

Organising Polish workers:
A comparative case study of British
(Unison) and Swiss (Unia) trade union
strategies

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Abstract

The thesis analyses British (Unison) and Swiss (Unia) strategies for organising Polish workers, focusing on projects delivered between 2008 and 2010 by Unison and between 2012 and 2014 by Unia. These projects were chosen because they were predominantly aimed at the inclusion of Polish migrants after the EU enlargement in 2004 and they involved aspects of policy implementation. Additionally, the thesis describes a successful strike of the mainly Polish care workers in Unia. The research analyses whether there were any gaps between the projects' aims and their implementation and what factors may have caused those gaps. The research is based on industrial relations theories applied in the context of comparative studies on migration: Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) theory that was adapted to the context of intra-EU migration with Marino in 2017 (Marino et al., 2017) and Connolly et al.'s (2014) and trade union revitalisation strategies (Frege and Kelly, 2003). The research argues that the internal dynamics of the unions, such as union identity and structures (Hyman, 2001; Frege and Kelly, 2003), were more instrumental in terms of project outcomes than the position of trade unions in the power structure of society, economic and labour market conditions or the social context. Overall, Unia was more successful and its approach was more sustainable. Unlike Unison, Unia had structures in place that supported the inclusion of Polish members (migrant workers' committees) and deployed resources to continue its organising efforts past the end of the project. The research shows that the provision of a dedicated resource is necessary to increase migrants' engagement in the union. Furthermore, as the analysis of the strike suggests, Unia was able to use the collective agency of Polish workers not only for their own benefit but also for the local workers employed in the care sector. Accordingly, this research suggests that Polish workers have a potential that could be used for trade union renewal.

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List of main terms and acronyms

A8: see CEE.

BAME: Black, Asian and minority ethnic.

CEE: Central Eastern Europe. Within the context of the dissertation, eight countries that joined the EU in 2004: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Sometimes called A8 countries in the literature. UK lifted the majority of restrictions on access to its labour market for CEE citizens in 2004 (all in 2011); Switzerland followed suit in 2011 (majority of restrictions) and lifted them all in 2014.

CEE project: a project in Unia aimed predominantly at Polish workers and delivered from September 2012 to September 2014.

EVWS: European Voluntary Workers' Scheme. The governmental scheme in operation in the aftermath of WW2 to fill in labour shortages in the British economy by accepting approximately 80, 000 displaced white persons from continental Europe (McDowell, 2009).

Flank measures: Swiss legislation aims to protect the labour market from workers from outside Switzerland undercutting wages; introduced at the beginning of the 2000s. More information in section 4.8.1.

HW project: Hidden Workforce Project of Unison delivered from January 2010 to December 2011.

MWP project: Migrant Workers Participation Project of Unison delivered from January 2008 to December 2009.

New Commonwealth countries: Countries that were British colonies until 1970s and their population is predominantly non- white.

Non-standard employment: According to the ILO definition, *these are a grouping of employment arrangements that deviate from standard employment. They include temporary employment, part-time work, temporary agency work and other multi-party employment relationships, disguised employment relationships and dependent self-employment* (ILO, 2016: 2). This term is similar to a concept of **the atypical work** proposed by Gumbrell- McCormick (2011), which is wider and also includes posted and undocumented workers.

OPZZ: All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions, the biggest confederation of Polish trade unions, which was a partner for the Unison and Unia projects analysed in this thesis.

Posting of workers: EU regulation allowing workers based in one EU country to be posted to another country within the principle of free movement of workers and services. Posting of workers is predominantly regulated by Directive 96/71/EC, recently amended in June 2018.

Referendum and popular vote: Referenda allow citizens to show their disagreement with an act proposed by the government whereas a popular initiative aims to create a new law at the national, cantonal or municipal level.

SGB (USS): Schweizerischer Gewerkschaftsbund, the Swiss Confederation of Trade Unions. Largest Swiss trade union confederation.

TUC: Trade Union Congress, the largest British trade union confederation.

UMF: Union Modernisation Fund, established by the Labour government in 2005 to fund trade union projects. With the support of the UMF money Unison delivered the MWP and HW projects.

Unia: largest Swiss trade union representing workers in the private sector.

Unison: second largest British trade union representing workers in the public services.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Reasons for conducting this research

The inflow of Polish migrant workers and their impact on Western trade unions has been widely discussed in the industrial relations literature (for instance in a recent book edited by Marino et al., 2017). This is because Polish workers constitute one of the largest groups among migrants from Central Eastern European (CEE) countries who moved to Western Europe following the EU enlargement in 2004. These countries include Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In contrast to previous migration waves (see Castels and Kosack, 1973; Penninx and Roosblad, 2000), the newly arrived migrants tended to occupy strands of the labour market which were more fragmented and, in many instances, characterised by precarious employment conditions (Marino et al., 2017). This presented even more organisational challenges for trade unions already dealing with membership decline (Gumbrell- Mc Cormick and Hyman, 2013).

This thesis examines the efforts of British and Swiss trade unions to organise Polish workers by focusing on the comparison of two projects whose aim was to enhance the inclusion and organisation of Polish workers. The projects were undertaken by Unison, a British trade union, and Unia, a Swiss trade union. Unison ran the Migrant Workers Participation project (MWP project) from January 2008 to December 2009, and Unia ran the Central Eastern European Project (CEE project) from September 2012 to August 2014. The Unison project focused on all migrants including those from outside the EU, whereas Unia focused specifically on CEE migrants. Both trade unions appointed a Polish-speaking officer to support those projects (the author of this thesis, seconded from OPZZ, the Polish Confederation of Trade Unions to Unison or directly employed by Unia on the advice of OPZZ) and so both focused their efforts primarily on Polish workers.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes to the literature on the organisation and inclusion of migrants by Western European trade unions (Castels and Kosack, 1973; Penninx and Roosblad, 2000; Wrench, 2004; Holgate, 2005; Perrett and Martinez Lucio, 2009; Marino, 2012; Connolly et al., 2014; Marino et al., 2017) with particular attention given to Polish and Central Eastern European workers (Meardi, 2007; Meardi, 2011; Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010) and the way in which their participation in trade unions contributes to a wider debate on trade union revitalisation (Frege and Kelly, 2004; Milkman, 2006; Turner, 2008; Gumbrell- McCormick

and Hyman, 2013). In addition, it contributes to the literature on union mobilisation strategies (McAdam, 1988; Turner, 2008; Gall and Fiorito, 2012; Kelly, 1998; Alberti 2014), given that Chapter 6 analyses the strike of CEE carers in Switzerland.

Although there is a large amount of literature which focuses on organising migrant workers and ethnic minorities (see, for instance, Gordon, 2005; Holgate, 2005; Milkman, 2006; Martinez Lucio and Perrett, 2009; Marino, 2012) or, recently, on the perspective of migrants' own experiences of unionisation (Alberti, 2014) as well as literature focusing on the organisation of CEE workers (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010), the existing literature largely overlooks the experiences of Polish workers within trade unions and their perception of trade unions. In the context of the UK, this research aims to fill in the gaps regarding the position of Polish members when it comes to their integration into union structures and decision-making processes. It is unknown whether this group is less or more active than other national or ethnic minority groups or British workers. For example, in the UK the union density among Black British workers was, historically, generally higher than among white workers (Wrench, 2000), although according to Holgate this number has recently decreased (Holgate, 2004). In the Swiss context, there is very limited academic research on the phenomenon of the participation of Polish migrants in trade unions, given the recentness of Polish migration to this country. This could, however, be explained by the fact that Switzerland lifted work-related restriction for CEE citizens only in 2011, seven years after the UK did so in 2004. In both countries, Polish workers constitute the largest migration group among CEE citizens.

Historically, both Unison and Unia have a background of being at the forefront of advocating for the rights of migrant and ethnic minority workers in their respective countries (see Chapter 4 for more detail). They were also the first unions which allowed self-organisation of those workers and, importantly, their predecessors such as NALGO in the UK or GBI in Switzerland were in the vanguard of unions that created groups for those workers.

Moreover, both trade unions are the leading workers' organisations within their countries. Unison is the second largest British trade union, representing public service workers from the private and public sectors. Unia is the biggest Swiss private sector trade union, which since 2012 has been actively present in the care sector, with both unions active in this particular sector. Both unions came about as a result of a previous merger: Unison in 1993 and Unia in 2004. Both lean towards an organising model, although there are differences in terms of

understanding and application of this particular model (section 1.4.2). Accordingly, this thesis will discuss the ways in which these unions deployed new organising techniques such as the creation of informal networks of Polish active members and co-operation with Polish migrants' community organisations and Polish trade unions.

As a trade unionist with a background in organising migrant workers in the UK and Switzerland (ongoing at the time of writing this thesis),¹ I first came up with the idea of undertaking this research when I was employed by Unison. After moving to Switzerland, I decided to conduct a comparative research project. At the time, I participated in a number of conferences on the then recent phenomenon of CEE migration and its impact on the labour market as well as the efforts of the trade unions to integrate those migrants. At that point, I became interested in integrating the practical challenges of meeting the needs of migrants on a daily basis with academic theories on organising migrant workers.

Being employed in two different countries provided me with a unique opportunity to compare how two trade unions from different countries, representing different approaches to migration and positioned within two different models of industrial relations, approached recent Polish migrant workers. The Swiss model of industrial relations differs from the British one and can be described as a co-ordinated market economy with neo-corporatism (Oesch, 2011), in contrast to the British liberal market economy with its high level of voluntarism (Hyman, 2001). According to the typology of Visser (European Commission, 2008: 48-49), the UK represents liberal pluralism, while Switzerland represents social partnership. The comparative approach was chosen in line with arguments proposed by Connolly et al. in which *comparative research is a vital step for understanding broader historical complexity and how unions vary, and why, over questions of immigration and ethnicity* (Connolly et al., 2014: 6).

As a Polish speaker, I was not limited by language or social barriers and so was able to directly communicate with Polish workers without having to rely on interpreters or any other third parties. Moreover, my position as a Polish migrant worker employed by Western European trade unions was crucial to the research undertaken in the context of this thesis. I was myself part of a group of almost 2 million Polish migrants (GUS, 2015) who moved to another Western European country after the 2004 EU enlargement. My personal reasons for moving to the UK

¹ In July 2018, I gave notice at Unia and my contract ended in November 2018.

were twofold – a commitment to trade unionism as well as economic reasons, given that I was not able to secure a well-paying job in Poland despite a recently completed law degree. Thus, the cultural and social connection I had with other Polish migrants helped me better understand their situation and perception of trade unions.

I was also motivated by factors mentioned by Holgate (2004), who talks about the need to allow the voices of ethnic workers, *the marginalised labour*, to be heard (Holgate, 2005) within the trade union context and in the academic literature. Through this research project, I wanted to create an opportunity for the voices of marginalised Polish workers to be heard.

Given my position within the trade unions and pre-existing relationships with union officers and members, I chose analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006) as the most suitable method to conduct the research. The issue of my positioning as an inside researcher as well as related ethical dilemmas will be discussed in relevant sections of the methodology chapter.

I believe that the research findings could inform and influence the policy and practice of trade unions on how to advance the integration of Polish and CEE migrant workers within their structures. Importantly, those migrants are not the only group of EU workers who are keen to pursue employment opportunities in Western European countries. Following the enlargement of the EU in 2007 involving Romania and Bulgaria and the incorporation of Croatia in 2013, as well as possible accessions of other countries from the Western Balkans, Western trade unions will face similar challenges. Furthermore, as this thesis suggests, although trade unions operate in different industrial relations contexts and will experience different issues in terms of engaging with migrants, the experiences of Unison and Unia show some commonalities.

1.2 Research questions and presumptions

Given the theoretical and practical framework regarding organising and including Polish migrant workers in Western European trade unions, the following research questions were proposed:

1. Why did the trade unions from two different countries, Unison in the UK and Unia in Switzerland decide to develop projects aimed at integrating Polish workers? What were the formal and informal reasons?

2. Who were the key drivers behind these initiatives: Polish workers themselves through the process of self-organisation (bottom-up) or union leaders (top-down) dynamic?
3. How were those projects implemented? What kinds of measures were taken by each union (Unison and Unia)? In what way was the support provided by the national structures utilised locally?
4. Were there any gaps between the aims of the projects (unions' policies) and their implementation? If these gaps did exist, in which trade union were they wider?²
5. What factors have been influential in explaining the presence of these gaps?

The following presumptions were made after formulating the research questions:

1. Factors related to trade unions' internal variables and dynamics such as union identity, rooted practices and structures (Hyman, 2001, Frege and Kelly 2003, Connolly et al. 2014, Marino et al., 2017) will play an important role in terms of trade unions being able to successfully organise Polish migrants.
2. Internal racism/xenophobia, when present at the local level, plays an essential role in understanding unions' response to migration (Jefferys, 2007a).

The second presumption, regarding racism and xenophobia, has not really been validated by research evidence, especially when it came to evidence from Polish workers based in the UK who did not mention any instances of less favourable treatment related to their nationality.

In the course of research, the following early findings emerged related to the sustainability of integration strategy.

1. Integration of Polish workers can be delivered sustainably only by creating designated structures or extending already existing ones to include Polish workers.

This finding emerged after conducting interviews with full-time Unison officers and active members as well as my own observation of decreasing numbers of active Polish members in this union. Polish workers could not participate in the Black members' committees of Unison and their informal structures. At the same time, a group of Polish members within Unison decreased its activities when the project finished, and the Polish-speaking organiser was no longer available.

² I would like to add that the research conducted by Marino (2012) on Dutch and Italian trade unions was an inspiration when developing this research question.

2. Polish migrants' collective agency is an important factor for understanding the dynamic of their inclusion processes in the union.

This conclusion followed the findings arising from the fieldwork and the case study of a strike of mainly Polish care workers in Switzerland, discussed in Chapter 6.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a literature review with an emphasis on theories chosen for the research. This chapter is followed by an overview of methodology (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 provides a comparison of industrial relations systems in the UK and Switzerland, the post-WW2 history of migration, focusing on issues related to Polish migration and finally trade unions' responses to migration.

Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, analyse the approach of Unison and Unia to organising Polish workers, focusing on two projects conducted by those unions. Importantly, issues around the long-term sustainability of project outcomes are discussed on the basis of examples of the Polish Members Network in Unison and analysis of a case study of a Unia strike in Switzerland in which primarily Polish members were involved.

The final chapter provides a comparative analysis of the two unions and aims to provide answers to the research questions; in particular, why the gaps between project objectives and their delivery were broader in Unison than in Unia, or, in other words, why Unia was more successful in organising Polish migrants. To answer this core research question, I will bring back the theories presented in Chapter 2 to test them against the context of my research. Finally, this chapter will provide recommendations for European trade unions on organising migrant workers.

1.4 Note on terminology

Since this thesis is situated in the field of migration and industrial relations studies, there is a need to provide consistent definitions, especially given that the use of many terms and concepts will vary depending on the country (Salomon, 2000).

Initial difficulties arise with the terms *migrant*, *ethnic minority* and *mobile workers*. Similar difficulties arise when defining the term *organising*, or concepts such as *trade union revitalisation* and *power* as well as *inclusion* and *self-organisation*. Equally, the meaning of the term *active members* (or *trade union representatives*) will differ depending on the context. Last but not least, it will be important to clarify the term *social dumping*, which is particularly relevant for Swiss trade unions.

1.4.1 Migrant, ethnic minority and mobile workers

To start with, the terms *migrants* and *migrant workers* are differently understood in the UK, in Switzerland and by the EU institutions or even the trade unions themselves. In Switzerland, similar to in the continental literature (compare Marino et. al., 2017), the term *migrant* is applied to people without Swiss citizenship, those who are naturalised or whose parents or grandparents were born without having a Swiss passport (second- and third-generation migrants). This definition is in line with the approach used by the Swiss Office for Statistics (Federal Statistical Office, 2018), which is based on the United Nations' definition (Hamel et al., 2015). In terms of Unia policy documents, there are also inconsistencies as migrants are sometimes referred to as workers who were born abroad to non-Swiss citizens or whose parents were born abroad regardless of whether they were naturalised (i.e. persons with a migration background).³ At times, the documents refer to migrants as only those without a Swiss passport, such as in the context of membership of the Unia Migration Committee (Unia, 2005). These inconsistencies will be discussed in relevant sections of Chapter 6.

In the UK, the terms second- and third-generation migrant are not widespread, and instead, terms such as Black and ethnic minority workers (BME) or, more recently, Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) will be used more commonly in academic literature (for instance by Holgate 2005; Connolly and Seller, 2017) when discussing recent non-white migrants born outside the UK. At the same time, in academic literature focusing on continental Europe (see Marino et al., 2017), the terms used for these workers would be migrants and second-generation migrants for their children. Those differences are reflected in Unison terminology where the terms BAME and migrant workers are used inconsistently. This is because in the context of the union movement, the term Black is a political rather than an ethnic concept and is tied in with the individual's self-identification (Holgate, 2008; see also TUC and other union policy

³ See documents related to Migrant Congress, organised by Unia in 2015 (Unia, 2015c).

documents on the definition of Black workers). Accordingly, in Unison, the term *Black* could technically include white Polish workers; however, as discussed in Chapter 5, this has not happened and Black workers' committees are not welcoming towards CEE workers. Holgate (2009a) suggests that British unions generally refer to non-Black migrants as migrants, whereas Black migrants are referred to as Black workers. However, in many trade union documents analysed for the purposes of this research, workers recently arrived from the Indian subcontinent were referred to as migrants.

Finally, according to the EU terminology (see Fries-Tersch, 2018: 19), citizens of EU member states (art. 20 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (EU, 2007)) are also EU citizens and as such are classed as (EU) mobile workers who move to work in another member state according to the principle of the free movement of persons (art. 21 TFEU or more precisely Directive 2004/38/EC⁴). In contrast with migrant workers, they are not third-country citizens. Legally, as EU citizens, their status should be equal to that of local British or Swiss workers. As such, their legal position is considerably better than that of non-EU workers or migrants who were part of previous inflows to the UK or Switzerland. In addition, Polish migrants are mostly white, which, especially in the UK context, makes them less visible as migrants within trade union structures (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010).

I have decided to use the following two terms for my research. When it comes to workers who moved to another country for predominantly economic reasons, I will use the term migrant. When it comes to individuals with a migration background, i.e. whose parents or grandparents were migrants, I will refer to them as ethnic minorities. When it comes to sections focused on Unison, in line with the union policy, I will refer to *Black* members, understood in the political context as a term encompassing all non-white people. Overall, it is a challenge to gain a coherent understanding of the migration-related terminology in the context of this research and will be discussed in more detail in relevant sections of Chapters 5 and 6.

1.4.2 Organising

Organising is understood in line with the framework proposed by Connolly, Marino and Martinez Lucio (Connolly et al., 2017) as

⁴ Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the European Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (...) (EU, 2004).

an approach to recruit new workers, empower union members and encourage worker self-organization as well as a strategic opportunity for renewal and revitalization in the context of declining union density and institutional power bases (Frege and Kelly, 2004; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013) (quoted in Connolly et al., 2017: 321).

In Unison, organising means members taking ownership of work-related issues (Unison, 2012c: 4). In Unia there is no common definition of organising, not even at a very general level. On the basis of the definition provided by Connolly et al. (2017), I understand organising as an approach to recruiting members and to supporting existing members to become active members.

I have decided not to differentiate between the organising and recruiting approach identified by Unison (2012c) and that identified by Simms and Holgate (2010), where organising is defined as focusing more on winning and supporting active members rather than solely on recruitment. I have also chosen not to differentiate between internal and external organising (Hurd, 2004; Connolly et al., 2017).

Instead I use the definition proposed by Connolly et al. (2017) because of its wide scope, which is particularly suitable to addressing my research questions focusing on unions' strategies towards migrants. Finally, challenges in defining organising will be discussed in more detail in section 2.5 of the literature review chapter.

1.4.3 Union revitalisation

As the above definition indicates, *organising* is connected with union revitalisation, self-organising and power. I have decided to use Frege and Kelly's definition (2003: 9); they argue that union revitalisation includes *a variety of attempts to tackle membership decline*.

In the context of Unison's revitalisation strategies concentrated on the introduction of organising techniques (Waddington and Kerr, 2009), which were later enhanced through co-operation with the American trade unions Service Employees International Union (SEIU) within the *Three Companies Project* and the creation of new post of local organisers which focused on recruitment.

Similarly, in Unia, revitalisation was introduced through the implementation of various organising techniques and strategies, such as supporting the creation of active members within the programme *Unia Forte*. In addition, the region where the strike of mainly Polish workers took place has links with the American trade union Unite Here (Rogalewski, 2018).

1.4.4 Inclusion of migrant workers

I have chosen Marino's definition of *inclusion*, given that it was produced in the context of a similar research project comparing Italian and Dutch unions' approach to migrant workers.

According to Marino (2012), inclusion means

full recognition of such workers as union members, with equal social, employment, political and organizational rights and participation in both internal debates and the formation of general union strategies (Marino, 2012: 8).

This definition recognises workers not merely as passive members who only pay union fees but as individuals who actively participate in union structures and their decision-making processes.

1.4.5 Self-organisation

Self-organisation as defined by the TUC's national Black workers' conference in 1992 involves

a creation of black members' group at all levels in a union, with an annual black workers' conference where decisions are made by black representatives on the issues specific concern to black members (quoted in Wrench, 2000: 142).

According to the Unison Rule Book (Unison, 2018a), the purpose of self-organisation is to promote the union's equality and bargaining agenda, defend jobs, terms and conditions and service, build its density and have a strong and dynamic presence in the workplace. And to this end, self-organising groups shall

meet to share concerns and aspirations, and establish their own priorities, elect their own representatives (...), have adequate and agreed funding and other resources, including education and training, access, publicity and communications, work within a flexible structure (...) and provide opportunities for the fuller involvement of disadvantaged members, work within the established policies, rules and constitutional provisions of the union (Unison, 2018a: 19).

In Unia, the equivalent of self-organising is the relevant formal migrant workers' committee, but also informal language groups created by migrant workers at national and regional levels in German-speaking parts of the country (see Chapter 6). Since many migrants in Switzerland do not have a Swiss passport, self-organisation allows migrants to be involved in the political decision-making processes in this country through participation in Unia committees (Alleva, 2001).

1.4.6 Trade union power

Although the concept of power is crucial in the context of industrial relations, there is no universally accepted definition (see Salomon, 2000; Kelly 1998). For instance, Kelly (1998: 5) argues that power *is perhaps one of the most widely used concepts in the field of industrial relations but at the same time (...) one of the least well understood.*

This concept is particularly important for comparative industrial relations studies in which the concept of trade union power is understood differently, particularly in terms of comparing membership density to coverage of collective bargaining agreements. In other words, this is about answering the question as to which unions were more powerful – those who had more members such as British unions or those who signed more collective bargaining agreements, such as French unions? For that reason, Frege and Kelly (2004: 40) argue that *Union power and influence [are] secured in different ways in different national systems.*

On a related note, Schmalz et al. (2013) suggest that trade union power could have various aspects depending on the area in which it is deployed. As such, they identified four forms of trade unions' powers: institutional, social, structural and organisational. Similarly, Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman (2013), when comparing trade unions' power in the industrial relations literature, identified four widely recognised forms of power: structural, associational, organisational and institutional.⁵ They also identified two additional power resources: *moral* (unions acting as a *sword of justice* to create a better society) and a *collaborative* (working with other allies or stakeholders) power resource.

⁵ *Associational and organizational strength may be bolstered by employer solidarity, legislative supports, the powers of statutory works councils, the administration of social welfare, or a status in structures of tripartite peak-level consultation. These institutional supports may well be a product of the prior acquisition of other power resources (...)* (Gumbrell- McCormick and Hyman, 2013: 30).

The issue of *power* is important regarding comparative analysis of trade unions' response to migration. Penninx and Roosblad (2000: 13- 14) do not provide a definition of power per se but focus instead on trade unions' position within the power structure of society and their influence on national decision-making processes. Accordingly, trade union power is (at the national level) linked with a high degree of organisation, strong ties with governing parties and strongly centralised and unified structures (Marino et. al., 2017: 9).

For the purposes of this research, I have chosen a definition provided by Hyman, who defines power in a broader sense as

the ability of an individual or group to control their physical and social environment; and as part of the process, the ability to influence the decisions which are or are not taken by others (Hyman, 1975: 26).

In the context of industrial relations, power is used primarily in the service of the collective interests (Hyman, 1975). I will use the term power interchangeably with *influence* as used by many scholars (see Frege and Kelly, 2004).

1.4.7 Active members

There is a need to explain the difference in terminology used to describe active members in Unison and Unia. For the purposes of this thesis, the term *active member* in the Unison context is applied to trade union representatives, that is, shop stewards, health and safety representatives, equality representatives, etc., and in the Unia context, to Vertrauensleute (people of trust). Active members are also those who were elected by other members as delegates for union congresses or presidents of formal union structures. It is also necessary to explain the different position and role of trade union representatives in Unison and Unia, due to differences in labour legislation. In Unison, representatives are elected by fellow branch members (structurally located at the bottom), and those who take part in specialised training for shop stewards are entitled to represent the union and its members in relation to employers, for instance in the context of disciplinary cases. They also participate in other trade union-related duties during working time and are protected against dismissal. Importantly, Swiss trade union representatives have fewer privileges and a lower level of protection. Generally, in Unia, representatives are appointed by regional officers and their role is limited to acting mainly as a liaison between union structures and workers/members. For the most part, they are not provided with time off for union duties and have less protection against dismissal; these differences will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

1.4.8 Social dumping or the race to the bottom

For the purposes of this research, the term *social dumping* is understood in line with Bernaciak's definition as

[a] practice, undertaken by self- interested market participants, of undermining or evading existing social regulations with the aim of gaining a competitive advantage (Bernaciak, 2015: 2).

