

Working Paper 80



**ETHNICISATION OF TEMPORARY JOBS IN
BRITAIN**

Surhan Cam

ISBN 1-904815-46-4

Abstract

This paper will analyse the nature and development of the 'ethnicisation of temporary jobs' in Britain, drawing on the data obtained from the Workplace and Employment Relations Survey and Labour Force Survey. To discuss the process of ethnicisation, first a growth in the proportion of temporary employment among the BME communities and migrant workers will be analysed along with comparisons to the white British workers. Then, the shift of temporary jobs in recent years toward such groups will be explored. In particular, the paper will analyse the disadvantages of BME communities and migrant workers in temporary jobs with regard to pay, unionisation, workload, training opportunities and job satisfaction.

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Introduction

Temporary contracts are usually considered a central element in labour market flexibility that enables employers to lay off workers without incurring statutory redundancy payments or restrictions imposed by employment rights legislation. Using empirical evidence, scholars have also confirmed that, despite a certain level of bifurcation, temporary jobs are generally undesirable when compared to permanent employment. Temporary workers have lower levels of job satisfaction, receive less training and are paid less (Burchell et al, 1999; Booth et al 2000; Booth et al 2002; Cam et al, 2003).

Whilst the Labour government enthusiastically advocated labour flexibility, especially in the end of the previous millennium, it was widely expected that there would be upward trends in temporary employment (Burchell et al, 1999; Forde, 2001). However, the proportion of workforce in such jobs has remained relatively low and stable as will be discussed later. Partly for this reason, scholarly attention to temporary employment has declined to certain degree in recent years, with the exception of few studies on agency work (e.g. Forde and Slater 2006). Meanwhile, however, what might be perceived as a process of the ‘ethnicisation of temporary jobs’ has largely fallen outside the focus of academic research.

In Britain, as elsewhere in Europe, the employment of migrant workers since the latter half of the nineteenth century has been an essential contributor to the process of industrialization and capital accumulation. Migrant workers served as a substitute for capital investment on the one hand, and facilitated investment by enabling the reduction of labour costs on the other.

Commentators often underlined that migrant labour provided a ‘reserve army’ recruited as replacement workers in the least desirable jobs to fill the ‘vacuum’ created by the mobility of indigenous workers in the presence of full employment and the increasing demand for qualified labour generated by technological progress.

Civil rights activists had waged a difficult yet constructive struggle to urge governments to start to recognise certain socio-economic rights of migrant workers. In the UK, employment equity legislation was initially introduced during the 1970s and has been gradually expanded to include more groups and to cover more aspects of employment. A distinctive feature was the existence of separate legislation covering race as well as sex, religion and disability, together with separate enforcement bodies. As the new generations of ‘ethnic minorities’ emerged from within migrant communities, they had been granted citizenry rights.

However, such historical developments have begun to be challenged by counter waves in recent years amidst a general escalation in discrimination and racism (Beynon and Kushnick, 2003; Verkaik, 2006). Growing number of asylum seekers, the atrocity of 9/11, the expansion of European Union and the London bombings have been used as a pretext by racist propensities to hamper the social status of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BMEs)¹ together with migrant populations in general. In the case of labour market, in

¹ The term Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BMEs) reflects a growing sensitivity among policy makers, campaigners and researchers in recent years about the use of right concepts to refer to people belong to various ethnic origins different from the ‘main stream’. The term is frequently, and controversially, used to cover all or any of non-white communities, migrant populations and non-British white populations. In this paper, we will use the term BMEs only to refer to ‘non-white’ populations specified in Table 2 since there is no consensus about the inclusion of other categories (GLA, 2004).

particular, headlines were littered with the likes of 'foreign invaders are stealing our jobs'. The hardships that workers from BME communities and new comers faced were given little press coverage.

Conventional studies into BMEs had mostly focused on culture and community dimensions, including multi-culturalism, discrimination and exclusions.² Influential studies on labour market, on the other hand, had largely been confined to self-employment (Ram, 1992) and unemployment (Gallie, D 1994). Over time, the scope of labour market studies has noticeably expanded toward 'entrepreneurship', especially in the face of the growing number of migrant investors (Ram et al 2001). Migration has also boosted the research into asylum seekers (Hayter, 2004) and more recently, few researchers have begun to investigate migrant workers with regard to semi-compliant, low paid and forced labour in domestic work (Anderson, 2006), hospitality (Anderson et al, 2006), au-per sector (Ruhs and Anderson, 2006), agriculture and sex industry (Anderson and Rogaly, 2005).

This paper aims to study the disadvantages of BMEs and migrant workers within the context of the ethnicisation of temporary jobs in Britain. The nature and development of the 'ethnicisation of temporary jobs' will be analysed by using the data retrieved from WERS 1998, WERS 2004 and LFS 2005. First, a growth in the proportion of temporary employment among BME communities and migrant workers will be analysed along with comparisons to the white British workers. Then, the shift of temporary jobs in recent years to BME groups and migrant workers will be explored. In particular, the paper will

² For a discussion on the emphasis of conventional ethnic studies on cultural aspects, see Bradley and Fenton 1999.

benefit from a new question introduced in WERS 2004 and LFS about 'other white' populations, especially in order to highlight the relation of temporary jobs to the new comers such as Eastern European, Turkish and Kurdish immigrants. The paper will also analyse the disadvantages of BME groups and migrant workers in temporary jobs in terms of a number of issues including pay, unionisation, workload, training opportunities and job satisfaction (Statistical analyses are based on logistic and loglinear regressions).

Temporary Jobs in Britain

When the Labour government came to power in 1997, it argued that one of the major challenges the country had faced was the promotion of labour flexibility (Sly and Stillwell, 1997), whilst a high level of labour productivity in the United States was claimed to have most benefited from labour flexibility (Kay et al, 2003). In an attempt to boost labour flexibility, the labour government rejected the EU directives designed to save temporary workers from unfair treatments. Although it has finally decided to uphold the aims of the directives through a draft piece of legislation in September 2005, the draft has been shelved later. This was not least because of the reservations of business circles about the directives as often expressed by the Confederation of British Industrialists (CBI) and the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC).

Table 1: Permanent and Temporary Jobs

		WERS'98	WERS'04	
		As % of Total Employment in Britain		
Permanent		92.1	92.0	
Temporary		7.7	8.0	
	Temporary - with no agreed end date	4.4	5.0	
	Fixed-term	3.3	3.1	
Other/multi coded		.2	.0	
Total		100.0	100.0	

Figures are weighted and based on responses from 28,072 (column 1) and 22,347 (Column 2) employees

The Trade Unions Confederation (TUC) maintained that the introduction of proper regulations in order to protect the rights of temporary workers would not only benefit employees but also companies by heading off public scepticism about temporary jobs and, hence, paving the way for an increased labour flexibility (TUC, 2006a). Notably, in countries such as France, Italy and Spain which are characterised by high levels of employment protection, there was a marked growth in temporary jobs after the mid-Nineties (Bergstrom, 2003). The TUC's position on the issue was also backed by the fact that the occasional attempts of governments in the continent to reduce employee rights in the name of labour flexibility sparked popular resistance, as witnessed in France, for example, in 2006.

