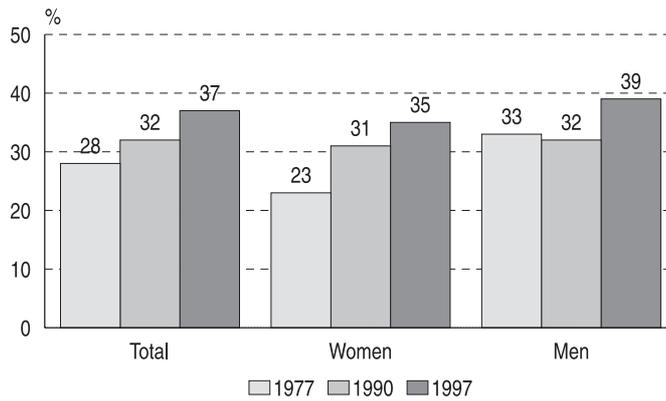
Opportunities for advancement at work

Good opportunities, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



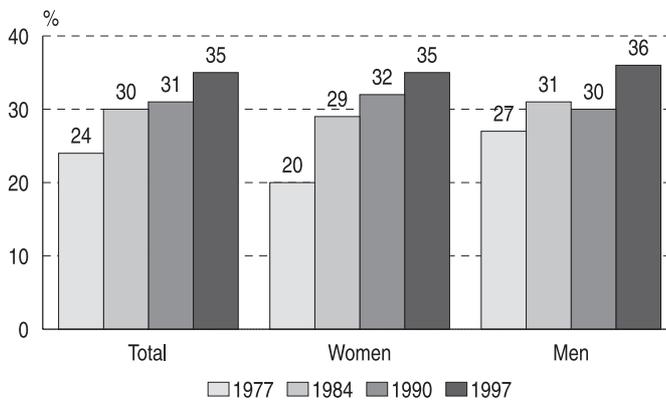
Opportunities for development at work

Good opportunities, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



Opportunities for receiving training to improve professional skills

Good opportunities, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



development as good is clearly linked with high educational level, but not with age.

One way of developing in one's own work is participation in in-house training. **Opportunities for receiving training to improve professional skills** have been improving distinctly throughout the examination period. In the latest survey, more than a third of respondents regarded their opportunities as good, whereas in 1977 the corresponding proportion was one quarter. This matter, too, has improved more as regards women. The same thing applies to opinions about training opportunities as does to those about development opportunities: the more previous training a person has, the better he or she regards his or her opportunities for further training to be. The central government is again the leader in this, especially male employees in central government. Administrative management work also seems to offer good opportunities for further training.

The good in-house training opportunities offered in Finland were also highlighted in the European Survey of Working Conditions (Paoli 1997). Where participation in in-house training is concerned, Finland is the leading country. In the European survey, 53 per cent of the surveyed Finns said that they had participated in in-house training in the last 12 months, while the corresponding average for the entire EU area was only 29 per cent.

According to the quality of work life surveys, **participation in training paid for by employer** has increased clearly in the Finnish working community over the past two decades. At the same time, the difference in the entire wage and salary earning population between women and men has also reversed. Early on, participation in in-house training was more typical of men but is today more typical of women. The differences are, however, quite small.

Participation in in-house training is very clearly tied to position. At the earlier points

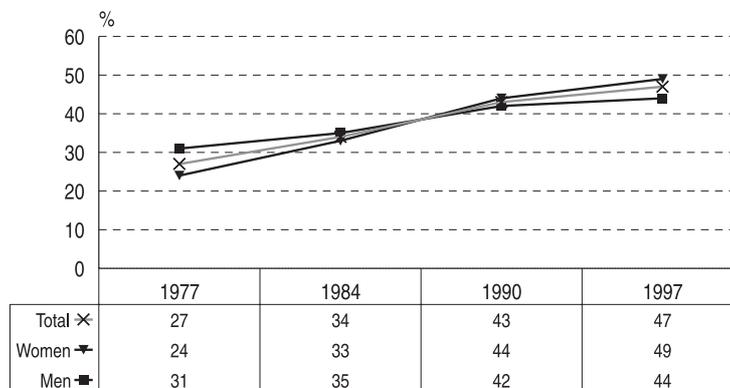
of time, women of all socio-economic groups had actually had fewer opportunities for participating in training than men. However, because by 1990 the female labour force consisted mainly of salaried employees, the proportion of women receiving in-house training in that year's survey was larger than that of men. In the latest survey, the proportions of women participating in training are larger than those of men even in the lower and upper salaried employee groups. Opportunities for participation in in-house training are so closely tied to position that while 70 per cent of upper salaried employees had participated in it, in the blue-collar employee group the proportion was only 28 per cent.

Here, too, the public sector excels, for of all those working for the government 63 per cent had received in-house training in the last 12 months, while in the private sector the corresponding proportion was only 43 per cent. An examination by age group shows that the least is invested in the very young: in respect of 15 to 24-years-old employees the proportion was only 22 per cent. There is most probably a link between this and temporary employment relationships, and occupations, or position at the workplace in general.

The development of the number of **training days** gives a slightly different picture of women's and men's position than does that of general participation in training. In this respect, men have retained their leading position, although there has been a tendency towards a reduction in the average number training days even among them. In other words, training is provided to more people but it is of a shorter duration. The averages shown in the adjacent graphics only include those who had participated in training at least once in a period of twelve months. In the 1997 survey, questions were asked about pre-classified training days, so it is not possible to work out averages for them in the same way.

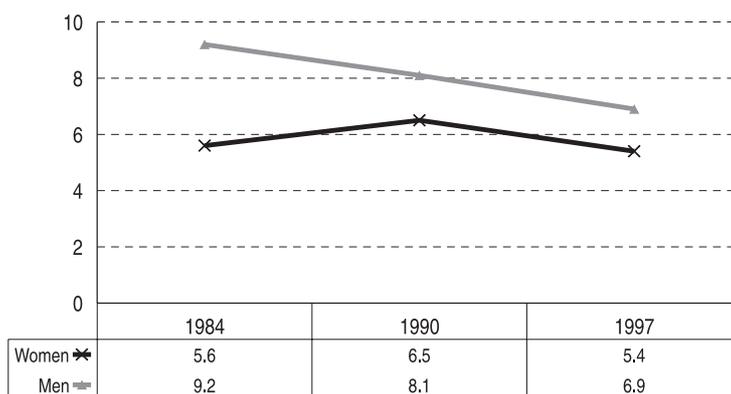
Participation in training paid for by employer

Participated in the last 12 months, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



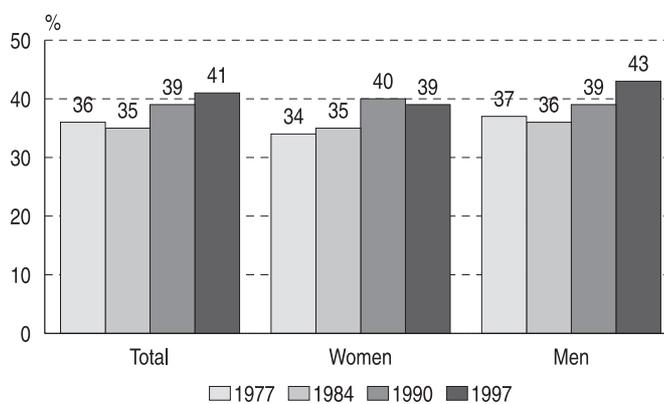
Number of training days

Training paid by the employer in the last 12 months



Being informed about changes relating to work

At the planning stage, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



Also adjacent are graphics showing how respondents are **informed about changes relating to work**. This is essentially linked with influencing and development opportunities. The full distribution of replies to this question was: "At the planning stage" (41%), "Shortly before the change" (35%), "At the implementation stage" (22%) and "Don't know" (3%). In other words, approximately every fifth employee faces changes without receiving any prior information about them.

However, the use of this question is hampered by its ambiguity and generalisation. Nevertheless, examined in the long term, the responses to it will certainly be at

least indicative. There has been surprisingly little change since 1977, and information flow has only improved marginally. Differences between the sexes are also very insignificant. With regard to this question, the deciding factor is again the respondent's position at the workplace. While 56 per cent of upper salaried employees are informed already at the planning stage, the corresponding proportion in the blue-collar employee group is only 32 per cent. Examined like this, the differences between the sexes also increase slightly; the proportion among male lower salaried employees is 48 per cent, as opposed to 38 per cent among their female counterparts.

Opportunities for influencing own work

Being independent in one's own work is very highly valued by Finnish employees. For this reason, the quality of work life survey question about autonomy in one's work has been made as detailed as possible. Asking about independence and opportunities for influencing one's own work in very general terms is not purposeful, because the answers will then reflect a very positive assessment of the situation, in the same way as they do in questions relating to general job contentment. Since 1984, the quality of work life surveys have included a question about opportunities for influencing one's own work, in which the respondents are asked to assess the extent to which they can influence a number of aspects of their work.

The adjacent graphics show the changes that have taken place in respect of the total wage and salary earning population in the opportunities for influencing these particular aspects in work. The trend has been rising in respect of all other aspects except the pace of work. The trend in respect of this

particular aspect has been going down since 1990. The ability to influence the order in which tasks are done has remained at approximately the same level as it was in the 1984 survey.

The graphics do not show differences between sexes in influencing opportunities. However, the answers of male and female respondents have been gathered into the table below.

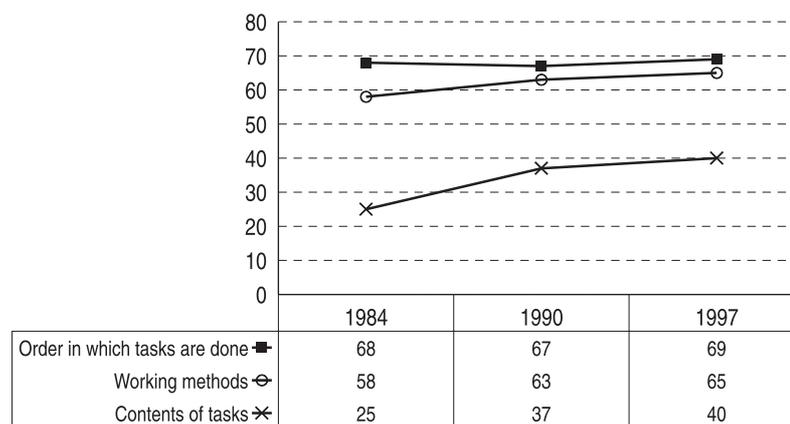
Examined in this way, there are systematic differences in men's and women's work. Women have less opportunities for influencing almost all the listed aspects of work. The order in which tasks are done is the only aspect on which women have slightly more say than men. In respect of all wage and salary earners, the clearest increase has happened in the opportunities for influencing the contents of one's work. Men's opportunities have advanced even faster than women's. Influencing the pace of work seem to have become more difficult for women today and here the gap to men has widened somewhat.

Can influence a lot or quite a lot:

	Women			Men		
	-84	-90	-97	-84	-90	-97
Contents of tasks	23	37	38	28	38	43
Order in which tasks are done	63	67	70	62	66	69
Pace of work	56	61	54	62	67	61
Working methods	54	60	63	62	65	68
Division of tasks between employees	22	27	29	27	30	33
Choice of working partners	9	16	16	16	19	21
Equipment purchases	16	18	20	23	24	26

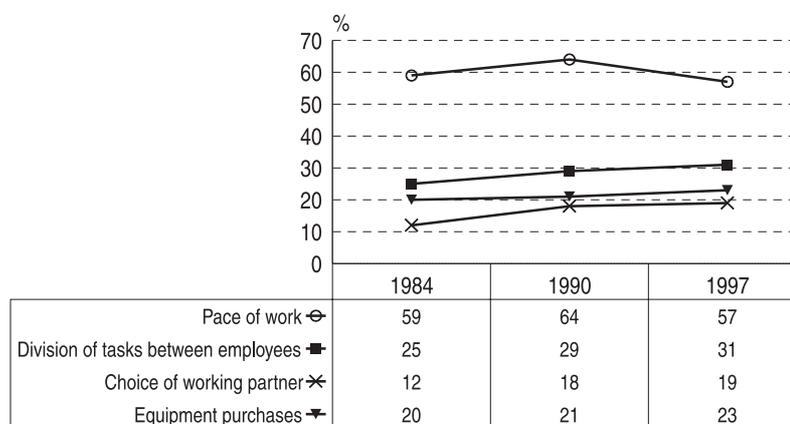
Opportunities for influencing own work 1/2

Can influence a lot or quite a lot, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Opportunities for influencing own work 2/2

Can influence a lot or quite a lot, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Social relationships at workplaces

The adjacent graphics describing the social relationships at workplaces point to certain internal disharmony. On the one hand, different conflicts have increased at workplaces but, on the other hand, various forms of support and recognition would seem to have grown more widespread. This may be explained by the fact that the changes that have taken place at workplaces are highly complex. At the same time as tasks are being developed and the modes of working improved – as in teamworking, for example – work is also being intensified, causing various pressures to mount up. The amount of work increases and, at worst, employees feel threatened by redundancy. All these factors increase competition and conflicts experienced by employees. Yet, the team-like working mode, for example, increases mutual support, trust and appreciation among employees.

