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Working Paper 149: Non-unionised Migrant Workers: Evidence from the UK Labour Force Survey for a *Triple-challenge Model*

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Non-unionised Migrant Workers: Evidence from the UK Labour Force Survey for a *Triple-challenge Model*

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to help rectify the lack of systematic research into the unionisation of migrant workers in Britain. We will explore the Labour Force Survey data using a logistic regression modelling. With a varying degree of influence on men and women, the results provide empirical evidence to assist the development of comprehensive explanations for the obstacles behind migrant workers' unionisation. The impediments we analysed can be considered within what one might call a *triple-challenge model* comprising of i) *encounter inputs*: demographic factors brought into the host society and citizenry rights offered by the host society to migrant workers ii) *accentuated structural factors*: workplace characteristics, flexible work and migrant workers' disproportionate location in less unionised companies with flexible contracts iii) *knock-on effects*: educational and occupational influences along with the impacts of *encounter inputs* and *accentuated structural factors* on such influences.

KEY WORDS

Migrant workers / union / gender / flexible work / workplace / occupations / qualifications

Introduction

Employers tend to celebrate migrant workers' self-discipline and commitment, but there are concerns that congratulatory rhetorics occasionally harbinger managerial opportunism (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). In line with this, union membership is considered crucial for the protection of migrant workers' rights (Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010; MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). Trade unions have long campaigned to organise migrant workers (TUC, 2004; Heyes, 2009). However, they remain less unionised, 18%, compared to 26% for the rest of the workforce (LFS, 2010). Since the beginning of the recession, migrant workers' membership has faced further pressures, declining from 22%, for example, in 2006 (LFS, 2006).

Over the last couple of decades, a substantial amount of academic work in both empirical and theoretical terms has been devoted to identifying factors associated with union membership. There is, however, a dearth of systematic research specifically into the dynamics of unionisation among migrant workers in Britain, despite some calls for investigations (McGovern 2007). An attempt to fill this gap needs to be guided largely by the debates on unionisation in general, along with few international and UK-based observations on organising migrant workers.

Demographic Issues

Research in the UK has demonstrated the effect of demographic factors such as age, marital status and gender on unionisation. Younger (Blanden and Machin 2003) and single workers (Bryson and Gomez 2005) were associated with low union densities. Speaking historically, gender was also included in the equation due to, for example, mutual hesitation between unions and women (Sinclair 1995). In recent years, however, the gender gap has been reversed: Almost 28% of women were union members in 2010 compared to 20% of men (LFS, 2010).

There is no systematic research into the links between demographic factors and unionisation among migrant workers in the UK with regard to age, marital status or gender. It is, however, possible to say that there is a clear gender difference among migrant workers as in the case of others. Circa 22% of women migrant workers were

union members in 2010 whereas the figure was down to 15% for men (LFS 2010). To some what, the gender gap has widened amid the decline in union density since the beginning of the recession: it was, for example, roughly 19% among men in 2006 when the figure was nearly 24% for women (LFS 2006).

As another demographic factor, the countries/regions of origin were addressed in terms of the unionisation of some Polish/Eastern European migrant workers in Britain, together with references to their past socialist experiences (Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010). In different settings, the importance of the time spent in host societies was also underlined. Bell and Jarman (2004), for example, argued that it would take years for migrant workers to establish themselves within new social environments. An investigation into Mexican-born migrant workers in the US, however, showed that it did not take that long for the Latinos to comprehend and protest their disadvantages (Milkman 2007).

Scholars underlined that exaggerating the role of migrant workers' individual characteristics would risk missing the big picture (McGovern 2007; Milkman 2000 & 2007) as well as nurturing the 'migrant mentality' stereotypes (Pantoja and Gershon 2006). Academic research highlighted that it was also important to take on board what the host society offers to migrant workers in terms of, for example, legal and citizenry prerogatives (Figueroa 1998; Milkman 2000 & 2007). Such legal frames can even determine how arbitrarily the very existence of a migrant worker in Britain would be dependent on his or her employer's will (Anderson 2010).

Work-related Issues

Workplace characteristics, including industrial variations (Bacon 1999; Broughton, 2001), public/private sectors (Prowse & Prowse 2006; Edwards 2009) and establishment size (Sayce et al 2006) were related to unionisation. For example, low pay industries such as hotels and restaurants (McKie *et al.* 2009) were reported to have accommodated low levels of unionisation. Likewise, small and medium-sized companies have been brought up for managerial reservations about trade unions (Fenn and Ashby 2004). Similar observations have also been made in the private sector in

general (Edwards 2009). These sorts of findings helped refute the parochialism of rational choice theories (Ebbinghaus and Visser 1999).

The impacts of workplace characteristics on the unionisation of migrant workers remain unexplored –with the exception of Holgate’s (2005) investigation into managerial barriers that migrant workers face in London’s food industry. Exploring such factors is particularly important in the case of migrant workers because of their disproportionate location in the workplaces less receptive to unionisation. Nearly 90% of migrant workers who came to Britain in the last five years, for example, work in the private sector and 14% of them are employed in hotels and restaurants, compared to 74% and 4% for the rest, respectively (LFS, 2010). Migrant workers are also less likely to become unionised across these sectors and industries. Only 6% of them are unionised, for example, in the private sector, compared to 14% of the rest (LFS, 2010).