In Anglo-Saxon countries, an equivalent term would be the *race to the bottom* (Krings, 2009). Tackling social dumping was particularly important for Unia, which refers to social dumping as *wage undercutting* in its policy documents.

The next chapter will analyse the literature on trade unions' approach to migrant workers and migration after World War 2 (WW2).

Chapter 2 Trade unions' efforts to organise migrant and ethnic minority workers

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will critically review existing literature focusing on Western trade unions' attitude to migration, starting with an overview of comparative approaches, including the work of scholars such as Castles and Kosack (1973), McEven (1995) and Martens (1999), as well as Penninx and Roosblad (2000) and, later, Marino et al. (2017) and Connolly et al. (2014). The analysis will touch upon theories of industrial relations, including trade unions' identities (Hyman, 1994, 2001) and renewal (Frege and Kelly, 2003), and will provide a useful framework for understanding the unions' response to immigration, given that migrant workers could be seen as potential members.

Particular attention is given to the theories of Penninx and Roosblad (2000), Marino, Penninx and Roosblad (Marino et. al., 2017), Frege and Kelly (2003) and Connolly et al. (2014) which underpin the theoretical framework of my dissertation.

The analysis will also focus on trade unions' response to racism, drawing mostly on literature situated in the UK context where race differences played an important role in the inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in trade unions and society. Crucially, the review will draw on literature on Polish migration, given the overall focus of this research. Finally, the review will incorporate literature on community-organising as these methods was used by both Unia and Unison in their approach to Polish workers, given that the recent debate on inclusion of migrant and ethnic workers is embedded within a discussion on organising.

2.2 European trade unions' response to post-World War 2 migration

One of the key works analysing trade unions' response to migration is Castels and Kosack's book *Immigrant Workers and Class Structures in Western Europe* (1973). Castels and Kosack argue that integration of migrant workers has always been a challenge for Western trade unions, even though the phenomenon of migration from and to Western Europe is as old as the beginnings of modern capitalism or even older. They compared the legal, social and economic situation of migrant workers until 1970 in four countries, the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland and Germany, and concluded that the foreign labour force has always presented a

dilemma for Western unions. Castels and Kosack introduce an important differentiation in terms of how migrants were perceived by the receiving countries:

In Britain immigrant has come to be virtually synonymous with 'black person' in popular usage. In France, the term immigrant is used even for temporary foreign workers, for they are all regarded as potential settlers. In Germany and Switzerland, immigrants are officially referred to as foreign labour, because are looked at primarily in an economic light and are not expected to stay permanently (Castels and Kosack, 1973: 12).

According to these scholars, migrants were treated in the same way regardless of their race or ethnicity. For instance, Castels and Kosack (1973) claim that initially, Black migrant workers in the UK were treated similarly to Italian workers in Switzerland.⁶

Castels and Kosack (1973) argue that trade unions' attitude to the dilemma of migration was a result of the historical development of their identities as well as their abilities to organise workers. Unions were created in the 19th century and played an important role in the formation of national states, and, as a result, their identity was built on the basis of two contradictory ideologies: protection of the interests of local workers and the solidarity of workers regardless of their nationalities, with the former usually taking the lead. This argument is taken up further by Hyman (2001), who claims that trade unions do not represent the interests of all workers. Instead Hyman perceives them as mostly sectorial organisations which act on behalf of their members. As a result, trade unions were initially against migration, particularly since imposing a limit on the number of workers has traditionally been regarded as a weapon in the struggle for better wages, given that migrants were willing to work overtime and this would lead to lower wages of local workers (Castles and Kosack, 1973). This dilemma became even stronger once immigrants, despite the restrictions, could access the domestic labour market. It then became apparent to the unions that those workers should become members and that this would be beneficial not just for the migrants themselves but for trade unions, particularly in sectors with a significant number of migrant workers. Without organising migrant workers, trade unions could not sustain their membership density, which was important for collective bargaining (Castels and Kosack, 1973).

⁶ See more on this comparison in Chapter 4.

Trade unions do not exist in a vacuum, and therefore it is important to examine underlying discourses; this comes up in the work of Vranken (1990), who has identified two models of trade union responses to migration, the internationalist and the pluralist model. The former aims to exclude any type of separate organisation of workers based on national or ethnic differences within trade unions and was predominant in socialist trade unions. The latter was more common in Christian unions and seems to be more relevant for Switzerland, where it was Christian trade unions that first created groups for migrant workers (see Chapter 4). Importantly, it is also useful to situate trade unions within the larger context of how European unions in general dealt with the issue of migration. This was done by two Dutch academics, Penninx and Roosblad (2000), who undertook comparative research of trade union attitudes to migration from 1960 until 1993 in Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria, the Netherlands, France and Sweden.

Penninx and Roosblad (2000) and, later with Marino (Marino et al., 2017) identified the following three dilemmas related to trade unions' responses to immigrants:

1. Resistance versus co-operation with the state and employers regarding the employment of foreign labourers (in a book published with Marino in 2017, the co-operation dilemma was changed to support state migration policies)
2. Inclusion versus exclusion of migrants within unions' structures
3. Equal versus special treatment of migrant workers (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000: 4).

With regard to the first dilemma, Castels and Kosack (1973) similarly argue that trade unions should be inclusive towards migrant workers because of international solidarity. At the same time, the strategy of employing a foreign workforce could be used by employers to undermine the position of the local workers. Moreover, the Marxist perspective suggests that employers will use migrants' willingness to accept a lower salary and longer working hours to increase the surplus value of the cost of local workers (Castels and Kosack, 1973). Therefore, migrants might be seen as a threat to the unions and so local workers should oppose immigration or at least try to reduce it. However, as mentioned by Castels and Kosack (1973), the commitment of unions to international workers' solidarity would suggest the opposite reaction. That is, it should be in the interest of trade unions to represent as many workers as possible, particularly given that trade unions seem to be best positioned to protect the interests of foreign workers (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000).

Analysing the resistance versus co-operation dilemma, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) identified five types of trade unions' reactions in terms of their orientations towards foreign labourers:

1. Co-operation from the position of strength – represented by Swedish, German and Dutch trade unions, which were involved in decisions and policy formulations and were part of the immigration system.
2. Resistance from the position of strength – in the case of Austria.
3. Resistance from a position of weakness – in the case of Switzerland.
4. Resistance on the part of unions as an opposition movement, represented by French unions, which never became part of a system of socio-economic decision-making in any significant way.
5. The British case, where trade unions had no direct involvement in decision-making processes related to immigration policies (with the exception of European migration just after the WW2, according to Wrench, 2000).

The perception that trade unions are traditionally in favour of restricting migration was critically assessed by Haus (2002), who calls it an approach based on *conventional wisdom*. In her research, she compared American and French trade unions' responses to migration, looking for an explanation regarding why trade unions from those countries changed their stance on foreign labour, moving from resistance to migration to recruitment. Haus (2002) argues that unions consider that the state has a limited ability to control immigration and that their changed approach from restrictions to integration should be explored in the context of internationalisation of economic and human rights. In the same vein, Jefferys argues (2007) that where unions face the threat of decline but at the same time perceive that they could potentially enhance their membership by recruiting from among migrant workers, then anti-racism could be adopted as a pragmatic necessity. According to the author, this influenced the anti-racist policies and activities undertaken by trade unions in Belgium, France, Italy and the UK.

Wrench (2004) and Krings (2009) reached a similar conclusion regarding the pragmatic approach of trade unions towards migrants. These authors argue that due to a decline in influence, British trade unions changed their strategy towards organising previously marginalised groups, including migrant workers.

In terms of the second dilemma (inclusion versus exclusion), Penninx and Roosblad (2000) argue that even though migrants could be perceived as a threat to the nationally defined labour market, it is in the interest of trade unions to include a migrant workforce in their membership. This is of particular importance in workplaces with a significant number of migrants as it will make the bargaining position of trade unions stronger. This dilemma was particularly visible in the 1970s when migrants began to reunite with their families and migrants' organisations developed links to trade unions, resulting in unions becoming more inclusive.

With regard to equal versus special treatment, from about 1970 onwards trade unions began to develop special policies and strategies aimed at integrating the foreign workforce. The most visible outcomes of the new policies included communication materials, such as leaflets targeting migrants in their native language. From that point onwards, it was apparent that migrants' membership in trade unions increased (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000). Trade unions created facilities for them either by modifying their organisational structures and trying to create conditions for migrants to influence trade unions' policies (through the creation of self-organised groups within the union, such as in the UK) or by creating outside bodies aimed at supporting migrants, such as various advisory bodies. Moreover, trade unions became more vocal in speaking on behalf of migrant workers and provided support for or actively participated in industrial actions and movements related to migrant workers; however, not all of these activities had a positive outcome. One example is the reaction of Swiss unions to the anti-immigration people's initiative in 1970 (Schimtmter, 1983). Another example is the resistance of the British unionists to the National Front at the end of the 1960s (Wrench, 2000). Other unions changed their position in a similar way; see, for instance, the engagement of French trade unions in the series of strikes in 1969 (Castels and Kosack, 1973). With regard to inclusion/exclusion and equal/ special treatment, MacEven (1995 cited in Wrench, 2004) identifies the following four types of approach adopted by trade unions in terms of integrating foreign workers:

1. The equal treatment approach – classic colour-blind approach, where unions do not distinguish between migrants and local workers.
2. The level playing field approach, which recognises the need to remove some of the unfair barriers in the labour market.
3. The equal opportunities approach, which aims for proportional representation of migrants in the long term by employing positive action.

4. The equal outcomes approach, which uses quotas to achieve proportional representation by applying quotas and positive discrimination.

Finally, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) propose four sets of factors that account for the different approaches of trade unions in different countries and during different periods:

1. The social position of trade union movements in the power structure of society.
2. The economic and labour market situation at the time.
3. The factors connected with society as a whole: the political structure, legislation, national ideologies and public discourse.
4. The factors connected with the characteristics of migrants themselves (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000: 200).⁷

The factors presented by Penninx and Roosblad in 2000 are similar to Dunlop's (1993) system theory of describing industrial relations by drawing attention to elements such as actors, rules and rulemaking, and finally context and ideology.

In relation to the first factor, researchers argue that the more powerful⁸ the union is, either in terms of membership size or its legal position in relation to employers and governments, the more influential it will be when it comes to developing and influencing immigration policies. The internal structure of trade unions is also an important factor. Some unions, for instance Dutch ones, may be strongly centralised and as such are strong at the top level but weak at the shop floor level. As Marino (2012) argues, this will negatively affect the protection of migrants' rights. Penninx and Roosblad (2000) do mention that the degree of involvement in state policy decision-making might be a good indicator of trade unions' effectiveness in influencing migration-related policies. However, it does not automatically predict the content or course of decisions concerning immigrants. For this reason, the outcomes of the migration-related policies Swedish and Austrian trade unions influenced were different even though these trade unions have a similarly strong social and political position (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000).

⁷ Following Marino et al. (2017), this theory has been extended by an additional fifth factor: internal union variables and dynamics such as union identity, rooted practices and structures which incorporate the union identities theory of Hyman (2001) as well as the theory of Frege and Kelly (2003) related to union revitalisation.

⁸ See more on the meaning of the term power in section 1.4.6.

Concerning the second factor, the policy of trade unions is likely to be strongly affected by the condition of the economy and labour market. As a result, where there is high unemployment, trade unions might oppose migration. This could be observed in the case of some unions (for instance in Germany) which argued against lifting labour market restrictions related to workers from Poland and other CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004. At that time only the UK, Ireland and Sweden, which had one of the lowest levels of unemployment in Western European countries (Figure 1), opened their labour markets to those groups of workers; and in all of those countries, trade unions accepted this decision (Krings, 2009 or Clark and Hardy, 2011). The UK had at the time one of the lowest levels of unemployment in its history, at 4.7% (Fine, 2014). For instance, unemployment in Germany at that time was almost 10%. In Switzerland, the unemployment rate was 4.3% in 2004 and 3.6 % in 2011 (Federal Statistical Office, 2015: 12).

| Unemployment (%) in August 2004 - in ascending order | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|----------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|---------------|------|
| LU | IE | CY | AT | UK | NL | DK | HU | SI | SE | PT | CZ | IT | |
| 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | June 04 4.7 | July 04 4.8 | July 04 5.8 | 5.9 | 6.2 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 8.5 | Jan 04 8.5 | |
| BE | EE | MT | Euro-zone | EU25 | FI | EL | FR | DE | LV | ES | LT | SK | PL |
| 8.6 | 8.7 | July 04 8.7 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 9.0 | Dec 03 9.3 | 9.6 | 9.9 | 10.6 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 15.7 | 18.7 |

Figure 1. Level of unemployment in the EU in 2004 (Eurostat, 2004: 1)

Trade unions are also part of society. They are not only influenced by national histories and identities but, as Castels and Kosack (1973) argue, trade unions are also a product of those histories and identities. Penninx and Roosblad (2000) suggest that national identity and ideology, public discourse and institutional arrangements, etc. may influence trade unions' policy towards migration. They also add that trade unions need to consider the way in which other institutional actors such as political parties or religious institutions react to migration. However, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) argue that trade unions are not necessarily influenced by religious or political attitudes. Nevertheless, even though trade unions may ideologically have a predominantly internationalist orientation, most of their activities will be influenced by the national context. On a related note, Wrench (2004) in his comparative research on Dutch and British trade unions suggests that national ideologies influence the attitude of trade unions towards migrants.

The fourth factor, related to the characteristics and perception of migrants by the host societies, may help explain differences in attitudes between trade unions in various countries. Penninx and Roosblad (2000) claim that trade unions may be more sympathetic towards migrants from the countries where unions are organised according to the same ideologies or have a similar structure, as was the case regarding former British colonies. Similarly, the history of Polish trade unions' struggle and the legacy of the Solidarity movement from the 1980s may have positively influenced the attitude of Western trade unions to workers from Poland. Moreover, migrants arriving in countries with a comparable trade union background may understand the role of trade unions better and may be more likely to become members. This may be the case with Black and ethnic minorities in the UK, whose membership in trade unions was higher than that of white workers (Wrench, 2000).

Furthermore, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) argue that immigrants themselves might display characteristics that make them more likely to join trade unions. Those coming from more industrialised countries will have more experience in the industrial relations environment and so will be more likely to become members, in comparison with migrants from, for instance, agricultural countries. Similarly, migrants who consider their employment as temporary either due to personal circumstances or legal restrictions (such as in the context of Switzerland) might not be interested in joining trade unions. This factor may be of particular importance in relation to Polish migrants in the UK (Eade, 2007; Fitzgerald and Hardy 2010; Anderson et al., 2008). Nevertheless, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) do not seem to support a commonly expressed hypothesis that migrants' lack of experience in trade unions and industrial working conditions is an important and explanatory factor in their lack of engagement with trade unions. Additionally, they argue that *equal and higher membership in trade unions does not automatically predict higher migrant's influence on trade union's behaviour and their policies* (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000: 201). As a result, migrants' lack of experience in trade unionism should not be an important factor in terms of trade unions' attitudes and behaviour towards them.⁹ For that reason, one group of migrants, such as Turkish workers, might be highly organised in Sweden and Belgium but not in France, Switzerland or the Netherlands.

⁹ This question will be analysed in my dissertation.

Finally, Penninx and Roosblad (2000) negatively answer the question of whether there was a parallel development of and convergence in attitudes and actions of trade unions after the WW2. There were some similarities between Switzerland and France, but for instance in the UK, emigration was an outcome of decolonisation. Therefore, three types of responses could be identified depending on the migration pattern: continuation in Switzerland and France, decolonisation in the UK and a new phenomenon in Sweden and the Netherlands (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000). Hence, there may have been some parallel developments but they did not lead to convergence.

From the 1980s onwards, some trade unions developed special structures for migrants or ethnic minority workers, including Swiss and British trade unions. However, there is an ongoing debate, particularly in Spain and Italy, about whether having these special groups could lead to divisions among their members (see, for instance, Connolly et al., 2014 and Marino 2012).

Martens (1999) also examined trade unions' responses to immigration, but his approach focuses more on the historical context rather than the dilemma perspective developed by Penninx and Roosblad (2000). He analysed how unions' attitudes to immigration evolved throughout time and proposed the following four stages:

1. First: from the beginning of trade unionism, i.e. from the 1850s until 1930. During that period, unions concentrated on controlling and limiting the number of migrants, which parallels Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) *resistance* dilemma.
2. Second: from the 1930s until the 1970s, when unions began to introduce the equal treatment policy so that the migrant workers would not undermine indigenous workers' conditions. This strategy was even more dominant after the unions failed to fight against immigration and became dominant during the economic growth years after the WW2 until the oil crisis.
3. Third: between the 1970s and the 1980s, when migrant workers become a more visible and permanent part of the labour force and trade unions began to organise them and some of them began to campaign for equal opportunities to provide equal access, training and pay without restrictions.
4. And finally, from 1990s onwards, when unions had to respond to globalisation by demanding *international social clauses* to spread the equal treatment globally.

This theory predominantly concentrated on trade unions' policy-framing and decision-making processes and their implementation at the top level but failed to include the shop floor level. For this reason, this approach has been criticised for not considering the full spectrum of the trade union movement, including its bottom-level structures (Wrench, 2004, Jefferys, 2007, Connolly et al., 2014, Marino, 2012, Frege and Kelly, 2003). Jefferys and Ouali (2007) argue that

a certain progressive determinism in Martens' schema thus sits somewhat uneasily with parts of the historical record. This is because his analytical framework is concerned with the formal evolution of national policies rather than on the way they are (or are not) implemented (Jefferys and Ouali, 2007: 409).

Similarly, Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) research provides only one account of national top-level policies, without details on their implementation at the shop floor level (Jefferys, 2007). Jefferys adds that this analytical framework potentially treats unions as unitary organisations *with capacity for individual strategy choice in relation to immigration rather than the moving outcomes of a process* (Jefferys, 2007: 392). Furthermore, Marino (2012), in her comparative study of inclusion of migrant workers in Dutch and Italian trade unions, demonstrated that differences in terms of gaps between planned actions and their implementation were very much dependent on unions' internal union variables rather than on institutional factors highlighted by Penninx and Roosblad (2000). In addition, Frege and Kelly (2003) stress that factors such as union structures and framing processes are important when it comes to understanding unions' responses to the challenges of migration. It has to be noted, however, that their research focused on unions' revitalisation strategies and did not directly engage with ideas proposed by Penninx and Roosblad. Finally, Wrench (2004) argues that too much attention is being paid to structural factors such as unions' strength or systems of regulation. He suggests that it is the impact of political discourse and social struggles that can influence unions' orientation and so researchers should pay more attention to critical incidents and moments when trade union strategies are being changed. My research aims to analyse key moments for Unison and Unia in terms of responding to the migration of Polish and CEE workers to the UK and Switzerland. As such, section 6.5 will focus on the first strike of CEE care workers in the history of Switzerland, demonstrating the implementation of Unia's strategies towards those workers.

The theoretical framework of Frege and Kelly (2003) provides a different perspective on analysing trade unions' responses to migration. The authors analysed union revitalisation

strategies, or, in other words, how unions responded to the current socio-economic challenges such as migration. They compared five countries representing liberal, co-ordinated and Mediterranean market economies (the UK, the USA, Germany, Spain and Italy). They argue that unions' responses to challenges are influenced not solely by the institutional context of industrial relations, unions' powers and their level of embeddedness within the state. They propose that these responses are also influenced by internal variables such as union structures and framing processes, that is, union identities and modes of contention. In order to explain unions' choices when it comes to developing relevant strategies in response to current challenges, the authors draw on social movement literature, in particular the concept of strategic choices developed by Kochan et al. (1986). They suggest that unions should not be perceived as *passive* institutions but rather as *active* actors. Furthermore, they introduce Hyman's (1994, 2001) triangle of industrial relations as a means of providing an explanation for the ways in which identities may shape union strategies since *identities may be viewed as inherited traditions which shape current choices, which in normal circumstances in turn reinforces and confirms identities* (Frege and Kelly, 2003: 12). Accordingly, they suggest that the existing literature identifies three determining factors regarding strategic choices: institutional differences, identity differences and differences in employer, political party or state strategies. They argue that relying on those determinants alone would fail to provide a sufficient explanation of the differences between various unions' strategies. They suggest that there should be an additional determinant incorporating unions' structures and framing processes. Accordingly, they provide a *social* model of unions' strategic choices with the following four independent variables:

1. Social and economic change, representing changes in society, the economy and the labour market, which reflects Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) first factor regarding unions' responses to migration.
2. Institutional context of industrial relations, including the legal and political framework of trade unions' operation, which is comparable to Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) second factor regarding unions' responses to migration.
3. Union structures, should be seen not only as vertical organisations but also as horizontal and hierarchical organisation of the unions movement (Frege and Kelly, 2003: 14). Analysis of union structures will involve an overview of top-level union leaders and how they influence decision-making, as well as local-level rank-and-file members. Union structures include Hyman's (2001) model of collective identity of the union's movement and what *the rank and*

files members stand for. This reflects Jeffery's (2007) argument about the importance of bottom-level perception when it comes to researching unions' responses to migrants.

4. And finally, framing processes, described as *the way in which unionists perceive and think about the changes in their external context as threats or opportunities (...) which often express elements of union's identity and draw from familiar ideas about union's action, so-called 'repertoires of contention'* (McAdam et al., 2001 in Frege and Kelly, 2003: 14).

These scholars suggest that unions possess a pattern of *well-worn behaviours* and that they are more likely to rely on this pattern when responding to new challenges (such as new types of migration) rather than risk using new approaches. Accordingly, conformist responses will be predetermined by inflexible structures, weak leaders and outdated identities.

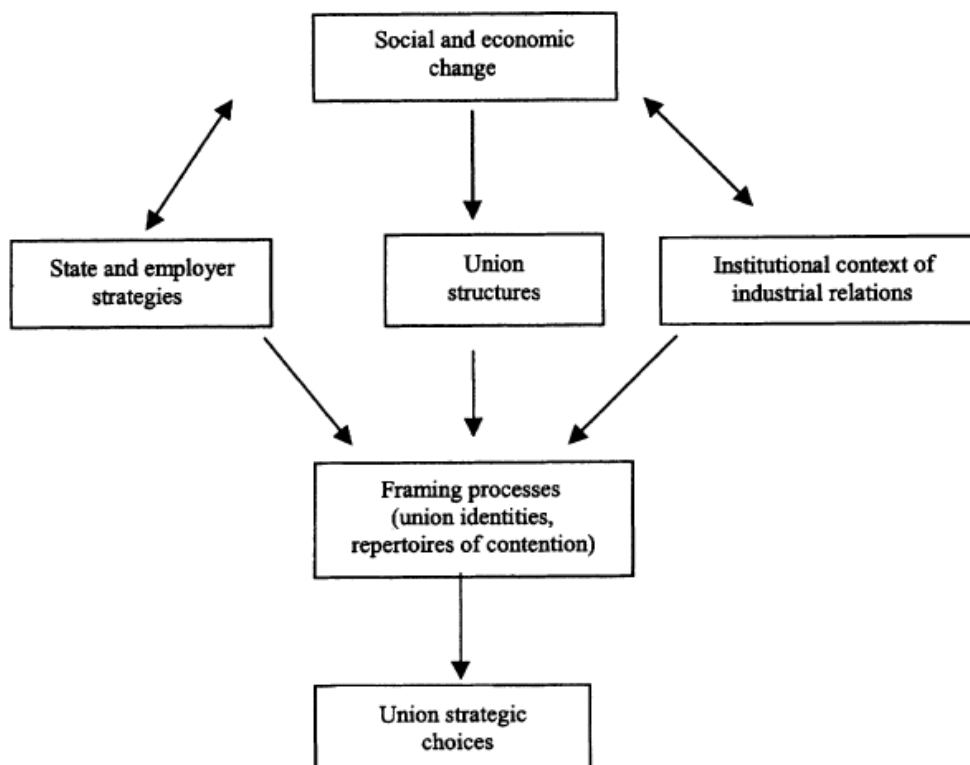


Figure 2. Social movement model of union strategic choices by Frege and Kelly (2003: 13)

Finally, the most recent theoretical framework of trade unions' responses to migration is presented by Connolly et al. (2014). Similar to Frege and Kelly (2003), Connolly et al. (2014) analysed unions representing the most important models of industrial relations (the liberal, co-ordinated market economy and the *Mediterranean* market economy) from the UK, Spain and the Netherlands. They did not include a Nordic model of economy. This analytical framework

aimed to understand different union identities and strategies in terms of their approach to integration of those workers. Their framework, including a perspective on how trade unions understand and reference *class*, *social rights* and *race* in relation to migration, is based on Hyman's (2001) trade union triangle of industrial relations. Connolly, Marino and Martinez Lucio (Connolly et al., 2014) transformed this triangle and replaced the points reflecting the model of trade unionism with points reflecting trade unions' responses to immigrants. They argue that unions' responses should be analysed against two dimensions. The first dimension looks at the logic of union actions around which they build policies regarding migrant workers. It is supported by forms of action undertaken by trade unions in relation to migration and issues around class, race and social rights. The second dimension is framed by specific union strategies (the modes of action) used to represent the interests of migrant workers, which include organising, engaging with communities and engaging with social regulations by acting as a social and institutional actor. Therefore, union policies on migration could be analysed by focusing on the following points of the triangle:

1. class/organising
2. race/community
3. social rights/social and institutional regulation.