Such factors as good organisation of work, identification of one's own interests with those of one's employer and people's mutual trust have become fractionally more important as factors influencing the **atmosphere at workplace**. As regards negative influences, slight increases can be detected in the occurrence of such things as gossiping and envy, and the feeling that the number of employees is insufficient compared to the workload. Assessing the proportions of positive answers as such, it still seems quite surprising that only about 60 per cent of the respondents claim communication to be open at their workplaces and only 42 per cent say that wages and salaries are public knowledge at their workplaces. The biggest difference between the sexes is that women, in particular, feel there are too few employees in relation to the workload at their workplaces.

Support from the employer and especially from co-workers has increased. Nevertheless, when in the 1990 survey the amount of support received was compared with corresponding results in Sweden, it was clearly proven to be much smaller in Finland (Lehto 1992, 73). This is a feature obviously characteristic of the Swedish working culture, for the European working conditions survey put Sweden at the top in the closely related topic of discussions held at work with superiors, on the one hand, and co-workers, on the other (Paoli 1997).

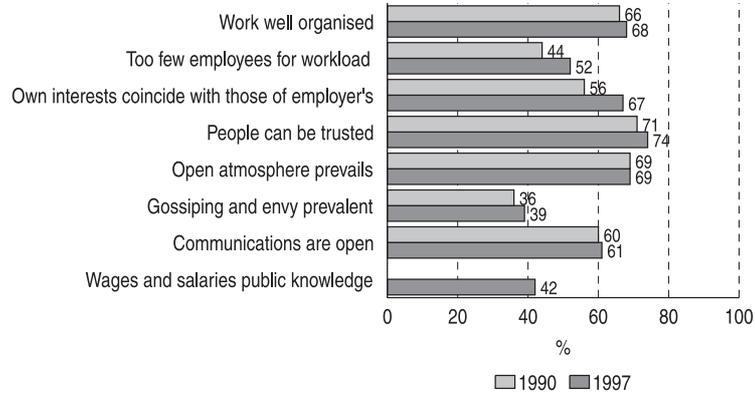
Women are slightly more satisfied than men in respect of these factors connected with social relationships at work. The division has remained unchanged compared with the previous survey. Women receive more support, especially from co-workers, but also from their superiors.

Competitiveness and conflicts have been increasing steadily at workplaces since the 1980s. Men's responses highlighted competitiveness and conflicts between superiors and subordinates. Women's responses put emphasis on conflicts between employees and, to certain amount also those between employee groups. The clearest increase compared to the previous survey was apparent in conflicts between superiors and subordinates in respect of men.

Various uncertainties connected with work, competition, and work-related stress are clearly associated with the occurrence of conflicts at workplaces. The same factors are quite obviously also associated with the phenomenon known as workplace bullying. This has emerged from more detailed analyses done in other contexts. Issue 3/1998 of Statistics Finland's publication *Hyvinvointikatsaus* (Welfare Review) contains a separate article on workplace bullying, or intimidation, that occurs at workplaces (Sutela-Lehto, 1998).

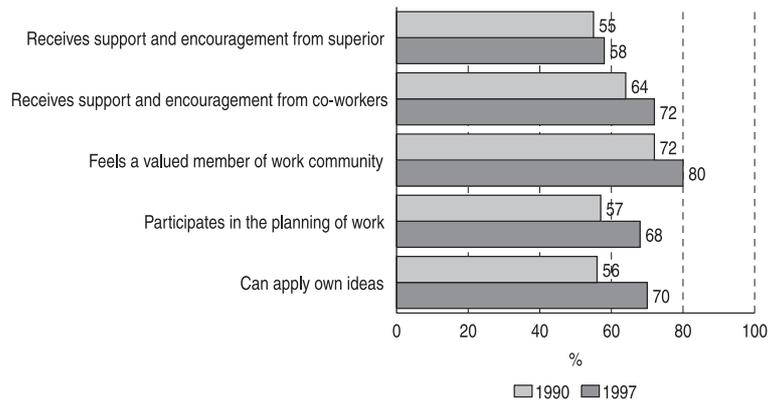
Atmosphere at workplace

Proportion of those in agreement,
Quality of Work Life surveys 1990 and 1997



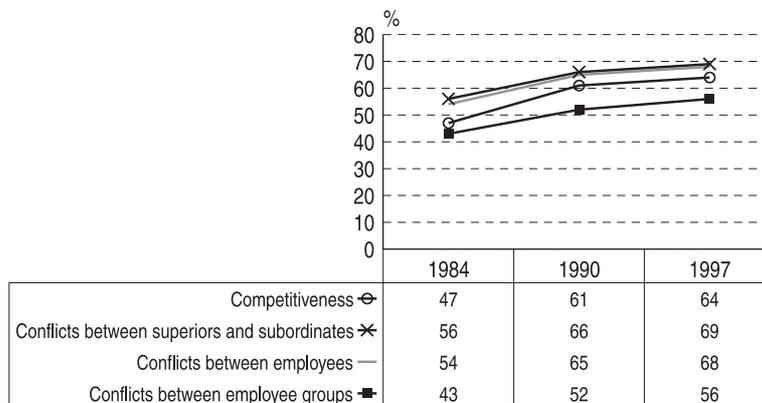
Encouragement from work community

Always or in most cases, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



Conflicts at work unit

Quality of Work Life Surveys, 1984, 1990 and 1997



The adjacent graphics show how common **intimidation** is at Finnish workplaces and how being subjected to it, or observing it are linked with gender. In all, 16 per cent of Finnish wage and salary earners are currently, or have previously been, subjected to workplace bullying. Yet, the proportion of those wage and salary earners who have observed this phenomenon is as high as nearly 40 per cent. Both personal experiences and observations of it as a by-stander are more typical with women than men. Besides being related to competitiveness, insecurity and increasing work-related pressure, workplace bullying is also quite clearly linked with certain occupations and industries. The likelihood of intimidation is greater if the employer is the public sector in general, particularly the state. Examined by occupation, the phenomenon is most widespread in education, health care and the manufacturing industry.

According to the quality of work life surveys, becoming **subjected to physical violence** at work has also been on the increase. Here, too, the change is slightly bigger in respect of women than men. However, it appears that the fear of physical violence, rather than actually becoming subjected to it, has increased most. This topic will be covered in more detail later on in this report. The growth of both physical violence and the fear of it is linked with the increase in the type of work that involves customer contact; the violence originates mostly from customers. As many as 55 per cent of all wage and salary earners were doing **customer contact work** for at least half of their working time. With women, the percentage had gone up to as high as 64 per cent.

It is also descriptive of the changes in the nature of work and social relationships that the proportion of **persons in supervisory positions** has been growing continuously. This is, in fact, quite surprising, considering all the recent talk about lighter or-

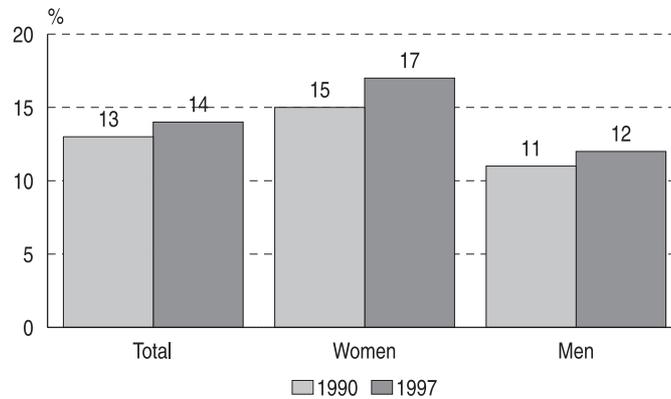
ganisational structures. Already as many as one in three employees say that their work entails supervisory tasks. Women's proportion has clearly increased in respect of this matter. Today, every third wage and salary earner has a female superior, while in 1984 this was the case for one employee in four. This feature is particularly characteristic of working life in the Nordic Countries (Paoli 1997).

Against this, the **segregation by gender** of jobs does seem to go on. Although the numbers of clearly female or male dominated jobs have reduced slightly from 1984, in the 1997 survey the proportion of male dominated jobs would seem to have remained quite unchanged from the previous survey. In other words, 43 per cent of men work at workplaces with other men only doing similar tasks.

Social relationships are most strongly reflected in the data about **discrimination and unequal treatment**. Of the factors listed in the questionnaire, the most observed one was discrimination based on favouritism, followed by discrimination based on the type of employment relationship (fixed or part-time). Diverging from earlier survey practices, discrimination on the basis of age and gender were both divided into two categories. Every tenth respondent had observed discrimination based on age – especially old age – while discrimination of women on the basis of their gender had been observed by almost as many, i.e. one in nine respondents. Thus, this survey produced a larger proportion of those who had observed sexual discrimination than did the Working Conditions Barometer of the Ministry of Labour for the same time period (Ylöstalo-Rahikainen, 1998, 145). Women had observed more of all forms of discrimination than men. A larger proportion of women had also experienced **personal discrimination**. The biggest differences compared to men were in discrimination in the access to in-house training, obtaining of information and the attitudes of co-workers and supervisors in general.

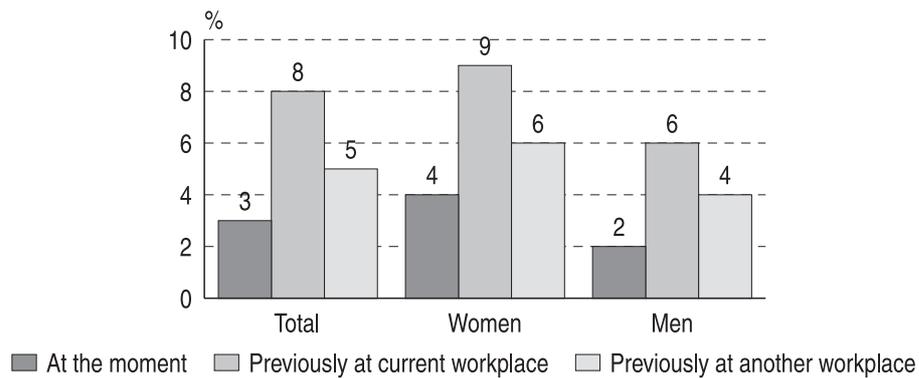
Been subjected to, or threatened by, physical violence when at work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



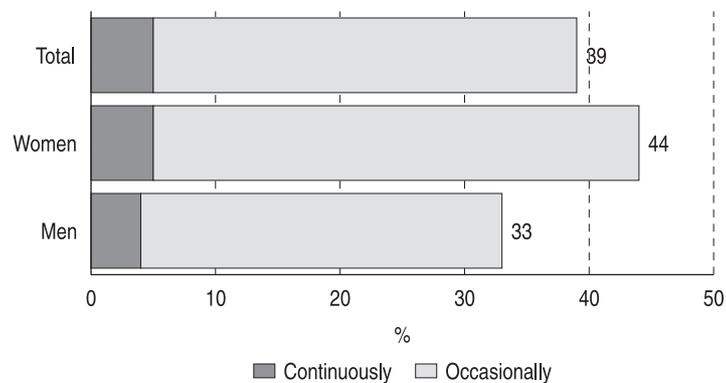
Personally subjected to intimidation at work

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



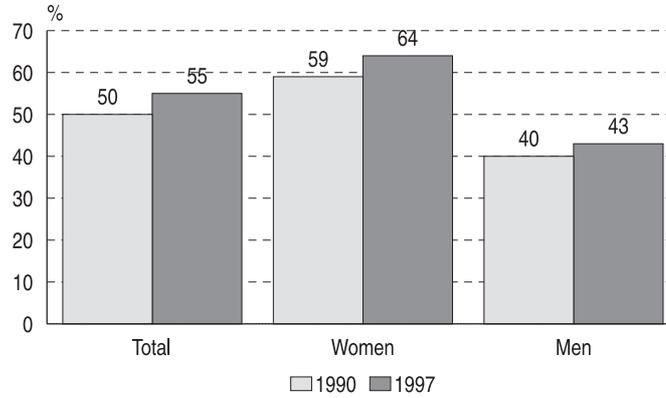
Intimidation at workplace

Quality of work life survey 1997



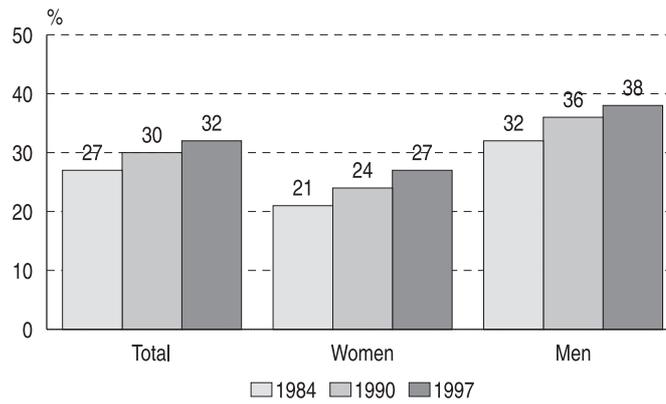
At least half of working time spent on customer contact work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