Detrimental consequences of flexible jobs during the long-term trajectory of union density in Britain have been well emphasised (Heery & Simms 2008; Pollert and Charlwood 2009). In particular, flexible contracts in low-pay jobs were internationally depicted as a component of precarious work settings characterised by low unionisation (Kalleberg 2009; Pape 2008). Nevertheless, systematic research specifically into the relation of flexible works to the unionisation of migrant workers is missing from the debate. This is at odds with the fact that migrant workers tend to be over represented, especially in temporary jobs: 14%, compared to 6% for the rest (LFS, 2010).

High level occupations augment the likelihood of union membership by and large. Professional/IT occupations, for example, have long been cited for their high tendency toward unionisation (Snape and Bamber 1989). Even so, managers and senior officials on top of the occupational hierarchy show little interest in becoming unionised (Hodson 2005). Likewise, lower-ranking occupations were associated with a constrained union density. Research findings suggest that low skill jobs, for example, reduce workers’ chance of unionisation by undermining the sense of job security (Pollert and Charlwood 2009).

Few references were made to the implications of lower occupational spectrums for the unionisation of migrant workers in terms of managerial reservations (Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010; Holgate, 2005; Wills, 2004). Even so, there is a lack of systematic research

to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics behind the unionisation of migrant workers in these sorts of jobs. Nor do we know much about the unionisation of those who hold high occupational positions. One possible reason for this is because migrant workers have been widely regarded as 'the men of unwanted jobs'. However, such assumptions should be treated with caution. There is no significant difference between migrant workers who came to Britain in the last five years, for example, and the rest of the workforce with regard to professional occupations, approximately one in six (LFS, 2010). The introduction of 'Highly Skilled Migrant Workers Scheme' in 2003 has arguably played an important role in this.

Education, a strong indicator of people's occupational positions at work (Brown *et al.* 2004) correlates positively with unionisation in general (Hundley 1988). Nonetheless, the links between education and the unionisation of migrant workers are yet to be investigated. Although migrant workers have been conventionally assumed to possess lower educational qualifications, such a homogeneous characterisation does not seem to be viable any more, either. When migrant workers who came to Britain in the last five years are once again compared to the rest, hardly any difference could be seen between the two groups in terms of having degrees and higher education, circa 40% (LFS, 2010). This is largely attributable to a point-based visa policy which has been prioritising well-educated migrant workers since 2007.

Broadly speaking, current academic debates mostly revolve around the unionisation of British workers in general, considering four broad categories: demographic profiles including age, gender marital status; workplace characteristics (establishment size, public/private sectors and industries); flexible work in relation to part-time and temporary jobs; and finally work-status indicators (occupations and educational attainments). Accordingly, we will examine the relation of these socio-economic correlates specifically to the unionisation of migrant workers through comparative analyses between men and women in order to help rectify the gap in research. For a model tailored to migrant workers, our analyses will also cover the countries/regions of origin, citizenry status and the time spent in Britain.

Methods

Data

Data is analysed from the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) a large household-based study conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). To make sure that our analyses are informed by the most recent developments, we used the data from the final quarter (between October and December) of 2010 the latest round including a question for union membership. LFS final quarters also pick up larger samples because of the Christmas-effect.

LFS deploys a multi-stage sampling design to achieve a probability sample of households and individuals in Britain for the exploration of employees' labour market status (ONS 2010). The major data collection instruments were face to face and telephone interviews with a small amount of postal surveys. Research was conducted with a worker or the representative of sample household on behalf of the workers investigated (proxy interview). Participants answered questions with their own descriptions of work activities. A total of 106,886 questionnaires were filled.

The LFS typically achieves a response rate in the region of 85% due to the burden of questionnaire completion (ONS 2010). However, non-response is only a source of bias to the extent that those who respond are different from those who do not with respect to characteristics of interest. Previous studies have shown that non-responders in surveys cannot be identified according to any socio-demographic factor, indicating that any biases introduced by nonresponse are not strongly related to commonly used explanatory variables (Chatzitheochari and Arber 2009). We analysed a subsample of 2024 male and 1716 female migrant workers (out of 4,866 male and 5,733 female migrant workers in total). We employ the individual level ungrossed-weight which corrects for non-response.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable, *non-unionised migrant workers* was produced by combining two separate questions about the country of origin (migrant workers) and union membership. The former excludes second generation 'immigrants' (Castles and Miller

1993). However, our analyses are not limited to a certain arrival year in Britain, although various scholars use different cut-points (Bell and Jarman 2004). The reason for this is because we will specifically control the impact of arrival years.

With regard to the question of trade union membership, two caveats should be borne in mind. First, because the question is asked only in the final quarter of each year, it is not possible to measure quarterly changes in responses. Second, the wording of this question refers to the membership of both trade unions and associations, although interviewers actually aim to find out trade union membership (Brook 2001).

Independent variables

In broader terms, the models developed in this study control the relation of non-membership among migrant workers to the four categories hitherto highlighted: demographic profiles, workplace characteristics, flexible work and work-status nominators.