Even so, the Labour government and business bodies in Britain have not been impressed by the TUC's campaign for a greater recognition of employee rights in temporary jobs, but their opposition to the EU directives did not help increase labour flexibility either. As can be seen from Table 1, there was only a slight increase in the proportion of temporary employment in total employment since the late Nineties, from 7.7% in 1998 to 8% in 2004 (This

growth stemmed from temporary jobs with no agreed end date, whereas fixed-term jobs have residually declined). Meanwhile, however, there was a process ethnicisation in temporary jobs.

BME Groups at Work

As Beynon and Kushnick underlined in 2003, Britain has increasingly begun to reinvent racism in social and political terms (Beynon and Kushnick, 2003). The growing number of suicide cases in detention centres for asylum seekers, for example, has often eluded the press, but most of the newspaper columnists campaigned for what critics dubbed as ‘Fortress Europe’ (Hayter, 2004). Notably, especially during the time of David Blanket in Home Office, the Labour government introduced draconian measures against ‘the swamp of foreigners’, including the denial of asylum seekers’ right to work in 2002.

Table 2: Ethnic Composition of Employment in Britain

			WERS'98	WERS'04
			As % of total employment in Britain	
White			96.0	93.7
Non-White			4.0	6.3
	Black		1.3	1.8
		Black Caribbean	.7	.7
		African	.4	1.0
		Black other	.2	.1
	Asian		1.5	3.1
		Indian	1.2	1.8
		Pakistani	.3	.6
		Bangladeshi	.1	.1
	Chinese		.2	.3
	Mixed		n.a	.9
	Multi coded		n.a	.2
	Other ethnic groups		.9	n.a
Total			100.0	100.0

Figures are weighted and based on responses from 28,075 (column 1) and 22,196 (column 2) employees

At a wider context, the attitudes of the government and business circles to BME groups at work were not always straightforward. As in the case of labour flexibility, policy makers claimed to follow the US as a role model for boosting labour productivity by promoting diversity at work. The diversity-friendly rhetoric of the government heightens from time to time, especially when the companies with high level of workers from BME communities report good financial performances. A popular example for such incidents was the case of B&Q which claimed that its profit rates in 2004 had been much helped by the age and ethnic diversity of employees (ECRDF, 2005). Following this, the Ethnic Minorities Employment Task Force, a government-funded think-tank, announced that the Department for Trade and Industry would consider prioritising the firms with ethnically diversified work force in contracting out public services (EMETF, 2005).

However, the British government has never brought itself to the point of introducing affirmative action policies as in the US. Notably, the BCC argued that a regulatory pressure on contractor firms to employ workers from BME groups would not help the competitiveness of companies (Syal, 2006). Such reservations can help understand why Britain is not a match to the US where official statistics classify nearly one third of the labour force as non-white (ERP, 2005). This proportion is below 7% in Britain (Table 2), and it is down to less than 6% in the case of permanent jobs (See, Appendix 1). Nor do the figures presented in the table indicate a considerable growth trend under the Labour government. Nevertheless, the picture changes once temporary employment is considered, especially after adding 'other whites' into analysis.

Temporary Employment and BME Groups

As noted earlier, existing discussions over the precarious nature of the jobs filled by the BME groups are largely based on anecdotal evidences, but a limited academic attention has recently been paid to the issue. In particular, the segregation of BME groups in geographical terms – mostly as a reflection of the high concentration of such populations in cities like Birmingham and London – has begun to be documented systematically (Green et al, 2005). Against this background, although the over representation of BME groups in temporary jobs had been evidenced up until recent years (Cam et al, 2003), there is a lack of systematic research into the current situation.

Table 3: Temporary Employment in Different Ethnic Groups (As % of all workers in each ethnic group)

			WERS'98	Base for Weighting (N=)	WERS'04	Base for Weighting (N=)
Temporary Employment						
White			7.5	26799	7.6	20,802
Non-Whites			11.1	1,137	16.7 ^{***}	1,312
	Black		9.5	418	13.4	359
		Black Caribbean	4.5	216	9.3	150
		African	14.9	133	18.1	188
		Black other	13.8	69	n.a	21
	Asian		12.3	398	13.4	642
		Indian	7.8	297	11.9	369
		Pakistani	29.5	88	20.7	111
		Bangladeshi	.0	13	16.7	24
		Other Asian	n.a	n.a	10.9	138
	Chinese		29.1	47	21.2	66
	Mixed		n.a	n.a	13.2	189
	Multi coded		16.7	5	n.a	54
	Another ethnic group		7.7	269	14.3	56

*** Significant relation at the 0.01 level (Logistic Regression)

A historical comparison in Table 3 shows that temporary employment was higher among non-white populations in the end of the Nineties compared to

the white populations: more than 11 percent in 1998, whereas this proportion was below 8% for the latter. In the following years, this gap has widened and, although the figure for the white population has not changed substantially, it rose to 16.7% among non-white populations according to the WERS'04 findings. This implies that, in recent years, ethnicity has become a statistically significant predictor about the likelihood of becoming a temporary worker.

Table 4: Ethnic Composition of Temporary Jobs in Britain (As % of Total)

		WERS'98	WERS'04
		As % of all temporary Workers in Britain	
White		94.2	87.5
Non-Whites		5.8	12.5
	Black	1.6	2.8
	Black Caribbean	.4	.8
	African	.8	2.0
	Black other	.4	n.a
	Asian	2.5	5.0
	Indian	1.2	2.6
	Pakistani	1.3	1.3
	Bangladeshi	.0	.2
	Any other Asian	n.a	.9
	Chinese	.7	.8
	Other	.9	.5
	Mixed	n.a	1.5
	Multi coded	.0	n.a
Total		100.0	100.0

Figures are weighted and based on responses from 2,014 (Column 1) and 1,723 (Column 2) employees

The growth in the proportion of temporary employment among BME groups has also had implications for the ethnic composition of temporary employment in Britain. Table 4 indicates that, in-between the last two surveys of WERS, there had been a considerable growth in the contribution of non-white populations to temporary employment, up from less than 6% in WERS'98 to 12.5% in WERS'04. What follows will provide a bigger picture regarding the

changing ethnic characteristics of temporary jobs in Britain by adding ‘other whites’ into account.

Further Beyond ‘Black and White’

‘Ethnic minorities’ are far removed from being homogenous with regard to their socio-economic status in society. Scholars have long pointed, for example, to the fact that unemployment levels vary from one group to another among BME groups (Beishon et al, 1998; Berthoud, 1999). Likewise, they are heterogeneous in terms of poverty/low-income status (Berthoud, 1998; Dorsett, 1998).

In recent years, the idea of a single white community has also begun to be questioned in Britain as well as in different countries, such as the US (Fine et al, 1997). In terms of official labour market statistics, in particular, it took up until recent years for the government to recognise the existence of different white populations. Before then, the disadvantages of worse-off ethnic groups among white communities had been virtually buried within the aggregated statistics of official ‘white’ category, as witnessed in the case of Irish populations (Condon, 2006).