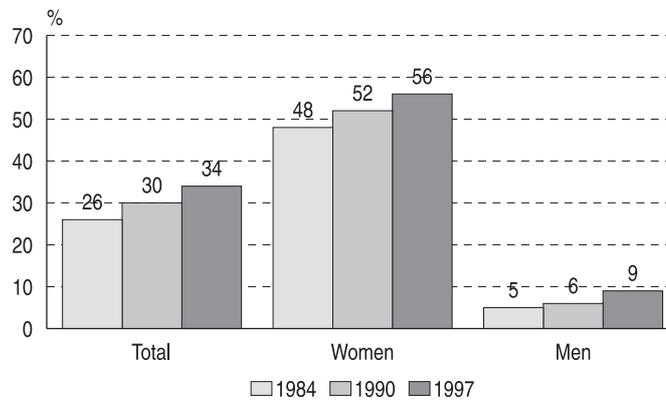
Work includes supervisory tasks

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



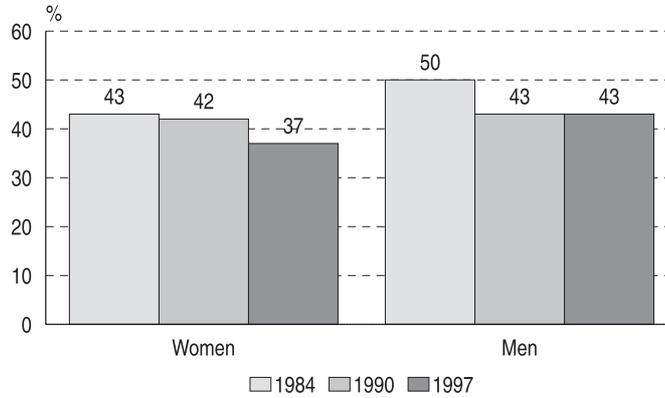
Superior is female

Quality of Work Life surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



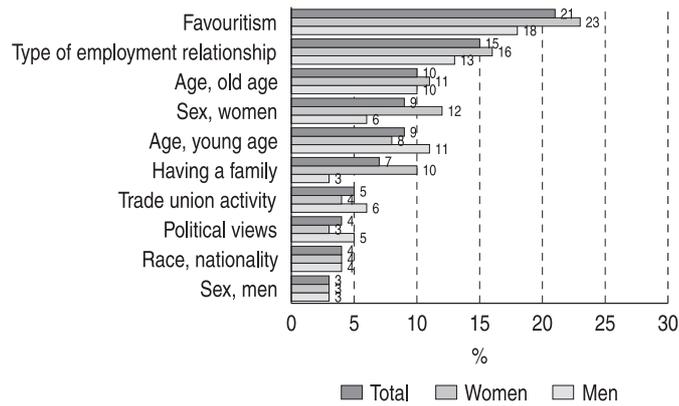
Gender of co-workers doing similar tasks

All same gender as respondent, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



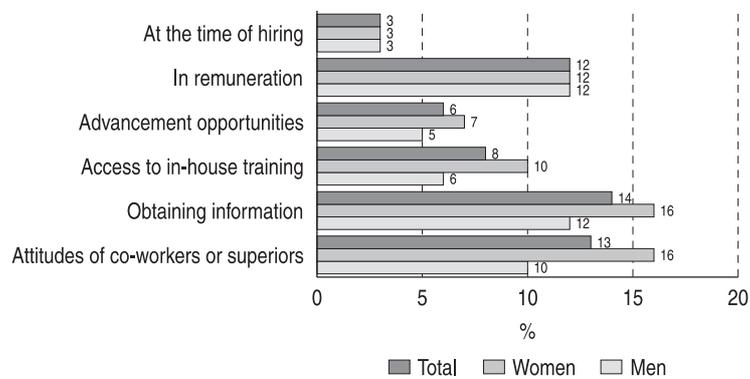
Discrimination at workplace

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997. Discrimination based on:



Experienced discrimination at current workplace

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997. In following situations:



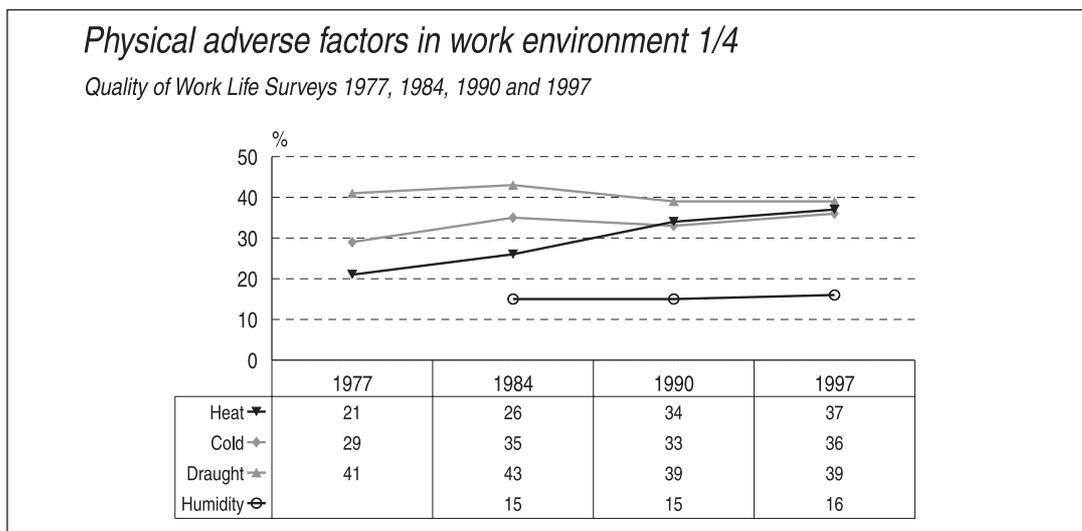
Physical adverse factors in work environment

An astonishing feature throughout the two decades covered by the quality of work life surveys has been that the experiencing of a diversity of physical adverse factors has been continually increasing. Yet, much has been achieved in the field of occupational safety in the same time period, and it would be logical to assume that this would be reflected in the survey findings. In questions like these comparison is hampered by the fact that, at the same time, our consciousness of the adverse effects of the environment has increased which, in turn, influences our personal assessments and experiences. In other words, these surveys do not actually explain how the occurrence of physical adverse factors has changed, but study how the respondents experience their own working environment. An experience which, from the point of the quality of working life, has developed towards a negative direction most obviously also gives cause for concern.

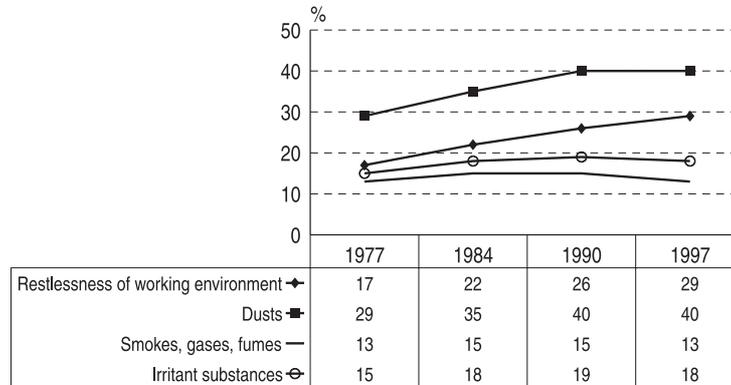
The conclusion that can be drawn from the development trends illustrated by the adjacent graphics is that, measured by ex-

periences, only very few physical adverse factors have diminished or even remained dormant. Among these few are draughts, humidity, dirtiness of work environment, vibration, and smokes, gases and fumes. The physical adverse factors which have increased include heat, dusts, restlessness of work environment, repetitive, monotonous movements and difficult working positions.

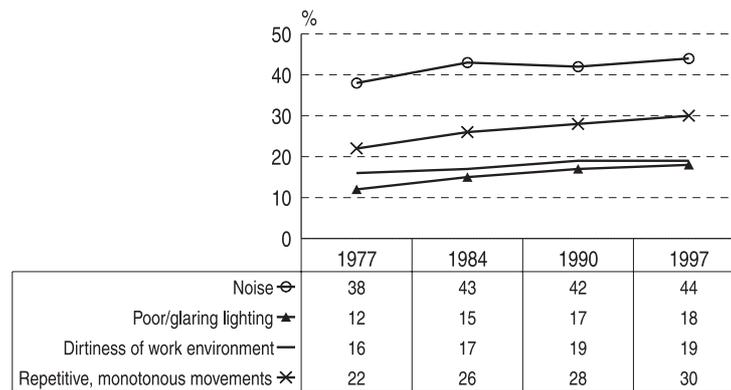
Physical adverse factors have typically always been connected with men's work, because men's occupational structure has centred more on manufacturing and production work, in which these problems are more prevalent. In last autumn's survey, factors like heat, cold, vibration, draught, noise, smoke, gases and fumes, humidity, dusts, dirtiness of working environment and irritant and corrosive substances were mostly apparent in men's jobs. Dry indoor air, restlessness of working environment and repetitive, monotonous movements are more typical in women's jobs. Even heavy lifting has grown into a more common problem in women's working environment.



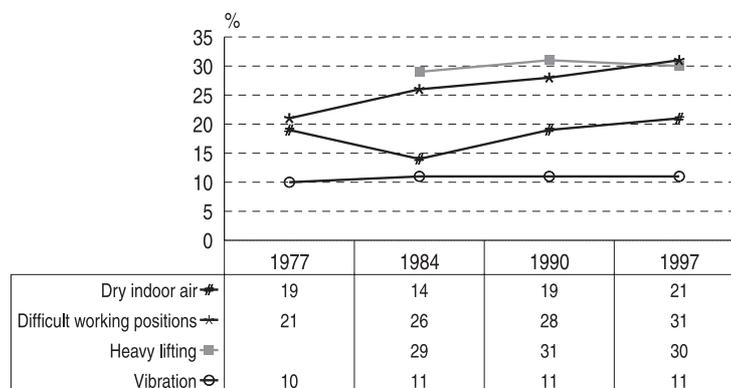
Physical adverse factors in work environment 2/4



Physical adverse factors in work environment 3/4

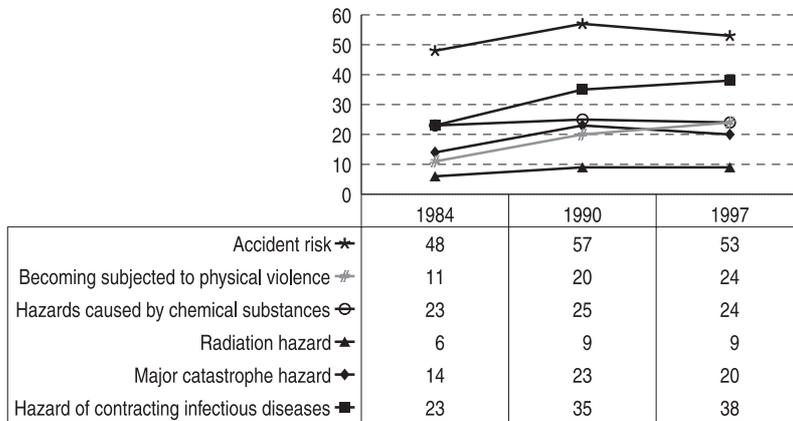


Physical adverse factors in working environment 4/4



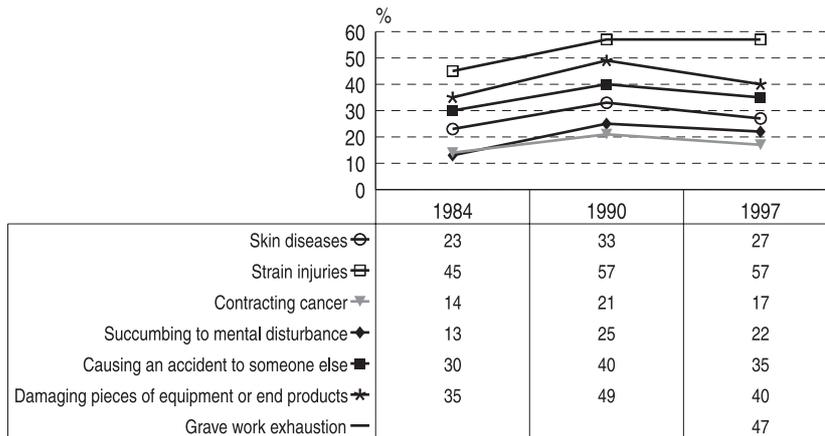
Experiencing of hazards in one's work, 1/2

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Experiencing of hazards in one's work, 2/2

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



The adjacent graphics show wage and salary earners' attitudes to various illness or accident hazards on the one hand, and to various risks relating to the labour market position, on the other. The graphics describing the **experiencing of hazards** show the percentual proportions of those who have either "experienced as a clear hazard" or "thought of occasionally" the given problems connected with work.