Among the demographic variables, 'the regions of origin' is produced by collapsing the countries of origin into a widely used classification (Black and Skeldon 2009): New members of the EU, Western Europe, other developed countries, Eastern Europe and ex-SSCB, Latin and Central Americas, Afro-Caribbean, Middle East, Indian Sub-continent and Southeast Asia. The use of these broad categories also helped resolve the problem of small sample size, although we still had to exclude the Latin and Central American respondents from the analyses due to such considerations. Our brackets provided adequate evidence to relate migrant workers' origins to unionisation.

The second demographic variable, age is measured by recoding working age population (from 16 to 65 years old) into four brackets in line with common practices (Blanden and Machin 2003), whilst excluding those over 65 years old due to small sample size.

The third demographic variable, marital status consists of never married singles, couples and the separated. The fourth demographic variable, the year of arrival is recoded into six bands in order to control the impact of time spent in the UK as specifically as possible: 2010-2007, 2006-2004, 2003-2000, 1999-1990, 1989-1980 and

before 1980. In particular, the year 2004 marks the beginning of arrivals from the new EU countries as well as coinciding with a five-year threshold to apply for indefinite leave. The fifth demographic variable splits migrant workers into two categories in terms of their citizenry status in Britain, citizens and non-citizens.

Workplace characteristics (as well as all other work-related correlates used in this paper) refer to employees' main jobs. The industry variable is based on the standard international classification of industries, SIC-2005 at two-digit level (i.e. Industry Sectors). Within 'energy and construction', the former includes mining, quarrying; electricity, gas, and water supply. Due to small sample size, we excluded agriculture, fishing, forestry, information, communication, finance and real estates from the analyses whilst removing energy, construction, transport and storage from the models for women. The second variable within workplace characteristics is a dichotomous variable of respondents' self-report as to whether they work in the public or private sector.

The third workplace characteristic, establishment size refers to the number of co-workers reported by respondents, and it is collapsed into five bands in order to control the impact of establishment sizes as specifically as possible: below 20, 20-49, 50-249, 250-499 and 500 or more (Forth *et al.* 2006). In particular, this grouping enabled us to evaluate the implications of the absence of statutory union recognition for our smallest category (Edwards and Ram 2006).

Flexible work variables are produced by breaking down respondents into part-time/full-time and temporary/permanent jobs. In the late 1970s, the official definition of part-time work based on working hours had been abandoned because of a perceived bias generated by the arbitrary determination of hours, although it is still utilised in some countries such as US (Lee and Mowry 2009). Part-time work is currently based on the self-definitions of participants in LFS. Therefore, there is no consistency across the sample. The definition of temporary jobs is also based on participants' understanding of their own contractual status.

Among work-status nominators, occupations are derived from the standard international classification of occupations, SOC-2005 at one-digit major level. Skilled trade

occupations as well as process, plant and machinery operatives, however, are excluded from the analyses for women owing to small sample size.

We used education levels as an indicator of work-status in order to shed more light on the implications of migrant workers' position at work for non-membership. Even so, because education is part of demographic characteristics, we first run our statistical analyses taking it within the demographic factors specified above. However, the results were not significantly different from the ones presented in this paper. The education variable is based on the highest qualification obtained, with five main categories from 'no qualification' to 'degree or equivalent'.

Analytical technique

The analysis uses logistic regression which is widely employed when modelling binary outcomes and for predicting the probability of an event. The dependent dichotomous variable is whether or not the respondent is a trade union member. The binary response is yes/no. The logistic models predict the probability of being non-member.

Separate and joint logistic regression models are stipulated for male and female migrant workers in order to examine the differential effects of demographic and work-related circumstances on their unionisation. Statistical tests enable evaluation of the significance of the inclusion of an explanatory variable in the model.

In logistic models, independent variables are successively added to the model in sequential blocks, which allows the observation of changes in the predictors' relationship to the outcome variable and assessment of the relative importance of each predictor in the model. These blocks are made up of the four broader categories of independent variables: demographic profiles (regions of origin, age, marital status, the year of arrival and citizenship); workplace characteristics (establishment size, public/private sectors and industries); flexible work (part-time/full-time and temporary/permanent jobs); and finally work-status variables (educational attainments and occupations).

Neither the order of variables within the blocks nor that of blocks within the models makes substantial difference on the results in general. However, using demographic

variables for Model 1 and then adding workplace characteristics in Model 2 proved better than other combinations for the goodness of fit.

Results

Descriptives

Table I presents chi-square results for the variations between non-unionised male and female migrant workers by demographic profiles, workplace characteristics, flexible work and work-status indicators. Female migrant workers from Western Europe and other developed countries are less likely to become non-unionised compared to men (circa 75% and 85% on average, respectively). A similar situation is also the case among those of Indian sub-continental origin.

Although age is negatively related to non-membership in general, gender differences emerge in the middle age categories specified in Table I. More than 83% of the women aged from 26 to 35 years old, for example, are non-unionised, but the proportion is nearly 90% for their male counterparts. The gender gap diminishes at later ages as the figures among those aged from 50 to 65 years old fall down to 69% and 73%, respectively.