Over the last few years, official surveys have increasingly begun to be recalibrated in order to highlight the socio-economic status of different white populations. Various surveys attempted to produce information about the differences within white populations by providing an additional option of ‘other white’ for the respondents (For an example, see Appendix 2).

Such a move resonates with on-going changes in the ethnic composition of populations in Britain which put further strain on the ‘imagined community’ of a homogeneous white population. A long-standing example for this was the growing number of Turkish/Kurdish migrants in Britain since the mid-Eighties, currently estimated up to half a million (Olay, 2005). Empirical data about these immigrants, too, had been buried within the aggregated statistics of white populations (Kucukcan, 1999).

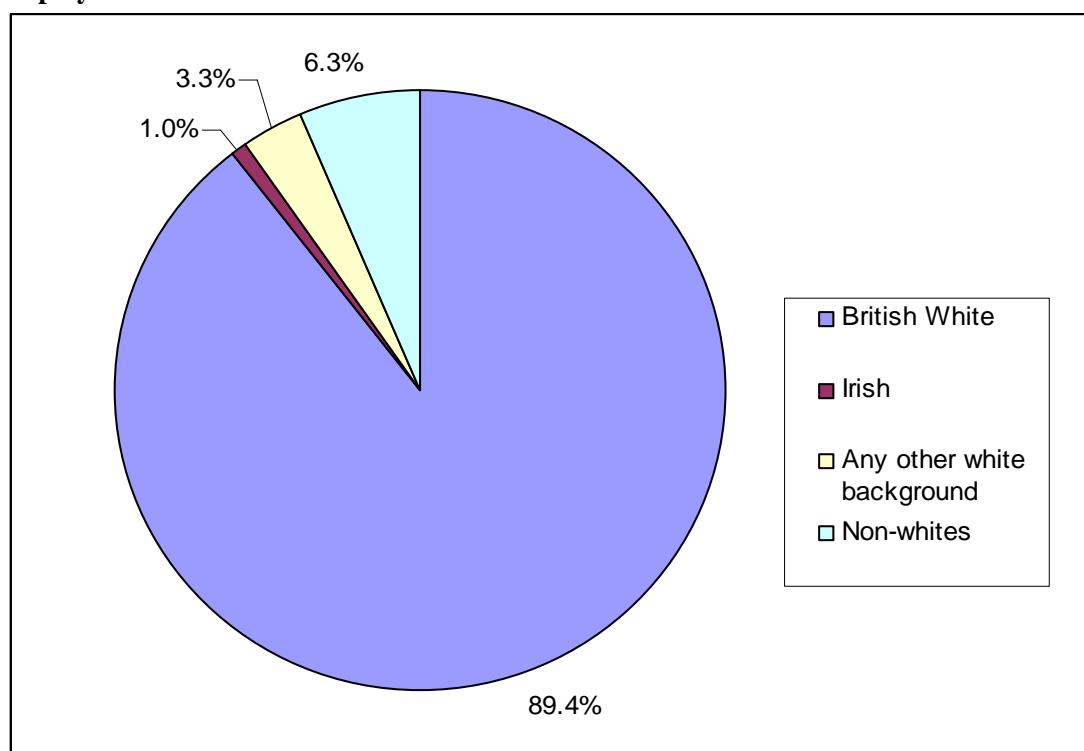
The enlargement of European Union toward Eastern Europe and Cyprus in May 2004 has given another momentum to the growth in the number of ‘other white’ migrants in the UK. On the eve of expansion, many columnists from spreadsheet newspapers as well as tabloids had argued that the labour market in Britain would crumble because of the influx of Eastern Europeans. Yet the government did not step back and, on the contrary, it insisted on ‘open door’ policy together with only two more countries in Europe, the Netherlands and Italy. The economic rationale for the government has soon become evident: the EU migrants made remarkable contributions to the economy, over £5 billion from May 2004 to August 2006 (Grice and Brown, 2006: 2).

Despite their significant contributions to the economy, the number of EU migrants was far less than being a ‘threat’. The latest quarterly report of *Accession Monitoring* published by the Home Office in August 2006 has indicated that 600 thousand migrants came to the UK after the EU enlargement (Home Office, 2006).³

³ For a discussion over growing ethnic diversities in Britain, see Vertovec, 2006

Once the statistics of such 'other white' groups are taken together with those of non-whites, one can see in a clearer way the extent to which Britain still remains as a closed society to ethnic varieties. Figure 1 shows that the share of white British workers (as opposed to the workers from non-white, Irish, any other white background) is almost 90% -This proportion is also slightly higher in the case of permanent jobs as can be seen in Appendix 3.

Figure 1: The share of White British, 'Other White' and Non-white Populations in total employment



Figures are weighted and based on 22196 responses

Source: WERS 2004 (WERS'04 covers the period until May 2005, and therefore, the data over the first year of migration from Eastern Europe after the EU enlargement).

Even so, as the next stage of EU expansion in January 2007 draws closer, the press coverage in Britain has yet again become obsessed with xenophobic news. This time, however, they have strong allies. Populist politicians, especially within the Conservative Party also try to capitalise on such trends by arguing, for example, that the government should curb migration in order to avoid political backlashes (BBC, 2006a). No less significant, the CBI also

claimed that the flood of migrant workers from Bulgaria and Romania would create a crisis in NHS and housing. In order to prevent such dangers, the CBI suggests the government introduce restrictions on migration (Guardian, 2006).

However, the evidence on the burden of EU migrants on the welfare system does not lend any support to the hurrah of scare mongering, since the dependants of these migrants in Britain are no more than 35,000 (BBC, 2006b). Many of the dependants were also reported to have made contributions to the economy by working in informal or semi-compliant jobs (Ruhs and Anderson, 2006). In particular, after the next expansion of the EU, the total number of migrant workers from Bulgaria and Romania is expected to be no more than 50,000 since most of them are likely to go to Southern Europe in order to join their already settled relatives (Travis, 2006).

The defence of public services by the CBI appears to be an attempt to scapegoat migrant communities in response to a recent demand by the TUC to raise corporate taxes to the EU average in order to fund public services. John Cridland, CBI deputy director-general dismissed the TUC's call as 'from another planet' (AccountancyAge, 2006). Such a reactionary attitude should also be put into perspective within the present aura of rising tensions between the representatives of businesses and workers about migrant workers in temporary jobs. Notably, the TUC conference in 2006 put this issue on top of its agenda and urged the government to take action to protect the rights of migrant workers in temporary jobs (TUC, 2006b).

Crucially, trade unions are not only worried about the situation of the EU migrants, but also all other migrant workers in temporary jobs; and such

concerns are given much political significance by the widespreadness of temporary jobs among the immigrants in general. Speaking in sociological terms, it is rather controversial to draw strict lines between migrant and 'ethnic minority' communities on the basis of a specific time period (Bell et al, 2004). However, the Labour Force Survey enables us to explore temporary employment in different ethnic groups by various arrival years to the UK. As can be seen in Table 5, the year of arrival is a significant predictor of temporary employment.