The biggest increase since 1984 has taken place in the experiences of the hazards of

contracting infectious diseases, becoming subjected to physical violence, and getting strain injuries. For example, every fourth employee today fears becoming subjected to physical violence, while the corresponding proportion in 1984 was only eleven per cent. The clearest reductions can be seen in the fear of damaging a valuable piece of equipment or end product. However, this reduction only relates to the years after 1990. This may be connected with the fact that the use of information technology has become well-established in the working

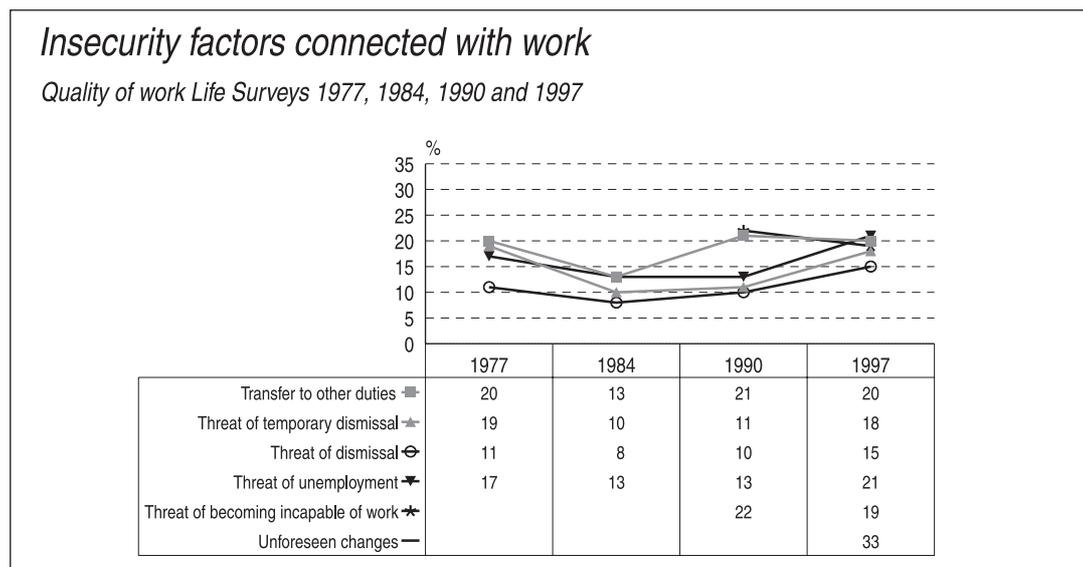
life and no longer evokes as big fears as when it was first introduced. Fears connected with accidents or major catastrophes at work have abated slightly less compared to the previous survey. Nevertheless, accidents at work and strain injuries are factors that are feared most: over one half of all wage and salary earners fear them.

There are considerable differences between sexes in the experiencing of the various hazards. For example, 64 per cent of men felt that accidents at work were a hazard while 44 per cent of women thought so. Becoming subjected to physical violence was feared more by women (31%) than men (16%). The latest survey included as a new kind of hazard the fear of "grave work exhaustion". Surprisingly many (47%) feared it. Every second (50%) female respondent felt threatened by it and as many as 43 per cent of the male respondents said that they thought about this hazard at least every now and then.

There has been a distinct increase in the 1990s in such **insecurity factors connected with work** which influence the **labour market position**. The long-term change is apparent in the fact that the fears of dismissal, temporary dismissal and unemployment have returned to the levels at which they were in the

1970s. However, it should be noted that none of the survey times have coincided with periods of peak unemployment when the proportions of respondents expressing these fears would have certainly been even greater. Of all the surveyed insecurity factors, only the threat of becoming incapable of work has gone slightly down in the 1990s. Almost as many respondents as in the previous survey envisage a transfer to other duties. One in five wage and salary earners reckon this might happen to them. The threat of unforeseen changes in general, which was now studied for the first time, was very common and experienced by one respondent in three.

As a rule, there were very little differences between sexes in respect of those insecurity factors connected with work which might influence the labour market position. However, when examined by age group, differences did emerge. Young, under 35-years-old respondents feared more the threats of dismissal and unemployment. The oldest age group of the over 55-year-olds feared most becoming incapacitated, while transfer to other duties, temporary dismissal and unforeseen changes in general were feared most by the middle-aged respondents.



Working hours

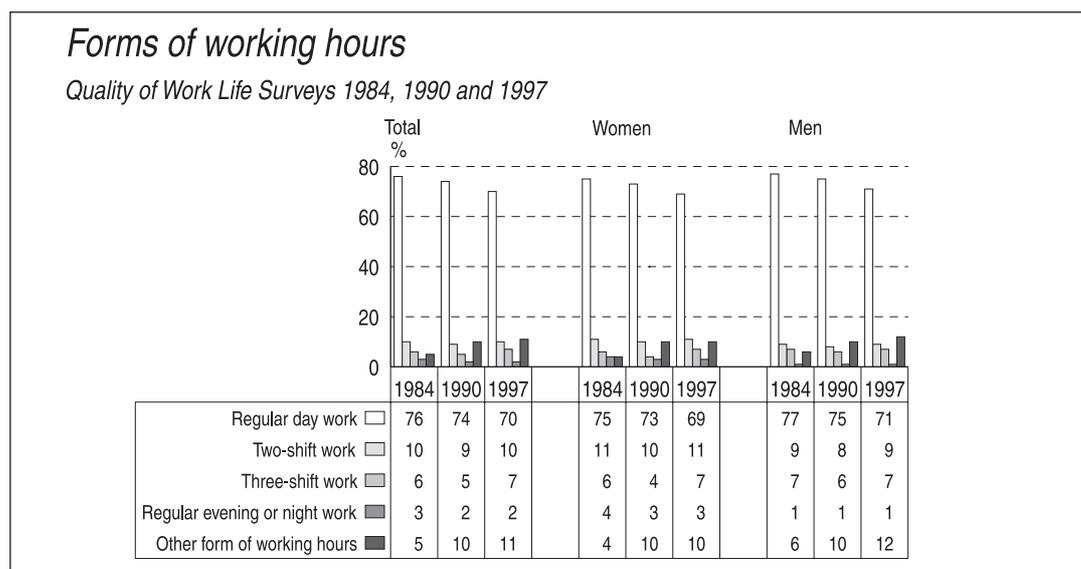
Employees' **forms of working hours** have remained quite unchanged. Although still by far the most common form of working hours, regular day work has perhaps diminished slightly, while "other forms of working hours" have increased. Since 1990, the "other forms of working hours" group has included so called week-end work, among others. However, its proportion continues to be marginal, at under one per cent of all employees, and a comparison with the previous survey reveals no major changes. Different atypical forms of working hours, such as shift work and regular evening or nightwork are slightly more common with women than men. However, no change has taken place in the respective proportions.

Throughout the 20-year period covered by the surveys, they have contained a question about the **possibility for brief absences from work in the middle of the working day to run personal errands, such as banking, dealing with authorities, etc.** In this respect, wage and salary earners seem to have become more, rather than less, tied to their workplaces. Accord-

ing to the quality of work life surveys, men have always been better off in this respect. Well over half (64%) of them say they can go out to attend personal errands whenever required.

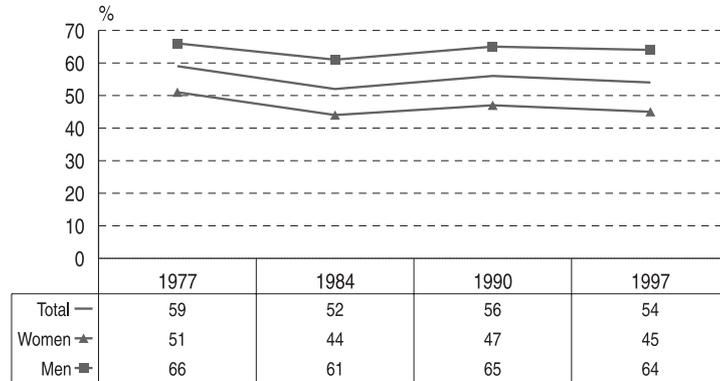
Although there has been next to no change in the possibility for brief absences from workplace, there is considerably more **flexibility in the starting and finishing times of work** than in 1984, when this subject was first included in the survey. Over one half (54%) of the respondents already say they can influence the starting and finishing times of their work by at least 30 minutes. Again, men have more freedom in this matter than women and women's opportunities for more flexibility have increased more slowly than men's.

In contrast, the question about the **possibility to take breaks as required** shows that wage and salary earners have grown more tied to their work. In this respect, too, women's possibilities are poorer than men's. The fact that the possibilities for breaks have lessened is closely linked with increased time pressure, described in more detail by later graphics in this publication.



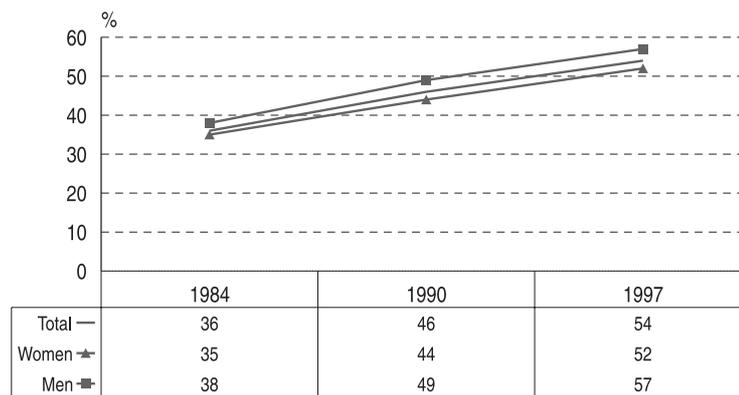
Possibility for brief absences from work in the middle of the working day to run personal errands

Whenever required, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



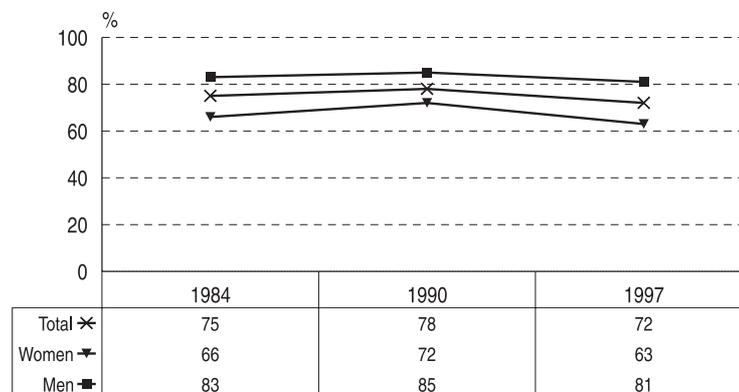
Can influence starting and finishing times of own work

Can influence by at least 30 minutes, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Possibility to take sufficient breaks from work

Quality of Work Life surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



There has been a strong increase in **overtime**. Since 1984, the quality of work life surveys have examined overtime working from two angles: on the one hand, overtime for which compensation is paid in money or time off and, on the other hand, overtime worked without any form of separate compensation. The latter could be called unpaid overtime, but it has also been called "voluntary overtime". In this context, however, the voluntarism is highly questionable.

The proportion of persons working **paid overtime** has increased less than that of those working unpaid overtime. It is more usual for men than women to work paid overtime, but the differences are quite insignificant. Whether overtime working is compensated in money or time off has changed in respect of both men and women. The relative proportion of overtime working compensated in money has decreased while that of overtime compensated in time off has increased. It is more typical for women's overtime to be compensated in time off: 30 per cent of female employees worked overtime compensated in time off, while the corresponding proportion for men was 16 per cent. In contrast, 34 per cent of male employees had their overtime work compensated in money, as against 18 per cent of their female counterparts.

There has been a strong increase in **unpaid overtime** in respect of women and men alike. In the latest survey, approximately one third of all employees said they did such overtime, while in 1984 the ratio was only one in five. The increase in this kind of "pseudo-voluntary" overtime is a clear indicator of increased commitment to work and, at the same time, the growing intensity of work. Although these findings do not relate to the quantity or frequency of overtime, the mere size of the proportion of employees involved in overtime working is descriptive of the direction in which working life is headed.