Marital status of respondents hardly alters the gender gap whilst interfering with the levels of non-membership. Among (never married) single migrant workers, circa 90% of men and 83% of women are non-unionised, compared to the proportions down to 84% of men and 75% of women who have separated.

Recently arrived migrant workers in the UK do not present a strong gender difference since they are less likely to become unionised in general: More than 95% of the most recently arrived men in Table 1, between 2007 and 2010, are non-unionised, compared to 92% of women. However, the gender difference becomes clearer with the length of time spent in Britain: Around 75% of the women who came to Britain in the first three years of the new millennium, for instance, are non-unionised compared to 84% of the men in the same situation.

Table I: Non-unionised migrant workers by demographic and work profiles

		Men		Women		
		N [†]	% [‡]	N [†]	% ^{‡(Y)}	
Demographic Characteristics						
Regions of Origin	New EU members	357	92.5	353	88.8 *	
	Eastern Europe and ex-SSCB	83	93.1	77	90.4	
	Western Europe	299	83.8	315	75.1***	
	Rest of developed countries	139	85.8	131	76.0***	
	Latin and Central Americas	23	83.3	27	81.9	
	Afro-Caribbean	288	75.6	265	73.9	
	Middle East	115	83.7	74	83.7	
	Indian Sub-continent	470	87.2	240	74.0***	
	Southeast Asia	83	77.7	105	76.7	
Age (Years)	16-25	165	91.6	186	88.6	
	26-35	673	89.7	582	83.7***	
	36-49	763	84.2	590	74.3***	
	50-65	381	73.5	327	69.1	
Marital Status	Single (never married)	539	89.1	483	83.1***	
	Couple	1313	83.8	994	76.5***	
	Separated	168	81.5	236	75.2 **	
Year of Arrival	2010-2007	357	95.9	271	92.3 **	
	2004-2006	383	89.2	357	85.9	
	2003-2000	319	84.0	253	75.7***	
	1999-1990	322	82.6	283	77.9	
	1989-1980	208	78.5	182	75.0	
	1979-	435	77.6	370	66.4***	
Citizenship	British	659	79.4	558	72.9***	
	Not British	1300	87.8	1108	81.0***	
Workplace Characteristics						
Establishment size	Less than 20	509	93.4	450	88.6***	
	20-49	252	88.3	263	75.6***	
	50-249	354	80.7	328	73.5***	
	250-499	117	75.0	104	76.6	
	500+	316	71.9	247	62.9***	
Sectors	Private Sector	1799	90.7	1372	89.3	
	Public Sector	215	53.7	334	50.4	
Industries	Energy and construction	214	91.9	29	85.0	
	Manufacturing	275	86.9	147	89.6	
	Distribution	254	90.5	247	91.7	
	Hotels and restaurants	208	97.5	150	96.0	
	Transport and storage	151	70.3	43	69.5	
	Information and communication	114	94.5	63	98.4	
	Banking and insurance	305	92.4	258	93.7	
	Finance and real estate	90	95.8	72	89.4	
	Public administration and defence	62	57.2	60	54.9	
	Education	87	66.0	187	57.9 **	
	Health (and social work)	153	63.7	351	63.0	
	Flexible Work					
	Temporary Work	Permanent	1447	81.7	1351	75.9 **
Temporary		150	92.7	138	81.8***	
Full/part-time Work	Full-time	1711	83.9	1052	76.2***	
	Part-time	312	90.3	662	81.4***	
Work-status variables						
Education	Degree or equivalent	627	82.9	526	71.5***	
	Higher education	101	75.2	150	61.4***	
	GCE A Level or equiv	252	81.0	166	79.2	
	GCSE grades A-C or equiv	139	80.4	183	79.6	
	No qualification	209	90.4	151	91.2	
Occupations	Managers and Senior Officials	359	94.6	195	89.9 *	
	Professional occupations	348	80.5	234	61.4***	
	Associate Professional and Technical	210	73.4	224	64.3***	
	Administrative and Secretarial	72	89.6	242	83.4 *	
	Skilled Trades Occupations	267	90.0	34	88.9	
	Personal Service Occupations	69	74.5	263	80.7 *	
	Sales & Customer Service Occupations	105	89.1	138	89.8	
	Process, Plant and Machine Ops	254	85.4	29	85.5	
	Elementary Occupations	340	85.1	313	88.6	

[†] Number of non-members

[‡] Non-members as % of all in each category

^(Y) Chi-square results for 'All' are based on the differences from the rest in each category; and they are for the gender gap in the 'women' column: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Source: LFS Autumn 2010, w eighted

Because both male and female migrant workers who are British citizens have a relatively higher propensity toward unionisation, gender differences do not seem to be much affected by citizenship: Among citizen migrant workers, less than 80% of men and 73% of women are non-unionised, compared to 88% of non-citizen men and 80% of women.

As for workplace characteristics (establishment size, sectors and industries), smaller establishments reveal higher proportions of non-unionised migrant workers. However, this is particularly evident among male respondents: 93% of them, for example, are non-unionised in the establishments with less than 20 employees, compared to 88% for women. The gender disparity becomes more conspicuous in large establishments (with 500 or more employees), notwithstanding a fall in both male's and female's non-membership to 72% and 62%, respectively.