Table 5: Temporary employment as Percentages of Total Employment in Each Ethnic Category by the Year of Arrival to the UK

	White British***		Non-white***		Other white***		All Ethnic Minorities***	
	%	(N=) ^a	%	(N=)	%	(N=)	%	(N=)
Before 1986	5.4	683	4.7	825	5.5	288	4.9	1113
1986-1995	7.1	128	8.0	405	8.0	250	8.0	655
1996 -2000	5.5	59	9.8	326	10.9	257	10.3	583
2001 - 2003	11.5	45	16.5	406	14.4	294	15.6	700
2004	n.a ^b		18.7	128	22.5	161	20.9	289
2005	n.a		15.4 ^c	73	29.9	185	24.3	258

LFS, 2005

^a: Number of Sample for weighting

^b: Not available due to small sample size

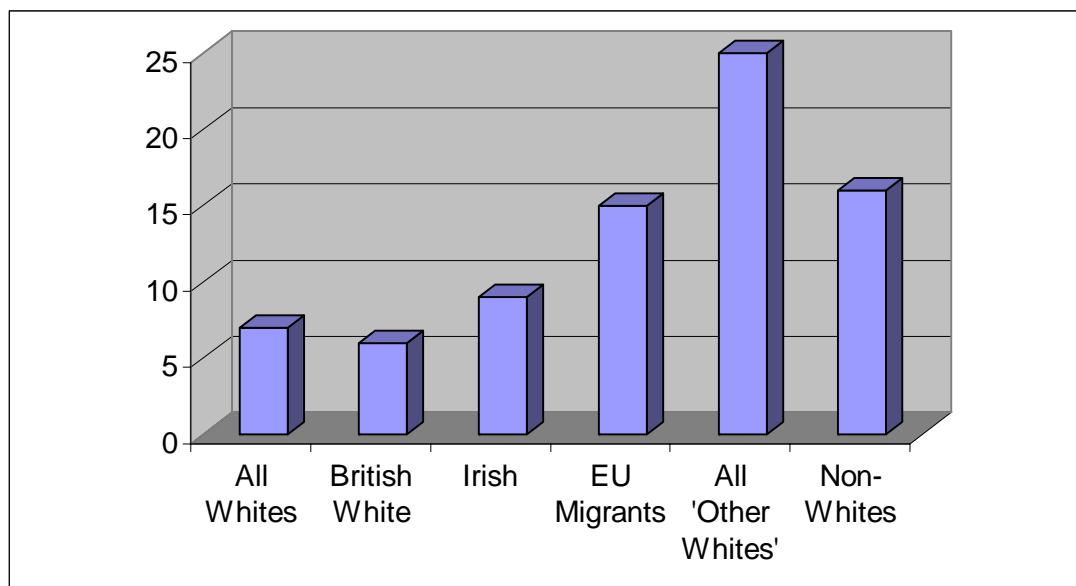
^c: This low proportion arguably due to the growing number of Eastern Europeans in temporary jobs, is excluded from the statistical analysis

*** Significant at the 0.01 level (Log Linear analysis)

In particular, the table shows that the highest level of temporary employment is among 'other white' populations arrived to the UK in 2005, with almost 30%. This should be put against circa 5% average for employees across all ethnic categories who had arrived to the UK before the mid-Eighties. Another result of the analysis is that there is a significantly negative correlation between the likelihood of temporary employment and the year of arrival to the UK in the case of the white British population as well. Nevertheless, Figure 2 indicates

that temporary employment among the white British population is clearly lower on average than it is among other groups.

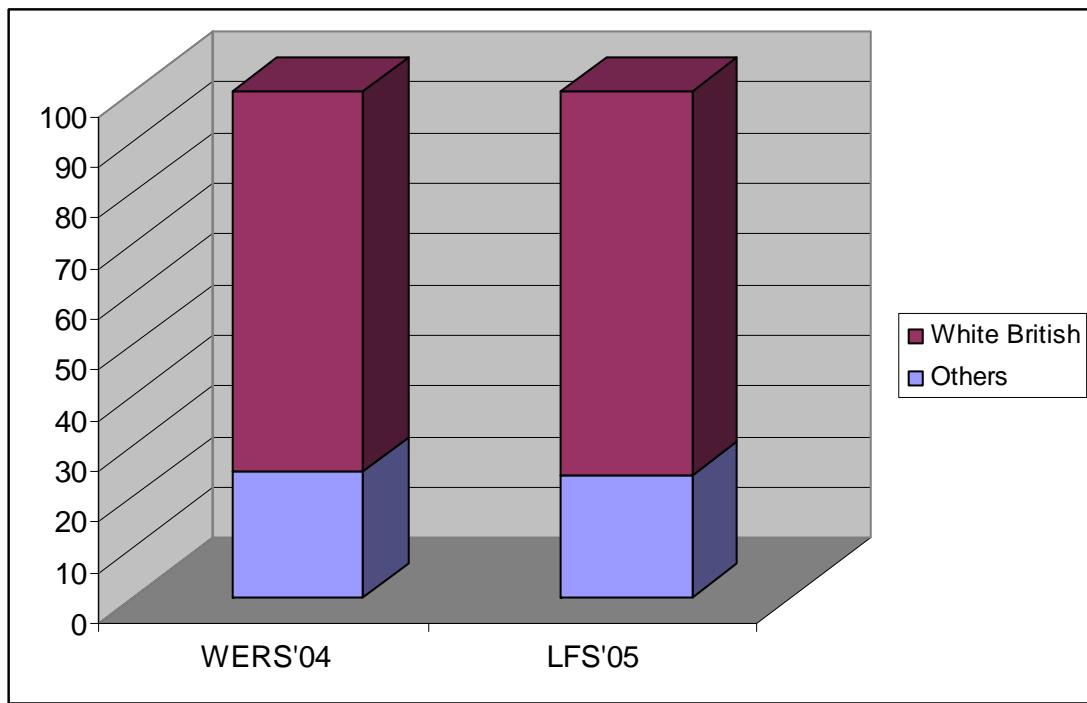
Figure 2: Temporary Employment in Different Ethnic Groups (As % of all workers in each group)



Figures are weighted and based on responses from 20,879 (White); 19,914 (British White); 213 (Irish); 817 (EU Migrants); 681 (Any other White background) and 1,417 (Non-whites)
Source: WERS'04 & LFS Autumn 2005 (For the EU Migrants)

Having considered the high level of temporary jobs among non-whites compared to the white workers, and the high level of temporary jobs among 'other whites' compared to the white British, it is now necessary to make a distinction between the contribution of white British workers and the rest of the workforce to temporary employment in order to see the full extent of ethnicisation in temporary jobs.

Figure 3: Ethnic Composition of Temporary Jobs (As % of all temporary workers in Britain)



*Figures are weighted and based on responses from 1723 (column 1) and 7157 (column 1) employees
Sources: WERS 2004 and LFS Autumn, 2005*

As illustrated in Table 4, the contribution of ‘non-whites’ to temporary jobs has doubled to 12.5% between the WERS’98 and WERS’04, but this proportion goes up to a quarter of all temporary workers once the data are split between white British and ‘others’ (Figure 3).⁴ Notably, this high proportion is also confirmed by a comparable analysis of the data retrieved from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).⁵

In what follows, we will provide a comprehensive analysis of BME groups and migrant workers in temporary jobs with regard to their economic and

⁴ Historical comparisons on the basis of this combined figure as such is not possible because of the lack of ‘other white’ option in previous labour surveys in Britain.