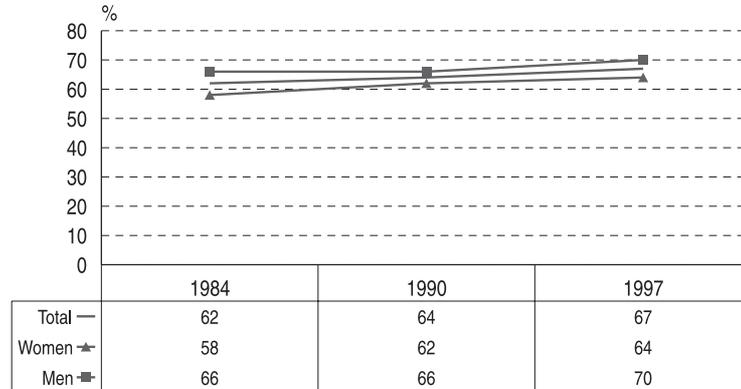
The fact that the numbers of men and women who participate in overtime working are almost equal can be regarded as quite an astonishing phenomenon which is characteristic of Finland. Although, in quantitative terms, Finnish men do more of each type of overtime, the proportions of Finnish women doing them can also be held as quite high, considering the larger share of home and family responsibilities women must also assume.

Changes in the proportions of unpaid overtime follow an exactly identical trend, illustrated by the adjacent graphics on the **adverse effects of time pressure**. Throughout the quality of work life surveys, adverse effects of time pressure have been inquired about with an identical question. The respondents are asked about a variety of problems, including time pressure and tight schedules, their occurrence and degree of adverse influence at their place of work. Examined like this, time pressure emerges as the adverse factor to have increased most in work environments.

This particular topic is covered by separate articles published in the Statistics Finland's periodical *Hyvinvointikatsaus* (Welfare Review), 2/1998 (Lehto 1998). The articles deal with changes in the experiences of time-related pressure at work and how work pressure has become especially a women's problem in Finland and how its increase is associated with various efforts aimed towards greater efficiency. The models of work organisation generated by better productivity thinking have, thus, produced both positive and negative developments. Insufficient human resources have been seen as a special problem at female-dominated workplaces. Increasing work pressure has created conflicts and even mental violence has become widespread at workplaces struggling with time pressure. There is also a distinct connection between work pressure and the occurrence of diverse symptoms of fatigue, headaches, neck and shoulder pains or insomnia.

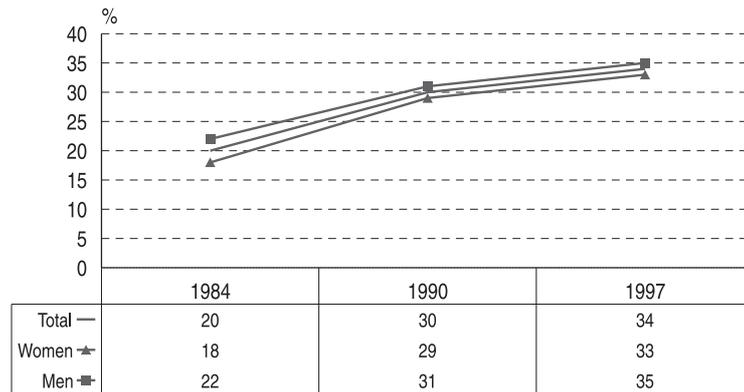
Paid overtime working

Compensated in money or time off, Quality of Work Life Surveys, 1984, 1990 and 1997



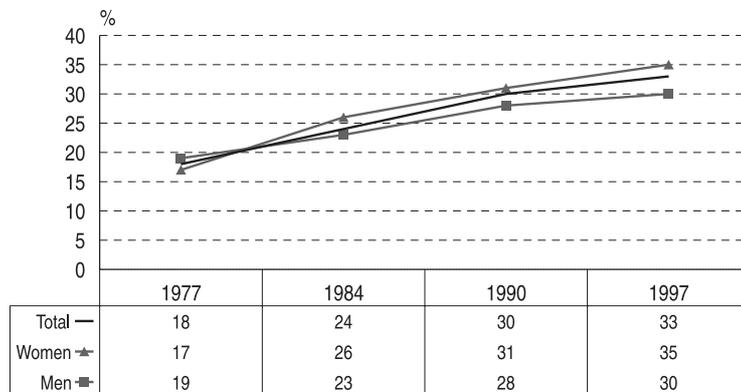
Unpaid overtime working

Works overtime for which no compensation is made, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984, 1990 and 1997



Adverse effects of time pressure

Extreme or moderate adverse effects, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



General aspects of work

The **monotony** of work has been given much consideration for as long as efforts have been made to develop work. The developing has been a response to the Tayloristic work organisation, in which the monotony of work reached its peak due to extreme task specialisation.

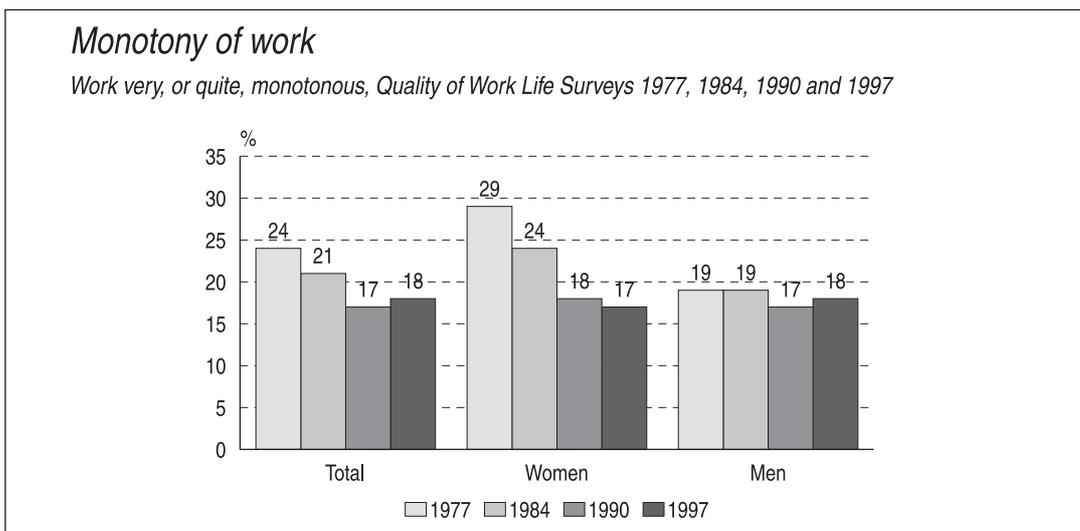
As late as a couple of decades ago it was quite common in Finland for women's work to be very monotonous. Almost one third of Finnish women regarded their work as monotonous, while under one fifth of Finnish men thought this of their work. However, the situation has changed quite rapidly and there is no difference between the sexes in this respect today. An explanation to the change is the increased prevalence of service-oriented jobs and the almost total disappearance of, for example, women's industrial work – especially highly Tayloristically organised jobs.

Of all the aspects of work described here, how **physically demanding work** is has changed the least. This finding is surprising in the sense that it would be logical to assume that mechanisation would have

alleviated this feature in particular. Here, too, the explanation may lie in the development of the employment structure towards service occupations, of which at least care work continues to be physically highly demanding.

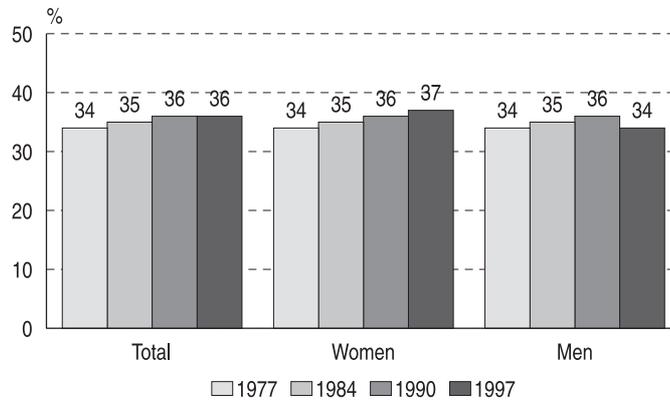
Increasing **mental demands** and growing **pace of work** go almost hand-in-hand. Besides time pressure, other factors, too, dictate how mentally demanding a job is. Conflicts arising from a variety of factors at a workplace, for example, lie behind growing mental demands. Over the survey period, women's work has grown more strenuous than men's in this respect.

Increased pace of work is a change of the working life which has been experienced strongly in the 1990. There is not much difference in this respect between the sexes. However, when the subject was studied more closely in the latest quality of work life survey, there were differences in what women and men regarded as reasons for the increased pace (see Lehto 1998, 53). Women highlighted more the lack of human resources, while men put the emphasis on



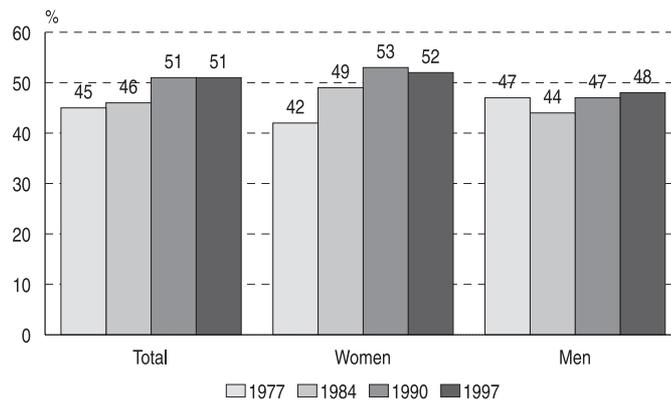
Work physically demanding

Work very, or quite, physically demanding, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



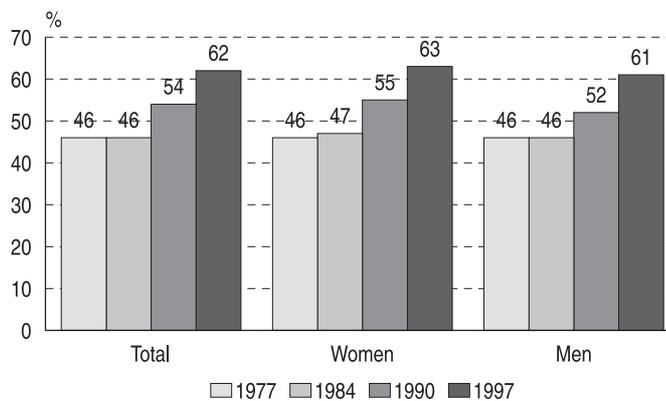
Work mentally demanding

Work very, or quite, mentally demanding, Quality of Work Life surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



Increased pace of work

Pace of work increased in past few years, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



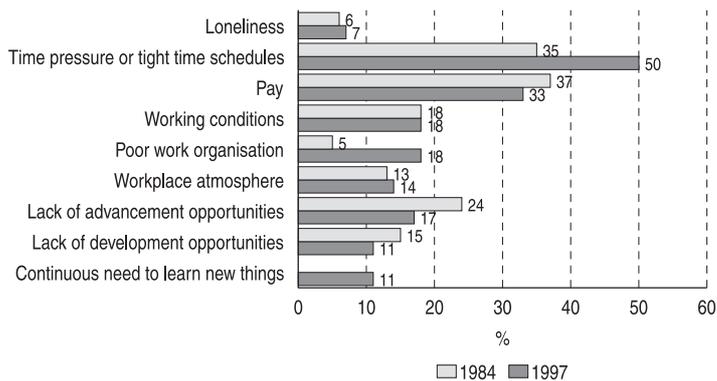
Factors making current job less enjoyable 1/2

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984 and 1997



Factors making current job less enjoyable 2/2

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984 and 1997



more demanding targets and increased competition. Both saw the general factors of increased and expanded tasks as the underlying reasons for the increased pace of work.

Factors making current job less enjoyable have been enquired about at two survey rounds, in 1984 and 1997. "Time pressure and tight time schedules" emerged as the absolute leader in the latest survey, which again goes to prove that increased pressure at work is the biggest problem at workplaces today.