There is no significant gender gap either in the private or public sector, although the proportions of non-unionised male and female workers equally tumble down from nine in ten in the private sector to one in two in the public sector. Likewise, little variations between men and women are embedded in specific industries, despite some changes in overall union density from one industry to another. The gender gap is most noticeable in education as the proportion of non-unionised female migrant workers turns out to be at a very low level, below 58%, compared to 66% for men.

Flexible work as defined by temporary and part-time jobs denotes little differences in terms of gender gap due to similar increases in non-membership for both men and women in such jobs. Almost 82% of female migrant workers in temporary jobs are non-unionised, compared to 93% for men. In permanent jobs, the gender difference is slightly less pronounced as the figures go down to 76% and 82% respectively. The proportions of non-unionised male (90%) and female (81%) migrant workers in part-time jobs, on the other hand, decrease more evenly in full-time jobs, –down to 84% and 76%, respectively.

Finally, we can have a look at the gender gap by work-status variables, educational attainments and occupational categories. Around 72% of female migrant workers with a

university degree are non-unionised, but the proportion for men is almost 83%. The gap tends to disappear at lower educational attainments because of a rise in the proportion of non-unionised migrant workers in general –to an overall average of 90%, for example, among those without any qualification.

A similar pattern applies to occupational ranks as well: Less than 62% of female migrant workers in professional occupations, for instance, are non-unionised whereas the proportion turns out to be no less than 80% for men. The gender gap becomes less noticeable in lower occupational categories as non-membership increases to 88% among female migrant workers in elementary jobs, compared to 85% for their male counterparts.

Overall, with a varying degree of influence, male migrant workers present a significantly higher disposition toward non-membership compared to women across almost all demographic and work-related benchmarks used in Table I.

Logistic regression models

Both separate and joint logistic regression models to examine the differential effects of demographic and work-related circumstances on male and female migrant workers' non-membership are provided in Table II. For each predictor variable, the last category in bivariate analyses is defined as the reference category.

Model 1 includes demographic profiles in terms of the regions of origin, age, marital status, the year of arrival and citizenship. The regions of origin have a significant effect on migrant workers' non-membership ($p < 0.001$). To somewhat, women migrant workers from the Middle East (OR = 1.53, $p < 0.01$) display a higher inclination toward non-membership, compared to those from the Southeast Asia –the reference category (Table II). However, migrant workers from the new EU countries as well as Eastern Europe and ex-SSCB are more likely to be non-unionised.

Table II: Non-unionised migrant workers

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model VI	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model VI
	Odds Ratios for All				Odds Ratios for Men				Odds Ratios for Women			
Demographic characteristics												
Regions of Origin	***	***	***	***	***				**	***	***	***
New EU members	1.56***	0.12	0.11	0.18	1.78 **				3.22 **	0.22	0.19	0.78
Eastern Europe and ex-SSCB	3.13***	6.54***	6.12***	6.25***	3.76***				5.87***	4.96***	4.47***	4.31***
Western Europe	1.15	0.01	0.00	0.00	1.41				0.61	0.31	0.32	0.00
Rest of developed countries	1.22	0.10	0.26	0.24	1.63				0.12	0.00	0.01	0.46
Afro-Caribbean	0.98	1.12	1.40	1.61	1.00				1.00	0.09	0.26	0.01
Middle East	1.53 **	0.00	0.09	0.05	1.37				2.79 **	0.02	0.14	0.23
Indian Sub-continent	1.33	0.38	0.58	1.27	1.71 **				1.45	0.33	0.00	0.14
Southeast Asia												
Age	***				***	***	***	***				
16-25	1.67***				2.08***	2.02***	1.87***	2.40***				
26-35	1.39***				1.80***	2.26***	2.33***	2.55***				
36-49	1.24***				1.66***	1.70***	1.78***	1.63***				
50-65												
Marital Status												
Single (never married)	0.73 *											
Couple	0.82											
Separated												
Year of Arrival	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
2010-2007	5.18***	5.41***	5.53***	7.16***	4.66***	5.13***	4.88***	10.52***	6.99***	3.79***	3.97***	3.87***
2004-2006	1.99***	2.32***	2.37***	2.65***	1.56 **	1.60 **	1.53	2.48***	3.07***	2.15***	2.29***	1.92***
2003-2000	1.15	1.60***	1.65***	1.91***	1.01	1.21	1.21	1.57	1.40***	1.44 **	1.53***	1.51 **
1999-1990	1.28 **	1.52***	1.56***	1.92***	0.98	1.02	1.02	1.27	1.76***	1.64***	1.69***	1.97***
1989-1980	1.13	1.20	1.32 **	1.36 *	0.91	0.90	0.97	1.12	1.39 **	1.23	1.35	1.22
1979-												
British citizens		0.78***	0.74***		0.75***	0.66***	0.65***	0.68***				
Workplace characteristics												
Establishment size		***	***	***		***	***	***		***	***	***
Less than 20		2.45***	2.77***	1.74***		2.57***	2.47***	2.47		2.54***	2.50***	1.85***
20-49		1.69***	1.66***	1.23		1.96***	1.99***	1.37		1.58***	1.57***	1.19
50-249		0.95	1.05	0.85		1.00	1.00	0.26		0.87	0.99	0.85
250-499		0.87	0.97	0.92		0.62 **	0.63 **	1.29		1.26	1.30	1.55
500+												
Private Sector		3.50***	5.77***	4.03***		4.05***	4.21***	6.44***		3.31***	3.57***	3.75***
Industries		***	***	***		***	***	***		***	***	***
Energy and construction		1.90***	1.90***	2.05***		1.64	1.68	1.59				
Manufacturing		2.13***	2.13***	2.09***		1.59	1.62	1.25		1.59	2.69***	2.44***
Distribution		2.56***	2.31***	2.19***		2.13***	20.5***	1.70		2.74***	2.09***	2.86***
Hotels and restaurants		6.27***	5.74***	5.63***		5.48***	6.17***	6.04***		2.42***	4.56***	3.20***
Transport and storage		0.68	0.67 **	0.76		0.49 **	0.50***	0.35***				
Banking and insurance		4.50***	4.21***	6.30***		3.14***	3.26***	5.44***		4.95***	4.55***	6.59***
Public admin and defence		1.74***	1.76***	1.61***		1.80 **	1.88***	2.07 **		1.47	1.43	1.25
Education		1.52***	1.44***	1.27		1.59	1.60	1.12		1.45	1.33	1.31
Health (and social work)												
Flexible work												
Temporary			2.10***	2.17***			2.83***	2.88 **			1.83***	1.83***
Part-time			1.44***				3.26***	2.40***			1.52***	