Connolly et al. (2014) argue that their framework provides an analytical tool for understanding why trade unions in different countries have different relationships with migrants and why their organising strategies lead to different outcomes. In this model, trade unions are *stretched between different logics of actions and meaning* (Connolly et al., 2014:6). This is similar to tensions within Hyman's (2001) triangle, where a union may be located between two points of identity but miss out the third one; for instance, UK trade unions are described as being located between the class and the market but miss out the society aspect of the triangle. Accordingly, trade unions might struggle to successfully organise migrants because their logic of actions and strategies is located between two points on the triangle but misses out the third one. This is because complete representation of migrants' issues would require an engagement with all three points of the triangle. This missed point could be perceived as an oversight on the part of trade unions in terms of the strategies they use to organise migrants, such as in the context of British trade unions that did not focus on social rights, Spanish unions that did not adequately address issues of race/ethnicity or the Dutch unions for whom the missing point was the issue of class.

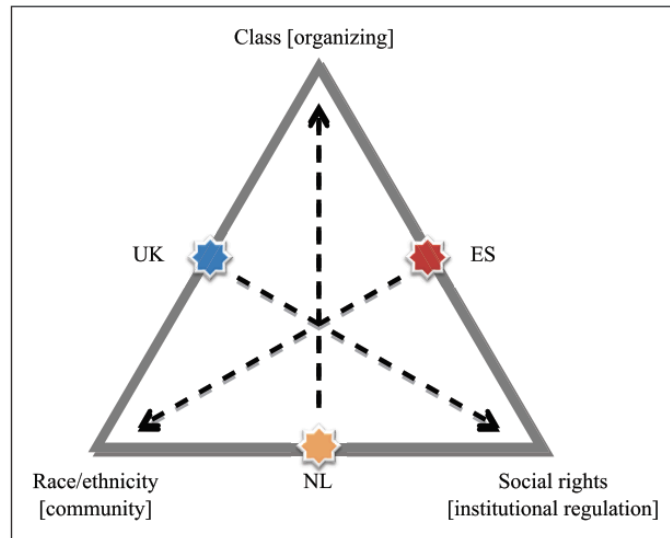


Figure 3. Modified triangle for researching trade unions' approach to migration by Connolly et al. (2014: 8)

Similar to the two theoretical frameworks of Kelly and Frege (2003) and Connolly et al. (2014), Marino's research (2012) focuses on the local-level perspective, representing a significant reorientation in terms of unions' responses to immigration. She compared the responses of Dutch and Italian (co-ordinated and *Mediterranean* models of economy respectively) trade unions to migrant workers. She focused on the level of integration of these policies within union structures and emphasised the gap between trade unions' policies and their implementation. In her analysis, she sought to answer which factors – trade union structures, ideology or institutional factors (political and economic position of trade unions, various models of capitalism) – could influence the different outcomes of immigrants' integration. It is important to mention that some of my research questions are based on Marino's (2012) concept of the *action–speech gap* in Unia and Unison policies and their implementation regarding Polish workers.

Marino's findings suggest that trade unions can opt for different strategic choices in relation to immigrants even though they experience similar challenges and operate in a similar context. Furthermore, those strategies and their outcomes strongly depend on internal union variables and dynamics, as described by Frege and Kelly (2003). Marino's (2012) findings also imply that there is a relationship between the degree of institutional embeddedness and union perception of migrants and ethnic minorities. Different levels of unions' power and institutional

embeddedness could explain their difficulties in integrating migrants only to a limited extent. Marino's (2012) research on Dutch trade unions shows that these were more institutionally embedded but at the same time were also less effective in unionising migrants. This seems to confirm the argument that more institutionally embedded trade unions perceive the issue of migrant workers' integration as less relevant to organisational strength (Regalia, 1988; Visser, 1998; Baccaro et al., 2003; Wrench, 2004). Moreover, the outcomes of Marino's (2012) analysis support the argument of Penninx and Roosblad (2000) that the more powerful and more institutionally embedded trade unions might not necessarily effectively influence the government in a direction favourable for migrants. Marino argues, however, that Penninx and Roosblad (2000)

do not find any causal relation between a stronger or weaker 'power position' and the 'direction' of union action towards migrant workers. Yet research findings suggest an inverse relationship between union institutional embeddedness and union efforts to include migrant and ethnic minority workers (Marino, 2012: 14).

Another group of researchers, Alberti, Holgate and Tapia (2013), through their analysis of three British trade unions (Unison, Unite and GMB) and by drawing on the intersectionality theory of Crenshaw (1993), identified two methods of trade unions' approaches to organising migrants: particularistic and universalistic methods. They argue:

Trade unions tend to consider migrants primarily as workers (taking on a so-called 'universalistic' approach), rather than as migrant workers with particular and overlapping forms of oppression (a 'particularistic' approach). As a result, unions tend to construct a dichotomy between workplace and migration issues, impeding the effective involvement of diverse and marginalised workers into unions (Alberti et al., 2013: 4132).

Alberti et al.'s (2013) research is particularly relevant to this dissertation, given that the researchers analysed the efforts of Unison to organise Filipino workers (conducted prior to the MWP project) and the GMB initiative to create a designated branch for CEE workers. According to them, a combination of particularistic and universalistic approaches turned out to be quite efficient in terms of attracting and retaining migrant workers.

It is important to mention the GMB experiences of supporting CEE migrant workers within the particularistic approach (Alberti et al., 2013). The decision to create a designated branch for CEE workers in 2009, seen by many trade unions as divisive, was, however, justified as it

mirrored the self-organising structures of Black workers and, similarly to those structures, aimed to enable migrant workers to familiarise themselves with the work and structures of their trade union and to later transfer to relevant branches (Tapia, 2014). The majority of its members, as well as a secretary, were Polish. The branch attracted workers mainly by offering free English classes and support regarding work-related problems. The branch quickly grew from 50 members in 2006 to 500 by 2008 (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). However, apart from offering educational courses, the branch struggled to provide additional support and consequently was not attracting enough members to make it financially sustainable. Connolly and Sellers (2017) suggest that the branch faced difficulties in reconciling its organising and servicing approach with its members and was dissolved in 2012.

Other Western European trade unions embraced similar methods and encountered comparable challenges. For instance, Dutch unions established a dedicated unit of Polish organisers (Marino et al., 2017), the German agricultural and construction union IG BAU created an association for mobile workers (Greer et al., 2013) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions launched a Polish members' network (ICTU, 2014). A number of these initiatives were project based, others, such as the association of mobile workers, struggled to attract members (Greer et al., 2013). There are, however, examples of more positive experiences, such as the Irish trade union SIPTU, which employed CEE organisers.¹⁰

It is also worth mentioning the research of Piore (1979) on the role of migrant workers in the labour market of receiving countries. In his *dual labour market theory*, he argues that the labour market can be divided into primary and secondary markets. The primary labour market is largely reserved for local workers and is characterised by stable employment relationships, employment protection and social security. The secondary labour market includes jobs at the bottom of the hierarchy that are insecure. The market therefore not only serves to buffer the business cycle but also to motivate local workers to appreciate their relatively better working conditions (Piore, 1979: 35-40). This theory therefore explains why Swiss trade unions initially perceived migrant workers as an *economic buffer* and so did not actively recruit them or advocate for their rights.

¹⁰ Those organisers belonged to a group on Facebook: Network Polish organisers in Western European trade unions: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/749401201777362/> (Accessed 14 September 2018).

Finally, Kranendonk and de Beer (2016) conducted qualitative research on the unionisation of migrant workers (that is, workers born abroad) in 23 European countries, based on analysis of European Social Survey data from 2002 to 2012. According to their research, trade union density among migrant workers in Switzerland was 9.7% and among local workers 14%. In the UK, 14.6% of migrants belonged to trade unions and trade union density among local population was 19.6% (Kranendonk and de Beer, 2016: 857). The authors argue that migrants are more likely to join unions if there is a higher union density in their countries of origin. This suggests that Polish workers are less likely to be union members because of the low membership level in Poland of 14% (ETUI, 2016). Secondly, their research confirms the argument of other scholars (see Marino et. al., 2017; Wrench, 2004; Krings, 2009) that the institutional position of trade unions reduces their efforts to mobilise mobile workers (Kranendonk and de Beer, 2016).

2.3 Racism and xenophobia are challenges to inclusion of migrant and ethnic minority workers

As mentioned in the introduction, the process of inclusion and integration of migrant workers within trade unions may also be analysed from the perspective of trade unions' responses to racism in a workplace. The issue of racism is even more visible in the British union movement, where historically the vast majority of migrants were Black and ethnic minority workers (Castels and Kosack, 1973; Wrench, 2004).

De Rudder et al. (2000) view racism as a social construct associated with people's individual thought processes and their actions. It is an ideological construct based on pseudo-scientific assumptions which emphasise differences between people and occurs in the legal, political and social system as well in individual practices (Jefferys and Ouali, 2007).

Jefferys and Ouali (2007) bring up the differences in terms of research findings, focusing on policy responses by unions from across Europe to migration and the challenge of racism:

Martens identifies common policy trends, Penninx and Roosblad and Wrench see a kaleidoscope of policies, and only Wrench's Danish union activists provide examples of the continuing toleration of racism (Jefferys and Ouali, 2007: 409).

Therefore, according to Jefferys and Ouali (2007), it may be useful to revisit debates on trade unions' attitudes to migration and racism in the British context and to understand the above

differences. For instance, some authors, such as Gilroy (1987), Sivanandan (1990) and Munro (2001), present trade unions as monolithic organisations representing the interests of the white skilled working class, whose interests have been prioritised and presented as general class interests to the detriment of other groups of workers. This point of view is similar to that of Hyman (2001), who suggests that trade unions traditionally tried to exclude some workers to protect the working conditions and social privileges of their core members. On the other hand, Virdee (2000) argues that unions should share common interests with Black workers. Similarly, Healy and Oikelome (2006) suggest that advancing common interests with Black and minority ethnic workers can not only reflect individual commitment by key union officials but also the extent of and capacity for collective mobilisation by minority members. However, *racist exclusionary practices* (Healy et al. 2004: 463) can still be visible within the trade union movement even though unions have policies aimed at tackling race-related discrimination. Holgate (2005) adds that those practices may significantly hinder trade unions' efforts to organise Black and ethnic minority workers.

However, Jefferys and Ouali (2007) suggest that apart from the above examples, there has been very little research on racism addressed towards Black and ethnic minority migrants, particularly on the shop floor level. Therefore, to analyse how the unions modified their position on racism and started to integrate migrant workers, we need to shift our attention to the bottom structures of trade unions. Accordingly, Jefferys and Ouali (2007) examined how shop floor level activists and rank and file members responded to visible and mediated racism aimed at migrant workers. Some of this research was conducted in the bus depots in London, Paris and Brussels. Their study identified issues in all three countries even though the main public transport trade unions implemented anti-racist policies at national level. Their research findings suggest that direct racism was rare but indirect racism was pervasive in nearly all the workplaces that were investigated.

Finally, it is important to mention Virdee (2014), who claims that ethnic minority workers in the UK were cast into the role of *racialised outsiders* and structured into the lower strand of society and that British trade unions' policy towards ethnic minority workers took the shape of *passive assimilation and race blindness*.

When it comes to Switzerland, the literature related to racism is limited due to the fact that migrant workers, as discussed in Chapter 4, from Southern Europe were predominantly white.

Nonetheless, even though migrant workers coming from Southern European countries were predominantly white, as Castels and Kosack (1973) argue, they experienced discrimination in a similar way to Black workers in the UK:

Coloured immigrants in Britain may be treated differently from Italians by the British population, but Italians are treated by the Swiss in very much the same way as the British treat coloured people (Castels and Kosack, 1973: 446).

In particular, the system of seasonal worker status contributed to discrimination against Southern Europeans, which included demeaning border medical examinations, prohibition to change jobs, inhumane prohibition of family reunification and tens of thousands of hidden children (Pedrina, 2016: 131). Under the seasonal workers status, their social and civil rights were very significantly reduced. They could work in Switzerland from 8 to 10 months each year and then would be required to go back to their country of origin. They would live in separate barracks (as the majority of them were men working at construction sites) and were unable to change employment during the first year of their stay in Switzerland or move within the country (Pereira, 2007, Steinauer and Von Allmen, 2000). Furthermore, they were unable to exercise family reunion rights during the first five years of their seasonal status (Schmitter-Heisler, 2000). Looking at the discrimination experienced by the Southern European workers, it could be argued that this group of workers were also treated by the Swiss society as ethnic outsiders, structured into the lower strand of society with sometimes fewer rights than Black migrant workers in the UK.

The seasonal workers status ended with the introduction of bilateral agreements and the free movement of workers within the EU at the beginning of the 2000s (see more in Chapter 4). However, the arrival of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and later Kosovo at the end of 1990s contributed to anti-migrant and in particular anti-Muslim sentiments fuelled by populist parties such as SVP, for instance in its initiative against building minarets (Tanner, 2015). Those negative sentiments still persist today and were instrumental in the popular initiative to reduce migration in 2014, described in Chapter 4.

2.4 Polish workers in Western Europe following 2004 EU enlargement

As a result of the CEE accession to the EU in 2004, Poland became one of the main sources of migration to Western European countries. Between 2004 and 2014, more than 1.9 million Poles left Poland to live in Western Europe (GUS, 2015).

Since the UK, Ireland and Sweden were the first countries which lifted the employment restrictions for CEE citizens, unions from those countries were at the forefront of organising CEE workers. There is a large amount of research, especially in the British context. For instance, in Fitzgerald and Hardy's (2010) research, trade union officials suggested that CEE migrants became more easily accepted in workplaces than previous waves of immigration due to their *Europeanness*. McDowell (2009) argues that the *whiteness* of Polish/CEE post-2004 migration to the UK meant that they had more privilege on the labour market than BAME workers or previous groups of migrants.

Eade (2007), researching Polish migrants who arrived in London, divided them into four named categories:

1. *Storks*: short-term, seasonal migrants, including students or agricultural workers, who come to the UK for around two to six months at a time to supplement their incomes at home.
2. *Hamsters*: temporary migrants who stay slightly longer to build capital for an investment back home.
3. *Stayers*: those who plan to remain in the UK and have strong ambitions for upward social mobility.
4. *Searchers*: the largest group, who keep their options deliberately open and are willing to work in either England or Poland depending on the career opportunities that become available.

Within the scope of this research, only the third and fourth categories of migrants will be interested in joining and becoming active within the researched unions. Reflecting on my own experience in Switzerland as well as on interviews with Polish trade unions officers from Unia (Chapter 6), those categories could also describe Polish workers in the Swiss confederation. Such as the *stork* type which will appear among many posted workers.

The literature on post-2004 Polish migrants in Switzerland is very limited and concentrates predominantly on the situation of live-in care workers, whose employment and living conditions are precarious (see, for example, Wigger et al., 2013; Wigger and Brüscheiler, 2014; Rogalewski, 2018).

Finally, it is useful to mention the study of Berntsen (2016) on the labour agency of Polish/CEE construction workers in the Netherlands. She suggests that although precarious employment limits unionisation of those workers (especially posted workers), the workers themselves could develop strategies to mitigate those precarious conditions to their benefit. Furthermore, her research implies that workers that do indeed mitigate their precarious situation do not usually seek assistance from trade unions, apart from in the most extreme conditions, and therefore trade unions need to be more proactive in reaching out to those workers.

2.5 Organising migrant and ethnic minority communities

Unison and Unia embedded their efforts to include Polish migrant workers within the wider organising strategy, i.e. they were not only including migrants but organising them, and so it is important to incorporate this aspect' within this review literature on trade unions' organising of migrant and ethnic communities (compare, for instance, Holgate, 2004, Milkman, 2006, Connolly et al. 2017).

Scholars agree that organising is a key part of revitalisation strategies and that it helps to tackle membership decline (Frege and Kelly, 2004; Martinez Lucio and Steward, 2009c; Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013). At the same time, trade unions and scholars use different definitions of the term *organising* (compare, for instance, de Turberville, 2004; Carter, 2006; Gall, 2009). For example, Simms and Holgate (2010) suggest that in the academic debate the organising model has been represented as the opposite of the partnership (Heery, 2002) or the servicing (De Turberville, 2004) model of unionism, and therefore *there is no single organising mode-* and argue that- *much UK organising activity has become a set of practices but without a unifying end purpose in mind* (Simms and Holgate, 2010: 158). Simms and Holgate do not offer a clear definition and instead argue that it is important to consider the aims and purposes of trade unions and that workers' self-organisation is crucial aspect. Hurd (2004) in his analysis of American trade unions' approaches to organising and trade unions' revitalisation differentiated between internal and external aspect of organising. The former refers to unions'

strategies aimed at mobilising existing members or focusing on already unionised workplaces with the aim of recruiting new members or mobilising workers to become involved in trade union activities. External organising, which reflects Simms and Holgate's (2010) understanding of organising, focuses on non-unionised workplaces. It uses campaigning and dedicated organisers to recruit new workers and create new union structures within or beyond the workplace (Connolly et al., 2017: 36). According to Connolly et. al., (2017), trade unions do not distinguish between those two aspects even though in many cases *internal organising* is not dissimilar to typical information campaigns run by trade unions within the workplace.

Finally, Connolly et. al. (2017) propose a broader definition of organising which covers both aspects of organising (external and internal) and emphasises its results, that is, the increased power of workers through self-organisation in trade unions. They argue that organising is

an approach to recruit new workers, empower union members and encourage worker self-organization as well as a strategic opportunity for renewal and revitalization in the context of declining union density and institutional power bases (Frege and Kelly, 2004; Gumbrell- McCormick and Hyman, 2013) (quoted in Connolly et al., 2017: 321).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I draw on this definition in my research.

Organising as a trade union technique emerged during the 1990s (Heery et al., 2000), with scholars (Heery et al., 2000; Holgate and Seems, 2008 or Connolly et al., 2017) in agreement that it was first adopted in the United States of America, then Australia and has since been taken up by the British and Irish and later all European trade unions. Employing organising methods to include migrant workers in the USA has been widely researched by Milkman (2006) and recently by Engeman (2015), the latter doing so from the angle of the social movement of unionism.

Milkman (2006), drawing on her research on American trade unions organising predominantly Latino workers in Southern California, identified three factors regarding why migrants may be easier to organise than their native-born counterparts:

First, working-class immigrants tend to have stronger social networks than all but the poorest natives (...). Second, class-based collective organizations like labour unions and CBOs [Community Based Organisations] may be more compatible with the lived experience, worldviews, and identities of many immigrants (...). Finally, the shared

experience of stigmatization among immigrants (...) may foster a sense of unity (Milkman, 2006: 133).

Milkman (2006) argues that organising models allowed trade unions to reach out to migrant communities and contributed to trade unions' revitalisation. Employing migrants as unions officers, co-ordination between *bottom-up* and *top-down approaches* and building alliances with migrant communities were essential factors in organising migrant workers. Furthermore, existing union structures along with the attitude of leaders played an important role in successful outcomes of these campaigns.

Similarly, Holgate (2004) in her research on the organising strategies of British trade unions which targeted migrant and ethnic minority workers found that trade unions' structures were not ready for the needs of those workers. She concluded that trade unions should have employed organisers representing relevant migrant groups to help address any trust issues. Furthermore, Holgate argues that migrants form social networks which could be developed by the union as part of their organising strategies (Holgate, 2005: 478). In the same vein, Tapia (2014) argues that if migrant workers' projects are allocated to a small number of union officers, migrant workers' issues become separated from overall union strategies.

Però (2014), who analysed the self-organisation of Latin American workers in London within their own organisation (Latin American Workers Association – LAWAS) with the support of the T&G (Unite), argued that *like for like* methods of migrants' organisations and co-operation with community groups outside workplaces played an important role in workers' collective engagement. Furthermore, the significance of the culture and identity of migrants as well as intersectionality between class and ethnicity in workers' identities were important for the success of the LAWAS campaigns. Però argues:

Contrary to the prevailing treatment of migrant workers as objects of policy or passive victims (Però, 2011; Però and Solomos, 2010), this sector of the population – despite its often very precarious conditions (Standing, 2011) – has emerged as able to engage collectively with exploitative and marginalising processes and to help in reinvigorating the labour movement (Però, 2014: 1167).

The argument that migrants are not passive victims is confirmed by the case study analysed in Chapter 6 of my dissertation.

Anglo-Saxon trade unions have perceived organising techniques, including organising migrant workers, as a means of addressing issues with membership decline (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2009c). Overall, scholars such as Alberti et al. (2013) and Connolly et al. (2017) have predominantly focused on the organising model in the context of English-speaking countries, given the popularity of the organising model for trade unions in those countries. It has to be noted that Alberti (2014) advises that community or workplace organising may not be successful in sustaining union membership among a fragmented workforce in the context of research on organising migrants in London hotels.

With the spread of the organising model to other countries, there has been an increasing amount of research on other trade unions that deploy organising strategies, particularly in terms of organising migrant workers. For instance, recently Connolly et al. (2017) focused on the Netherlands and compared the organising campaign of FNV with the SEIU campaign *Justice for Janitors*. I have adopted a similar approach in my article focusing on organising Swiss migrants in Unia (Rogalewski, 2018). Furthermore, as Martinez Lucio (2017) argues, Spanish trade unions have been organising workers for a long time without consciously realising that they were applying organising techniques. The research of Connolly et al. (2017) implies that the introduction of the organising model by Dutch trade unions as a means of union revitalisation has not only resulted in greater representation of workers and increased union influence in the cleaning sector but has also contributed to the process of reform and democratisation within the union.

Similarly, it is interesting to look in greater detail at the approach taken by British trade unions to organising migrants, also in the context of the previously mentioned collaboration with the US trade unions. During the 1996 conference, the TUC launched the *New Unionism* initiative, which led to the establishment of an Organising Academy¹¹ in 1998, whose purpose was training organisers for its affiliates (see, for instance, Connolly et al. 2017). Individually or through bilateral co-operation with US unions (e.g. SEIU), British trade unions held organising campaigns aimed at migrant workers. One of them was the TGWU's campaign which started in 2004, *Justice for Cleaners*, which mirrored the SEIU's campaign, *Justice for Janitors*. It successfully organised workers (many of whom were of migrant origin) employed in London's financial district in Canary Wharf. Similarly, Holgate (2004) describes the local campaigns of

¹¹ I graduated from the academy in 2009.

USDAW, the TGWU and the GMB targeting Black and ethnic minority workers in retail and food-producing sectors.

In 2006 the TUC published a report entitled *Organising Migrant Workers: A National Strategy*, hoping to encourage its affiliates to support, represent and organise migrant workers. In this report, particular attention was given to a new group of migrants from CEE countries. Shortly after the report was published, a debate in the TUC began about whether its policies should be specifically focused on migrant workers or whether this should be part of a wider vulnerable (precarious) workers' strategy. As a result, the TUC shifted its position and in 2007 set up the Commission on Vulnerable Employment, with the change aiming to send a political message that the TUC was equally interested in local and migrant workers (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). The commission produced a report entitled *Hard Work: Hidden Lives* (TUC, 2008), which, in line with the previous report, examined the situation of precarious workers and encouraged union affiliates to organise them. At the time of writing, the TUC did not have any officer responsible for post-2004 migrant workers nor any body responsible for their issues.

The creation of the commission focusing on vulnerable workers in May 2007 (TUC, 2007) represented an important change in union policies towards migrant workers, which could reflect changes in political rhetoric linked to EU migration in British society. Although this modification took place before the economic crisis of 2008 and before the famous Lindsey Oil Refinery dispute of 2009 involving European workers, which resulted in the growing anti-European migrant narrative within British society, some anti-migrant narrative was present in the public discourse before 2008 (Connolly and Sellers, 2017). It could be also seen in the introduction to the commission's report (2008) by the TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, who said that migration from the EU was a difficult issue for union members, who were concerned about unemployment and migrants driving down wages:

Migration is clearly a difficult issue for politicians. There is voter concern that it has caused unemployment and driven down wages. While these effects may have been exaggerated, the recent increase in migrant workers has brought the hidden world of vulnerable work into the daylight (TUC, 2008: 1).

Nonetheless, it is plausible to say that by changing its focus to vulnerable workers, the TUC marginalised the position of migrant workers within its policy. It was particularly apparent in the definition of vulnerable work presented by the TUC in 2007 (TUC, 2007), when it became

a cross-cutting category consisting of at least six groups: agency workers, other atypical workers, young workers, unpaid family workers, recent migrants to the UK and informal workers.

2.6 Conclusions

The chapter presented the academic literature on trade unions' approaches to migration and their efforts to organise workers within the discussion on trade unions' revitalisation.

The literature discussed in this chapter suggests that trade unions faced challenges related to the inclusion of migrant workers. Penninx and Roosblad (2000) organised those challenges into three sets of dilemmas and presented a set of four factors and later with Marino et al. (2017) five factors that influence different approaches to migration. These could also be seen in a context of internationalist and protectionist approaches (Castels and Kosack, 1973) and moral and pragmatic (instrumental) approaches to migration (Haus, 2002 and Jefferys, 2007). In the last-mentioned approach approach, trade unions decided to organise migrants in order to sustain their membership base and collective power. This pragmatic approach is particularly relevant because it will be reflected in the changing attitudes of Swiss trade unions towards migrants and in Unison's approach to Polish workers. It is also an important factor within the theory of strategic choices (Frege and Kelly, 2003) as well as within the discussion on trade union revitalisation. Looking at my research questions, the literature provides a framework to understand the linkage between the gaps in the implementation of trade unions' policies as well as the connections between supporting migrants and organising them.

However, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, there are some gaps in the literature regarding the experiences of Polish workers within trade unions. For instance, the existing literature does not provide answers as to whether Polish workers representing a new inflow of migration (mobile workers) to Western European countries have different expectations of trade unions or whether trade unions have to tailor their approach accordingly. Nor does the literature provide an assessment of whether organising methods deployed by trade unions were successful in reaching out to Polish workers. In the Swiss context, given the recency of Polish migration, there is very limited literature on their engagement within trade unions. The next chapters will aim to fill this gap.

Chapter 3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the research methods adopted for this thesis and explains why these are the most applicable. It begins with an outline of the theoretical framework of the research questions and includes the presumptions behind the questions as well. This is followed by a discussion on the effectiveness of methods that would be the most applicable for answering these questions. Further discussion focuses on methodology-related issues, such as methods of data collection and analysis and selection criteria, with an emphasis on issues related to translation as well as the positioning of the researcher. Translation issues are particularly relevant in the context of this research as all data, including interviews, were collected and analysed in three languages: English, German and Polish, and so this chapter will address interpretation-related dilemmas. Furthermore, attention is given to the unique position of the *inside researcher*, focusing on ethical issues and ways in which the author's position may have contributed to or influenced the research outcome.

This research was based on a qualitative approach, with data collected through a combination of interviews, a dedicated case study and participant observation alongside an analytic autoethnographic approach. The primacy given to the qualitative method mirrors the approach of other scholars who undertook comparative research on strategies adopted by trade unions towards immigrant workers (see Hyman, 2001; Marino, 2012 and Connolly, 2014) or in relation to organising migrant workers (Holgate, 2005; Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). As mentioned in the introduction chapter, this approach was underpinned by the need to provide an opportunity to listen to the voices of marginalised CEE workers. It has to be noted that the bulk of previous research on the integration of CEE members into trade unions is primarily based on statistical data or interviews with full-time officials. I was therefore keen to broaden that perspective and to provide an understanding of trade union policies from the perspective of the shop floor level; after all, this is where the implementation takes place and where, at the same time, internal racism and xenophobia may weaken this process (Jefferys, 2007). For this reason, this research incorporated interviews with Polish trade union representatives (activists) as well as Polish rank and file members.

Polish activists and rank and file members were interviewed in their native language, with the aim of understanding trade union policies from the perspective of the target group on the shop floor level.

As a Polish speaker, I was not limited by language or social barriers when it came to communicating with Polish workers and did not need to rely on an interpreter or the involvement of third parties, unlike other scholars, who may have faced difficulties in gaining access to an organisation (Bryman, 1998).

Compton and Jones (1998) argue that organisations cannot be analysed from a distance, and I certainly benefitted from my *insider* status as an employee of both trade unions being analysed in this thesis. I had a good understanding of these unions' structure and policy-making processes and could easily access key informants and gain their trust. I was also able to participate as an observer in relevant meetings such as seminars of Polish members in Unison or meetings of Polish groups in Unia. At the same time, my position as an insider was not without its challenges, including ethical ones, and these will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for comparing trade unions' strategies for inclusion of migrant workers is based on the application of an international comparative perspective as well as consideration of factors related to trade unions' identities and ideologies discussed in the previous chapter.

To start with, the theoretical framework draws heavily on research undertaken by Penninx and Roosblad (2000) and later by Marino et al. (2017), who focused on factors related to trade unions' attitudes to migration.

At the same time, the model presented by Penninx and Roosblad in 2000 has been criticised by many scholars (Wrench, 2004; Jefferys, 2007; Jefferys and Ouali, 2007; Marino, 2012; Connolly et al.; 2014), who have argued that it pays too much attention to the top floor policy

level while overlooking the processes on the shop floor level and their influence on the implementation as well as the creation of unions' policies.¹²

Hyman (2001) provides a useful set of tools, arguing that union identity is framed by the following: class (class struggle), the market (labour market functions and regulations) and society (social justice). Connolly et al. (2014) modified this model to understand the attitude of unions towards migrant workers and identified two key dimensions for comparing the responses of trade unions to migration. Consequently, Unison and Unia policies on migration can be analysed by focusing on the following aspects of the logic of their actions and strategies:

1. class/organising
2. race/community
3. social rights/social and institutional regulation

Within this context, differences between Swiss and British unions can be discussed in terms of differences in the logic of framing their policies and developing their strategies (modes of action) to involve migrants. As such, Unia could be described as a more class and social rights-oriented union, but at the same time it lacks community engagement. On the other hand, Unison's focus on class and organising (as well as its emphasis on self-organisation of Black union members' which is strongly embedded within its structures) could imply that the union is more oriented towards race and community and does not focus as much on issues concerning social rights and institutional regulation.

Furthermore, analysis of Unison's and Unia's responses to Polish workers can also be evaluated in line with Frege and Kelly's (2003) theory of strategic choices. They suggest that unions possess a pattern of *well-worn behaviours* and are more likely to rely on these patterns when responding to new challenges (such as new types of migration) rather than risk new approaches.

¹² As mentioned in the previous chapter Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) theory in the continuation of their book with Marino in 2017 (Marino et al., 2017) have been broadened by the fifth factor related to internal union variables such as union identity, rooted practices and structures. These variables are based on theories of Hyman (2001) and Frege and Kelly (2003). As such, the theoretical framework presented in my thesis includes this fifth factor by making reference to Hyman's (2001) and Frege and Kelly's (2003) theories.

Taking into consideration the weaknesses and strengths of the three sets of theories discussed above, i.e. Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) and Hyman's framework (2001) modified by Connolly et al. (2014) and Frege and Kelly (2003), I decided to use them in a complementary way rather than relying on a single one. As a result, the theoretical framework used to analyse the efforts of Unison and Unia to include Polish migrants draws on selected aspects of the above theories.

To start with, unions' dilemmas in terms of responding to migration were analysed with reference to the three dilemmas described by Penninx and Roosblad (2000), later modified in a book published with Marino (2017):

1. Resistance versus support of migration policies;
2. Inclusion versus exclusion of migrants within their structures;
3. Equal versus special treatment within their structures.

In addition, the framework adopted for the purposes of this thesis draws on Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) four factors which influence the different ways in which unions respond to migration:

1. The social position of the trade union movement in the power structure of society.
2. The economic and labour market situation at the time.
3. The factors connected with society as a whole (the political structure, legislation, national ideologies and public discourse).
4. The factors connected with the characteristics of migrants themselves.

Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) factors were broadened by Marino et al. (2017) via a theoretical framework drawing on the work of Frege and Kelly (2003) and Hyman (2001) – the fifth factor influences trade unions' responses to migration. I will use this framework in my research to analyse the importance of unions' internal structures and *framing processes* that include the union identities presented by Hyman (2001) as well as the role of trade union leaders in revitalisation processes and their approach to migration. Drawing on these theories will allow me to understand the importance of unions' structures and *framing processes* in influencing the outcomes of unions' efforts and will help explain any possible gaps between policy and its interpretation.

Finally, I will use the theory of Connolly et al. (2014), which will allow me to analyse the dimensions (factors) of trade unions' responses to migration. These are as follows:

1. Logic of union actions (identities) around which policies regarding migrant workers are framed (class, race and social rights) and which are correlated with Hyman's trade unions' identity triangle (class, market and society)
2. Strategies on how those policies are implemented (organising, community approach or institutional regulation approach).

3.3 Research design

The majority of scholars who conducted comparative studies of trade unions' inclusion of foreign workers relied on interviews in their methodological approach. For example, Marino (2012) conducted 43 interviews when comparing approaches to the integration of migrants adopted by Italian and Dutch trade unions. The interviewees included union officials, representatives and workers, and were chosen on the basis of their role in activities related to policy-making and implementation. Similarly, Wrench (2004), who researched the responses of trade unions to immigration and racism in Denmark and the UK, conducted 20 interviews with members of the migrant activists' network in Danish trade unions, Danish union officials involved in migration issues and 10 British trade union officers. Likewise, Fitzgerald and Hardy (2012) conducted interviews with 63 informants when analysing trade unions' efforts to organise migrant workers. Qualitative methods appeared to be the most efficient to help understand the different expectations of the actors and the complex logic of their actions.

Importantly, this research aims to reveal the voices of excluded and marginalised groups by enabling the full spectrum of migrants' voices to be heard. This contrasts with the approach taken, for instance, by Fitzgerald and Hardy (2010), who interviewed only full-time trade union officers.

Given the complexity of the research questions, it was clear that an approach based on one method would not be sufficient to provide a satisfactory outcome. Therefore, a multi-research method approach with priority given to qualitative techniques was chosen, with the following methods included:

1. Qualitative semi-structured interviews with full-time union officials as well as Polish trade union representatives (activists) and rank and file Polish union members.
2. Case study of carers' strike in Switzerland.
3. Participant observation (attendance at seminars of Polish activists in Unison).
4. Analytic autoethnography using my unique position as a member of research organisations (a Polish organiser employed by two trade unions).

Qualitative approaches including a case study, participant observation and analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006) were supplemented by desk research. This focused on analysis of data on the labour force and migration at the local level (UK, Switzerland and Poland) and the European one (using Eurostat as well as membership statistic when available). These methods were used in addition to interviews; however, this was not with the intention of finding out whether different sources would lead to the same conclusions (Greenfield, 1996: 9) but to provide the research investigation with more depth and rigour (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Preferential treatment was given to the case study method, which, according to Yin (2009: 4), allows the retention of the holistic and meaningful characteristic of real-life events, including organisational processes. Given the specificity of my research subject, the study approach involves direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of persons involved in the events (Yin, 2009: 11). Furthermore, the case study method was particularly useful in the context of the strike of Polish workers as this approach can be used in any phase of the research, that is, exploration, description and explanation (Yin, 2012). In this instance, the case study approach was used to provide an explanation of how trade unions were implementing their policies in practice. In addition, a number of scholars researching trade unions organising migrant workers (compare Holgate 2004 or Milkman, 2006) adopted a case study method.

The qualitative research was supported by quantitative analysis of trade union membership, labour and the migration workforce in Switzerland and the UK as well as statistics on migration at the European and Polish levels (Eurostat, Polish and Swiss statistical offices and Labour Force Survey). Analysis of union membership proved difficult when it came to Unison. There

were no data on the number of Polish members in Unison (see section 5.3.4)¹³ as this union records only the race of its members (which in the case of Polish members would usually be white other), not their nationality. Therefore, the number of Polish members in Unison could only be estimated by its officers as opposed to members of Unia, which records members' nationality as well as their native language. As mentioned by some Unia officers, information about members' native language was particularly important to ensure that union members could be provided with appropriate support such as opportunities to meet within their informal language groups or to become part of the migrant workers' formal regional and national structures. Questions related to the rationale for not collecting data on nationality in Unison were raised during interviews with Unison officials; this is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.4.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection focused mainly on Unison and Unia projects: the Migrant Workers Participation Project (MWP project) and the project to organise Polish and CEE workers (CEE project); it also focused on related initiatives such as the Hidden Workforce Project (HW project) and the Polish Activists Network in Unison and a similar network in Unia or a strike of mainly Polish carers in Switzerland.

3.4.1 Interviews

Given the time constraints while studying for the Professional Doctorate and the need to keep the number of interviews at a manageable level, an initial sample of 32 interviews was chosen. In the course of the research projects, additional interviews were conducted, including seven case study-related interviews, an interview with the president of Unia, an interview with a Polish-speaking organiser of Unia, who was appointed after the research commenced, and finally an interview with a TUC race equality officer. 45 interviews were conducted with informants, representing a broad spectrum of trade unionists from the top level, such as general

¹³ In an analysis of surnames that were Polish in origin by a Polish-speaking organiser in 2014, there were approximately 3000 members with such surnames in Unison. In 2014 in Unia, there were about 1000 Polish members. Therefore, the proportion of Polish members within Unison and Unia could be estimated as follows: in Unison, 0.002% (3000 out of 1.3 million members) and in Unia 0.5% (1000 out of 200,000 members). However, even Unia data are only an estimate as some Polish members could opt out of filling in their nationality in application forms. Of course, it has to be noted that some Polish Unison members may have a surname that is not typically Polish, for instance through marriage.

and deputy secretaries, to policy officers in head offices, regional secretaries and managers, and organisers and all the way to Polish activists and rank and file members (see Figure 4).

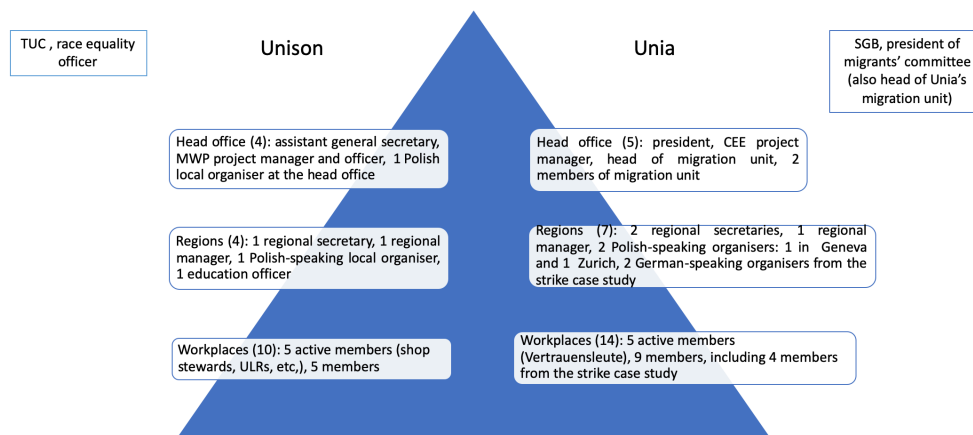


Figure 4. Type and position of informants within union structures

Out of 45 interviews, 26 were conducted in Switzerland (including 7 from the case study of the care workers' strike), 19 in the UK. In order to reveal the voice of excluded and marginalised groups, priority was given to interviews with Polish active members and rank and file members, with 24 such interviewees: 10 in the UK and 14 in Switzerland (including 4 from the case study of the care workers' strike).

The reason for paying more attention to rank and file informants follows Jefferys' (2007) suggestion of analysing the view from the bottom rather than from the top of union structures. Moreover, the existing literature on union approaches to Polish workers in the UK is primarily based on interviews with trade union officers at the top of union structures (see, for instance, Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). As a result, the experience of Polish activists and members has not been adequately represented or fully analysed. Their voices are vital in terms of understanding union integration strategies from the perspective of their target groups. Finally, issues related to language and cultural background did play a role in choosing Polish workers as the main research target. I was able to build trust with the interviewees over a shared experience of being a migrant Polish worker in the UK and Switzerland. In addition, like many of the interviewees, I had very similar reasons for leaving Poland, mostly economic ones, and

so in many cases I felt a connection with the interviewees which undoubtedly helped create a rapport. This was particularly relevant when my interviewees were sharing their experiences of working in the UK, which often involved underemployment or employment in jobs that may be perceived in Poland as shameful for an educated person (for instance refuse collector). Importantly, I felt that some interviewees assumed that due to our shared status as Polish migrants, I may have had similar experiences myself or knew other Polish people who found themselves in similar circumstances. As such, the shared background helped the interviewees overcome any barriers they may have had in sharing some aspects of their experiences in the UK. The issue of positioning myself as an inside researcher will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Out of 24 interviews with Polish members, 10 were conducted with Polish active members (trade union representatives): 5 from Unison and 5 from Unia. In Unison, the interviewees represented different levels of membership, including shop stewards, union learning representatives (ULR), health and safety representatives and equality reps. Unia has only one type of trade union representative – Vertrauensperson (in German, literally a person of trust) – where members are engaged at three different levels: as an activist, a supporter and a contact person. This position is equivalent to that of the British shop steward; however, in the Swiss context there is less employment protection against dismissal on the grounds related to trade union duties. In addition, Polish members can take up elected positions on various committees and union governing bodies at regional and national levels.

At active membership level, interviews were conducted with the co-president of the migrants' regional committee in Geneva and 2 presidents of Unia's informal group of Central Eastern European care workers. Active and rank and file members in both unions were identified through networks of Polish members and via Facebook pages. Excluding the case study of the care workers' strike in Switzerland, eight informants were members working as care workers (4 from Unia and 4 from Unison, representing different regions). The care sector is the only one that both trade unions have in common.

The remaining interviews were undertaken with full-time union officials at main and regional offices. Because I was unable to get access to Unison's Black members' officer I chose to carry out an interview with the TUC's race equality officer instead. Interviewees at the top of union

structures in Unison included 4 officers: 1 manager and 1 member of the former Migrant Workers' Unit, 1 Polish-speaking organiser from the Strategy Organising Unit and the assistant general secretary. In Unia, 3 officers from the Migrant Workers' Department (1 manager and 2 members), 1 member of the executive board responsible for migration and the president were interviewed. The head of Unia's migration department at the time of the interview was also a president of the SGB's Migrant Workers' Committee, an equivalent of the TUC's Black Workers' Committee. I did not plan to interview the Unia president but given her interest in the research, I eventually included her as an interviewee.

At the regional level, interviews were conducted in Unison with 1 regional secretary, 1 regional manager, 1 Polish-speaking local organiser and 1 Polish speaking regional officer responsible for education. In Unia with 2 regional secretaries and 2 Polish-speaking regional organisers. All informants were selected based on their own or their region's involvement in organising migrant workers and the high density of migrant workers among their members.

Among the trade union officers, 2 in Unia and 2 in Unison were of Polish origin. The migration background of the other officers varied: in Unison, 3 had a migration background and 2 were white British, whereas in Unia only 1 person out of 7 was of Swiss origin. This is not surprising as the majority of union members have migration roots, with 50% being non-Swiss citizens. This pattern is also present at the regional level, where the majority of the heads of regions are first- or second-generation migrants (Unia, 2016b).

The length of all interviews varied from 30 to 90 minutes, depending on various circumstances such as the informant's experience or the time available. The shortest interviews were with rank and file members as well as the striking care workers as these took place within a very short time, during or just before the strike.

Interviews were conducted in places most convenient for all parties, which included offices, homes and public spaces (one interview was conducted in a park in a Swiss city) as well as over Skype, where the interviewee would usually be in their home.

Out of 45 interviews, 5 were conducted via Skype. More information about the interviewees, including demographic information, is provided in Appendix 1.

3.4.2 Case study of the CEE workers' strike in Unia

When I drew up the research plan, I did not anticipate including a case study; however, during the time frame of this doctorate I had the opportunity to observe a strike of care workers and decided to incorporate the material within the thesis. A case study on the strike of CEE care workers in Switzerland provided an opportunity to assess Unia's policy in *practice*, especially given that the strike occurred in the last months of the project that was focused on organising Polish migrant workers.

All semi-structured case study interviews with workers were conducted on the last day of the strike. I decided to do that as I was aware that it might be difficult to contact workers again given their work patterns and the fact that some of them might take another job or return to Poland. 3 carers were interviewed shortly after they learnt that they had won the strike and 1 when she was still waiting for the results of the negotiation. All interviews with Polish carers were conducted in their native language. I did not interview the Slovakian striker given the language barrier, as her German was not strong enough to let her freely express herself. Finally, I was unable to interview 2 live-in carers as they left the strike shortly before it concluded.

I decided to interview union officials at a later stage as I knew I would be able to contact them more easily, and so these interviews took place a month after the end of the strike, giving the officers an opportunity to gain some distance from the events of the strike. Interviews with 2 officers were undertaken in German and with the regional secretary in English as he felt confident doing so. As this case study aimed to analyse the union's strategy towards inclusion of migrant workers, I decided not to contact the employer.

3.4.3 Participant observation

To enhance data collection, I decided to employ an additional method of gathering information, namely the observational approach, given that I had an opportunity to participate as an observer (Yin, 2012), at the annual meeting of the Polish members of Unison in April 2016. The meeting was attended by 25 participants representing active members (shop stewards, etc.) and less experienced members from across the country. Given that there was no time or space to conduct

a focus group, I decided to speak to 5 participants: 4 during the meeting and 1 soon after the end of the meeting. Participants were chosen on the basis of criteria related to their gender, age, position in Unison, geographical location and, most importantly, current job so that the chosen sample could be compared to that in Switzerland. I also made sure that I chose participants who did not hold any union position (non active members) as well as participants who had not met me previously.

It was not easy for me to participate in the meeting as an outside researcher, especially since the facilitators and some participants previously knew me in my role of Unison project officer; they were also aware of my role in creating the network of Polish activists. I tried to manage the situation by remaining mostly silent throughout the seminar; I also made sure that I sat at the back of the room, close to the other researcher present at the meeting, to reinforce the fact that I was there similarly in a research capacity. There were, however, a couple of occasions when the facilitators inadvertently drew attention to me by mentioning my previous involvement in Unison. My approach was to explain that I had very limited recollection of that time given that I had left Unison over four years prior. I was also asked a couple of times to participate in seminar workshop groups and I did join in, not wanting to build unnecessary barriers and conscious of my status of *participant* observer. I believe that my dual position at the seminar of being simultaneously an outsider (as a researcher) and insider (as a previous Unison employee) allowed me to *step in and out of the setting under study* (Burgess, 1982: 48, cited in Holgate, 2004) and enhanced my reflection on the data gathered during participation.

3.4.4 Additional methods of data collection

The research design also incorporated the autoethnography method as formulated by Anderson (2006) to question and verify information provided by the interviews or through desk research. This method is characterised by the five key features: *complete member researcher status, analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility of the researcher's self, dialogue with informants beyond the self and finally a commitment to theoretical analysis* (Anderson, 2006: 378).

I participated in the MWP and CEE projects described in this thesis and kept the diaries and notes from those projects as well as from my all employment at Unison and Unia. I used these to analyse my involvement in those projects .

Finally, in terms of secondary data collection, the desk research method was used. This included a detailed analysis of policy and statistical documents, including the database of members and documents produced by the unions that were relevant to the research topic; archives of the TUC and the SGB were also consulted.

3.4.5 Selection criteria for primary data

Informants were chosen from among those involved in the above projects or from those who due to their high position in the union (senior union officers) should have known about the project. Active and rank and file members were chosen from among those who participated in training seminars for Unia and Unison members or on a snowball basis.

I have chosen the intersectionality approach (Crenshaw, 1993) in order to better understand the unionisation of Polish workers and most importantly to avoid the bias that *gender blind* research can introduce (Danieli, 2006; Holgate et al., 2006) and therefore my thesis pay special attention to female informants. This was of particular importance as Polish migration to the UK and Switzerland was more feminised than previous migration (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, Unison operates in the public service sector, which is highly feminised. Unia operates in private sectors and its membership is less feminised: 25% of members were women (Unia 2016b) as opposed to in Unison, with 77% (Unison, 2016a). It was also important to listen to migrants across the age spectrum, from those who were young to those close to retirement age. I made sure I focused on informants from the largest sectors organised by the two unions, that is, the local government sector in Unison and the construction sector in Unia. Those sectors were important because forming unions of Unison and Unia (NALGO and GBI) (as mentioned in the introductory chapter) was at the forefront of implementing trade unions' inclusion policies. It was assumed that some local union structures established by NALGO and GBI operating in those sectors would be more sensitive towards migration issues. Given that the only sector in which trade unions actively recruited members was the care sector, special attention was drawn to Polish members and representatives from within this sector.

From the total number of 24 Polish members who were interviewed, 13 were women. In Unison, 5 out of 10 informants were women and 8 out of 14 Unia members were women (including all 4 women from the care workers' strike). It has to be noted that more women were

interviewed from Unia due to the strike analysed in Chapter 6, in which only female members participated. In terms of active members (i.e. union representatives), the breakdown was as follows: 2 women and 3 men in Unison and 2 men and 3 women in Unia.

Looking at the distribution of informants in the sectors organised by particular trade unions, in Unison the number of members from the sectors was as follows: 4 interviewees were care workers employed by private companies working for the local government sector, 4 worked for hospitals (NHS sector, and two of them were employed by private contractors), 1 worked for the community sector and 1 was in higher education working as a security officer. In Unia, 8 informants were care workers, 5 worked in the construction sector and 1 was a cycling courier.

In terms of the age representation of Polish members, 2 were aged between 30 and 40, 6 between 40 and 50, 2 between 50 and 60 and 4 between 60 and 70 years old.

Finally, informants were spread across all regions of Unison and Unia; this was a conscious decision to avoid interviewing only those who live in the most populated or industrialised places. More information about the interviews and a full list of interviewees are included in Appendix 1.

3.4.6 Selection criteria for secondary data

Secondary data were chosen mainly due to their relevance to the research subject or period (trade unions' approaches to migration from 1945 to 2016). While this thesis did not aim to produce a historical analysis of Polish migration to Switzerland and the UK, it was nevertheless important to consult secondary data to gain a better understanding of Polish workers and trade union approaches to migration overall. As such, the scope of secondary data collection was as broad as possible so as not to omit any important documents which could have relevance to union policy. For instance, archival research has led to the discovery of publications about Polish immigrants (Lorenz, 1910; Okołowicz, 1920) at the beginning of the 20th century, with problems faced by the Polish workers at that time being very similar to issues experienced by Poles currently in Switzerland. At the same time, key emphasis was placed on documents from

the post-WW2 period, which Penninx and Rooseblad (2000) also did. Accordingly, with regard to UK trade unions, attention was paid to TUC annual congress documents which, during the post-WW2 period, reflected a highly visible *resistance* approach. In terms of geographic boundaries, secondary data came from Switzerland, the UK and Poland and were accessed in a variety of forms, including print and online.