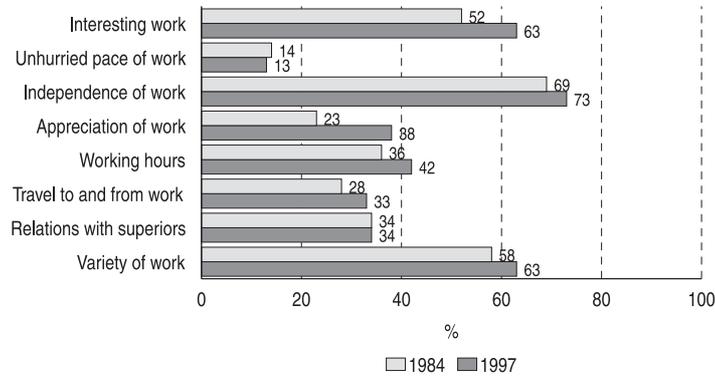
In the previous, 1984 survey, poor pay

was the most mentioned factor making work less enjoyable. In the latest survey, its proportion had grown slightly smaller. Lack of advancement opportunities, too, no longer seems to trouble as many as it did before. In contrast, uncertainty about the continuity of the employment relationship, enforced pace of work and poor work organisation now seem cause more trouble than they did previously.

The order of the **factors making current job more enjoyable** has not changed: independence of work continues to be the most frequently mentioned factor, followed by va-

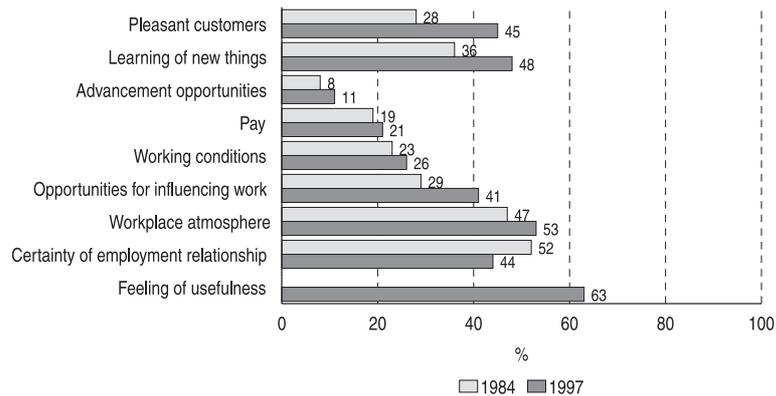
Factors making current job more enjoyable 1/2

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1984 and 1997



Factors making current job more enjoyable 2/2

Quality of Work Life surveys 1984 and 1997



riety of work and interesting work. The new factor of "feeling of achievement and usefulness" was also quoted by more than 60 per cent of the respondents.

The biggest increases were evident in the appreciation of work, pleasant customers, learning of new things, opportunities to influence work and interesting work. The only clear flop was certainty about the continuity of the of employment relationship, no longer given much praise.

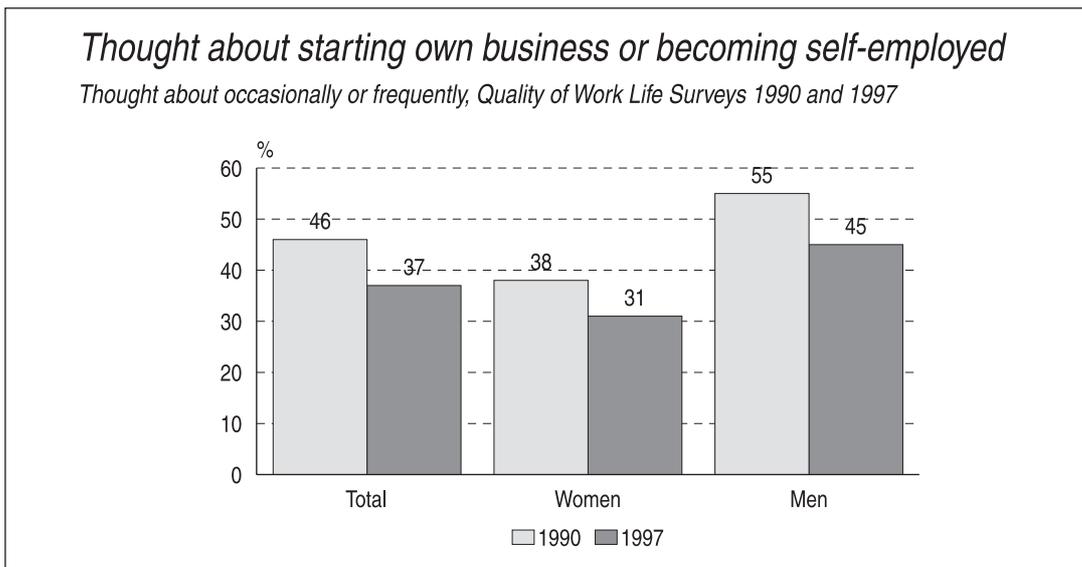
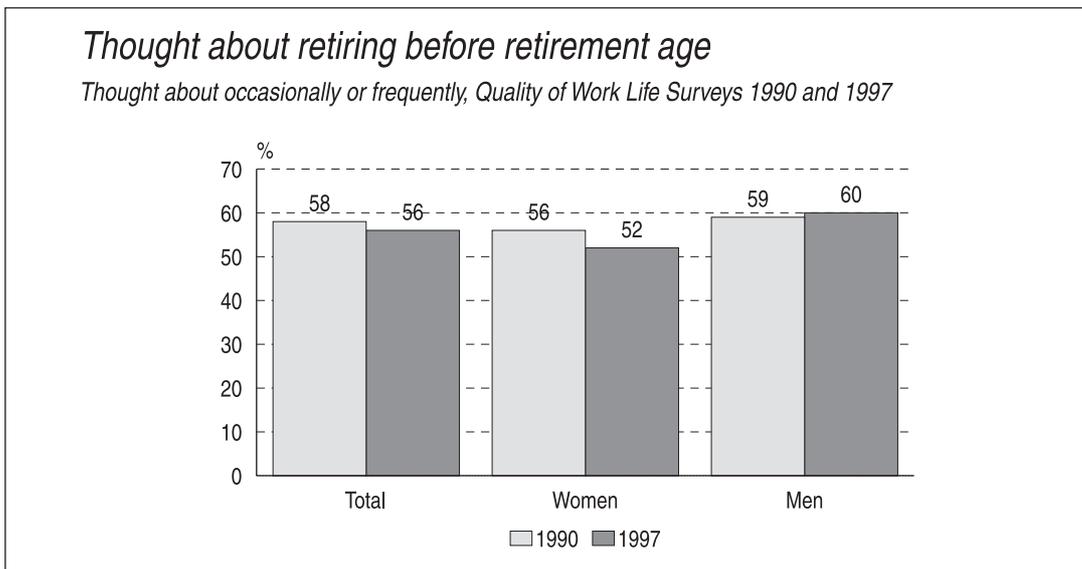
Much concern has been expressed in Finland about the trend of opting for early retirement. In fact, this was the main inspira-

tion for carrying out the 1990 quality of work life survey in 1990. The working conditions committee which sat at that time had been set up to find out what was wrong with the working life and conditions in Finland as the employees could no longer cope with, nor enjoyed, working until the normal retiring age. The adjacent graphics on how many respondents had at least occasionally **thought about retiring before retirement age** show that this is still quite commonly thought about. However, there is a fractional reduction in the proportion of women thinking this way. At both survey times, the

proportion of those who had thought about early retirement frequently was approximately 15 per cent.

Clearly fewer now **thought about starting their own business or becoming self-employed** than in the early 1990s. A lot of encouragement is given today for starting up in business, but it is primarily

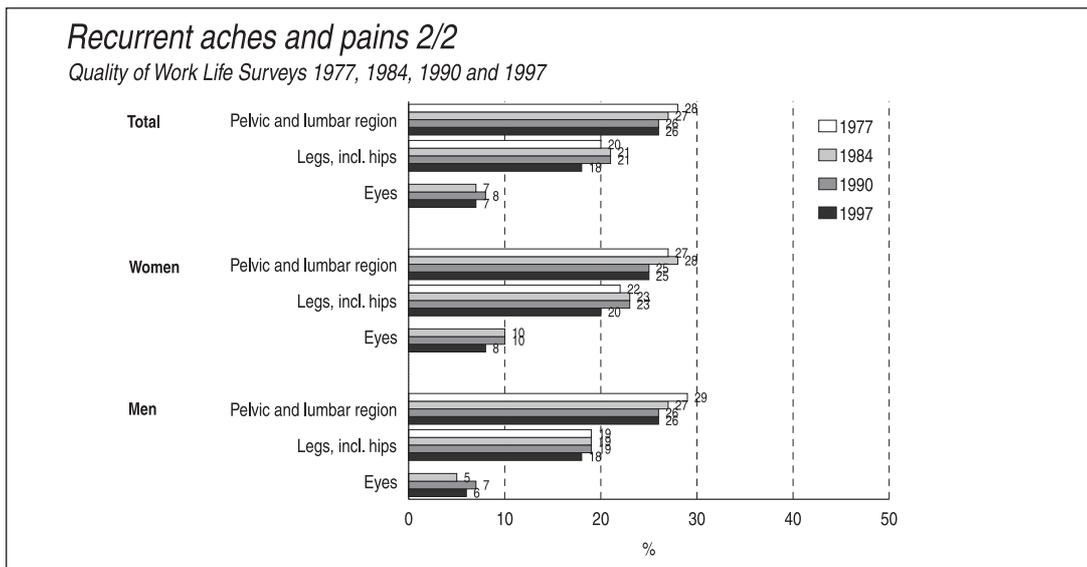
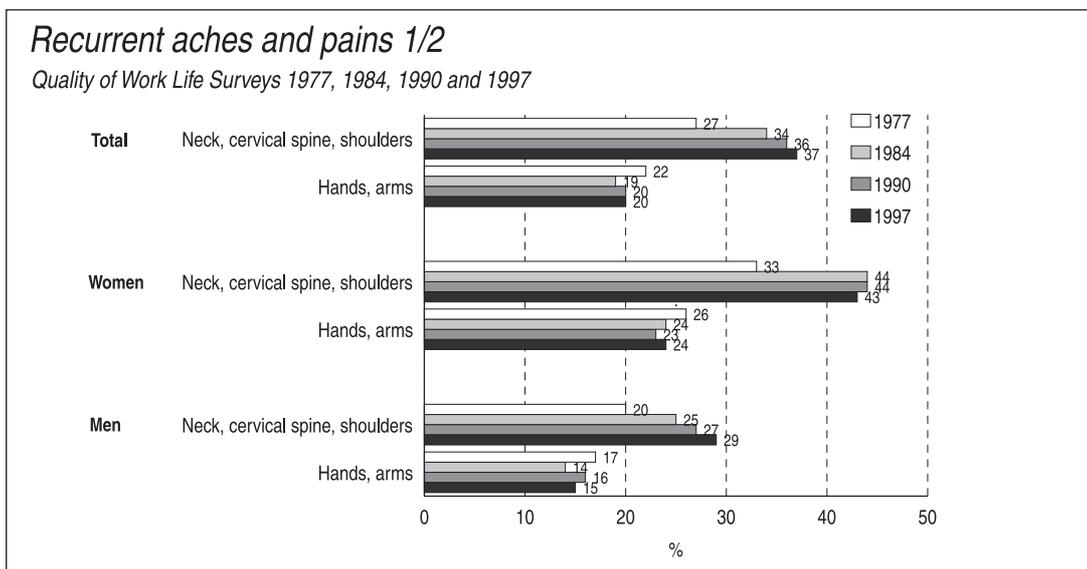
targeted at the unemployed. The reduction in the employees' fantasising about starting up in business would certainly seem to be associated with the same commitment to work today of which clear evidence was already given at the beginning of this report. Current work is regarded as important and jobs are changed less frequently than before.



Recurrent aches and pains

In all quality of work life surveys, employees have been asked whether they suffer from recurrent aches and pains. In the two decades of surveys, there has been a clear increase in the incidence of **recurrent neck, cervical spine and shoulder pain**: today, more than one in three employees suffer

from them. Contrastingly, **recurrent pain in the pelvic and lumbar region, and leg pain** have become less frequent. This trend in the development may be attributable to the increasing amount of sedentary and ADP work. Recurrent aches and pains are more common among women than men.



Psychic and somatic symptoms

All quality of work life surveys have also included questions about psychic and somatic symptoms. All in all, employees appear to suffer from them today less than in the past. However, in respect of both sexes there has been a clear increase in **sleeping difficulties**, of which more than one in three of all wage and salary earners suffer at least once a month, and in the feelings of **fatigue, apathy and lack of energy**. This lack of energy is the most common of all the symptoms, suffered from by over one half of men and three out of five women at least once a month.