⁵ Since the results of WERS’04 are based on the companies with ten or more employees, one might expect the LFS result to be higher, assuming that small and medium-sized establishments, in general, tend to have higher proportions of temporary employees and workers with different backgrounds from the white British. However, the companies with ten or less employees, in particular, do not substantially differ from national averages, 6.8% and 7.7%, respectively (LFS, 2005).

demographic characteristic as well as the disadvantages they encounter in such jobs.

Demographic and Economic Characteristics

As underlined earlier, ‘ethnic minorities’ are far removed from being a single and homogenous entity. However, this does not mean that their general disadvantages could be ignored. Notably, although unemployment levels vary from one group to another among BME groups, it is much higher on average among all BME groups than the white population (Chahal, 2000). Likewise, although BME groups are not homogeneous in terms of low-income status, the research also points to the fact that BME groups are economically more disadvantaged in general than the white population (Platt and Noble, 1999; Oxfam 2003).

In the case of temporary jobs, on the other hand, both aggregated and specific comparisons of ethnic groups suggest that BME groups and migrant workers are unexceptionally over represented in such jobs as discussed earlier. Even so, it is practically impossible to develop consistent analyses on specific ethnic groups with regard to either their economic and demographic characteristic or disadvantages, because of the lack of large enough sample size in available surveys. Therefore, we will provide a combined analysis of BME and migrant groups including non-British white workers (hereafter abbreviated as BMEM groups for practical purposes) in temporary jobs.

Over the past few decades, women have gained access to the labour market roughly on a par with men. Yet scholars had underlined that their jobs were

considerably segregated with regard to managerial, occupational and industrial lines as well as part-time and temporary status (Avshar and Maynard, 1995; Hakim 2000). The data extracted from WERS'04 suggest that women still have a higher share in temporary jobs to a statistically significant level, circa 58% (Table 6). In permanent jobs, however, gender difference is less pronounced. Further, since this overall pattern essentially repasts itself within both white British and BMEM workers, it is not possible to talk about a statistically significant effect of ethnicity on gender composition at work.

Table 6: Gender Composition (Percentages)

	Male	Female	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent				
White British	46.8	53.2	100.0	18444
BMEM ^a	46.9	53.1	100.0	1882
All Permanent	46.8	53.2	100.0	20326
Temporary				
White British	41.9	58.1	100.0	1414
BMEM	43.9	56.1	100.0	305
All Temporary	42.2	57.8***	100.0	1719

^a: Black, Minority Ethnic and Migrant populations (including non-British whites)

Source: WERS'04

***Significant relation at the 0.01 level (Logistic Regression)

Previous research had highlighted that temporary workers tend to be younger than permanent ones (Purcell and Purcell, 1998). Considering this, it would be useful to have a glance at the age structure of temporary workers from BMEM groups along with comparisons to white British workers. Notably, Table 7 demonstrates that nearly 40% of temporary workers are aged between 16 and 29 years old whereas this proportion is half less for permanent workers. That is, the type of jobs (temporary or permanent) appears to be a statistically significant factor on the age composition of employees.

Likewise, ethnicity is also affecting the age composition of employees significantly in both temporary and permanent jobs. Notably, although the proportion of workers aged between 16 and 29 years old is 37% among the white British in temporary jobs, this proportion goes up to one in two among BMEM workers (whilst less than 10% of them appear to be aged 50 and over).

Table 7: Age Composition (Percentages)

	Aged between 16 and 29	Aged between 30 and 49	Aged 50 and over	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent					
White British	19.2	52.8	28.1	100.0	18,460
BMEM	27.4***	54.4	18.2	100.0	1,885
All Permanent	19.9	52.9	27.2	100.0	20,345
Temporary					
White British	37.0	39.0	24.1	100.0	1,412
BMEM	48.9***	41.6	9.5	100.0	305
All Temporary	39.1***	39.4	21.5	100.0	1,717

Source: WERS'04

*** Significant relation at the 0.01 level (Logistic Regression)

Migrant workers in picking fields sometimes attract the attention of press because of ‘difficult working conditions in dirty jobs that we do not want’. Or Polish migrants are mocked as ‘plumbers’ on comic television programmes. However, there is a lack of systematic information about the industrial distribution of BMEM workers in temporary jobs. As displayed in Table 8, the largest concentration of these workers takes place in health, social services and education, 18.4% and 15.7% respectively. These are followed by 13.1% in wholesale, retail and motor trade; and circa 10% in manufacturing, real estate, renting and business activities. Such distributions, however, hardly render BMEM workers in temporary jobs different from the rest of workers in Britain.

Only health and social services present an exception to certain degree where ethnicity appears to be a significant factor on the industrial distribution of temporary employment; although 18.4% of temporary workers from BMEM groups are employed, the figure is down to 12.3% for the white British temporary workers. This is largely in line with a recent growth in the number of migrant workers, especially in conventionally gender-segregated jobs such as nursing and caring (Anderson, 2006).

Table 8: Industrial Distribution (Percentages)

	Permanent			Temporary		
	White British	BME M	All Permanent	White British	BMEM	All Temporary
Agriculture, hunting & forestry	.8	.4	.7	.7	.5	.7
Fishing	.0	.0	.0		.2	.0
Mining, quarrying	.5	.3	.4	.5	.3	.4
Manufacturing	14.7	13.0	14.5	9.0	10.9	9.5
Electricity gas & water supply	.7	.4	.7	.5	.5	.5
Construction	6.0	4.3	5.7	4.4	3.3	4.2
Wholesale, retail & motor trade	15.7	14.6	15.5	10.2	13.1	10.9
Hotels & restaurants	3.7	6.0	4.0	7.2	8.1	7.4
Transport, storage & communication	7.0	7.1	7.0	5.2	4.7	5.1
Financial intermediation	4.8	4.7	4.8	2.5	3.0	2.6
Real estate, renting & business activities	10.0	10.9	10.1	9.9	10.7	10.1
Public administration & defence	8.1	9.1	8.2	7.4	5.6	7.0
Education	9.8	8.5	9.6	22.2	15.7	20.7
Health & social work	13.4	16.2	13.8	12.3	18.4**	13.8
Other community, social & personal	4.7	3.9	4.6	7.6	4.2	6.8
Private households with employees	.2	.3	.2	.1	.8	.3
Extra-territorial organisations, bodies	.0	.2	.0	.0		.0
Workplace outside UK	.0	.1	.0	.0	.2	.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base for Weighting (N=)	39552	6499	46051	2090	642	2732

** Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

SIC, 2003

Source: LFS, Autumn 2005

In an attempt to address skill shortage in Britain, the Labour government initiated a scheme for ‘Highly Skilled Migrants’ in 2002. The scheme aimed to make it easier for migrants with high skills to obtain work permit and to remain in the country for certain periods, if they can prove that they are seeking a new job after the end of work contracts in their previous jobs. This policy has probably contributed to a higher proportion of professional occupations among BMEM workers in temporary jobs, over 22%, compared to less than 12% for white British workers in permanent jobs (Table 9). Even so, because of the lack of systematic research into the issue of over qualification, we do not know to what extent this figure implies that such workers are actually employed in high skill-requiring jobs.⁶

Temporary workers from BMEM groups, on the other hand, are considerably polarised in terms of occupational distribution. The second highest category among such groups is elementary occupations, nearly 20%. This high concentration in elementary occupations should be compared to again less than 12% for white British workers in permanent jobs. However, a polarisation in terms of the distribution of temporary jobs between high and low skilled occupations also applies to white British workers in temporary jobs, though to a slightly lesser extent.