3.4.7 Transcription of interviews and translation issues

All interviews were conducted in a language that was either the participant's native tongue or was familiar to them. It was important that interviewees were free to express themselves openly and therefore they were offered the option of choosing the language of the interview. This was especially important for participants who spoke more than one language, for instance Polish officers in Unison or Swiss or Polish officers in Unia. Language issues were particularly prominent when it came to interviews with Unia officials. In one case, to avoid translating an interview from German into English, I decided to conduct the interview with a senior official in English, particularly because when offered the choice, the person chose English rather than German, their native tongue. However, I noticed that neither I nor the interviewee felt particularly comfortable doing that and the interview sounds somewhat strained. I did not want to interrupt that particular interview because I did not want this person to feel that I was being critical about his language skills. On the basis of that experience, I decided that all future interviews with Unia officials would be conducted in German, the native language of full-time Unia officials. At the same time, given that the original research questions were in English, I made sure I showed these to the interviewees at the beginning of the interview and verbally translate them into German.

At the early stage of my research, I planned to conduct interviews with Polish full-time officials and with active members in English, again to avoid having to translate the interviews from Polish into English. However, after the first interview with a Polish official it became clear that using English acted a barrier rather than an opportunity and created an artificial atmosphere in which all participants were translating their thoughts from Polish into English instead of using their native language. Again, as in the case of the interviews with Unia officials, the plan was abandoned and all further interviews with Polish participants were carried out in Polish only. Interviews with trade union representatives and members were conducted always in Polish.

Forms regarding ethics were provided either in the language of the research or in the native language of participants.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim by persons who were native speakers of German, Polish or English. The choice of relying on external transcribers was dictated by limited time, as I was employed full time and did not want to add any additional delays to the research process by having to transcribe 45 interviews myself. The people who were transcribing the interviews were chosen from among close, trusted friends or were recommended by them. The transcribers were not connected to any of the trade unions and received the recordings already anonymised. In two cases, however, there was a possibility that the person transcribing the interview could easily have recognised the interviewees; in those cases, both parties were informed beforehand and permission was sought from the interviewees.

I checked transcripts against the recordings and any notes made during the interviews to ensure accuracy. If requested, which was in the minority of cases, transcripts were sent for authorisation to the interviewees.

The biggest challenge was the choice of the language used for analysis, as at the end of the process there were 45 interviews in three different languages (English, German and Polish). Initially, I started translating Polish interviews into English but then realised this would lead to analysing the translation rather than the interviews themselves. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis, I relied on the transcripts in the native language of the interviewee and translation was undertaken only if a quote was included within the main text of the thesis.

3.4.8 Early research findings following data collection

As mentioned in section 1.2, the following two early research findings appeared during the data collection and were related to the sustainability of the integration of Polish workers and their collective agency:

1. Integration of Polish workers can be delivered sustainably only by creating designated structures or extending already existing ones to include Polish workers.

2. Polish migrants' collective agency is an important factor for understanding the dynamic of their inclusion processes in the union.

The former finding is based on the Unison case study and particularly on participant observation of the annual meeting of the Polish members of Unison (section 5.5); the latter is related to Unia's experience of organising Polish workers and their involvement in the strike action (section 6.5). Discussion related to these findings will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Primary data analysis

The research used a qualitative, inductive approach, with data collection determined primarily through ongoing interpretation rather than pre-existing hypotheses or presumptions. A concentrated effort was made to avoid any preconceptions given my role and position in the trade unions being researched. This was easier than expected as the interviews were analysed four years after I finished my employment in Unison and two years after the analysed project in Unia ended. In terms of the case study, there was a gap of one year between undertaking and analysing the interviews. Interview transcripts were analysed using qualitative research software Nvivo.

The analysis was divided into four stages. First, I read individual transcripts in the original language of each interview to gain an overall context. Second, they were read again to identify as many themes as possible by using open codes. These codes were then grouped into larger subcategories. All codes were analysed in terms of relationships, similarities and patterns. Following that, they were split into theoretical categories as described in an earlier section on framing the research questions.

The analysis and coding of the interviews was also cross-checked against my private notes and other supporting documents; for instance, for the Swiss case study these included a copy of the strike settlement agreement, publications in Polish and Swiss media, press releases, etc.

3.5.2 Secondary data analysis

As mentioned in section 3.4.6, the scope of the research data focused broadly on the period from the end of WW2 onwards and was geographically restricted to three countries: Switzerland, the UK and Poland.

Some documents were accessed through archival research (especially those produced around the time of WW2, which have not been digitised), with the bulk of documents available online, such as TUC Congress documents. At the same time, some documents were not publicly available and so I had to request access to congress documents of Unison, Unia and the SGB. In some cases, I was personally involved in creating those documents (such as for the 2012 and 2014 Unia congresses) or attended relevant events (the 2015 SGB congress) and so had access to hard copies.

The main challenges in terms of collating and analysing secondary data were related to the topic of migration, organising or active members, especially when I came to the stage of comparative analysis. All of these challenges are described in detail in section 1.4.

3.6 Position of *inside* researcher and ethical issues

This research is built upon a non-positivist approach, where the researcher is never an objective viewer of a social phenomenon. As Elizabeth Grosz claims:

The conventional assumption that the researcher is a disembodied, rational, sexually indifferent subject - a mind unlocated in space, time or constitutive interrelationships with others, is a status normally attributed only to angels (Cited in McDowell, 1997: 107 after Holgate, 2004).

Critical social science research takes the position that researchers as social actors have their own ideological and political standpoints (Maynard and Purvis, 1994). I used the research approach of Holgate (2004) presented in her dissertation on British trade unions organising migrants because I similarly aimed to use my research to influence policy and practice (Graham, 1997). Making their position clear, critical social researchers are honest with their

audience, who may judge whether their research, methods and conclusions have been invalidated by the researcher's identity (Holgate, 2004). I accept and embed the position of feminist theorists and agree that researchers are unable to practice research that is untainted by the values acquired as result of social conditions (Brunskell, 1998). Feminists argue that male researchers have tended to create a world from their own point of view by creating an objectivity that is both gendered and partial (Maynard and Purvis, 1994). Moreover, the position of the researcher is not only influenced by gender but also race (Carby, 1997). As identified by Bhopal (2000), through the *shared identity* of being a trade unionist, I could gain the trust of my interviewees, who were trade unionists as well. Furthermore, I agree with some Black feminists (Carby, 1997) about the importance of shared experience, and as a Polish migrant living in Western Europe, I would argue that this positioning helped me gain insights into the experience of Polish migrants in the UK and Switzerland. However, I acknowledge that there were also differences between us such as my gender or level of education.

Similar to Holgate (2004), in my research I choose to use an emancipatory approach, which in the context of my thesis aims to create knowledge which will improve the position of CEE migrants in the Western trade unions. This approach challenges *the fundamental binaries of traditional approaches, such as objectivity and 'distance' from the participants, hierarchies amongst knowers, both within research teams and between research and researcher, and universality and uniqueness* (Truman et al., 2000:8). Furthermore, the *emancipatory research* allows me to *bring to voice* excluded and marginalised groups as subjects rather than the objects of research, in an attempt to understand the world and change it (Humphries 2000: 182).

Additionally, my positioning as a former or current employee of Unison or Unia raised some challenges. At the same time, the research was not commissioned by either of the trade unions. It has to be noted, though, that both were supportive. Unia covered some of my tuition fees and provided time off for research, mostly to support me with undertaking interviews with its members and officers. Unison similarly provided me with study leave, allowing me to attend lectures during working hours.

This is not to say that the trade unions were uninterested in the outcome of the research; after all, their support meant that I had access to information and key informants. Importantly, neither Unison nor Unia tried to interfere in or influence my research project. This respectful distance was particularly important when I came to interview persons such as my former line managers, who were some of the key decision makers and were involved in the decision to employ me. Alongside other top-level trade union officers and my work colleagues, they would sometimes feel uncomfortable answering questions about the projects focused on Polish migrants and their sustainability. Similarly, quite often I felt uneasy upon finding out what they thought of the projects and, by extension, what they thought of my work. Nonetheless, all key union research participants were able to demonstrate trust in the research process, especially when sharing their thoughts on the achievements of the projects and the role I may have played. I am grateful for their honesty and trust.

Given that the information revealed during the interviews could be confidential, all informants (including the participants in the case study) were given the opportunity to receive interview transcripts and to authorise the content, which majority of them opted to do. Only one informant also asked to authorise direct quotations used in the text of my research. For the most part, informants made minor amendments related mainly to names and numbers, not the views they shared during the interview.

Prior to the interviews, all informants received forms about research ethics and were informed that they could withdraw their consent up until the interview transcripts had been approved. The majority of interviewees approved their transcripts and only a few did not reply to the emails in which they asked me to send them their transcribed interviews. If they did not respond to my emails, I assumed that they had approved their transcripts.

A few Polish interviewees insisted that they should be quoted in the dissertation under their real names, particularly those who were activists. Respecting their choice, I have decided to use their real names, but others are quoted under changed names. Therefore, each quote by a Polish member is under a changed name, unless mentioned otherwise in a footnote; at the same time, I was keen to use names when referring to Polish interviewees, given my intention to

bring them to the voice. In the case of all Polish organisers in Unia, changed names are used; this is because in some instances they were critical of the union and so my intention was to protect them against any negative repercussions. Non-Polish union officials are referred to by their function, once again to help protect their anonymity; however, some of the more prominent officials such as the president of Unia or Unison assistant general secretary will be easily identifiable by default.

3.7 Fieldwork diary

Throughout the period of collecting research data, I kept a fieldwork diary and a research journal; these were important documents whose aim was to deepen my reflection on the process of research and the data analysis and to capture any insights that may have been emerging, especially with regard to my own position as an inside researcher.

3.8 Data storage, management, archiving and disposal

Research data were stored on a personal computer and were password-protected. Additional copies of research data were saved on an external drive and were password-protected as well.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology. By taking an anti-positivist approach and using qualitative methods supported by secondary data collection, I aimed to design a research framework within the emancipatory approach that would allow me to *bring to voice* marginalised groups of Polish migrant workers who were targeted by the union policies. Designing the research in this way also allowed me to analyse union integration strategies not only from the top- and regional-level perspectives but, most importantly, from the bottom (shop floor) level, where they would be implemented and where they could be threatened by racism or xenophobia (Jefferys, 2007).

Furthermore, I have employed various qualitative methods (interviews, case studies, observation, analytic autoethnography) supplemented by desk research to address any issues arising as a result of my positioning as an inside researcher.

Chapter 4 Historical and structural context of Unison's and Unia's approach to Polish workers

Coloured immigrants in Britain may be treated differently from Italians by the British population, but Italians are treated by the Swiss in very much the same way as the British treat coloured people (Castels and Kosack, 1973: 446).

4.1 Introduction

The analysis of the policies of Unison and Unia related to the inclusion of Polish and CEE migrants would be incomplete without providing contextual information on historical background or the unions' immigration policies and the context of industrial relations in which these operate. This research draws on a number of theoretical frameworks (for instance, those of Penninx and Roosblad, 2000; Frege and Kelly 2003 and Connolly et al. 2014) which suggest that trade unions are historically influenced by social and economic factors.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first includes a comparison of industrial relations systems along with a description of Unison and Unia and their forming unions. The second provides a concise analysis of the history of migration to the UK and Switzerland, with an emphasis on the migration of Polish workers. The third focuses on trade unions' approaches to migration. The period following the end of WW2 was chosen because the Polish migration to the UK was the first group of migrants arriving in the UK at that time.

4.2 Comparison of industrial relations systems

The British model of industrial relations is described as a liberal market economy (Hyman, 2001) whereas the Swiss model is a co-ordinated market economy that includes neo-corporatism (Oesch, 2011) and is characterised by a weak federal state, considerable entrepreneurial power and weak Swiss trade unions (Schmitter- Heisler, 2000: 24). When it comes to comparing political models, Switzerland is described as a pluralist federal state and Britain could be located between a pluralist federal and a unitary state (Layton- Henry, 1990). The table below compares both models (adapted from ETUI, 2016).

Table 1. Comparison of industrial relations systems in Switzerland and the UK

| | Switzerland | United Kingdom |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Population | 8,112,200 | 63,256,141 |
| Trade union density | 21% | 26% |
| Trade unions | Two trade union confederations representing Christian (Travail Suisse) and Socialist traditions (Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SGB)). The biggest confederation is the SGB, which has 16 affiliates with over 360,000 members. The second federation is Travail Suisse, which has 12 affiliates with 165,542 members. | There is only one trade union confederation: the Trade Union Congress (TUC), which, according to its roots, leans towards left-wing traditions. The TUC represents the vast majority of British trade unions and has 50 affiliates with 5.6 million members (as of 2016). |
| | There are trade unions not affiliated to any confederations representing mainly white-collar workers. | Some trade unions are not affiliated to the TUC, but they only represent a small number of workers. |
| | Unia, with almost 200,000 members, is the biggest affiliate of the SGB. | Unison, with almost 1.3 million members (as of 2016), is the second biggest affiliate of the TUC. |
| Collective bargaining coverage | 51% | 29% |
| Collective bargaining | Negotiation mainly on sectoral or branch level in the public and private sectors and also with individual companies. The largest collective bargaining agreement is in the construction sector and is negotiated by Unia. | Sectoral negotiations mainly in the public sector, where almost two-thirds of employees are covered. In the private sector, mostly with individual companies. The biggest collective agreements are in the health sector (NHS) and local |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | government, with both negotiated by Unison. |
| Workplace representation | Dual system with trade union and elected workplaces representatives (workers' councils), with few exceptions such as in service sectors where there is no elected workplace representation. In sectors with workplace representation (e.g. steel industry), elected representatives are usually members of trade unions. | Since 2005, a dual system following the introduction of EU legislation on workers' representation (access to information and consultation). Due to long-established trade union representation on the workplace level, independent workplace representation is minimal. |
| Minimum wage | No minimum wage. A trade union initiative to introduce it in 2014 was rejected in a popular vote. | Minimum wage introduced in 1999. |

In terms of union membership, there is a difference with regard to who counts as a member. In Unison and all British unions, members are normally those who are employed or retired. Rank and file membership of Swiss trade unions is also open to unemployed people. This may suggest that trade union density in Switzerland is lower than shown in the table and is nearer to the density of British unions.

There are important differences with regard to labour legislation, which impacts the support that trade unions can provide for migrant workers. First of all, both countries differ in terms of legal regulations concerning industrial disputes. During the period covered by this research, Switzerland had the advantage of more union-friendly legislation when it comes to collective action, unlike in the UK, where trade unions are provided with legal immunity when they strike. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the fact that Swiss union members can call a spontaneous strike may have increased the trade union's power.

Importantly, industrial action regulations in Switzerland are unclear in terms of assessing the legality of a strike. The right to strike is guaranteed by the Swiss constitution, and for a strike to be legal it may only be organised as a last resort. For instance, there are no special forms to organise strike ballots or a threshold for their validity. Only some cantons require prior notification before a dispute to a conciliation and arbitration office. In that respect, the difference between a legal and a wildcat strike is not as clear as in the UK, and Swiss employers can dispute the legality of industrial action as only a court (if involved) is allowed to determine its legitimacy. This is one of the arguments often used by employers as a means of keeping workers from striking.

Both countries offer different levels of protection for union representatives (shop stewards – Vertrauensleute). British employment law protects active members from unfair dismissal on the ground of trade union activism and the burden of evidence is on the employer. This is not the case regarding Swiss legislation; active members have less protection against dismissal.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that like in other Western European countries, Swiss and British trade unions were confronted with diminishing membership and overall decline of collective bargaining coverage (Frege and Kelly, 2003). In order to address those challenges, Unison and Unia introduced organising strategies (see Chapter 2), including organising migrant workers. For instance, Unison co-operated with the American trade union SEIU and they launched an organising project together (Three Companies Project) (Unison, 2012a); similarly, Unia liaised with an American trade union, Unite Here (Rogalewski, 2018).

4.3 Description of Unison

Unison represents about 1.3 million public service workers across the public and private sectors. It is the biggest public service trade union in the UK and the second biggest trade union in the country (Unison, 2018b).

Unison members are organised into more than 1000 branches representing one or more employers and divided into 12 geographical regions. Mirroring the organisation of public services in the UK, members are split across 7 service groups: local government, health, higher education, police and justice, community (people working for non-profit organisations), water,

and environment, transport, energy (gas and electricity). This structure is supported by four self-organised groups representing women, Black, LGBT and disabled members. Furthermore, there are formal committees for young and retired members.

All service groups as well as self-organised committees have their regional and national structures. The highest decision-making body is the Unison National Delegate Conference (NDC), which is held once a year and includes regional, service and self-organised groups' delegates. Self-organised groups have a reserved number of delegates. Unions' activities between NDCs are supervised by the National Executive Council (NEC). Unison is managed by a general secretary, a full-time official elected for a 4-year term by all members and supported by the president, a lay member elected every year by the NEC from among the members of the NEC.

Self-organised groups and their respective committees are co-ordinated by dedicated officers at the national level. At the regional level, responsibility for self-organised groups is included among other duties in regional officers' job descriptions. At branch level, lay members become elected as Black workers' representatives, but not all branches are required to have Black workers' representatives. The decisions of self-organised groups are made at the branch level, regionally and finally nationally by relevant committees. The higher decision-making bodies of self-organised groups meet at their annual conferences, which elect representatives to the NEC and delegates to Unison's annual conference and prepare motions for the conference.

4.3.1 Unison's forming unions' role in the inclusion of migrant workers

Unison was created in 1993 by a merger of three unions: the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the Confederation of Health and Service Employees (COHSE). Its predecessor, NALGO, was the first British trade union which supported the self-organisation of Black workers (Virdee et al., 1994, Wrench, 1986, also see history of NALGO Ironside and Seifert, 2000). The approach of NALGO to self-organisation was summarised by Ironside and Seifert (2000) as a pragmatic adjustment.

The beginning of Black self-organisation in NALGO was challenging due to internal conflict within the union about which approach, top-down or bottom-up, should prevail. In 1982, the

National Executive Council set up the Race Equality Working Party (REWP) in order to improve the inclusiveness of the union's policy towards Black and ethnic minority members (Ironside and Safer, 2000). This move was met with criticism from Black members, who argued that they had not been appropriately consulted and that informal groups that were part of NALGO were not represented within REWP (Wrench, 1984).

Against this background, REWP prepared a report for the NALGO conference in 1984. The report recognised the need to provide representation for Black members while at the same time raising concerns about union's structural integrity (Ironside and Seifert, 2000). The report proposed establishing special posts for race equality officers, Black members' groups and race equality committees at branch and district levels. It recommended that there should be a permanent race equality committee at national level, equal in status to the already established women's committee (National Equal Opportunities Committee). Following the recommendations of the report, the first Black members' conference, attracting approximately 500 activists, took place in 1986. In 1987, the conference established the National Black Members' Coordinating Committee (Ironside and Seifert, 2000). Two years after that, the first NALGO Black members' conference took place, and the TUC held its first Black workers' conference in 1988.

It has to be noted that in NALGO Black self-organisation took place against the backdrop of a wider debate on increasing the participation of other disadvantaged categories of members such as women, lesbian and gay men and disabled members in the union's structures. As a result, since the beginning of the 1990s all self-organised groups have become effectively embedded within its structures and accurately funded.

4.4 Description of Unia

Unia is the biggest inter-professional Swiss trade union representing workers in the private sector, with half of its 200,000 members (Unia, 2018) as well as a large proportion of its full-time officials being of migrant origin (Unia, 2016b). Members are divided into four sectors: construction (the largest), followed by industry (metal, pharma, chemical), craftsmanship and finally private service (retail, hospitality, etc.). Members are also represented by self-organised groups (called interests groups – Interessengruppe) representing women, youth, retired

members and migrants. Unia members were organised into 14 regions (in 2014). Branch structures are less developed in Unia than in Unison and only present in some sectors, such as construction and industry. Moreover, given the more developed dual system of representation in Switzerland, Unia members can also be represented in some work councils.

Unlike Unison, Unia offers an unemployment service through offices paying unemployment benefits (Arbeitslosenkasse). Those offices are separate from Unia membership structures and members or non-members of Unia can equally access these services.

Similarly to Unison, service groups as well as self-organised committees have their own regional and national structures. The highest decision-making body is a congress, which is held every four years and is attended by delegates representing regions, service and self-organised groups. Self-organised groups have a reserved number of delegates. The activities of Unia between congresses are supervised by a delegate conference (Delegiertenversammlung), which is held three times a year. The lowest central decision-making body is the executive committee (Zentralvorstand), which meets between delegate conferences. Unlike Unison, Unia is managed collectively by an executive board (Geschäftsleitung) led by the president, who is elected, along with the members of the board, by the congress delegates.

Similar to Unison, self-organised groups and their respective committees are co-ordinated by dedicated officers at the national level. Unia has one full-time officer responsible for women, one for youth members and a dedicated migration unit consisting of 4 officers. Those at the time of the project under consideration were officers speaking Portuguese, Albanian and Spanish and me (i.e. Polish-speaking). Similar to Unison, the responsibility for self-organised groups at the regional level was included in regional officers' job descriptions. Decisions of self-organised groups are made at the regional and national level by relevant committees. The higher decision-making bodies of self-organised groups meet at their annual conferences (biannual conference in the case of the women's committee), which elect representatives to the national decision-making bodies (the executive board or delegate conferences). It is important to note that migrant members have more seats than other self-organised groups (women or youth) within Unia's national decision-making bodies.

4.4.1 Unia's forming unions' role in organising and including migrant workers

Similar to Unison, Unia was created as a result of a merger of five unions in 2004: Gewerkschaft Bau und Industrie (GBI) (mainly a construction and industry workers' union), Schweiz Metall und Uhrenarbeiternehmerverband (SMUV) (predominantly the metal, pharma and chemical industries) and Verkauft Handel Transport and Lebensmittel (VHTL) (union of retail, hospitality and transport workers), as well as unia (a union created jointly by the SMUV and GBI for retail workers) and a small trade union in Geneva for retail workers: *action*. At the time of its creation, it had approximately 200,000 members, which made it the biggest Swiss trade union (Unia, 2014). Within the forming unions, GBI was at the forefront of supporting migrant workers within its structures and in society more generally.

For instance, in 1969, GBH (since 1992 GBI) not only changed its election rules to allow foreign workers to be elected as members of the executive committee (previously those positions were restricted to Swiss citizens), but in order to show its commitment towards inclusiveness and internationalism, it went as far as removing the word Swiss from its name (Alleva, 2001). GBH created within its structures special interest groups for seasonal workers at national and regional levels whose aim was to integrate migrant workers into the trade union and society (Alleva, 2001). Those groups were supported by informal language groups for migrant members. Importantly, GBI migrant members had the same rights as Swiss citizens; however, according to Alleva (2001), due to language barriers they were underrepresented in decision-making bodies, particularly in German-speaking Switzerland. Similar to NALGO, GBI introduced guaranteed seats for migrant members on the union's executive committee and this regulation was later adopted by Unia (Alleva, 2001).

The creation of special structures for migrants in order to increase their involvement in trade union decision-making processes was seen as beneficial for all members. For instance, in 1993 a GBI policy document calling for increased integration of migrants into the union stated: *Already diversity of cultures could bring new impulses to solve our problems (Gerade die Vielfalt der Kulturen kann neue Impulse zu Lösungen unsere eigenen Probleme bringen)*¹⁴ (GBI, 1993).

¹⁴ Translations of documents into English are mine unless stated otherwise.

Finally, as the result of unions' efforts to organise migrants and change the ethnic profiles of workers represented by the union at the time of Unia's creation, in 2004, half of GBI officers had migration roots. Twelve years later, according to an internal survey conducted among Unia's employees in 2016 (Unia, 2016b), 58% of Unia officers had an immigrant origin and among those, 32% were first-generation migrants, 20% second generation. The proportion of managers with a migration background was lower than that of employees and constituted 46%.

4.5 History of migration to the UK with an emphasis on Polish migrants

The first significant group of migrants that arrived in the UK at the end of WW2 were approximately 120,000 Polish soldiers and their families, who for political reasons became refugees and were unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin (Duevell and Garapich, 2011). As a result, the Polish population in Britain rose from 44,642 in 1931 to 162,339 in 1951 (Holmes, 1988).

The first wave of Polish citizens arriving in the UK after 1945 was accompanied by approximately displaced persons arriving from WW2 refugee camps located in Europe under the European Voluntary Workers Scheme (EVWS) (Zubrzycki, 1956).

The next significant flow of migration to the UK began in the 1950s and consisted predominantly of workers from former British colonies (New Commonwealth) such as Jamaica and other Caribbean territories and the former colonies in the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, etc.). Following the decision of the British government in 1945, these workers were internal migrants, arriving in the UK as British nationals and sharing the same labour and political rights (Phizacklea and Miles, 1980). Their status as British citizens allowed them to move freely and choose any suitable employment and place to stay in the UK,¹⁵ in contrast to earlier Polish migrants or workers arriving under the EVWS scheme.

The inflow of non-white workers was in gradual decline from 1962 onwards as both Labour and Conservative governments employed administrative measures to make migration to the

¹⁵ This movement of workers can be compared to the post-2004 migration of Central Eastern European citizens in the EU, who, as European citizens were exercising their rights to move and work in any EU member states as well as participate in local (but not general) elections. See more information on post-2004 migration in the following sections.