Table II Continued

Work-status indicators												
Education				***								
Degree or equivalent				0.48***								
Higher education				0.48***								
GCE A Level or equiv				0.48***								
GCSE grades A-C or equiv				0.74								
No qualification												
Occupations				**					***			
Managers and Senior Officials				4.04***					5.51***			
Professional occupations				1.85***					3.63***			
Associate Prof. and Technical				1.28					1.70			
Administrative and Secretarial				2.76***								
Skilled Trades Occupations				1.38					2.01 **			
Personal Service Occupations				2.63***								
Sales and Customer Services				1.80					2.58			
Process, Plant and Machinery				0.85					1.82			
Elementary Occupations												
? df	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	7	8	8	8
-2 LLR	3792.8	2575.9	2500.2	1874.8	1769.3	1160.4	1118.6	788.0	1996.1	1384.5	1349.9	1034.4
? -2LRR		1216.9	75.7	625.4		608.9	41.8	330.6		611.6	34.6	315.5
Significance of ? -2 LRR		***	**	***		***	**	***		**		***

Source: LFS Autumn 2010, weighted

Significance of difference from reference category * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table III: Changing impacts of work-status indicators on migrant workers' non-membership

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model I	Model II	Model III
	Odds Ratios for All			Odds Ratios for Men			Odds Ratios for Women		
Education	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	**
Degree or equivalent	0.54***	0.63 **	0.59 **	0.64		1.21	0.46***		0.41
Higher education	0.28***	0.48***	0.43***	0.37***		0.54	0.25***		2.99 **
GCE A Level or equiv	0.46***	0.52***	0.48***	0.50***		2.19	0.39***		0.47
GCSE grades A-C or equiv	0.49***	0.69 **	0.67	0.54***		0.10***	0.44***		1.43
No qualification									
Occupations	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Managers and Senior Officials	2.16***	2.41***	2.49***	3.88***	3.61***	3.42***	1.51	1.09	1.05
Professional occupations	0.40***	1.06	1.12	0.80	1.90***	1.93***	0.25***	0.43***	0.42***
Associate Prof. and Technical	0.37***	0.89	0.93	0.77	1.21	1.20	0.31***	0.43***	0.43***
Administrative and Secretarial	0.85	1.94***	2.05***				0.79	0.90	0.93
Skilled Trades Occupations	1.19	0.82	0.90	1.61 *	1.14	1.14			
Personal Service Occupations	0.62***	2.02***	2.01***				0.64	1.16	1.12
Sales and Customer Services	1.49	1.14	1.17	3.56***	2.65 **	2.52	0.98	0.50	0.50
Process, Plant and Machinery	0.86	0.66	0.67	1.07	1.16	1.19			
Elementary Occupations									
? df	6	8	8	7	8	8	7	8	8
-2 LLR	3240.3	2227.9	2152.7	1473.7	980.9	924.2	1722.9	1220.0	1193.4
? -2LRR		1012.4	75.2		492.8	56.7		502.9	26.6
Significance of ? -2 LRR	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	***	***

Model 1 is only for work-status indicators; Model 2 adds workplace characteristics and Model 3 adds Flexible Work

Source: LFS Autumn 2010, weighted

Significance of difference from reference category * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Age is also an important factor on migrants workers' non-membership ($p < 0.001$), although this is essentially because of a negative correlation between age and non-membership among men, rather than women. Marital status further influences the unionisation of migrant workers, but this occurs in a limited way since only never-married singles present a relatively low non-membership (OR = 0.73, $p < 0.05$).