Compared to 1984, slightly more men today feel it is "all just too much" and, compared to 1990, more men suffer from **depression and over-exhaustion**. In respect of both sexes, **arrythmia** has become more frequent compared to 1990, but it is still

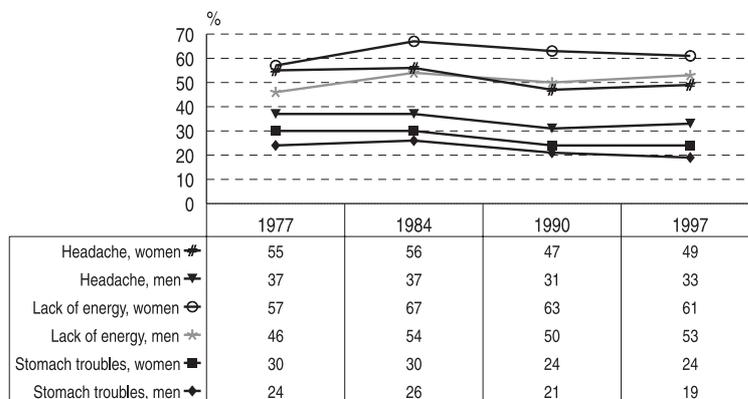
less widespread than twenty years ago. The incidence frequency of **stomach troubles, dizziness and headaches** has been constantly declining. Nevertheless, headache continues to be a very common problem: over one half of women and one in three men suffer from it at least once in a month.

Women suffer from more of the listed symptoms than men. In addition to the already mentioned fatigue, headache and sleeping difficulties, a further common problem is the **feeling of tenseness, nervousness and irritability**, experienced at least once a month by two out of five wage and salary earners.

Three out of four (78%) of the employees who suffer at least once a week from the symptoms mentioned above, believed that their symptoms were related to work or work matters.

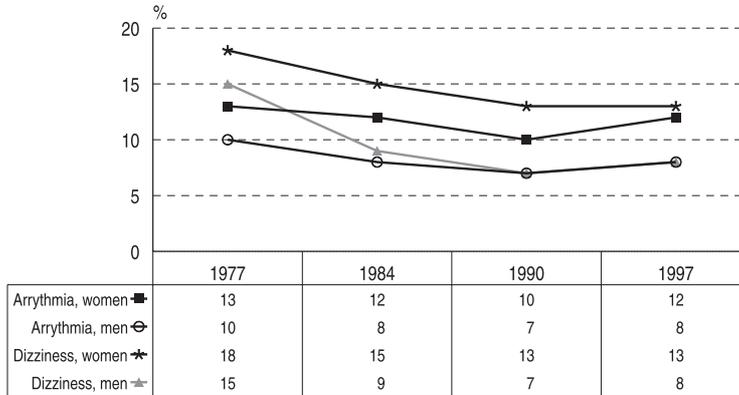
Psychic and somatic symptoms 1/4

Suffers from at least once a month, Quality of Work Life surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



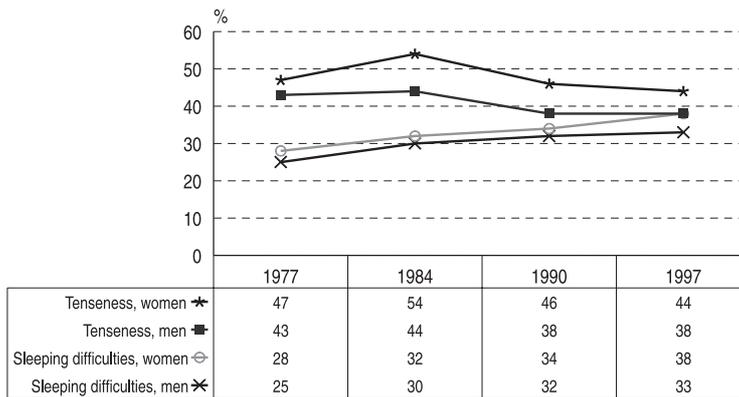
Psychic and somatic symptoms 2/4

Suffers from at least once a month, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



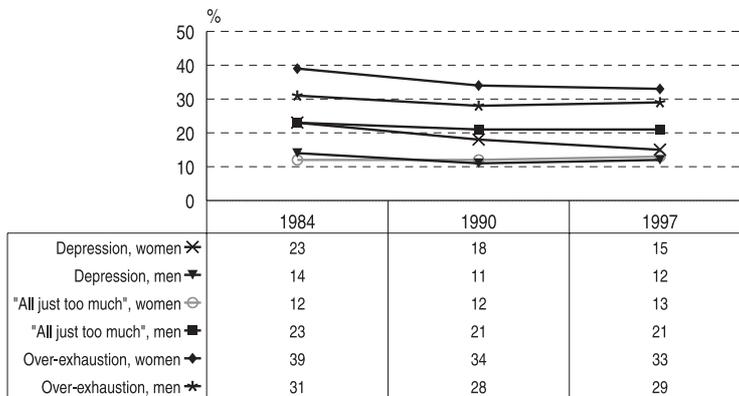
Psychic and somatic symptoms 3/4

Suffers from at least once a month, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



Psychic and somatic symptoms 4/4

Suffers from at least once a month, Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997



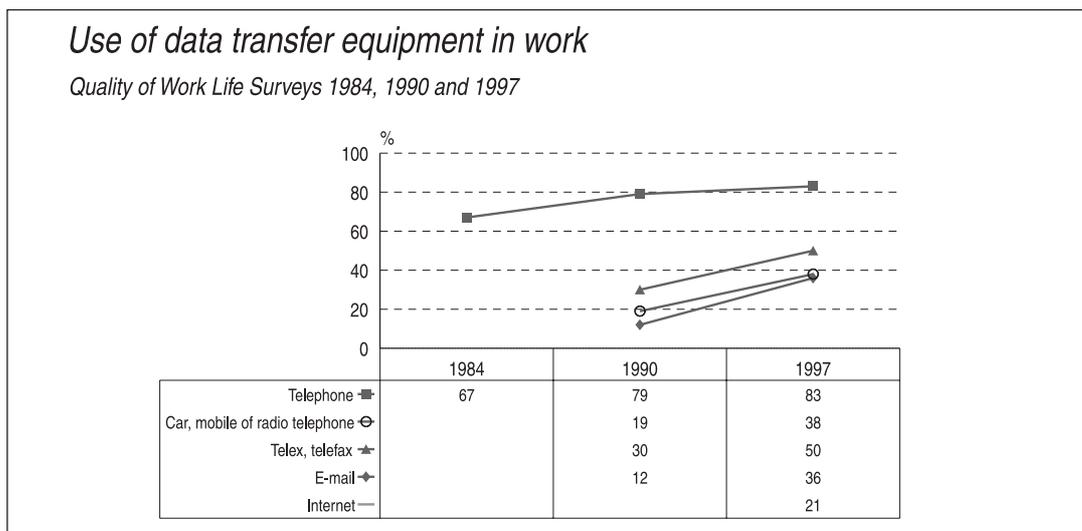
Use of data transfer equipment in work

The extent of the use of data transfer equipment has only been inquired about in the quality of work life surveys since 1990. An exception to this is the telephone, on the use of which questions were already included in 1984. In 1997, the use of the Internet was included in this category for the first time. While the use of the telephone has been increasing steadily over the entire examination period, increases in the use of the mobile telephone, fax and e-mail have been phenomenal in the 1990s. The use of electronic mail has tripled and the use of a car, mobile or radio telephone doubled during this decade. Every second Finnish employee uses the fax in his/her work, almost two out of five use the mobile telephone and the fax is used by well over one third. Exploitation of the **Internet** has spread very fast. Every fifth employee uses it in his/her work, men fractionally more (22%) than women (19%).

Women use in their work the conven-

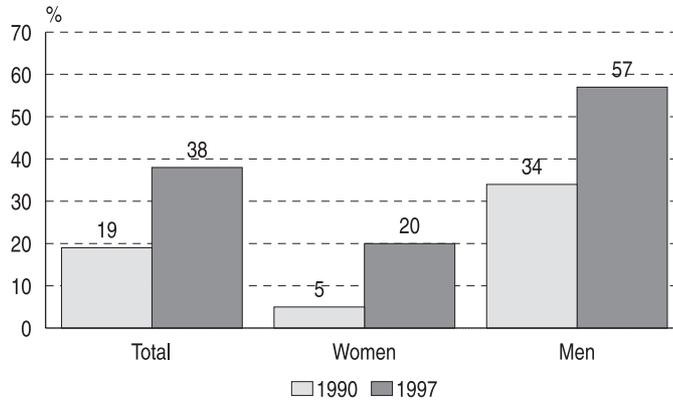
tional **telephone** more (87%) than men (79%). A prominent feature of the use of the new communications equipment is that it is largely tied to gender. Well over half of men, but only one in five of women use in their work a car, mobile or radio telephone. In 1990, the difference was even greater, which means that women have been catching up with men fast.

Women use **telefax** slightly more than men today, whereas in 1990 the situation was still reversed. The use of **e-mail** is quite evenly distributed: both sexes use it to the same extent. However, a closer examination reveals that the purposes for which it is used do differ. Both women and men use e-mail equally frequently for communicating internally at their workplace, but men use it more often than women for communicating with outside domestic and, especially, foreign contacts. Forty per cent of the men, but only 25 per cent of the women, who use e-mail say they need it to maintain international contacts.



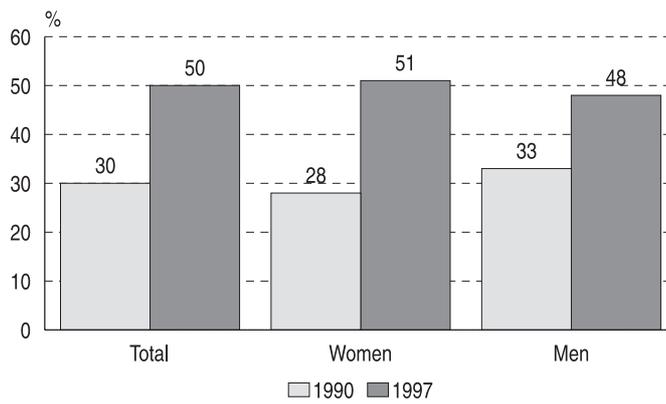
Use of car, mobile or radio telephone in work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



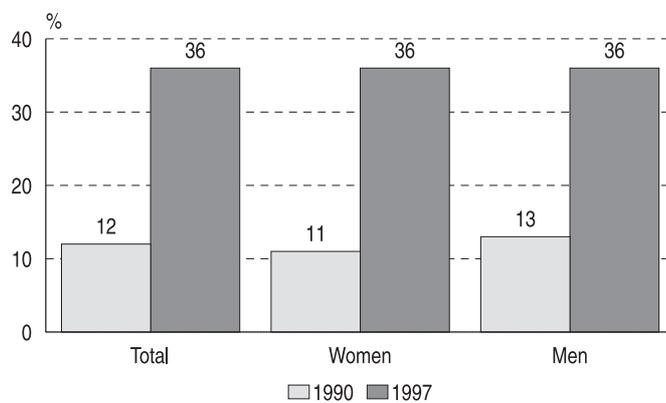
Use of telefax in work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997



Use of electronic mail in work

Quality of Work Life Surveys 1990 and 1997

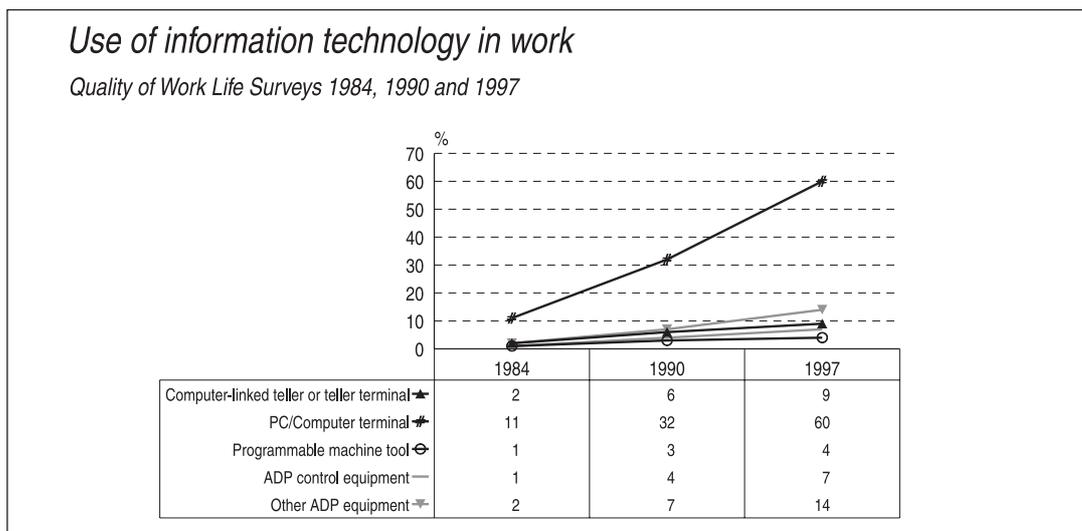
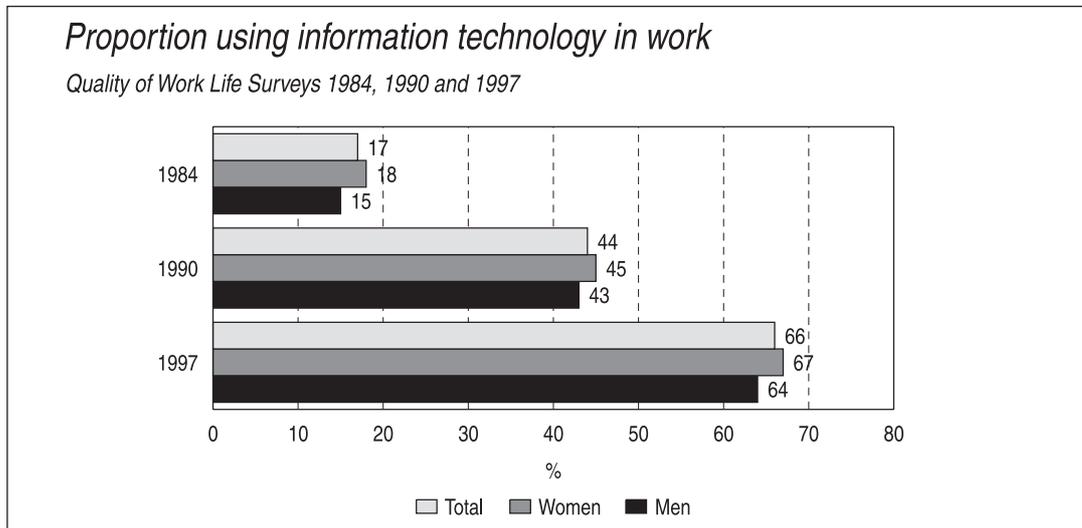