⁶ For some observations on the over qualification of migrant workers in the East of England, see MacKay and Winkelmann-Gleed, 2005

Table 9: Occupational Distribution (Percentages)

	Permanent			Temporary		
	White British	BMEM	All Permanent	White British	BMEM	All Temporary
Managers and Senior Officials	15.6	12.0	15.1	4.3	4.1	4.2
Professional occupations	11.7	14.7	12.2	18.9	22.4	19.7**
Associate Professional and Technical	14.2	15.1	14.3	12.2	9.9	11.7
Administrative and Secretarial	13.9	12.5	13.7	15.1	12.2	14.4
Skilled Trades Occupations	8.9	7.8	8.8	6.0	5.0	5.8
Personal Service Occupations	8.0	7.8	8.0	10.5	8.7	10.1
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	8.5	9.5	8.6	8.2	12.3	9.2
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	7.7	7.5	7.6	6.3	5.7	6.2
Elementary Occupations	11.5	13.0	11.7	18.4	19.7	18.7**
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Base for Weighting (N=)	39552	6499	46051	2090	642	2732

**Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

SOC, 2003

Source: LFS, Autumn 2005

The following part will explore the disadvantaged positions of temporary workers from BMEM groups along with comparisons to permanent workers and white British workers. We will address, pay, unionisation, training, workload, and job satisfaction issues.

Ethnicised Disadvantages in Temporary Jobs

Through the analysis of available survey data, this section will show that BMEM groups in general are subjected to more disadvantaged positions in temporary jobs when compared to their white British counterparts in Britain. Ethnic gaps are also the case in permanent jobs, but BMEM workers in temporary jobs are in the most disadvantaged position. This produces further substance to the growing concerns of the ILO over the working conditions of temporary migrant workers all around the World (Rush, 2005).

It had been documented up until the first couple of years of the new millennium that, despite a certain level of bifurcation, temporary employees were less paid on average compared to permanent workers (Booth et al, 2002). Although limited, there was also research into earnings inequalities in temporary jobs on the basis of ethnic differences (Cam et al, 2003). There is, however, a lack of systematic research into recent developments in earnings inequalities despite widespread claims, mostly based on anecdotal evidence, that migrant workers in general are paid much less than national averages (Riddell, 2006).

The evidence provided in Table 10 suggests that the type of job is a statistically significant predictor in understanding the likelihood of being in the lowest layer of earnings band specified in the table, £5 or below per hour. Workers from white British and BMEM backgrounds in temporary jobs are twice more likely to be paid £5 or below per hour compared to their counterparts in permanent jobs. The role of the type of jobs is also evident in a higher category of earnings, £5.01-£14.99 per hour.

Table 10: Hourly pay (Percentages)

	£5.00 or below	£5.01-£14.99	£15.00 or more	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent					
White British	11.4	74.7	13.9	100.0	16,624
BMEM	14.2	71.3	14.6	100.0	1,676
All Permanent	11.7	74.4	14.0	100.0	18,300
Temporary					
White British	23.7	64.0	11.2	100.0	1,290
BMEM	29.9**	57.8**	13.3	100.0	270
All Temporary	25.5***	62.9***	11.5	100.0	1,560

*** Significant at the 0.01 level; **Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

Source: WERS'04

The impact of ethnicity on earnings, however, has two-fold appearance. In permanent jobs, the difference between white British and BME workers is less pronounced compared to the situation in temporary jobs. For instance, over 11% of white British workers earn £5 or below per hour in permanent jobs and this is less than 15% for the BME workers.

In the case of temporary jobs, on the other hand, ethnicity plays a statistically significant role; although less than 24% of white British workers earn £5 or below per hour, this proportion increases to circa 30% for the workers from BME groups. Ethnic division in temporary jobs is also evident in the higher earnings category of £5.01-£14.99 per hour. Less than 58% of temporary workers from BME groups are represented in this category, compared to the 64% of white British workers. Notably, the figure goes up to almost 75% for white British workers in permanent jobs, reflecting the combined effect of ethnicity and the type of jobs on earnings inequality.

In the UK, the ring fencing policies of the 1980s by trade unions often tended to protect the jobs of their members during local government reorganisation and the privatisation of public utilities. Such policies aimed to draw a line around existing employees, and to ensure that no 'outsiders' were given the opportunity of competing for jobs within the ring fence. With regard to this, scholars such as Mann (1992) underlined that the sectionalism and defensive nature of British workers had served to reinforce social divisions, even when the national trade union policy had emphasised equal opportunities.

In the following years, union membership has dramatically declined in the UK, from circa 13 million in the late Seventies to 11 million by the end of the

Conservative government in 1997 and, with a further momentum under the Labour government, down to 7 million in 2006. Meanwhile, trade unions have increasingly begun to emphasise anti-racist policies and they have become more pro-active about organising workers from BMEM groups.

Table 11: Union Membership (Percentages)

	Are you a member of a trade union or staff association?			Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
	Yes	No, but have been in the past	No, have never been a member		
Permanent					
White British	38.4	17.0	44.5	100.0	18,430
BMEM	30.9**	13.2	55.9	100.0	1,881
All Permanent	37.7	16.7	45.6	100.0	20,311
Temporary					
White British	27.3	17.3	55.5	100.0	1,412
BMEM	15.0***	10.5	74.5	100.0	306
All Temporary	25.1***	16.1	58.8	100.0	1,718

*** Significant at the 0.01 level (Logistic regression)

Source: WERS'04

Notably, unions have begun to expose the racist practices of companies to the public, especially in terms of pay and promotion. For this aim, the TUC organised, for example, regular conferences in corporation with the Equal Opportunities Commission in the UK. A report published by the TUC in 2000 had also shown that black members in general were better paid than the non-member thanks to the more effective pressure of organised solidarity on collective bargaining agreements. The report specified that the average hourly wage for black workers who were not covered by collective bargaining was £6.77. For black workers covered by collective bargaining, on the other hand, the figure was up to £8.95, which was 32% higher, compared to a 10% collective bargaining premium for white employees (TUC, 2000).

Table 12: Has anyone ever asked you to join a union or staff association?

	Yes	No	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent				
White British	36.0	64.0	100.0	18,313
BMEM	30.2	69.8	100.0	1,866
Total	35.5	64.5	100.0	20,179
Temporary				
White British	25.1	74.9	100.0	1,403
BMEM	20.5	79.5	100.0	302
Total	24.3***	75.7	100.0	1,705

*** Significant at the 0.01 level; **Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

Source: WERS, 2004

Nevertheless, union membership is still affected by ethnicity as well as by the type of jobs. Table 13 illustrates that 37.7% of permanent workers in general are union members, but this is down to 25% among temporary workers, implying a statistically significant difference.