The year of arrival in Britain is a strong predictor of non-membership as the recent arrivals are more likely to be non-unionised ($p < 0.001$). Non-membership among those who came between 2007 and 2010 (OR = 5.18, $p < 0.001$), for example, is more than five times higher compared to those who had arrived before 1980. The impact of the time spent in Britain, however, disappears among the male migrant workers who arrived before 2004, although such an effect lasts longer among their female counterparts. Women's unionisation does not seem to be affected by their citizenship status either, whereas men are less likely to remain non-unionised after becoming British citizens (OR = 0.75, $p < 0.001$).

Bringing in three aspects of workplace characteristics, establishment size, public/private sectors and industry, Model 2 illustrates that such characteristics have significant effects on migrant workers' unionisation. To start with, establishment size strongly predicts the likelihood of non-membership regardless of gender ($p < 0.001$). In the establishments with less than 20 employees, for example, the likelihood of female (OR = 2.54, $p < 0.001$) and male (OR = 2.57, $p < 0.001$) migrant workers' non-membership is almost two and a half times higher, compared to large establishments (with 500 or more employees). Besides, the gap between public and private sector companies is more than three times for women (OR = 3.31, $p < 0.001$) and four times for men (OR = 4.05, $p < 0.001$).

Industries have marked implications for migrant workers' unionisation ($p < 0.001$) as well. In banking and insurance, for example, the likelihood migrant workers' non-membership is more than four times higher compared to health (OR = 4.50, $p < 0.001$). Public administration and defence (OR = 1.76, $p < 0.001$), in addition to education (OR = 1.74, $p < 0.001$), also predict significantly higher likelihoods of non-membership. Industrial variations have a gendered effect. The impact of public administration and

defence, for example, largely echoes a higher level of non-membership among male, rather than female, migrant workers. This helps explain the gender gap in terms of unionisation in general.

The significant role of coming from the Middle Eastern and new EU countries in addition to that of marital status and age in general disappeared in Model 2 as they actually reflect the impact of the workplace characteristics. Nevertheless, the model boosted the significance of arrival years (see the change in log-likelihood ratio in Table II).

Model 3 demonstrates the relation of flexible works to the unionisation of migrant workers. Temporary contracts predict higher levels of non-membership among both male (OR = 2.83, $p < 0.001$) and female (OR = 1.83, $p < 0.001$) migrant workers. Similarly, part-time jobs raise the likelihood of non-membership for men (OR = 3.26, $p < 0.001$) and women (OR = 1.52, $p < 0.001$). In particular, the inclusion of flexible jobs in Model 3 curtailed the significance of arrival years among men.

Model 4 includes work-status indicators to examine how the constraints stemmed from educational attainments and occupations impinge upon the chances of migrant workers to become unionised. Putting all independent variables into the analysis, the model illustrates that education and occupations are highly explanatory factors ($p < 0.001$). Migrant workers who have GCE grades A-C or above are less likely to be non-unionised, compared to those who have no qualification (OR = 0.48, $p < 0.001$). In other words, lower educational qualifications heighten the likelihood of non-membership. Even so, this is a combined effect as the model fails to detect a significant impact on men and women separately.

Model 4 suggests that, when migrant workers gain access to high-rank occupations, the likelihood of becoming non-unionised becomes greater. Migrant workers in managerial and senior positions, for example, are four times more likely to be non-unionised compared to those in elementary occupations (OR = 4.04, $p < 0.001$). To a lesser extent, similar patterns also apply to various occupations, including professional jobs (OR = 1.85, $p < 0.001$).

However, the negative correlation between occupational levels and unionisation reflects only the results for men, since the model endorses no significant impact on women. Therefore, occupational variations between male and female migrant workers' non-membership emerge as another component of the gender gap. Finally, the inclusion of work-status variables in Model 4 eradicated the significant impact of small establishments on men and that of part-time works on women.

Thus, each new model added into the analyses in Table II changed the results significantly. Considering this, miscellaneous combinations were also tried, as noted earlier, in order to see whether or not the outcomes would differ. Although the results in general barely changed, there was one exception: After swapping the work-status and demographic variables (Table III), educational impact became powerful enough to diminish the likelihood of non-membership among men and women separately. The likelihood was also curbed by professional (OR = 0.40, $p < 0.001$), associate professional/technical (OR = 0.37, $p < 0.001$) and personal service occupations (OR = 0.62, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

To rectify the lack of systematic research in Britain, we explored socio-economic challenges to the unionisation of migrant workers. An important finding is related to the gender gap since women have a higher propensity toward unionisation than men. This contradicts the conventional under-representation of women in trade unions (Sinclair, 1995). Even so, both male and female migrant workers' non-membership is significantly affected by the range of correlates analysed. Accordingly, the results presented in this paper provide evidence to help explain non-membership with a varying degree of influence among men and women. From a theoretical point of view, they also appear to support a *triple-challenge model* comprising of *encounter inputs*, *accentuated structural factors* and *knock on effects*.

In terms of *encounter inputs*, the evidence confirms that demographic factors are strong predictors of unionisation among migrant workers in line with the research findings on the relation of overall unionisation to, for example, age (Blanden and Machin 2003) and marital status (Bryson and Gomez 2005). In the case of migrant workers, these

demographic characteristics are considered to be 'brought-in' factors to the host society (Castles and Miller 1993). Regions of origin can also be added to such significant factors (Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010), especially for women. In particular, migration from the former socialist countries is among the strongest predictors of low unionisation regardless of the EU membership.