UK more complicated for immigrants from the New Commonwealth countries¹⁶. Finally, immigration to the UK was significantly limited in 1968 by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act and later by the Immigration Act in 1971¹⁷. This legislation aimed to reduce non-white immigration while still making it possible for white workers from the former colonies to migrate to the UK (Wrench, 2000). Following the 1971 Act, other pieces of legislation were introduced (British Nationality Act 1981 and Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993), which further restricted migration to the UK (Holgate, 2009a). These changes resulted in a significant decrease in immigration that lasted until 1994 and led to a situation in which more workers were leaving than entering the UK each year (Salt and Clarke, 2001).

Finally, the last significant inflow of migration took place from 2004 onwards when eight CEE countries¹⁸ joined the EU. The UK, Sweden and Ireland were the only countries which decided to open up their labour to workers arriving from those countries.¹⁹ Other European member states opened their labour markets gradually using the possibility of imposing restrictions within the seven years of the post-accession period.

Opening up the labour market to CEE workers significantly changed the configuration of migrant and ethnic workers in the UK. Within a short period of time, the number of CEE migrants arriving in the UK increased in an unprecedented way. In the first five years following accession, 1,067,000 CEE nationals migrated to the UK (Duevell and Garapich, 2011). As a result, according to the 2011 census, the largest non-UK-born ethnic minority group became white other (2.1 million people), with the majority of this group (71%) arriving in the UK between 2001 and 2011 (ONS, 2015).

The migration from CEE countries was younger and more feminised than previous waves: 82% of workers were aged between 18 and 34, 47% were women and 93% had no dependents

¹⁶ See the meaning of this term in the List of main terms and acronyms.

¹⁷ The latter act constitutes a milestone in reducing migration from the New Commonwealth countries. Until the 1971 Immigration Act, which came into force in 1973, workers from the New Commonwealth countries were not *foreigners* in legal terms. After that year, they were treated like any other migrants arriving as foreigners in the UK.

¹⁸ Apart from Poland, these were Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. They accessed the EU, as did Cyprus and Malta. Only citizens of the two last-mentioned countries were allowed to work in other member states without any restrictions.

¹⁹ At the same time, during the seven-year post-accession period, the UK imposed the requirement for CEE citizens to register their employment with the governmental Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) and restricted access to unemployment benefits. Those requirements did not hinder migration from CEE countries.

(Home Office, 2009). Considering only Polish migration to the UK in years 2001 to 2011: *the early accession period saw a strong increase in the proportion of men in the flow (from 52.7 to 65.2 per cent) which then gave way to an almost equally strong decline (to 55.5 per cent)* (Okólski and Salt, 2014: 8). Many CEE were highly educated but worked in low-skilled jobs. In contrast to previous immigration groups, they were more geographically dispersed, with only 26% settling in London in comparison to 38% of non-CEE migrants and 8% of the UK-born population (Sumption, 2009).

Table 2 is based on the research of Okólski and Salt (2014) and presents sectors of the British economy where Polish workers were employed after their arrival between 2001 and 2011.

Table 2. Poles arrived in 2001- 2011 to the UK by industry (Okólski and Salt, 2014: 23)

| | | |
|---|---------|-------|
| All categories: Industry | 390 815 | 100.0 |
| A Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 5 179 | 1.3 |
| C Manufacturing | 74 923 | 19.2 |
| B, D, E Energy and water | 5 332 | 1.4 |
| F Construction | 36 347 | 9.3 |
| G, I Distribution, hotels and restaurants | 105 512 | 27.0 |
| H, J Transport and communication | 38 390 | 9.8 |
| K, L, M, N Financial, real estate, professional and administrative activities | 64 658 | 16.5 |
| O, P, Q Public administration, education and health | 45 237 | 11.6 |
| R, S, T, U Other | 15 237 | 3.9 |

As the table shows, Polish workers who arrived in the UK between 2001 and 2011 were predominantly employed in the distribution and hospitality (27%), manufacturing (19.2%) and business services (K, L, M, N) (16.5%) sectors. The percentage of Polish workers in industries where Unison operates (public services) was as follows: 11.6% in public administration, education and the health industry and 1.4% in energy and water. It has to be noted that administrative and support services (category N) include work on a part-time basis in such

activities as cleaning or security, and many workers covered by this category are agency workers working in other industries. Agency work presents challenges regarding organising Polish workers and will be analysed in section 5.3.1, which is dedicated to fragmentation of the labour market and the precarious workforce.

4.6 History of migration to Switzerland with an emphasis on Polish migrants

The Swiss government's and Swiss people's attitude to migrants after WW2 was summarised well by a Swiss philosopher, Max Frisch, who said: *We asked for a workforce but we got people instead* (*Wir riefen Arbeitskräfte, und es kamen Menschen*) (Frisch, 1990: 219).

Switzerland was one of the earliest industrialised countries in Europe after the UK (D'Amato, 2008), and in comparison with the UK as well as with the majority of all European countries, is a country with a long history of immigration, dating back to the second part of the 19th century (see, for instance, Piguet and Mahning, 2000; Schmitter-Heisler, 2000 or D'Amato, 2008). From the second part of the 19th century, industrial development was highly dependent on the supply of a foreign workforce. Before World War I, the migrant population was at 14%, which was the highest among all Western European countries (D'Amato, 2008).

According to Lorenz (1910) and Okołowicz (1920), the first recorded group of Polish economic migrant workers arrived in Switzerland in 1904; it consisted of 30 people who had arrived to work in a sugar plant in Aerberg. Further groups came to Switzerland to work in agriculture on a seasonal basis, and in the steel or construction industry on a more permanent basis.

In comparison with other countries, including the UK, Swiss immigration policy was from the outset highly politicised, with frequent changes of immigration law (Mahning and Piguet, 2003). In many cases, citizens' demands led by xenophobic sentiments wanting to restrict migration had to be balanced against the reliance of the economy on foreign labour. This dualism resulted in a highly politicised debate on immigration which was nurtured by the model

of direct democracy and federalism, enabling lobbying groups as well as individual citizens to influence immigration law through referenda or popular votes (Mahning and Piguet, 2003).²⁰

Schmitter-Heisler (2000) divides post-WW2 migration (until 1993) to Switzerland into three periods. The first period, from 1945 until 1963, was dominated by a rotation principle, according to which migrants could only arrive in Switzerland on a temporary basis and could stay no longer than one year. During the second period, from 1963 to 1980, many seasonal workers already in Switzerland were allowed to remain for longer and could bring their families. Finally, during the third period, from 1980 to 1989, many foreigners become an integral part of the Swiss economy, with second-generation migrants embedded within Swiss society.

Initially, migration in Switzerland was perceived both by the government and by the trade unions as a source of a controlled labour supply which could be reduced in the periods of lower economic prosperity and used as an *economic buffer* to absorb any shocks (Puffertheorie); as such, it was perceived as a temporary phenomenon (Degen, 2000; Piguet and Mahning, 2000). At the beginning of the 1960s, the Swiss became increasingly concerned about the number of immigrants arriving in Switzerland (Piguet and Mahning, 2000). The debate about *over-foreignisation* (Überfremdung) was supported by an economic argument that the inflow of migrants contributed to growing inflation, which had negative consequences for the Swiss economy (Piguet and Mahning, 2000).

The increased inflow of immigrants and the failure of the Swiss government to restrict it contributed to increasing xenophobic sentiments among the local population. Given the possibilities provided by the Swiss system of direct democracy, those sentiments were expressed in the form of people's initiatives, such as the so-called *Schwarzenbach Initiative* in 1970, which proposed that the percentage of immigrants in all cantons should not exceed 10% (with the exception of 25% in the canton of Geneva) and that Swiss nationals could not be dismissed in favour of foreign workers.²¹ If the initiative had been accepted, it would have had

²⁰ See the List of main terms and acronyms for an explanation of referenda and popular votes.

²¹ This was not the first popular initiative demanding immigration restriction, although it was the first which was put to a vote. For instance, the first initiative from 1968 demanded an immigration decrease of 5% but it was withdrawn following the concessions made by the government to reduce migration by 3% in 1968 (Piguet and Mahning, 2000).

a tremendous effect on the migrant population as it was estimated that about 200,000 migrants would have been forced to leave Switzerland. Moreover, it also represented the biggest challenge for the post-WW2 immigration policy because it may have led not only to migrant expulsion but also to an economic crisis (Piguet and Mahing, 2000). With one of the highest turnouts in the modern history of 74%, and with strong opposition from all trade unions, the initiative was defeated by 54% to 46%.

After that initiative, the number of migrants started to decrease. A major factor was the oil crisis of 1973, which strongly affected Switzerland and resulted in a loss of almost 10% of all workplaces from 1974 to 1977. Consequently, in 1975, for the first time since WW2, the number of immigrants decreased. Migrant workers were not only made redundant (migrants constituted 67% of all dismissed workers), but because unemployment benefits were at that time voluntary, many of them lacked the financial means to stay in Switzerland and had to return to their countries of origin (D'Amato, 2008).²² Schmidt (1985) argues that Switzerland was the only country in Europe which in the 1970s exported immigrant workers.

From the end of the 1970s, workers from other countries besides Italy started to migrate to Switzerland in large numbers. These were mainly immigrants from Spain and Portugal, followed by Yugoslavia and Turkey (Piguet and Mahing, 2000). From the early 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, the influx of foreign nationals was influenced by an increasing number of refugees who were arriving from countries affected by war, such as the former Yugoslavia and later Sri Lanka.

In a referendum in 2000, Swiss citizens voted in favour of free movement of workers from EU countries along with other bilateral agreements regulating Swiss–EU co-operation (67.2% votes in favour, 48.3% turnout) (Federal Chancellery, 2000). The free movement of workers policy finally removed the exploitative status of seasonal work with the result that EU citizens who previously could work only as seasonal workers in Switzerland could now more freely find a job in any sector of the economy (D'Amato, 2008). Similarly to in the UK, ratification of bilateral agreements with the EU resulted in the regularisation of the immigration status of many undocumented EU citizens, particularly from Portugal and Spain.

²² By the next economic crisis of the 1990s, unemployment insurance was compulsory, which enabled the majority of migrants to stay in Switzerland (D'Amato, 2008).

In the 2005 referendum, 56% of Swiss citizens voted in favour of extending free movement of workers to CEE countries which had joined the EU in 2004. In April 2006, some restrictions were lifted, allowing CEE citizens to work in Switzerland provided an employer could not identify a suitable Swiss worker (so-called *Inländervorrang*). More restrictions were lifted in 2011; however, free movement was controlled by a so-called safety clause (*Ventilklausel*) which introduced an annual quota for the number of permanent work permits available for CEE citizens, with temporary permits excluded from the quota system. Finally, on 1 May 2014, all restrictions for CEE and EU workers were lifted.

Data on the number of Poles arriving in Switzerland suggest that there was a steady increase in numbers between 2004 and 2015, similar to the pattern observed in the UK. In 2004, the number of registered workers from CEE countries was 19,402, including 5,084 Polish citizens. In 2011, there were 14,126 Polish nationals out of CEE 41,161 workers. In 2014, the number of Polish workers rose to 21,421 and in 2015 the figure was 24,673; the number of CEE workers rose to 63,779 in 2014 and to 73,273 in 2015 (State Secretariat for Migration, 2019).²³

Table 3 presents the number of Polish workers registered per industry who arrived in Switzerland between 2012 and 2014, which is the time frame of the CEE project. The table is based on data from the Federal Statistical Office (2019)²⁴ and includes permanent residents (in German: *ständige ausländische Wohnbevölkerung*), that is, workers whose work contracts were at least one year long. Within the three main sectors of the Swiss economy (agriculture, industry and craft and services) the table presents subsectors with the significant number of Polish citizens. For instance, in the industry and craft sector there is the construction subsector, in services: IT, hospitality and household services (including live-in care workers). As the table indicates, the majority of Polish workers who arrived in Switzerland between 2012 and 2014 were employed in the service sector (61.37%), followed by industry and craft (19.55%) and agriculture (19.08%). The largest subsectors where Polish workers were employed were planning, consulting and IT (1,638 registered workers), followed by agriculture (1,464), hospitality (594) and household services (416).

²³ The Swiss immigration data on CEE citizens is more precise than that of the UK because any person arriving or leaving Switzerland is legally required to register with the relevant cantonal immigration authorities.

²⁴ Authors' own analysis based on data from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2019).

Table 3. Poles arriving in Switzerland between 2012 and 2014 by industry and staying in Switzerland at least one year

| Permanent Polish residents per industry | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2012–2014 | Percentage |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Total number of registered workers | 2,298 | 1,926 | 3,457 | 7,681 | 100% |
| Agriculture: | 478 | 390 | 596 | 1,464 | 19.08% |
| Industry and craft: | 422 | 364 | 717 | 1,503 | 19.55% |
| - Construction | 103 | 70 | 107 | 280 | |
| - Wood processing | 29 | 20 | 44 | 93 | |
| - Metalworking | 38 | 43 | 60 | 141 | |
| Services: | 1,398 | 1,172 | 2,144 | 4,714 | 61.37% |
| - Banking | 30 | 25 | 66 | 121 | |
| - Retail | 65 | 43 | 102 | 210 | |
| - Research and Development | 8 | 7 | 12 | 27 | |
| - Hospitality | 168 | 154 | 272 | 594 | |
| - Household services | 143 | 106 | 167 | 416 | |
| - Medicine and healthcare | 50 | 43 | 90 | 183 | |
| - Planning, consulting and IT | 435 | 440 | 763 | 1,638 | |

The next table presents the statistical information on workers who were registered as non-permanent citizens between 2012 and 2014 (nicht ständige ausländische Wohnbevölkerung) and who were allowed to stay in Switzerland for less than a year. Like the previous table, it is based on data from the Federal Statistical Office (2019).

Table 4. Poles arriving in Switzerland between 2012 and 2014 by industry and staying in Switzerland for less than a year

| Non-permanent Polish residents per industry | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2012–2014 | Percentage |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Total number of registered workers | 6,300 | 7,438 | 6,904 | 20,642 | 100% |
| | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Agriculture: | 2,838 | 3,181 | 3,123 | 9,142 | 44.28% |
| | | | | | |
| Industry and craft: | 779 | 875 | 640 | 2,294 | 11.11% |
| - Construction | 154 | 156 | 97 | 407 | |
| - Wood processing | 44 | 47 | 29 | 120 | |
| - Metalworking | 70 | 112 | 38 | 220 | |
| | | | | | |
| Services: | 2,683 | 3,382 | 3,123 | 9,188 | 44.61% |
| - Banking | 125 | 152 | 181 | 458 | |
| - Retail | 105 | 166 | 125 | 396 | |
| - Research and Development | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 | |
| - Hospitality | 529 | 656 | 503 | 1,688 | |
| - Household services | 196 | 244 | 205 | 645 | |
| - Medicine and healthcare | 34 | 68 | 131 | 233 | |
| - Planning, consulting and IT | 774 | 989 | 1,027 | 2,790 | |

As can be seen in Table 4, there is a difference between the industries in which Polish workers were dominant. More Polish workers were registered in the agriculture sector (44.28 %) than in the industry and craft sector (11.11%) due to the fact that many agricultural workers do not stay in Switzerland all year and only work there on a seasonal basis. However, similarly to workers who were registered for more than a year, this group of workers was also predominantly employed in the service sectors, in IT (2,790), followed by hospitality (1,688) and household services. Furthermore, construction (407 registered workers) had the largest number of Polish workers in the industry and craft sector.

It is important to mention that due to the annual quotas many Polish workers could come to Switzerland until the 1st of May 2014 only on a short-term basis and as such the number of non-permanent residents was more than two times higher than workers with at least a one-year employment contract. Unia's challenges regarding organising posted be discussed in section 6.3.1.

Finally, looking at the gender differences within the Polish migration to Switzerland, it was more feminised than Polish migration to the UK. As Table 5 indicates, there were marginally more Polish women than men in Switzerland at the end of 2014, the year when the CEE project

concluded. There was also a higher proportion of women in the group of all CEE citizens living in Switzerland in 2014. Similarly, a higher number of women among the Polish and CEE population in Switzerland was observed in the previous years. For instance, at the end of 2012, the number of women compared to men was 26,356 to 20,732 in the CEE population and 8,676 to 7,479 in the Polish population. At the end of 2013, the figures were 28,883 to 23,721 among CEE migrants and 9,522 to 8,405 among the Polish population (State Secretariat for Migration, 2019). Interestingly, in comparison with other important migration groups such as Italian or Spanish ones, presented in Table 5, Polish and CEE migration was also more feminised. It was also more feminised when it comes to comparison with all migration populations in Switzerland, which have a higher proportion of men: 1,033,936 men to 913,087 women in 2014 and 969,026 to 856,034 in 2012 (State Secretariat for Migration, 2019). It is important to note that Table 5 and the previously mentioned data include the number of migrants with a permanent residency status and exclude those migrants who were later naturalised. Members of previous migration groups such as Italian or Spanish ones who became Swiss citizens are not included in this table and consequently the proportion between women and men in those groups could vary. Nonetheless, looking at the statistical data on migration during the time of the CEE project, it is plausible to say that Polish migration was more feminised than previous flows of migration.

Table 5. Gender of Polish citizens in Switzerland in comparison with other migration groups in 2014 (State Secretariat for Migration, 2019)

| Country or area | Total number of citizens | Women | Men |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Total migration population | 1,947,023 | 913,087 | 1,033,936 |
| EU-28/ EFTA | 1,328,318 | 595,621 | 732,697 |
| EU-17 | 1,213,513 | 534,491 | 679,022 |
| EU-8 (CEE countries) | 63,779 | 33,475 | 30,304 |
| Germany | 298,614 | 133,137 | 165,477 |
| Italy | 308,602 | 128,768 | 179,834 |
| Kosovo | 105,348 | 50,742 | 54,606 |
| Poland | 21,421 | 10,989 | 10,432 |
| Portugal | 263,010 | 117,612 | 145,398 |
| Serbia | 69,748 | 34,205 | 35,543 |
| Spain | 79,491 | 35,522 | 43,969 |

4.7 British trade unions' approaches to migration

As McDowell (2009) argues, trade unions' responses to the first group of migrants arriving in the UK after the end of WW2 under the European Volunteer Workers Scheme (EVWS) were influenced by a protectionist attitude towards their own members. The scheme comprised approximately 80,000 displaced persons and aimed to fulfil labour shortages in the British economy after WW2 (McDowell, 2009).²⁵ While the unions accepted the arrival of European workers (refugees) in principle, they demanded that those migrants should only be employed in sectors affected by labour shortages and that their employment status should not undermine the working conditions of local workers. Moreover, this was the only period of migration history to the UK when, according to Wrench (2000), British trade unions actively collaborated with the government on immigration policy planning.

Over time, trade unions became more sympathetic to immigrants and voiced their opposition to their discrimination; however, their intentions were not reflected in reality. For instance, the TUC argued that it would oppose any changes in the immigration law which were racially motivated but it did not oppose any changes to the immigration law aimed at significantly reducing non-white migration to the UK. Moreover, the TUC did not formally oppose the introduction of the 1971 Immigration Act, one of the most important regulations reducing migration from the New Commonwealth countries, even though its own congress in 1973 passed a motion against the act (Wrench, 2000).

As Wrench suggests (2000), even though workers from ethnic minority groups were more likely to join trade unions than local workers, according to the research conducted in the 1980s, unions did not necessarily address their needs well. Migrant workers from the New Commonwealth countries become the *racialized outsider[s]* (Virdee, 2014), with trade unions' policies characterised by *passive assimilation and race blindness* (Virdee et. al, 1994). In many cases, ethnic minority workers were treated in a different, less favourable than local British workers and were confronted with racism in their workplaces.

²⁵ According to McDowell (2009), this migration was ignored in the histories of British immigration and the scheme was shut down as the Caribbean-born migrants began to come to the UK (McDowell, 2009: 21).

The reason ethnic minority workers were more likely to join trade unions could be due to the fact that trade unions in their country of origin were modelled on the British unions and supported by them (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000). This thesis will build on the work of Penninx and Roosblad (2000), who argue that cultural similarities are key to influencing unions' responses to migrants.

One of the most important strikes for ethnic workers was the two-year dispute (1976–1978) at the Grunwick Photo Processing Laboratory in North-West London (Wrench, 2000). Prior to this strike, trade unions took on the position of observers rather than active participants when it came to collective action against discrimination and racism due to ethnicity. By positioning themselves as witnesses, unions could oppose any changes to their existing structures and would not have to get involved in campaigns to make legislation more inclusive. In fact, the TUC opposed the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation, arguing that it would interfere with existing conciliation procedures, which were seen as more effective. During the Grunwick dispute, for the first time ethnic minority workers received full support from trade unions from the outset, which took on the role of active participants rather than witnesses (Holgate, 2004).

However, as Holgate (2004) argues, the positive changes in the unions' statutory bodies and the later election of a Black person as general secretary of the T&G trade union did not fully reflect the situation of ethnic minority workers within the unions' structures. In particular, the number of ethnic workers in the leading trade unions elected or appointed to positions was still low and was not proportional to their membership numbers. Phizacklea and Milles (1980) argue that a lack of trade union responses to racism in the workplace was one of the reasons for lower ethnic workers' involvement in local trade unions. In the 1970s, lower participation was also explained by a lack of trade union experiences and language difficulties (Runnymede Trust 1974: 24, cited in Wrench, 2000). This led to a discussion on how unions could increase participation of ethnic minorities within their organisations, i.e. whether ethnic workers should receive more support to become active members and whether this encouragement would lead to a special, more favourable treatment of this group and discriminate against indigenous workers. As Wrench claims, the dilemma of Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) equal versus special treatment appeared initially at the end of the 1960, when trade unions saw an introduction of any special policies regarding ethnic workers as divisive and discriminatory against local workers (Wrench 2000).

One of the most important forms of developing special trade union treatment of ethnic minority workers was self-organisation (see the definition of self-organisation in section 1.4.5 – note on terminology). Wrench (2000) points out that white trade unionists opposed the self-organisation of Black workers, arguing that creation of autonomous ethnic workers' groups was divisive and counterproductive to the objectives of trade unions, that is, supporting the class-based interests of all workers (Wrench, 2000). Other researchers, such as Tapia (2014), argue that by allowing the self-organisation within their structures, trade unions did not significantly change their approach to Black, ethnic minority and migrant workers. According to Tapia, this could be described as a dialectic approach in which, on the one hand, British trade unions set up self-organising structures, guaranteeing the autonomy of ethnic minority groups; on the other hand, they stress a more integrative approach that considers workers as workers, regardless of their background (Tapia, 2014: 56). This is, however, an oversimplification and generalisation suggesting that self-organised structures came about as a result of top-down processes. In many cases, such as in the forming unions of Unison described above, self-organisation was a long process developed by the workers themselves and later officially recognised by the union's decision-making bodies. In many cases, British trade unions allowed and supported self-organised structures rather than setting them up for ethnic minority workers. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research, it is acknowledged that by allowing Black and ethnic minority workers to set up self-organised groups, British trade unions opted in to the special treatment approach (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000).

Finally, it is important to mention that British trade unions' efforts to include migrant and ethnic minority workers from the end of the 1970s were taking place in the context of a deteriorating industrial relations environment. The Conservative governments (1979 to 1997) introduced many anti-trade union legislative acts, aiming to weaken the power of trade unions. This included abolishing the National Economic Development Committee, the equivalent of a tripartite committee, which made conducting industrial actions more difficult. Trade union membership gradually declined from 51% density when the Conservative government came power to 25% in 2014. Similarly, collective bargaining coverage decreased from 70% in 1980 to 27.5% in 2014 (ETUI, 2016). The declining position of trade unions in British society undoubtedly had its consequences in terms of their impaired ability to reach out to migrant and

ethnic minority workers, particularly from those sectors where trade unions' presence was weakened.

4.7.1 Trade unions' approaches to CEE workers

The TUC did not resist the opening up of the British labour market to workers from 2004 accession countries. In fact, it opposed any restrictions on their employment and social rights within the seven-year transitional period. The TUC argued that accepting the free movement of workers was important as otherwise those citizens could be forced to take on irregular work (Clark and Hardy 2011: 4). Furthermore, the TUC argued that all four EU freedoms (the free movement of capital, services, goods and people) should be equally respected and that if entrepreneurs were entitled to use the first three of those freedoms, workers should not be treated differently and should equally benefit from freedom of movement, as stipulated by the EU treaties (Owen, 2016). In addition, similar to during the post-WW2 period, the labour market situation was stable, with a low unemployment rate and labour shortages. In 1998, the Labour government introduced the minimum wage, which would protect local workers from social dumping.

According to Unison's policy documents, the trade union supported free movement of workers as one of the core freedoms of the EU:

(...) Unison has however also supported a more positive Social Europe with good employment provisions and workers protections, equal treatment, free movement for workers and equalities and human rights protections (Unison 2016a: 28).

Connolly and Sellers (2017) argue that the post-2004 migration has not been debated among relevant social partners in any serious or formalised manner; there is, however, some evidence pointing to informal measures, such as the joint statement of the Home Office, the TUC and the CBI on post-2004 migrants, issued in September 2005 (Home Office, 2005). Social partners agreed that they will work within their individual areas to *ensure that migrant workers can contribute their skills and maximise their potential in the workplace and in the community at large* (Home Office, 2005). The TUC made a commitment to assisting its affiliates in organising migrants and representing their interests in the workplace.

In Fitzgerald and Hardy's (2010) research on unions' responses to post-2004 migration, trade union officials suggested that CEE migrants would be more easily accepted within workplaces than previous waves of immigration due to their *Europeanness*. Moreover, Anderson et al. (2008) found that CEE workers were regarded by employers as highly motivated workers and praised for their capacity for hard work in low-paid and demanding jobs that British workers tended to find unacceptable.

