



University of
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Bad Jobs Practice, Policy and Effects

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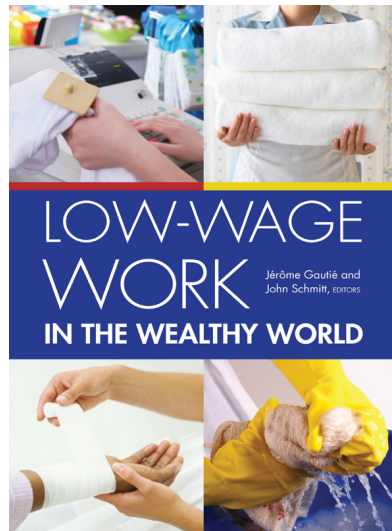


Outline

- Bad Jobs: evidence from RSF project
 - Low wages
 - Other elements of poor job quality
- Outline of academy and policy developments and debates about job quality
- Different conceptualisations of (bad) job quality
- Seminar (and general) tasks ahead for making bad jobs better



Russell Sage Foundation research



UK, US, France, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands

Comparative labour market data

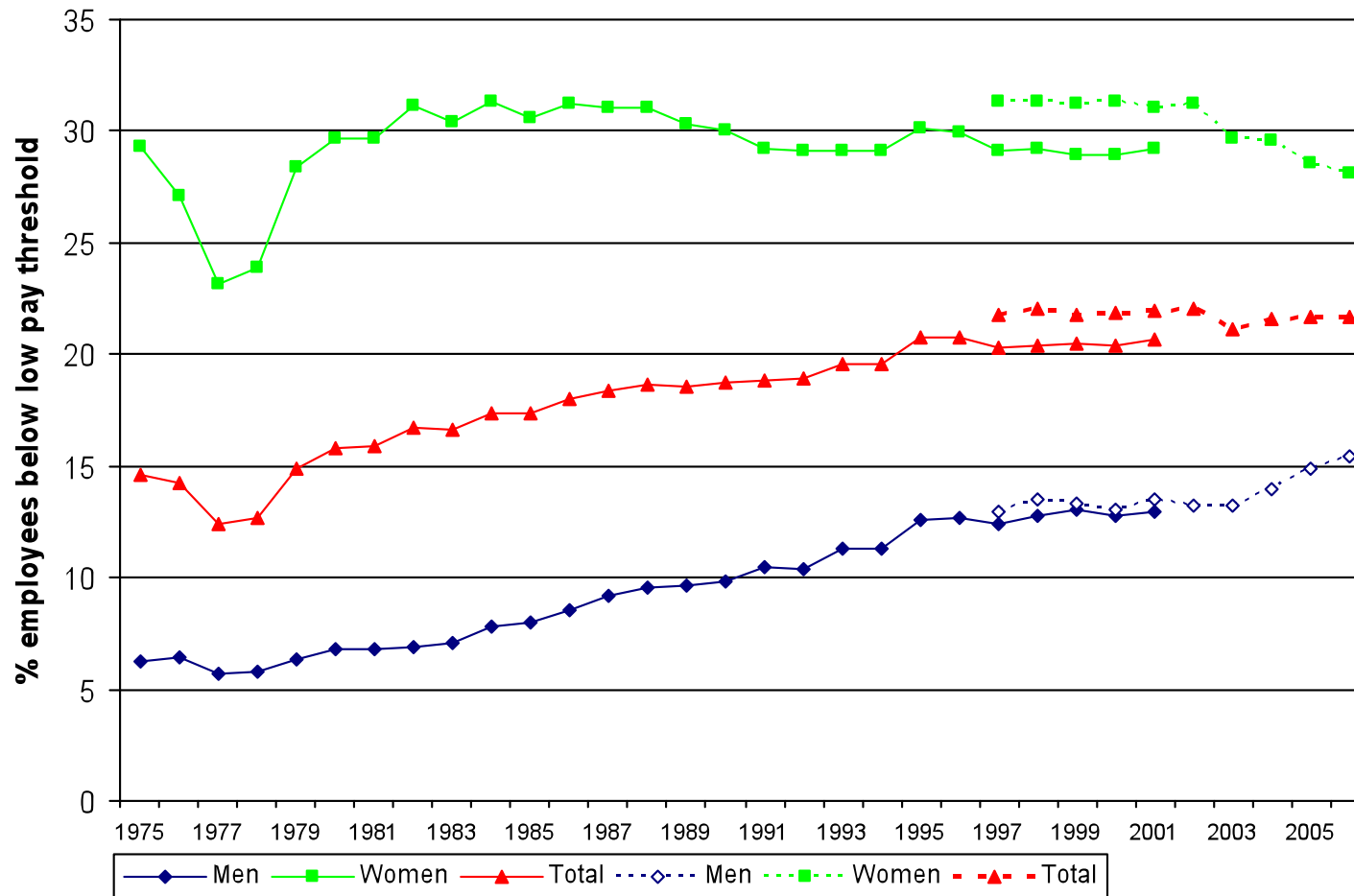
Comparative case studies:

- hotel room attendants
- hospital cleaners
- health care assistants
- retail check out/sales assistants
- call centre agents
- food processing operatives

UK Team: SKOPE, NIESR, SCER



UK workforce below LPT (2/3 median hourly pay) 1975-2006



Source: Mason et al 2008 (*Low Wage Work in the UK*)



% below the low pay threshold, 2005

ALL		20.8%
Sex:	Male	15.1
	Female	26.6
Age:	16-24	49.4
	30-49	13.9
	60-64	24.1
	65+	40.6
Ethnic origin:	White	20.6
	Pakistani	26.9
	Bangladeshi	30.3
Working time:	Full-time	14.0
	Part-time	42.5
	Temporary	32.6
Qualification:	Degree+	5.2
	level 2	27.5
	no qualification	40.6

(Mason et al 2008:45 in
*Low Wage Work in the
United Kingdom*)



Low-paid employment in the UK by sector

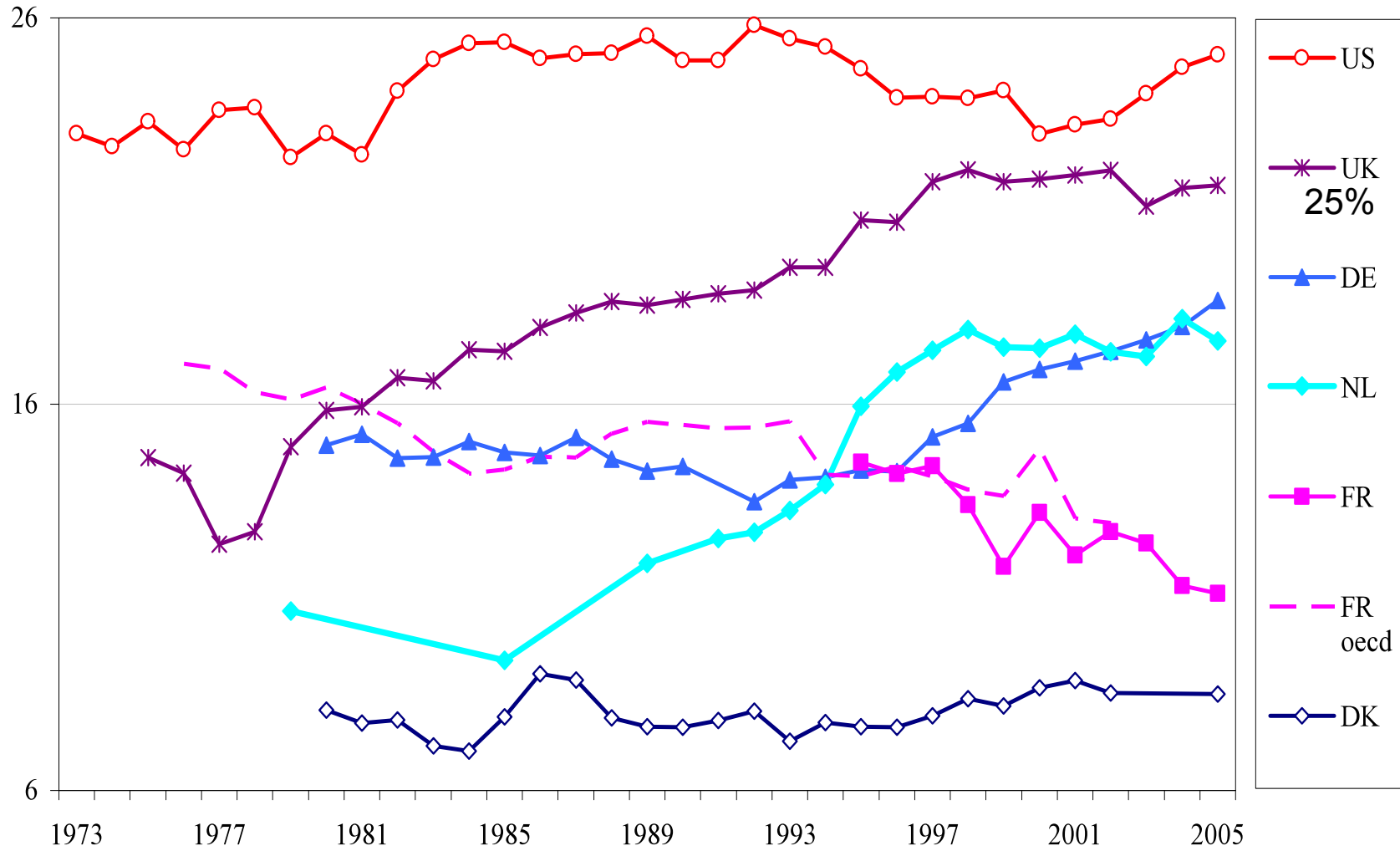
SIC code	Sector	% of total low-paid employees in UK economy	% of employees in sector earning below LPT
52	Retail	26	49
85	Health services	13	18
55	Hotels and restaurants	12	59
15-37	Manufacturing	9	13
80	Education	8	16
90-93	Social and community services	7	29
74	Cleaning, security and miscellaneous business services	6	18
60-64	Transport and communications	5	13
50-51	Wholesale	5	22
45	Construction	3	13
65-73	Other private services	3	8
75	Public administration	2	6
01-14; 40-41	Other industries	1	15
	TOTAL	100	