Use of information technology in working life

Information technology has conquered ground quite rapidly in the Finnish working life. When questions about the **use of information technology** in work tasks were first included in the quality of work life survey in 1984, 17 per cent of employees used it. In 1997, two out of three employees already utilised information technology in their work. Women have stayed slightly ahead of men

over the entire examination period. Women also make more intensive use of information technology than men, for well over one half (57%) of the women who use information technology regularly in their work use it for **at least half of their working time**. The corresponding figure for men is 46%.

The use of all ADP equipment has increased clearly since 1984, but the most

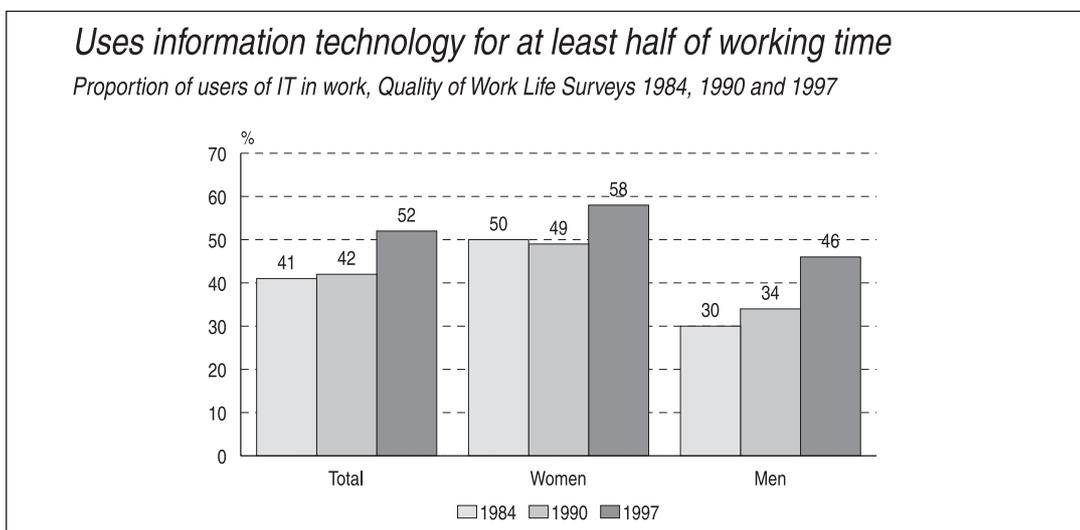


commonly used hardware is still the **PC or computer terminal**. Three out of five (60%) of all employees need it at least occasionally in their work.

The fact that over 90 per cent of the information technology users have been working with ADP equipment for more than one year also goes to confirm that information technology has become an established part of the working life in Finland. On average, employees had behind them **seven years of work using information technology**. Nearly every third (29%)

information technology user had already been working with ADP equipment for more than ten years.

Over the last two years, the users of information technology had received, on average, three days of **ADP training** paid for by their employers. Two out of three information technology users, women in particular, felt that they received **sufficient guidance** in new or difficult situations connected with information technology. Fourteen per cent felt they received far too little training.



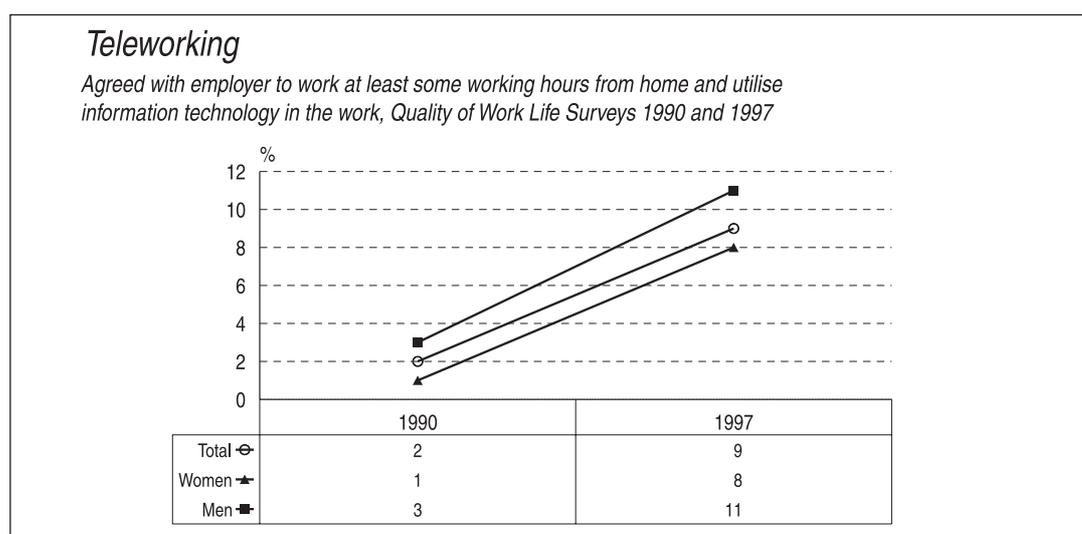
Teleworking

As information technology and data transfer equipment grow increasingly widespread, teleworking has become a popular subject of discussion. Teleworking is a problematic phenomenon in that it is difficult to define explicitly. In the 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey, teleworking can be measured in two ways. On the one hand, proportions can be worked out of those employees who have agreed with their employers to work for at least some of their working hours from home and use information technology to perform this work. In this case, the criteria for teleworking are an agreement about the practice with the employer and the utilisation of information technology. Actual extra "work brought home" is, therefore, not regarded as teleworking. Defined like this, teleworking has increased nearly five-fold in the 1990s and nearly one in ten employees do it at least occasionally, men more than women.

On the other hand, in the 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey employees were asked direct whether they themselves thought they did teleworking. In the pertinent question teleworking was defined as "paid work

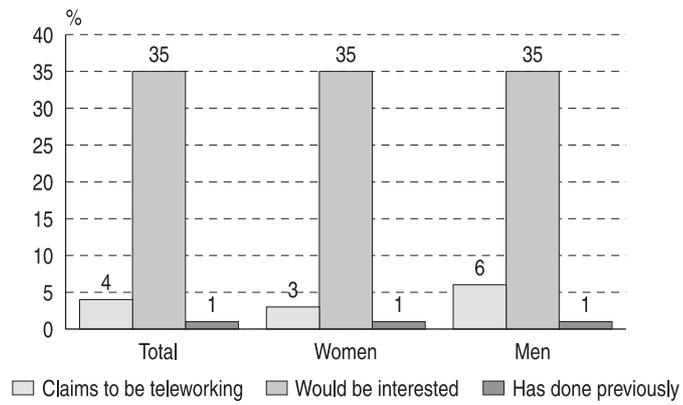
done away from actual workplace. In principle, this work can also be done on the employer's premises. The essential characteristics of teleworking are working arrangements which are independent of time and place". Defined like this, four per cent of employees themselves reckoned they did teleworking, men twice as often as women. One per cent of employees said they had tried teleworking previously.

It is interesting to note how popular the idea of teleworking is, however. In connection with the same question, more than one in three (35%) employees said that they were interested in teleworking. The age group of 25 to 44-year-olds included the largest number of those who said themselves that they did teleworking, while interest in teleworking was the greatest among respondents aged under 25. Of these young respondents, 47 per cent – and as many as 54 per cent of young female respondents – expressed interest in this type of working. Interest in teleworking wanes steady along with age and in the age group of 55 to 64-year-olds, the interest percentage was no more than 14.



Interest in teleworking

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997



Summary

The quality of work life surveys carried out by Statistics Finland in 1977, 1984, 1990 and 1997 are extensive interview inquiries directed to between 3,000 and 5,700 employees. They describe the Finnish employees' experiences of their physical, mental and social working environments. The surveys also study the changes that have taken place due to employees' labour market positions, work organisations and working tools, as well as examine the combining of work and family life and experiences of equality or discrimination.

The survey findings show that the development to improve working conditions has produced results in the Finnish working life over the last two decades. According to the quality of work life surveys, the tasks of employees have grown more varied and participation in in-house training has increased. Employees also feel that they can increasingly influence their own work. Work is looked upon as interesting and support is received from co-workers and superiors more readily than before.

Nevertheless, the development has also had its negative aspects, of which the main one in the 1990s has been the increasing pace of work. The notions of productivity

and flexibility have produced added pressures at workplaces. Uncertainty, competition and fixed-term employment relationships have become more widespread. Work has become mentally more wearing. Time pressure and uncertainty about the continuance of employment relationships are reflected in the work community and social conflicts at workplaces have become common. Two out of five wage and salary earners in Finland have noticed workplace bullying at their place of work.

The marks of the economic recession are also visible as changed labour market positions. In the 1997 Quality of Work Life Survey, every third respondent already said that he or she had been unemployed or temporarily dismissed at least once in the last five years. The average number of months of unemployment had gone up to 12 months.

New work organisation practices demand strong commitment from employees. It would seem that employees value gainful employment and their own work more now that employment relationships have become less secure and time pressure at work has increased. As a result of the recession, job loyalty has undergone a revival – at least in respect of those in permanent employment relationships.

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Appendix 1

Quality of Work Life Survey 1997, Response and Non-response

The 1997 quality of work life survey was implemented as personal face-to-face interviews in connection with the September and October rounds of the monthly Labour Force Survey. At the end of the telephone interviews of the Labour Force Survey, those respondents who proved to be wage and salary earners were invited to participate in the Quality of Work Life Survey and appointments were made with them for separate face-to-face interviews. The average duration of an interview was 74 minutes. The interviews were carried out from September to December in 1997.

The target population was selected from respondents in the second and fifth rotation groups of the September Labour Force Survey and in the second and fourth rotation groups of the October Labour Force Sur-

vey. The sample consisted of 15 to 64-years-old wage and salary earners whose normal weekly working hours comprised at least five hours of paid work. This way it was possible to interview 2,978 persons out of the 3,795 selected into the quality of work life survey sample. The survey response rate, therefore, was 79 per cent, while non-response remained at 21 per cent. The growing reluctance in general to participate in surveys may have been the reason for the risen non-response rate in this survey, as well as in many other surveys.

Women responded more actively than men to this survey, as they generally also do to other surveys. The very youngest age group of 15 to 24-years-old respondents is the least active. This age group is also the most difficult to reach due to its high mobility.

Response and non-response by gender and age

	Re- sponded %	Refused %	Indis- posed %	Not reached %	Other reason %	Total %	Number %
Total	78.5	11.7	0.5	9.0	0.3	100	3 795
Gender							
Female	82.3	10.5	0.6	6.4	0.2	100	1 923
Male	74.6	13.0	0.3	11.6	0.5	100	1 872
Age group							
15 to 24-year-olds	71.3	13.5	0.6	14.4	0.3	100	355
25 to 34-year-olds	78.6	12.2	0.3	8.4	0.5	100	946
35 to 44-year-olds	79.9	10.6	0.2	8.9	0.4	100	1 132
45 to 54-year-olds	80.0	11.6	0.6	7.6	0.3	100	1 063
55 to 64-year-olds	75.6	12.7	1.7	10.0	0.0	100	299

Appendix 2
Interview questionnaire