Interestingly, the *Europeanness* of Polish workers and their high level of work motivation did not really influence their trade union participation. Quite the opposite, as the data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) from 2015 in Table 6 below (ONS, 2015) suggests; trade union membership among Polish workers might have decreased after Poland's accession to the EU. According to the survey, the density of trade union membership among Polish citizens was 8.6% (Polish born 8.2%), whereas union membership of Eastern European-born workers in 2002, two years before Poland's accession to the EU, was 11.7% (Connolly and Sellers, 2017).

Table 6. LFS survey: Trade union membership of Polish workers in the UK

| Country of Birth = Poland | Employees | |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Union member | Count | Percentage |
| Yes | 33,695 | 8.6% |
| No | 359,960 | 91.4% |
| Total | 393,655 | 100.0% |

As shown in Table 7, the lower trade union density of Polish workers could be explained by the fact that trade unions were present in only 26% of surveyed workplaces and only 18.2% of them were covered by trade unions' collective agreements.

Table 7. LFS survey: Presence of union in workplaces with Polish employees

| Country of Birth = Poland | Employees | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Whether unions are present at place of work | Count | Percentage |
| Yes | 75,092 | 26.0% |
| No | 213,251 | 74.0% |
| Total | 288,343 | 100.0% |

Table 8. LFS survey: impact of union agreements on pay/conditions in workplaces with Polish employees

| Country of Birth = Poland | Employees | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Pay / condition affected by union agreements | Count | Percentage |
| Yes | 61,100 | 18.6% |
| No | 267,034 | 81.4% |
| Total | 328,134 | 100.0% |

Fitzgerald and Hardy (2010) identified two sets of responses in relation to inclusion processes targeting Polish migrant workers. The first set concentrates on recruitment and organising methods; the second includes development of local, regional, national and international linkages. The organising approach quickly threw up organisational and structural challenges. To start with, many potential members were employed in non-unionised workplaces or by agencies. Secondly, many members faced difficulties in becoming activists. Finally, unions were unsure how far they could go when developing special policies and how these could include migrant workers.

One of the aspects of British trade unions' inclusion strategy regarding post-2004 migrants' involved strengthening of bilateral co-operation between Polish and British trade unions (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). In 2008, the TUC and Polish unions OPZZ and NSZZ Solidarnosc signed a co-operation agreement²⁶ which committed both parties to supporting each other's members and encouraged them to join trade unions in Poland and the UK (TUC, OPZZ, NSZZ Solidarnosc, 2008). Unison employed one person from OPZZ²⁷ and the another British union GMB an officer from NSZZ Solidarnosc. Similarly, Unite employed some Polish-speaking organisers; however, this was not in the context of any previous bilateral co-operation with Polish trade unions. In addition, trade unions liaised with Polish community organisations, such as the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, an umbrella organisation for all

²⁶ The protocol for co-operation was signed on 25 September 2008 and as it was only valid for four years it officially expired in 2012. Some of its commitments from British trade unions included providing training and information for Polish members, producing information materials about employment and welfare rights and the benefits of joining trade unions, and organising Anglo-Polish cultural and trade union events.

²⁷ The author of this thesis.

Polish groups in the UK. Unison also collaborated with organisations representing post-2004 migrants such as the Polish Cooperation Network, Polish Professionals and other locally based groups. According to Fitzgerald, this co-operation was a *marriage of convenience* (Fitzgerald, 2006: 3).

As Connolly et al (2014) argue, British trade unions struggled with access to funding, which meant that many projects addressing the needs of post-2004 migrants relied on external, short-term government funding. One such source of funding was the governmental Union Learning Fund set up in 1998, used by trade unions to organise free English courses for migrant communities. This helped not only to improve migrants' language skills but was also a means of recruiting them to trade unions (Martinez et al, 2007; Heyes, 2009).

Similarly, the research of Connolly et al. (2014) showed that many trade unions' activities concerning organising migrant workers depended on various circumstances, including strong and committed branches, dedicated union officers or external funding. As such, Connolly and Sellers (2017) argue:

Without broader co-ordinated action, long-term strategies towards greater collective regulation and greater support from the state, much of the work done by trade unions, remains small scale, fragmented and rests on precarious foundations (Connolly and Sellers, 2017: 240).

Similarly, Tapia (2014) admits that migrant workers' projects were allocated to a small number of union officers, separating migrant worker issues from the broader union strategies. In the same vein, James and Karnowska (2012) conclude that existing union projects were not embedded within their structures and overall lacked sufficient financial resources.

4.7.2 Union Modernisation Fund's role in trade unions' approaches to CEE migrants

In order to support trade unions, in 2005 the Labour government established the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF). The UMF would provide funding to British trade unions and support innovative modernisation projects which contribute to a transformational change in the organisational effectiveness of a trade union (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014: 7). It was supervised by the Department of Business, Innovations and Skills and operated in three two-year rounds. Unions could receive up to 50% of funding towards their projects from the UMF. In the Round 2 (2008–2010), the UMF focused on migrant workers, and many

trade unions applied for funding for projects related to immigration, including Unison (the Migrant Workers Participation Project). Applications were also submitted by Unite, BFAWU (The Bakers and Allied Food Workers Union) and the TUC Northern region. Round 3 (2010–2012) supported projects focusing on vulnerable workers, and Unison received funding to run the Hidden Workforce Project, aimed at the precarious workforce. The UMF was closed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrats' government in 2011.

4.8 Swiss trade unions' approaches to immigration after WW2

Although Switzerland has always been a country of immigration (D'Amato, 2008), in the immediate aftermath of WW2, the Swiss trade unions demonstrated a highly protectionist approach to migrant workers, more so than their British counterparts. As argued by Penninx and Roosblad (2000), however, this was done from a position of weakness.

Swiss unions' protectionist approach to migration was due to the fact that, as described in section 4.6, immigration was perceived as a temporary phenomenon, related to the post-WW2 economic prosperity and resulting labour shortages. Trade unions were resistant to employing migrant workers as they represented a threat to the pay and working conditions of local workers (Degen, 2000). Moreover, local workers were offered employment first and would be the last to be affected by redundancies (Degen, 2000). Because migration was expected to be a temporary phenomenon, some Swiss trade union leaders suggested that migrants should be frequently sent back to their countries of origin so that their stay would not be long enough to make it possible for them to obtain a permanent work permit (Gerlach, 1955 cited in Degen, 2000). The anti-migrant narration was fuelled by fears arising from the economic recession of the 1950s. This led to the development of a theory that controlled migration could be deployed as an economic buffer (*Puffertheorie*) to protect the economy from overheating. Towards the end of the 1950s, this theory was questioned, especially given that in sectors such as construction and textile, almost one third of workers were migrants. In the 1960s it became clear that migration was taking place not solely in response to the changing economic situation, with migrants becoming a permanent part of the labour market (Degen, 2000). The increased inflow of a foreign labour force led to growing anti-migrant sentiments among trade union leaders as well as rank and file members. Since the economic buffer theory lost its significance, it was replaced by a theory of *over-foreignisation* (*Überfremdung*) in which migration was not

only a threat to Swiss workers' identities but would also bring conflicts to the workplace and pose a threat to the quality of work and social partnership (Riedo, 1976: 44). For instance, the congress of the SGB in 1960 called for a restriction on migration in order to protect the quality of Swiss products (Steiner and Von Allmen, 2000). The *over-foreignisation* theory became popular in the Swiss trade union movement in the 1960s (Degen, 2000). In 1965, trade unions used the term *over-foreignisation* in their communications and also in posters for the 1st of May demonstration (Degen, 2000). It is also important to point out that at the time, the majority of migrants did represent different beliefs, for instance Catholicism as opposed to the dominant Protestant religion (Schmitter - Heisler, 2000). Some of the migrants were also communists and so represented a threat to Christian and social democratic trade unions (Steiner and Von Allmen, 2000).

The Swiss trade unions demonstrated a long history of a dialectical approach to migration. For instance, in the 1960s they would criticise government proposals to relax immigration legislation while at the same time advocate equal social and employment rights for migrant workers (Degen, 2000). Similarly, in terms of their reactions to the so-called *Schwarzenbach Initiative* in the 1970s (discussed in section 4.6), even though from a moral perspective, trade unions were against the initiative, the economic argument of potential crisis was more persuasive (Degen, 2000). This ambivalent approach was still present in the 1990s, when the SGB published a policy document stating that its approach to migration had two aims: a quantitative limitation of the number of migrants entering Switzerland and a qualitative demand to promote legal and social equality for foreigners (Schmitter-Heisler, 2000).

Even though the policies of trade unions were based on the principle of controlled migration, the inflow of migrants in the 1950s and 1960s changed unions' perspective on recruiting migrants. Initially, trade unions were not interested in organising migrants as many of them were seasonal workers or had other types of temporary work permits (Degen, 2000). This approach could not be sustained as many migrants became a permanent part of the Swiss workforce, either by extending their stay or by going regularly to Switzerland as seasonal workers. As discussed in section 4.6, the governmental initiatives to reduce the number of foreign workers failed and immigration was constantly increasing, including in sectors such as construction, textile and steel, which had a traditionally high union density. For instance, in 1960, migrant workers comprised 20% of the total workforce, including 50% in the

construction sector (Tanner, 2015: 339). As Degen (2000) argues, trade unions had no choice other than to recruit foreign workers if they wanted to have enough members to retain the ability to bargain on behalf of local workers. Haus (2002) makes a similar argument when it comes to the reasons why French and American trade unions changed their stance on migration and moved from the restriction to the integration approach (see also Chapter 2). Some trade unionists (see Pedrina and Keller, 2018) disagree with Degen (2008) and argue that trade unions had a choice and could have opted not to recruit foreign workers. GBI was one of the first unions that started focusing on migrant workers on the basis of an ethical rather than an instrumental paradigm (Pedrina, 2016). For instance, Ezio Canonica, the president of GBH (1968–78) and later president of the SGB (1973–78), strongly promoted the integration of migrant workers in Swiss trade unions (Bürgi, 2005). At the same time, the new generation of Swiss union officials became more supportive of foreign workers (Pedrina and Keller, 2018).

As a result, from the late 1960s onwards, trade unions began to develop more inclusive structures catering for migrant members. For instance, in 1954, one of the predecessors of Unia, SMUV, appointed the first migrant worker of Italian origin as its officer and later, in 1962, started to translate its official newspapers for members of Italian origin (Schmitter-Heisler, 2000). Since the beginning of the 1960s, another predecessor of Unia, GBH, a construction and woodworkers' union, started to employ migrant workers as officers. The first trade union which created a committee for migrant workers was the Christian trade union CNG (Christlichnationaler Gewerkschaftsbund), which in 1966 set up a committee for guest workers (Gastarbeiterkomitee) (Tschirren, 2004). GBH followed suit, and in the mid 1970s created an interest group (a self-organised group) for seasonal migrant workers. As argued by the president of GBI, Vasco Pedrina:

The integration of a large number of migrant workers into our ranks has enabled us not only to avoid the decline in union membership experienced by the unions in Europe that missed the boat. It has also, over time, changed the union's culture in the sense of unity in diversity, and it has, above all, contributed to increasing its combativeness (Pedrina, 2016: 141).

The main factor contributing to trade unions becoming more inclusive towards migrants was the oil crisis of 1973 and its repercussions; it led to the departure of almost a quarter of the migrant population from Switzerland. The arguments about *over-foreignisation* lost their

significance as migrants were leaving Switzerland (Degen, 2000). Nevertheless, during the time of the oil crisis, the SGB still demanded a reduction in the number of immigrants to protect local workers from dismissal and argued that work permits should be only issued to immigrants with secured employment. This attitude contributed to migrants' decision to leave Switzerland (Arlettaz and Arlettaz, 2006).

Schmitter-Heisler (2000) argues that Swiss trade unions shifted their attitudes from modest opposition against anti-immigration initiatives between 1960 and 1970 to supporting initiatives aimed at improving the legal status of foreign workers in the beginning of the 1980s and 1990s.

Of particular importance was the support of trade unions for the initiative to remove seasonal workers' status: the *All Together Initiative* (1979–1980), perceived as taking place in response to the *Schwarzenbach Initiative*. For instance, GBH changed its position on seasonal work's status; in the 1950s the union was supportive, but from the 1960s it became more critical and later on became one of the biggest supporters of the *All Together Initiative*. Although the initiative was rejected by the popular vote and seasonal work's status ceased to exist only after relevant bilateral agreements with the EU were ratified in 2000, nevertheless, the campaign was successful in making Swiss citizens become more attentive to the rights of migrant workers and improving the employment status of migrant workers and their families (Alleva, 2001).

The efforts of Swiss trade unions to support migrants' rights helped increase their participation within the unions. For instance, at the end of the 1960s, foreign workers constituted 10% and 15% of the membership of SGB and CNG respectively; this changed to 31.8% and 20.1% in 1986 (Degen, 2000). GBI saw the biggest increase, and in 1997, 63% of its members were born abroad (Degen, 2000).

As Alleva (2001) mentions when he was president of the SGB immigration committee (and future president of Unia), the integration of migrant workers into Swiss trade unions was important because trade unions were the only place where migrants could influence local politics even if only indirectly.

One of the recent key events involving migrant workers was a strike in a Basel hospital laundry (Zentralwäscherei Basel), supported by GBI and a union called VPOD (Schweizerischer

Verband des Personals öffentlicher Dienste – public service union) (Ferro Mäder, 2017). The strike took place at the end of 2000 and was the longest strike in Basel for the previous 100 years and one of the largest in Switzerland. It engaged mainly women of Southern European origin who did not accept the reduction in their salaries when the decision was made by the management to adjust workers' salaries in line with their low skills and qualifications. This decision was possible as the laundry was privatised in 1994. After five days of protests, with the strike also supported by local workers, the management withdrew the decision. Similar to the 1976 Grunwick dispute, the Basel strike was highly significant for the Swiss labour movement, given that the majority of strikers were women and the protest engaged local workers as well.

The turning point of Swiss trade union history as well as of its approach to the European migrants was the referendum on membership in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. The Swiss trade unions supported EEA membership and were actively involved in the referendum campaign (Wylér, 2012). This resulted in a high voting turnout of 78.83%, although membership was rejected by a small margin of votes, 50.30% to 49.70% (Federal Chancellery, 2012). According to Wylér (2012), the referendum and the campaign prior to it changed Swiss trade unions' approach to EU integration (with membership of the EEA being the first step to accession to the EU) and led to the Europeanisation of trade unions' policy. The positive attitude towards the EEA also influenced similarly positive attitudes towards the bilateral agreements with the EU (described in the next section) regulating the free movement of workers and ending the exploitative seasonal workers' status for EU citizens.

4.8.1 Trade unions' approaches to CEE workers (flank measures)

To some extent, the attitude of Swiss trade unions towards CEE migrant workers was more cautious in comparison with UK unions. On the one hand, free movement of workers put an end to the highly exploitative working conditions related to the seasonal worker's status, something that Unia and its predecessors were strongly against. On the other hand, Swiss trade unions were concerned that free movement of European workers might contribute to social dumping and worsen the labour conditions of local workers in Switzerland. This approach was represented by Unia's policy position adopted at the 2008 congress, entitled *Yes for free movement of workers but not at any price (Ja für Personenfreizügigkeit aber nicht um jeden Preis)*. The document argues that free movement of workers is proof of social progress but has

to be accompanied by binding and efficient measures to protect workers' wages and employment terms and conditions (Unia, 2008a: 18). Since Switzerland was not part of the EU and each European legislative act had to be negotiated bilaterally with the EU, the free movement of workers was subject to negotiation, with Swiss trade unions playing a crucial role. Importantly, free movement of workers would be subject to a referendum vote, and without support of the unions, the results would not have been positive (Pedrina and Keller, 2018). Using the political leverage provided by the Swiss system of direct democracy (Wyler, 2012), unions approved the bilateral agreements with the EU under the condition of introducing special accompanying measures (flanking measures) (after the German term *Flankierden Massnahmen* (FlaM)) to protect all workers from wage undercutting (Erne and Imboden, 2015).

The flank measures came into force along with the opening up of the labour market to EU citizens at the beginning of 2001 and were gradually improved between 2006 and 2013, along with the opening of the labour market to CEE citizens. The measures guaranteed that all workers, including posted workers, would be covered by universally binding collective bargaining agreements. The threshold for collective agreements to be universally binding was lowered. In sectors without collective agreements, tripartite committees were established to assess the fair wage of workers. The tripartite commissions were able to negotiate national labour agreements (NAV) in sectors without collective bargaining agreements where wages were undercut (SECO, 2015). One of these agreements was introduced for workers employed to carry out domestic duties, including care work. The flank measures legislation resulted in an increase in the number of labour inspectorates.

Lowering the threshold for binding agreements and the introduction of tripartite committees were important measures to guard against possible wage undercutting by migrant workers given that at the time, unlike in the UK, Switzerland did not have a minimum wage.

The introduction of flank measures was seen as a success by Swiss trade unions because they were able to use EU legislation to increase their power and social position whereas in other countries that legislation led to social dumping and weakened the position of labour movements. Swiss trade unions used negotiation on free movement within the framework of

direct democracy to protect local workers from social dumping as well as to improve their own bargaining position (Erne and Blaser, 2018). Thanks to the flank measures, it is easier in Switzerland to conclude universally binding collective agreements. Importantly, the principle of free movement of workers ended exploitative seasonal workers' status which Unia and other Swiss trade unions campaigned against (Pedrina and Keller, 2018).

4.9 Trade unions' responses to the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016 and the anti-migration vote in Switzerland in 2014

Societal attitudes towards migration were quite transparent during the debate before the referendum on UK membership of the EU in June 2016 (so-called Brexit referendum) and the anti-mass immigration (in German: Eidgenössische Volksinitiative Gegen Masseneinwanderung) referendum (popular initiative), which took place in Switzerland in February 2014. In terms of the Brexit referendum, the bulk of the public debate focused on EU migrants, particularly those from CEE countries. All but a few trade unions in the UK (such as RMT) were against leaving the EU and all in Switzerland were against the initiative, including Unison (Unison, 2016) and Unia (Unia, 2013b) in their respective countries. One of the arguments for leaving the EU used by Brexit supporters was that the UK would be able to better manage, that is, effectively reduce, the number of CEE migrants (D'Angelo and Kofman, 2018). The Swiss referendum aimed to limit immigration by moving back to the system of quotas for migrants which existed prior to introducing various bilateral treaties between Switzerland and the European Union in 2002.

Nevertheless, in both cases, the public chose the anti-EU, anti-immigration option by a small margin of votes. In Switzerland, 50.30% of those who took part in the referendum voted for the anti-immigration option, and in the UK, 51.90% of those who took part voted to leave the EU.

Interestingly, the early polls suggested that both referenda would be rejected by the nation by a large margin of difference. The main argument was that introducing the proposed changes would be negative for both economies. That is, in the UK the economy would suffer as a result of Brexit; similarly, introducing quotas for migration in Switzerland would be negative for the economy given the country's dependence on the EU. These arguments affected the slow

mobilisation of Unia and Unison in terms of campaign organising. Unison began its Brexit-related campaign relatively late as a result of a large-scale consultation process involving approximately 60,000 members, which allowed the National Executive Council to make a final decision in the middle of April (Unison, 2016a). The timing of the anti-migration referendum was very unfortunate for Unia as in the same year, a referendum on introducing the minimum wage was supposed to take place, with Unia as its main initiator. As a result, Unia's efforts, including its financial resources were focused on supporting the campaign for the referendum on the minimum wage, held in September that year. Moreover, the main Swiss confederation, SGB, was engaged in the negotiations with employers and the government to improve flank measures regulations (Pedrina, 2018). In some ways, the situation in Switzerland was comparable with the period in the run-up to the Brexit referendum when the polls suggested widespread support for Remain and few believed that the UK would vote to leave the EU.

4.10 Conclusions

As the overview of industrial relations systems in both countries demonstrates, there are a number of similarities and differences. The Swiss model of a co-ordinated market economy results in wider coverage of collective bargaining agreements and negotiations at sectoral and branch level. The higher number of collective bargaining agreements in Switzerland does not, however, translate into higher membership levels, with both countries having a relatively similar, low number of members. In both countries there is a dual system of workplace representation, which is more developed in Switzerland (however not in all sectors), whereas in the UK it is rarely used by trade unions. There are also some ideological differences between British and Swiss trade unions, with the former being affiliated with the main trade union confederation the TUC, which has historically supported the Labour Party, and with Swiss trade unions affiliated with Christian or Socialists confederations. If we understand trade unions' power in the context of industrial disputes regulation, Swiss trade unions should be in a more favourable situation to strike than their British counterparts. However, looking at the position of individual members, active union members in Switzerland have less protection against dismissal on the ground of their involvement in trade unions than their UK counterparts.

Furthermore, the history of post-WW2 immigration to Switzerland and the UK shows some parallels despite a number of differences. First of all, Switzerland and the UK were the only

countries in Europe that restricted immigration before the beginning of the oil crisis (Schmitter-Heisler, 2000; Mahning and Piguet, 2003). In other European countries, such as France and Germany (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000), it was the oil crisis that provided an economic argument to reduce the inflow of foreign labour. Second, the largest early groups of migrant workers arriving in those countries already spoke the languages of their destination country; that is, people from the New Commonwealth countries spoke English, and Italians spoke one of the official languages of Switzerland. Third, in the years following the oil crisis and then in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, migration trends reversed, with negative migration taking place. And finally, governmental policies also followed similar trends, from the initial post-WW2 liberal approach to the post-1970s restrictions.

There are, however, a number of key differences, in particular in terms of the characteristics of workers, immigration policy and the national narrative about immigration. Immigration has always been perceived by the Swiss government as a temporary necessity to address labour shortages and to support economic growth at a time of prosperity. As a result, migrants' rights to stay and to work were designed to be temporary and depended upon the economic situation. As the economy deteriorated following the oil crisis, migrants lost their jobs and without the right to receive unemployment benefits were forced to leave Switzerland. Although migrants to the UK were also required to fill labour shortages, their right to stay was not contingent on economic factors and people coming from former British colonies were allowed to permanently settle as British citizens. The main issues faced by foreign workers were related to racism and discrimination in the workplace and wider society (Wrench, 2000).

There are also major racial differences in terms of migrants arriving in the UK and Switzerland. With the exception of refugees from Sri Lanka, Switzerland remains a country of destination for mainly white European workers. The majority of migrants going to the UK in the post-war period, with the exception of Polish and EVWS workers, came from postcolonial countries and were ethnically non-white. As Virdee (2014) claims, they were cast into the role of *racialized outsider[s]* and structured into the lower strands of society, not because of their precarious immigration status, as was the case in Switzerland, but due to the racialisation of non-white people already present in British society. As the Swiss immigration policy reflected the federalist state model and direct democracy, it was subject to changes over time, placing the migrant population in a more precarious position than in the UK. Finally, compared to the UK,

the naturalisation process continues to be more expensive, time-consuming and complex in Switzerland.

Similarly, in terms of government policies regarding CEE immigrants, more disparities than similarities can be identified between the UK and Switzerland. Following the Central Eastern EU enlargement, the UK was one of the first EU countries, together with Sweden and Ireland, that did not make full use of the seven-year transitional period provision. The UK had other restrictions in place, including limited access to unemployment benefits and compulsory registration of employment; however, these were not as rigorous as requirements imposed by the Swiss government, which introduced limits on the number of permanent work permits available for CEE workers. Nonetheless, those limits did not prevent the growth of economic migration to Switzerland, which saw a fivefold increase; this was lower, however, than the tenfold increase in the UK. Finally, in both countries, post-2004 migrants were employed in sectors historically occupied by the foreign workforce, such as construction or care.

When it comes to British and Swiss trade unions' approaches to migrant workers, there was a convergence in trade unions' inclusion policies. They moved between the three dilemmas identified by Penninx and Roosblad's (2000 and with Marino in 2017) (resistance versus support, inclusion versus exclusion and special versus equal treatment) almost at the same time, and in the late 1990s all of them opted for the special treatment approach. Swiss and British trade unions differed, however, in the early post-WW2 years. Swiss trade unions perceived migrants as a threat to their labour market and therefore resisted migration or accepted it only as a temporary phenomenon.

British trade unions since 1945 have shown a consistent approach to migrant workers. Their top structures did not oppose immigration from Europe after the end of WW2, or later waves from the New Commonwealth countries or those from the EU following the 2004 enlargement. With the exception of EVWS workers (Wrench, 2000), the influence of trade unions on government immigration policy was limited. In terms of their response to the workers arriving under the EVWS, British trade unions adopted a similar approach to Swiss trade unions, demanding that migrants could arrive only if they met certain conditions. The response to new arrivals from New Commonwealth countries was more positive. However, as Virdee argued (2014), the trade unions' approach to the non-white workers could be described as based on

colour and race blindness. British trade unions did not aim to differentiate between migrant and non-migrant workers and treated the latter in a different way, drawing on the concept of class consciousness rather than the Weberian notion of status including race or nationality. Instead, unions expected that migrants would assimilate within the existing membership and ignored any cultural or ethnic differences, as was the case for Polish and other EVWS white workers. However, non-white workers experiencing race discrimination did not assimilate as easily as expected. Following some infamous industrial disputes involving migrants in the 1970s, trade unions changed their stance from passive observers to active participants. The creation of self-organised structures for Black and ethnic minority workers in the late 1980s and early 1990s aimed to improve their inclusion within trade unions. However, the Stephen Lawrence case (a young Black teenager murdered in a racially motivated attack in 1993) showed that structural discrimination was pervasive within society and in trade unions. After the 2004 EU enlargement, union structures and in particular the structures of self-organised groups were not adjusted to accommodate the needs of white EU migrants. As such, the activities of British trade unions aimed at including CEE migrants were mainly project based and depended on funding from the UMF (see section 4.7.2).