Patterns of low pay

	DK	FR	GER	NL	UK	US
Year	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2003-5
% employees below LPT	8.5	11.1	22.7	17.6	21.7	25.0
Mobility out	High	Rel. high	Limited	Some	Limited	Limited

Source: Gautie and Schmitt (2010) Low Wage Work in the Wealthy World

INCIDENCE OF LOW PAY, % OF EMPLOYEES, 1973-2005



Source: Mason & Salverda 2010



Other aspects of bad jobs

- Limited benefits: sick pay, leave, pensions
- Agency status
- Lack of union representation
- Lack of voice/influence



Working time

- uncertainty: variable hours/zero hours contracts
- lack of hours (incl. agency and variable contracts)
- long hours: overtime
- shift working/unsocial hours: lack of premiums
- changing shift patterns at short notice (little choice)



Poor job design

“after doing the same process several thousand times, even several hundred times in a day, it gets overly repetitive and it definitely loses the challenge and any interest ... every day your core job is being chained to your desk and having to listen to the same kind of people in my case for 10 or 12 hours a day” (call centre agent)

“we walk around every quarter of an hour so you actually feed the line rather than putting the stuff out in the basket onto the line for a quarter of an hour and then you move around and to another place ... it saves you having to work with one hand all the time ... Well, we are [chicken] drums all day today, it’s been that boring, horrible rotten day, drums all day.” (food processing operative)