Ethnicity is an important predictor of membership in both permanent and temporary jobs. Union density is over 38% among white British workers in permanent jobs but this is hardly more than 30% among the workers from BMEM groups. In the case of temporary jobs, the gap widens at lower proportions: 27% of white British workers are members whereas this is as low as 15% among BMEM workers.

A question asked in WERS'04 would arguably give us a unique perspective about the low level of union membership, especially among temporary workers from the BMEM groups. In an attempt to evaluate the pro-activeness of unions in organising, the employees' survey investigated whether workers were asked by anybody to join trade unions. The result suggests that ethnic division both in permanent and temporary jobs influences the likelihood of being asked to join a union, although its effect is less pronounced compared

to the type of jobs. Table 12 indicates that 36% of white British workers in permanent jobs were asked to join a union whereas this is just above 30% for workers from BMEM groups. At lower proportions, the gap is also evident in the case of temporary jobs, down to roughly 25% and 20% respectively. Notably, a cross-reading of these figures implies that the type of jobs has a statistically significant influence on the possibility of being asked to join a union.

Table 13: Whether offered education or training from employer?

		Yes	Never offered	Total	Base for Weighting
		Percentages			
Permanent	White British	60.2	39.8	100.0	39552
	BMEM	55.1	44.9	100.0	6499
	All Permanent	59.5	40.5	100.0	46051
Temporary	White British	39.3	60.7	100.0	2090
	BMEM	33.5**	66.5	100.0	642
	All Temporary	37.9***	62.1	100.0	2732

*** Significant at the 0.01 level; **Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

Source: LFS Autumn 2005

In the last decade, the training of employees has become one of the most important issues in the labour market as a booster for labour productivity and as a response to the restructuring of labour markets amidst the growing pressures of post-industrialisation and globalisation (Fairbrother, 1996). Yet scholars have often underlined that the importance of the issue was not well appreciated by policy makers (Stroud and Fairbrother, 2005). For example, the government's support for training programmes has been in a long-term decline. The sharpest decline in the number of government supported training and employment programmes had been observed between 1992 and 1999, from 400 to 161 (LMT, 2000: 18). Meanwhile, the number of trainees had also decreased from 547000 to 345000 (NOS, 2000). In succeeding years, such a

process rendered the contributions of non-governmental actors in industrial relations, namely employers and trade unions, to the training of workers even more important (*Global*, 2005).

However, the evidence points to the reproduction of disadvantages by the training opportunities provided by employers since such programmes are differentiated on the basis of the type of jobs and ethnic background. Table 13 shows that temporary employees are less likely to be offered training compared to permanent workers. Less than 38% of them are offered training, whereas this figure goes up to 60% for permanent employees, implying a statistically significant gap.

BMEM workers also have a lower chance than white British employees in both permanent and temporary jobs. Temporary workers from BMEM groups, in particular, have the least access to training opportunities. Although almost 40% of white British workers are offered training by their employers in temporary jobs, this is down to nearly 33% among workers from the BMEM groups.

Table 14 Approached employer about shorter hours?

		Yes	No	Total	Base for Weighting
Permanent	White British	42.6	57.4	100.0	39552
	BMEM	41.1	58.9	100.0	6499
	All Permanent	42.3	57.7	100.0	46051
Temporary	White British	44.4	55.6	100.0	2090
	BMEM	49.8***	50.2	100.0	642
	All Temporary	46.0	54.0	100.0	2732

*** Significant at the 0.01 level (Logistic Regression)

Source: LFS Autumn 2005

The British workers have a relatively heavy workload as measured by working hours. They work longer than their counterparts in the continent. On average,

employees work 44 hours per week in Britain, whereas this average is only 38 hours in the continent. In countries, such as France and Germany, it is even less, especially because of the introduction of 35 hours limit in recent years (Lambert, 2006: 5). However, the crude statistics of working hours do not necessarily indicate what workers feel about the length of working hours, especially in hourly-paid jobs.

To provide a deeper insight into the issue, the Labour Force Survey asks three questions. One of them is whether employees would prefer shorter hours. The difficulty with this question is that even if employees wish to have shorter hours, it would not be clear how serious they are about this. Therefore, the survey asks another question as to whether employees would prefer shorter hours even for less pay. However, even if employees were desperate for shorter hours, less pay may simply be unaffordable among low-paid employees (like the BMEM workers in temporary jobs). Accordingly, the survey asks the third question to find out whether employees have actually approached their employers for shorter hours.

Table 15: Satisfaction with the sense of achievement you get (Percentages)

	Satisfied or Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent					
White British	70.6	19.2	10.2	100.0	18,373
BMEM	70.2	18.2	11.6	100.0	1,861
All Permanent	70.5	19.1	10.3	100.0	20,234
Temporary					
White British	70.9	19.1	10.0	100.0	1,399
BMEM	68.0	22.1	9.9	100.0	303
All Temporary	70.4	19.6	10.0	100.0	1,702

Source: WERS'04

Table 14 provides data on employees approaching employers in an attempt to reduce their working hours. One of the noticeable results is the high proportion of employees who have tried to do so, over 42% among permanent workers. In particular, temporary employees are more likely to approach their employers for less hours compared to permanent workers, but this as such does not add to a statistical significance (46%). Nor does ethnicity seem to be a statistically strong indicator within permanent or temporary jobs. However, when the combined effect of ethnicity and the type of jobs is considered, the picture becomes clearer: Almost half of temporary workers from the BMEM groups reported that they have approached their employers for shorter hours.

Table 16: Satisfaction with the scope for using your own initiative

	Satisfied or Very satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied	Total	Base for Weighting (N=)
Permanent					
White British	72.5	17.5	10.0	100.0	18,338
BMEM	70.0	18.7	11.3	100.0	1,839
All Permanent	72.2	17.6	10.1	100.0	20,177
Temporary					
White British	69.6	20.4	10.1	100.0	1,390
BMEM	65.1**	23.5	11.4	100.0	298
All Temporary	68.8	20.9	10.3	100.0	1,688

** Significant at the 0.05 level (Logistic Regression)

Source: WERS'04

In recent years, scholars like Rose (2003) and Green (2005) have been trying to increase the relevance of job satisfaction question to workers' actual well being by redesigning the Workplace and Employment Relations Survey. Notably, the hitherto single question of jobs satisfaction has been divided into sub-categories in order to specifically refer to issues such as influence at work, pay and sense of achievement. Here we will refer to the job satisfaction of temporary workers from BMEM groups in terms of the issues which we

have not addressed so far; sense of achievement and scope for using personal initiative at work.

The data provided in Table 15 suggest that employees' satisfaction with the sense of achievement is hardly affected by the type of jobs; around 70% of both permanent and temporary workers expressed their satisfaction.⁷ Nor does the ethnicity appear to be a statistically significant indicator, although the proportion of satisfied workers is residually lower among BMEM groups in temporary jobs, 68%.