However, the strength of 'brought-in' factors weakens over time (Milkman 2007) as the evidence presented in this study points to the importance of time spent in Britain (Bell and Jarman 2004). Further, the influence of 'brought-in' factors as well as the time spent in Britain should be put against the socio-legal status offered to migrant workers by the host society (Anderson, 2010) as the acquisition of citizenry rights enhances union membership, especially among men. Correspondingly, demographic 'brought-in' factors can be taken together with the legal protections available for migrant workers right from the very beginning as two elements of *encounter inputs*. In policy terms, the notion of *encounter inputs* would help fend off the likes of 'migrant mentality' stereotypes (Pantoja and Gershon 2006).

Accentuated structural factors, first of all, refer to our findings on the implications of workplace characteristics and work contracts for the unionisation of migrant workers. As in the case of overall unionisation (Fenn and Ashby 2004; Sayce *et al* 2006), migrant workers' unionisation is rather limited in smaller establishments. An important reason for this is because the government refuses statutory recognition of trade unions in establishments with fewer than 20 employees, citing financial constraints on such businesses owing to their spatial dependency on local trade (Edwards and Ram 2006). Low union density is also a common feature in private (Prowse & Prowse 2006; Edwards 2009) and low-pay companies in general (Bacon 1999; Broughton, 2001; McKie *et al.* 2009). Nor are migrant workers an exception when it comes to detrimental impacts of temporary and part-time jobs on unionisation. An important reason why temporary (Cam *et al.* 2003) and part-time jobs (Green 1991; Millar *et al.*, 2006) are less conducive to unionisation is because the government refuses to adopt the EU directives to protect flexible workers against unfair dismissals.

However, structural factors have an accentuated impact on migrant workers. Their unionisation is distinctively moderate compared to the rest of the workforce across

various establishment sizes, public/private sectors and industries, as reported in this study. Such a situation can be attributed to *encounter inputs* in the sense that both 'brought-in' characteristics and restricted legal rights for migrant workers impede unionisation. To understand the accentuated effect of structural factors on aggregated union density, however, another factor should also be taken on board: Migrant workers are disproportionately located in unfavourable work settings for unionisation such as private, smaller and low-pay companies as well as temporary jobs, as we have evidenced. In theoretical terms, these findings on *accentuated structural factors* in general, as well as the ones on *encounter inputs*, further challenge rational choice approaches (Ebbinghaus and Visser 1999) in the specific case of migrant workers.

As for the *knock-on effects*, our analyses highlighted that work-status indicators, educational and occupational levels positively correlate with unionisation among both male and female migrant workers, with the exception of top managers and senior officials. Such results reinforce previous research findings on the implications of education (Hundley 1988) and occupations (Hodson 2005; Snape and Bamber 1989) for unionisation in general.

However, the evidence presented in this paper also suggests that the effects of work-status indicators on the unionisation of migrant workers are eradicated or reversed by *encounter inputs* and *accentuated structural factors*. Positive impacts of GCSE grades A-C (or equivalent), for example, are eradicated by *accentuated structural factors*. That is, migrant workers with these qualifications are disproportionately located in private, smaller and low-pay establishments with flexible contracts at the expense of unionisation. Further, once the pressure of *encounter inputs* is added, the positive effect of work status indicators on unionisation may turn out to become a negative one. In other words, inadequate legal protections for recently arrived migrant workers, for example, repress unionisation among professionals down to a significantly low level, compared to their citizen counterparts in elementary jobs.

Broadly speaking, the *triple-challenge model* along with its three components, *encounter inputs*, *accentuated structural factors* and *knock-on effects* offers a well-fitting frame for the examined obstacles behind migrant workers' unionisation. It is also important to note that the *triple-challenge model* appears to be a general pattern, rather

than a cyclical effect. When we run the same analysis with the LFS data from 2006, for example, the model remained intact by and large (LFS, 2006).

Since the beginning of the recession, there was an increase in the proportion of non-unionised migrant workers, especially in the private service sector companies characterised by low pay and low unionisation. Recent government initiatives to toughen migration and visa controls may also lead to a further rise in non-unionisation by deteriorating the sense of job security among migrant workers (Anderson 2010). If migrant workers are to be deployed sustainably in combating the current economic downturn, it is necessary for companies to cooperate with trade unions representing the workers in the lower ends of the labour market. For this, it might prove useful to address, for example, managerial reservations about becoming engaged in communication with trade unions (Butler, 2009). Union renewal efforts among migrant workers should also be synergised with wider debates on alternative organising strategies (Simms and Holgate 2010).

The relation of non-membership among migrant workers to flexible jobs and lower work status in general renders it an explorable area for the students of precarious employment both empirically and conceptually (Kalleberg 2009; Pape 2008). There is also a need for specific analyses to examine the relationship between migrant workers' unionisation and potentially important issues which are not included in this study such as job satisfaction and the selection of union representatives (Charlwood 2004). Further, it would be useful to conduct qualitative research for an in-depth understanding of the ways in which variations in unionisation are informed by, for instance, limited commitment to organising from the union leadership (Heery and Simms 2008).

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