Lack of progression

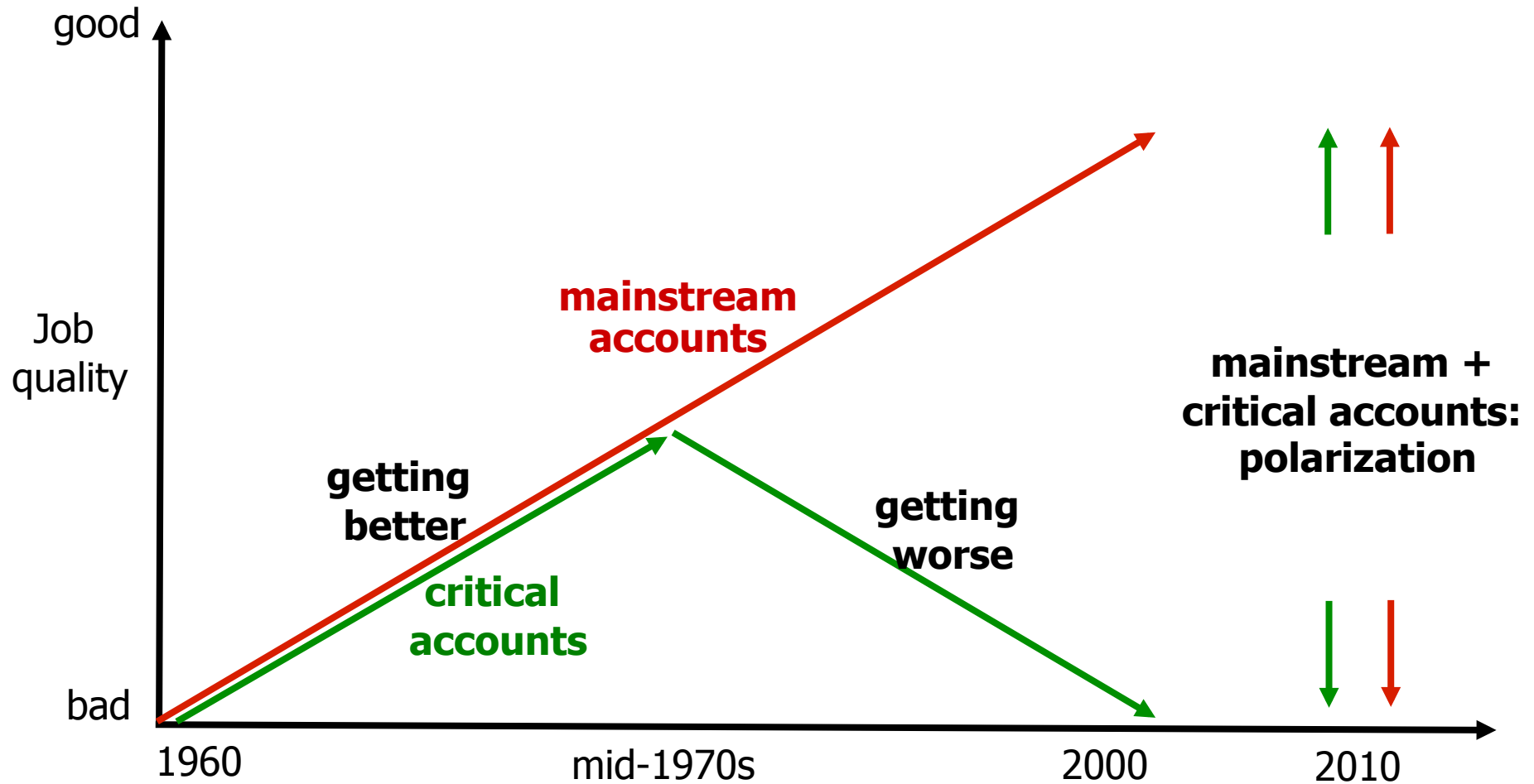
- Lack of positions rather than lack of skills (some over-qualification)

“I don’t know I think you’d need to be here a couple of years, you would need to know everything and do everything perfect and all that to get a supervisor’s job, you won’t just come in and the girls have been here for years and they’ve not got it” (hotel room attendant)

- Outside of NHS, promotion for part-timers rare
- Intermediate jobs (e.g. craft) and management recruit externally rather than train within



Academic debate





Policy focus: good jobs, bad jobs, any jobs

60s-early 70s

Better jobs

**Quality of
Working Life
movement
typically
focused on
skilled jobs**

late 70s-80s

Any jobs

**Job creation
with 'screw-
driver plants'
and semi-
skilled jobs**

90s-early 00s

Good jobs

**Stimulation
of creative/
knowledge
work and
high skill
jobs**

currently

**(Any jobs)
Polarised jobs**

**Good and bad
jobs but not
mutually
exclusive –
complement
each other**



Operationalising Job Quality

- Economists – pay ... and sometimes skill (but as a proxy for pay).
- Sociologists skill (task complexity) and control (autonomy).

(Feminist accounts – gendering of bad jobs and intersection with women's care work.)

- Psychologists focus on job satisfaction and, in various ways, intrinsic rewards.

Tasks Ahead

1. Defining and mapping bad jobs.
2. Exploring how the quality of bad jobs can be improved.
3. Exploring routes out of bad jobs for job-holders.
4. Generating, road-testing and disseminating policy recommendations.