In the case of scope for using personal initiative, however, the picture is more complicated (Table 16). Compared to temporary workers, a higher proportion of permanent employees indicate that they are satisfied with the scope for using personal initiative, but this does not add up to a statistical significance; the proportions are 68% and 72%, respectively. Ethnicity does not imply a statistically significant difference within temporary or permanent jobs either, although a slightly higher proportion of the white British are satisfied than the workers from BMEM groups in both temporary and permanent jobs. Against this background, the picture changes when the combined effect of ethnicity and the type of jobs is considered; circa 65% of temporary workers from the BMEM groups express their satisfaction. This is significantly lower than a 72.5% for the white British workers in permanent jobs.

⁷ In order to increase the reliability of sample size, we combined the original responses of 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' into one category as in the case of 'dissatisfied' and very 'dissatisfied'.

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this study suggests that there is a process of ethnicisation in temporary jobs as a result of the shift of such jobs toward BME groups and migrant workers. The waves of migrant workers from Eastern Europe, Turkey and other countries have accelerated this process in recent years. The evidence also suggests that, although the longer individuals stay in the country, the less likely they work in temporary jobs, they are in disadvantaged positions with regard to various issues such as pay, training, unionisation, workload and job satisfaction. Their situation reflects the disadvantages generated by both ethnic divisions and temporary recruitments.

Britain does not have proper regulations in place in order to prevent unfair treatment of temporary workers by unscrupulous employers. The British government and business representatives, such as CBI and BCC, still resist EU directives on temporary employment. They fear that Brussels' provisions risk undermining competitiveness and labour productivity despite the fact that various EU countries, such as Belgium, Sweden, Netherlands, France and Germany have higher levels of productivity than Britain along with comparable rights to temporary and permanent workers.

Business circles and Conservatives have also joined a recent campaign for curbing migration in the name of avoiding a 'crisis of public services', rather than heeding the calls of trade unions to increase corporate taxes to European standards in order to support public services. Government is in favour of migration, and arguably there would be more migration in the coming years ahead not least because of the growing contributions of migrant workers

to the economy amidst continuing expansion of the European Union. This probably means further ethnicisation in temporary jobs. However, no attempt for the introduction of regulations to protect the rights of migrant workers is in the political agenda of either government or businesses. Such complacency appears to be self-deprecating in social and economic terms.

The failure of the government to show a political determination, even to stamp out human trafficking for the sake of the cheap labour of illegal workers, rings alarm bells. Various policy watchdogs, such as the Commission for Racial Equalities, often warn that Britain travels in a direction that threatens future political prospects by alienating BME groups and migrant workers whilst risking civil unrest as witnessed in the USA and France. Introducing proper regulations to protect the rights of BME communities and migrant workers is not only about benefiting such groups but also indigenous populations.

Moving toward a two-tier labour market antagonises the very interests of native workers and endangers ethnic backlashes. Notably, the latest congress of the TUC in September 2006 has given priority to the issue of BME groups and migrant workers in temporary jobs in order to highlight unfair treatments by employers. However, the evidence presented in this study suggests that there also seems to be room for the unions to improve their organising strategies by approaching BME groups and migrant workers more proactively.

In economic terms, Britain cannot afford global competition by cheap labour, as its practical appeal in short-term runs against long-term sustainability.

Growing marginalisation of the British economy in the World cannot be addressed by turning a blind eye to the national and international standards of

labour. The British government acknowledges that investing in skills, training, R&D, science, and technology is the only way forward. Yet it fails, for instance, to secure the fair treatment of BME and migrant workers in temporary jobs with regard to training. Nor does the government endorse the EU's call to introduce common standards for migration laws or that of the ILO and the UN for the fair treatment of migrant labour around the World. The finance ministers of rivalling emerging market economies, on the other hand, occasionally cite the way Western countries treat migrants in order to euphemise their own harsh labour policies.

In recent years, academic research into temporary employment has declined in the face of no increase in such jobs, and ethnicisation of temporary jobs has largely fell out of the focus of scholarly attention. Academic discussions into the ethnicisation of temporary jobs need to be boosted. Notably, we know very little about the specific positions of different ethnic groups in temporary jobs since existing surveys do not have large enough sample size. This paper hopes to inspire academic interests into comparative studies on temporary workers from different ethnic groups.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Ethnic Composition of Permanent Jobs in Britain

	WERS'98	WERS'04
As % of all permanent workers in Britain		
White	96.2	94.4
Non-White	3.8	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Figures are weighted and based on responses from 28,075 (Column 1) and 22,196 (Column 2) employees

Appendix 2

The following question for WERS'04 asked employees to specify if they are from 'other' white backgrounds as opposed to British and Irish. One difficulty with this question is that it required participant to choose between British and one of the listed 'non-white' backgrounds, although one may well perceive himself or herself both, for example, Indian and British. Even so, there were about 50 people who have chosen multiple options in general. Because it is not possible to trace down if these people are white or not, they are excluded from the analysis throughout this study.

WERS'04 Survey of Employees' Questionnaire

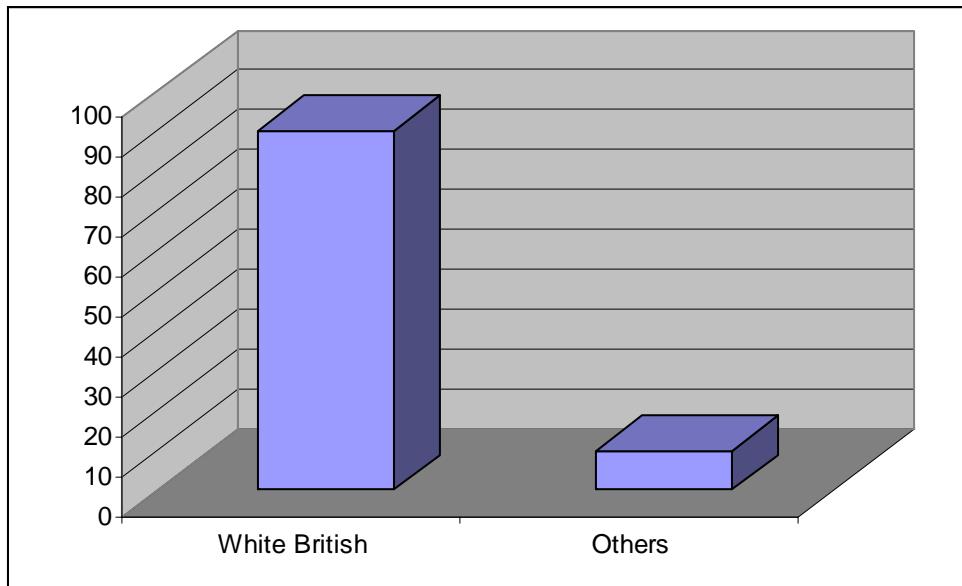
E14 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

Tick one box only

White	British	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
	White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
	White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Black British	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other Black background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese or other ethnic group	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Any other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 3

**Permanent Jobs in Britain by Ethnic Breakdown: White British and Others
(Percentages)**



Figures are weighted and based on 20591 responses

Source: WERS 2004