Swiss trade unions were more involved in migration policy-making than UK unions. They were also more in favour of restrictions regarding migrants in the early years after the end of WW2. Although the decision to include migrants was motivated by the ethical paradigm in some unions (such as GBI), the argument in favour of a pragmatic approach to changing unions' stance towards the integration of migrants (Haus, 2002; Jefferys, 2007) has its value in relation to Swiss unions. The Swiss trade unions decided to recruit migrants against the backdrop of an increasing number of migrant workers, once they realised that the Swiss labour market depended on foreign labour. Furthermore, once the number of migrant workers became larger in some trade union-dominated sectors of the economy, such as the metal industry or construction, trade unions could not negotiate with employers without having migrants among their rank and file membership. For the purposes of supporting migrant workers, trade unions gradually created special committees (equivalent to British self-organised groups) with the aim of not only encouraging their integration into union structures but also into society in general (Allewa, 2001). As opposed to the UK, where migrants from the New Commonwealth were British citizens and as such had a direct influence on UK policy-making through the voting process, workers coming from abroad to Switzerland did not have the right to vote. Therefore,

their only influence on politics in Switzerland was through participation in the decision-making process in Swiss trade unions. Consequently, migrant workers' committees played an important role in the engagement of migrants in trade unions as well as regarding their participation in Swiss political life. Importantly, unlike in the UK's Black members' committees, participation in Swiss committees was based on migration status, not ethnicity, and so after the 2004 EU enlargement, Swiss structures were ready to include CEE migrants. Given that the approach of Swiss trade unions was based on the strategy of inclusiveness and special treatment, this meant that including CEE workers could easily be integrated into the existing policy on the recruitment and organising of migrants.

Looking at Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) contextual factors regarding different trade unions' approaches to Polish migrants, that is, the position of unions in socio-economic decision-making processes, the economic and labour market situation and factors connected with society and the characteristics of migrants, there are many similarities that influenced convergences in Unison's and Unia's responses to CEE migrants. The characteristics of migrants are not so relevant since this is a similar group of migrants in terms of their country of origin and, as the statistics show with both migration waves being feminised. As this chapter has shown, the economic and labour market situation at the time of opening the labour market to Polish migrants in the UK was very positive. The UK had the lowest level of unemployment rate in its history, at 4.3% and a similarly low level of unemployment, at 3.6%, was observed in Switzerland. British trade unions' position in society was weaker than that of their Swiss counterparts. Although membership density was comparable, it was lower in Switzerland than in the UK (21% compared to 26%) but Switzerland had a higher level of collective bargaining coverage (51% compared to 29%) (see Table 1). *Flank measures* legislation significantly strengthened the position of Swiss trade unions. Nonetheless, as the chapter has shown, Swiss society before and at the time of the project was substantially more negative towards migrants than those in UK society. Penninx and Roosblad (2000) factors account for the different approaches of Unison and Unia to Polish migrants will be analysed through the text of this thesis.

According to Hyman's (2001) triangle regarding trade unions' identity, historically Unison can be seen as having a business union identity because it focuses more on the labour market whereas Unia could be described as a more class-oriented trade union (as this research shows,

Unia represents a stronger commitment to collective mobilisation than Unison). Although in both unions some other identity aspects are visible, such as class aspects in Unison (focus on organising due to a weak social dialogue system) or, in Unia, a focus on the labour market situation due to a better-developed social dialogue than in the UK, also as a result of *flank measures*. As mentioned in Chapter 4, two unions were left-wing oriented.

Finally, Swiss and British unions from both countries recently faced similar challenges in terms of political changes that will probably have a profound impact on EU/CEE migrants and the approach to organising them, although the full impact of those changes is yet unknown and therefore will not be covered within this research. These changes are the EU referendum in 2016 in the UK and the anti-mass migration people's initiative of 2014 in Switzerland. As discussed previously, the vast majority of trade unions in the UK were against so-called Brexit and all trade unions in Switzerland opposed the anti-mass migration initiative; at the same time, both unions significantly underestimated the likelihood of those initiatives becoming approved. While a full-impact analysis would exceed the timescales of this research, nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that these political changes will undoubtedly affect the future organising of CEE workers in both countries.

Chapter 5 Organising Polish migrants in Unison

Today I don't really know what Unison wants from me, a Polish activist within the organisation, I feel a bit like a burden. I have absolutely no clue what else I could do for Unison apart from the things I have already done (Marcin, Polish activist).²⁸

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses Unison's policies and strategies focused on organising Polish migrant workers. The analysis begins with a description of the Migrants Workers Participation Project (MWP project), whose aim was to implement union policies focusing on migrants. This is followed by an analysis of the Hidden Workforce Project (HW project) as well as other activities aimed at Polish migrants, including the Polish Activists Network. The chapter also explores challenges and gaps with regard to implementation of those policies. The chapter then moves on to discuss inclusion processes from the perspective of Polish trade union representatives and members. This is followed by an overview of further policy development following the MWP project initiative as well as a reflection on whether the model of self-organisation of Black members was appropriate for Polish migrants seeking greater involvement within Unison. Finally, the chapter examines further implementation of Unison's policies, with an emphasis on how sustainable these early achievements were by reflecting on the meeting of the Polish Activists Network in 2016, five years from its inception and seven years from the closure of the MWP project.

5.2 Analysis of Unison policies related to Polish workers

5.2.1 Development of Unison policies before Migrant Workers Participation Project

Unison first mentioned CEE (A8) workers in its policy documents in 2007, in a conference motion from 2007 titled Organising Migrant Workers in the UK (Unison, 2007a).²⁹ However, that first set of documents did not include an explicit strategy on the inclusion of citizens from

²⁸ For the original version of these and other quotes in their original languages (Polish and German) see Appendix 3.

²⁹ Interestingly, this motion states: *Conference notes that migrant workers have historically been central to the building of unions and a campaign of recruitment and organisation of migrant workers is an important way of renewing and strengthening the union as well as ensuring that migrants are not exploited* (Unison, 2007a).

CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004. Instead, the strategy addressed all recent migrants, including those from the new EU countries. At the same conference, Unison adopted its annual objectives, which included *increasing the union's influence in the private, community and voluntary sector and **effectively representing migrant workers*** (emphasis is mine) (Unison, 2008a: 16)³⁰. It is difficult to say how effective representation could be measured, especially as this is not being tracked in follow-up reports. In the same document from 2008, migration is described as one of the key challenges, alongside fragmentation of public services (privatisation, subcontracting and agency growth) and equal pay (Unison, 2008a). Moreover, in the year preceding the project, Unison launched various initiatives aimed at engaging and providing support for migrants, such as the following:

Service groups and regions have developed robust and active networks and partnerships in a number of areas which affect migrant workers, for example the setting up of Migrant Workers North West with other unions and the TUC; education services campaigning on ESOL; the health group acting on behalf of members in relation to work permits etc. There has been continuing work with relevant campaigning organisations in this field (Unison, 2007b: 43).

Before the MWP project, some other local initiatives were launched by Unison. For instance, in 2003 Unison's Scotland region funded the Overseas Nurses Network,³¹ which aimed to encourage members to be more active in their branches and provided information and access to training and welfare as well as social and professional networking. The network was an informal body which met on an annual basis. It was initiated by a Malaysian nurse, Sofie Taylor, who later became the representative for the Black members' self-organised group of the National Executive Council. In 2006, the London region of Unison employed a Polish-speaking intern, the author of this thesis, for three months to support regional staff in organising Polish members.

³⁰ The annual reports are produced for the Unison National Delegates Conference, which takes place each year around June, and the Annual Reports cover the period between May of the previous year to April of the year when the report is published.

³¹ At the time of writing (August 2017), it is not clear whether the network still exists as the website has not been updated recently www.unison-scotland.org.uk/healthcare/overseas/index.html.

The union has also provided long-term support to Filipino care workers; this included a campaign to oppose changes in immigration law that may have affected their future rights to remain in the UK. The campaign was led by a London-based Filipino organisation, Kanlungan (Kanlungan, 2017), which, together with Unison, successfully lobbied the Labour government to change its policy in 2007. As a result of Unison support for this campaign, Filipino membership increased (Tapia, 2014).

5.2.2 Migrant Workers Participation Project 2008–2010: Initial approach to organising migrant workers

The Migrant Workers Participation (MWP) project, which is the focus of this chapter, was the first centrally co-ordinated Unison strategy regarding the organisation of migrant workers. The strategy was formally launched by a motion adopted at Unison's National Delegate Conference in 2007, *Organising Migrant Workers in the UK*. This motion

called on the NEC (National Executive Council) to develop a strategy for increasing the union's organisation among migrant workers (...). The strategy builds on a two-year jointly UMF/government-funded project to encourage migrant workers to be active in Unison. (...) The aim is to ensure that migrant workers are properly represented in Unison, making the union more sensitive to their needs and more welcoming to migrants (Unison, 2008a: 21).

At that time, there were no members of Polish origin in the NDC that could have initiated the strategy. It is quite likely, however, that the motion was triggered by Sofie Taylor, who had a seat on the NEC as a member of the National Black Members Committee. She had initiated the Overseas Nurses Network in Scotland and had been a member of the NEC between 1999 and 2010.

It is important to mention that when the motion was tabled, the labour market situation was good with a low level of unemployment (see Figure 1). This could be one of the factors that, according to Penninx and Roosblad (2000), influenced Unison's positive response to migration.³²

³² See later the change of approach when Unison continued its work on precarious workers not migrant workers.

As mentioned previously, one of the drivers for launching the strategy was the funding received from Round 2 of the Union Modernisation Fund (discussed in Chapter 4). Between 2008 and 2010, the fund focused on projects related to supporting migrants in trade unions.

Since 50% of project funding was provided by the government, Unison needed to focus on initiatives related to integration and provision of supporting services for migrants rather than increasing union membership.³³ Nevertheless, the implicit assumption on the part of both top-level union officials and project officers was that raising the union's profile as a result of the project should lead to increased membership. Although no official data exist showing how many members were recruited as a result of the project, my personal recollection is that during the lifetime of the project about 300 new Polish and CEE members joined the union. Therefore, it could be argued that one of the key drivers for the initiative was tied to the motivations of trade union officials who used government funding to support implementation of Unison policies. In this respect, Unison took a similar approach to other British trade unions to migrants, which, according to authors such as James and Karmowska (2012), Connolly et al. (2014) and Tapia (2014), concerning their activities regarding organising migrant workers largely depended on external funding.

The MWP project employed a Polish and a Filipino worker. To start with, the majority of CEE citizens arriving in the UK following the accession of CEE countries that joined the EU in 2004 were Polish. In addition, at the time, Unison was noticing an overall increase in Filipino healthcare workers in terms of both general participation in the labour market and union membership. Accordingly, the focus was on these two distinct groups of migrants.

A Polish-speaking project worker was seconded directly from the Polish Confederation of Trade Unions All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ). The Filipino officer was seconded from one of Unison's regions. The project team, located in Unison's head office in London, was led by a white British manager who did not have a migration background. Interestingly, there is an expectation in Unison that a person responsible for Black workers needs to be of a non-white ethnicity (Afro-Caribbean or Asian origin). In Unia, as discussed in the next chapter, a manager of the migrant unit needs to be of a migrant origin (at least second generation). It

³³ In contrast, Unia's project was financed by the union, with one of its objectives focusing explicitly on membership recruitment.

appears that the requirement for the ethnicity matching the represented group is based on the argument that this person, being a migrant, would better understand the needs of other migrants, but this was not the case in Unison. Moreover, a lack of matching between a responsible officer and a represented group was also visible in the appointment (in 2015) of the person responsible for the Polish Activists Network, who was not of Polish origin.³⁴

The formal objectives of the MWP project (Moore and Watson, 2010: 6) were as follows:

- greater levels of participation in the democratic processes of the union by migrant workers;
- increased numbers of activists at all levels;
- reduced economic and social exclusion of migrant workers in the workplace;
- and finally, Unison services that better meet the needs of migrant workers.

To achieve these aims, the project focused on four key tasks (Moore and Watson, 2010: 8):

- promulgation of materials to encourage migrant representation and organisation along with a guide for branches;
- outreach through community networks;
- talent-spotting targeting potential activists;
- *Pathways into Unison* course for potential activists identified through the above activities.

These tasks contributed to two key outcomes of the project, that is, ensuring that Unison services meet the needs of migrant workers and encouraging migrant worker participation and activism.

³⁴ See more on the situation in Unison in 2015 in section 5.5

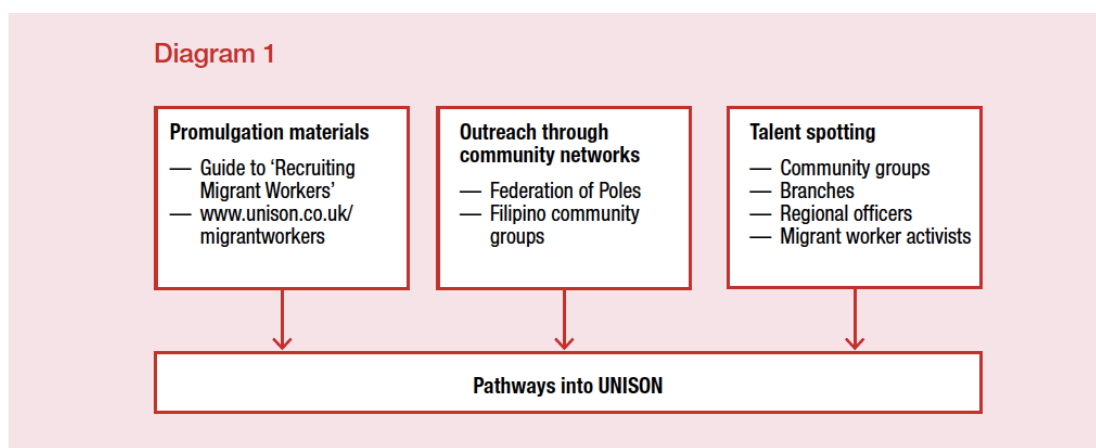


Figure 5. Overview of project methodology (Moore and Watson, 2010: 8)

The key focus of the project was the development of a weekend course called *Pathways into Unison*. The course targeted migrant members, using language that was plain and easy to understand, and introduced them to British trade unions and Unison. Its aim was to deconstruct myths related to union membership and encourage participants to become lay members. Topics included representation and organising, involvement in the union and its structures, handling issues in the workplace and action planning. Moreover, the course aimed at building confidence among migrants.

During the project, 6 courses took place in chosen Unison regions and were attended by 92 participants of over 14 nationalities, with almost half Filipino and one third Polish. Around 50% of participants were from health branches, a quarter from local government and a minority from higher education (Moore and Watson, 2010: 14). The majority of participants were either new union members or currently not active in the union, with only one person reporting some level of active union involvement. The courses were facilitated by project officers with support from an education officer from the union's Learning and Organising Services (LOAS). LOAS also supported the development of the course book and learning materials.

Overall, 6 courses were planned, targeting members across all 12 regions. While information was sent out to each region, my recollection is that the majority of participants were recruited through direct contacts with branches or local migrant community groups, mainly representing Filipino and Polish nationals.

According to my notes, at the end of each course, those participants who were not activists were encouraged to fill in a union representative's form. These forms were then sent to members' respective branches with a request to accept them as union reps and provide them with further training required for their new roles. Project officers would mentor members who started out as union reps this way; the officers also contacted those members on a regular basis to check their progress within union structures. It has to be noted that the branches may have felt some pressure to accept representatives recruited this way, given that this was a fairly top-down initiative. This suggests how important bottom-up structures were for the sustainable inclusion of migrant workers. Nevertheless, according to a follow-up survey undertaken for the evaluation report (Moore and Watson, 2010) after the course, 10% of the participants had become workplace contacts; 20% had become stewards; 2% health and safety reps; 5% union learning reps; 3% equality reps and 7% branch officers. 39% of participants attending the course were already lay members. Some of those members of Filipino and Polish origin were then supported to become involved in Polish and Filipino activists' networks (described in detail in section 5.2.5).

In addition to the Pathways course, Unison developed a number of services for migrant members, such as free immigration advice for non-EU workers, provided by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and a tax advice service, addressing the needs of EU members. The project team collaborated with Polish community organisations to organise or sponsor joint events such as the 90th anniversary of Polish independence in 2008; it sponsored the *12 Polish cities project* (Polish Express, 2008), organised by a Polish community group representing new migration. The team also liaised with the Polish Embassy. In addition, during the lifetime of the project, some regions and branches launched their own initiatives to organise and integrate migrant workers. For instance, the London region with a Westminster branch organised free English classes for street cleaners.

According to the evaluation report prepared by researchers from London Metropolitan University (Moore and Watson, 2010), overall the project was a success, with 70 activists recruited as a direct result of its activities. Moore and Watson add that

as a result of the work of the project more migrants felt comfortable recruiting other migrants or giving informal help and advice even though they felt reluctant to become

actively involved with the formal structure of the union, often because of their concerns over migration status (Moore and Watson, 2010: 5).

Prior to the beginning of the project in 2008, the Working Lives Research Institute of London Metropolitan University conducted a survey across 100 Unison branches on their engagement with migrant workers. The findings were incorporated in the evaluation report (Moore and Watson, 2010) and show a significant potential for recruitment and integration of migrant workers. Only 12% of surveyed branches confirmed they had active migrants among their membership. The follow-up survey, conducted six months before the projects finished in 2009, suggests that a number of challenges in organising migrants remained constant. These were mostly related to factors such as privatisation in the case of Polish care workers, members' fear of dismissal as a result of trade union activism and, last but not least, language barriers (Moore and Watson, 2010).

The evaluation report highlighted some organising techniques which were particularly successful in working with migrants. These included community engagement through migrant workers' community organisations, talent-spotting and good communication through a dedicated project website and newsletter sent out in three languages (English, Filipino and Polish) to migrant workers and project supporters. As such, the project confirmed an initial finding of the research, i.e. that through provision of a dedicated resource it was possible to influence and increase migrants' engagement in the union (Moore and Watson, 2010: 4).

Finally, according to the evaluation report (Moore and Watson 2010), the project identified five main barriers preventing migrants' engagement in the union. These included obstacles related to factors such as fears of losing jobs or being deported as a result of joining the union, lack of awareness of Unison and finally language and cultural barriers. In terms of internal organisational barriers, these were mainly related to assumptions that organising migrants would lead to an increased demand on time and financial resources of a branch.

After the MWP project concluded, Unison's strategy was implemented, partially through the Hidden Workforce Project and partially through networks of Polish and Filipino members launched in 2011, which will be described in section 5.2.5.

5.2.3 Campaign encouraging Poles to vote in the 2009 EU elections

During the lifetime of the MWP project, Unison provided support (mainly financial) to Polish community organisations, for instance through the campaign *Poles to Poles*, aimed at increasing voting participation among Poles in the 2009 EU elections.³⁵ Unison also carried out its own campaign aimed at Polish migrants in the UK, *Remember to Vote*, in response to the increasing popularity of the British National Party and its strong anti-migration stance. The main objective of the Remember to Vote campaign was to convince Polish citizens in the UK to register for the EU election and to choose to vote for any party other than the BNP (see also Tapia, 2014). As the budget was limited, the campaign comprised a poster, with a message explaining why registration and voting against the BNP was important for the interests of Polish workers in the UK. The poster was published in Polish-speaking newspapers in printed and online versions. It appeared on the Polish website *Londynek.net*, one of the biggest Polish online information portals, which sent the poster out to all of its registered users via email. As Tapia (2014) argues, the campaign did not change the outcome of the election, which was positive for the BNP, nor did it increase Polish participation in the election. She suggests that the campaign represented the first attempt of Unison to reach out to the Polish community beyond the workplace. It has to be noted that there were some earlier initiatives through which Unison did attempt to engage with Polish citizens beyond their workplaces, in particular in the context of a close collaboration with Polish community organisations. For instance, the celebration of the 90th anniversary of Polish independence in 2008 mentioned in the previous section.

³⁵ As EU citizens, Polish citizens were entitled to vote in local and European elections.



Figure 6. Poster from 2009 campaign ‘Remember to Vote’ (Unison, 2009a)

The text within the poster reads: *Do you want to live and work in the UE? Remember to vote. Make sure you are an active citizen. Remember to vote on the 4th of June. Say yes to free movement of workers. Say no to parties like BNP which want the UK to leave the EU. Unison is the biggest public service union and it encourages you to register and vote in European elections on Thursday the 4th of June. More information about the campaign and how to join Unison can be found on the website (...).*

5.2.4 Continuation of MWP project: The Hidden Workforce Project 2010–2012

The Hidden Workforce Project (HW project) took place between 2010 and 2011 and, similarly to the MWP project, was co-financed by the Labour government through the Union Modernization Fund (UMF – Round 3). MWP project workers were transferred onto the HW project team, which now also included an educational officer with previous experience of working on another Unison UMF project between 2008 and 2009.

The project focused on the vulnerable worker, who was defined as *someone working in an environment where the risk of being denied employment rights is high and who does not have the capacity or means to protect themselves from that abuse* (DTI, 2006: 25 quoted in Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014: 12).

The project title, Hidden Workforce,³⁶ reflected the fact that outsourced workers were less visible overall in public services as well as within the union's structures. It aimed to highlight the exploitation of these workers and examine the barriers to providing support. It also sought to demonstrate ways in which union activists and organisers could provide effective support (Unison, 2010: 26-27).

It is important to mention that Round 3 of the UMF and the project were implemented after the economic crisis of 2008. This suggests that British unions including Unison moved their attention from migrants to precarious workers. The economic and labour market situation (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000) seems to have influenced Unison's decision to depart from focusing their efforts inclusively on migrants to supporting precarious workers (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010) (compare the extended discussion on that topic in section 2.5).

As was the case with the previous project, the HW project produced training courses for members and potential members within the precarious workforce. Similar to the Pathways course in the MWP project, following successful completion of the HWP courses, attendees were encouraged to apply for representatives' roles in their branches and workplaces.

The project focused on eight branches with a significant number of members from outsourced workforces. The vast majority of workers were of migrant or Black and ethnic minority origin, apart from the Oxford branch and, to a lesser extent, the Lincolnshire branch. Members employed at universities were mostly of Black African and Caribbean or Latin American origin. At City and Islington College, there was also substantial representation from Polish and

³⁶ *Migrants tended to be concentrated in the outsourced workforce (...). As many as one in four public service workers, or around 1.2 million workers, are employed by contractors. Many of these workers are vulnerable. But paradoxically the contracted-out workforce is often the least well organised, lacking the trade union representation they so desperately need (...)* (Unison, 2010: 26).

CEE workers. The workers at Basildon hospital laundry were mostly Slovakian, whereas workers employed by the private contractor were predominantly Black workers or of Polish origin. Heritage Lincolnshire employed Polish as well as white British workers, and St John Care trust was the only company where migrant and ethnic minority groups did not constitute the majority of the workforce.

The project identified some common issues faced by vulnerable workers such as isolation and limited knowledge of their rights or the potential benefits of union membership. Those issues were compounded by a lack of appropriate resources within branches to represent members employed by private contractors, even though some of their issues would easily have been solved if the branches had allocated adequate representation and facility time (Unison, 2012b). The project also set a number of recommendations which focused mainly on ensuring that organising outsourced workers became a key priority for the union. The evaluation report of the project conducted by the Working Lives Research Institute stated that the project *has left a clear legacy in the union and a strong basis upon which to build in order to improve the conditions and representations of vulnerable workers* (Unison, 2012a: 34).

5.2.5 Unison strategy to improve migrants' representation: Creation of Polish Activists Network in 2011

During the lifetime of the HW project, in July 2011 Unison launched informal networks of Filipino and Polish activists (Unison, 2011b). It has to be noted that the initiative to launch the Polish Activists Network did not come directly from Polish members. Instead, the network was initiated by officers involved in the MWP project, that is, the project manager and me. Similarly, the Filipino network was launched by the MWP project team rather than Filipino members themselves.³⁷

The networks were co-ordinated by Filipino- and Polish-speaking officers and focused on increasing involvement in the union's structures through mentoring of new activists by more experienced ones, annual meetings and supporting communication channels such as dedicated Facebook pages.

³⁷ Building upon the experiences of the Polish and Filipino networks, Unison also created an informal network of African Activists (Unison, 2016a).

One of the project officers provided the following rationale for establishing the network:

MWP project officer: *Migrants' networking allows migrant members to come together on common issues that they want to do. I think, I believe that it will only work if people within the network are of the same nationality and language because the language is quite important and the historical background for them is quite important (...) it's good for them to be able to express it in their own language, to be able to come together and say: 'well, this is us and this is what we can do together'.*

Despite the informal nature of the networks, its members were entitled to reimbursement of travel costs and in some cases facility time when attending Unison meetings, even though meetings took place predominantly on Saturdays. Both networks were designed to provide ongoing support for Polish and Filipino activists recruited during the MWP and HW projects. The Polish network had approximately 30 members at the end of 2011 and the Filipino one was larger.

I left Unison in September 2012, and the responsibility for the network was handed over to the former HW project manager, which understandably resulted in reduced activity of the network. In 2014 it was relaunched as the Polish Members Network and was run by another Polish-speaking officer employed by Unison in the same year. After his departure from Unison in 2015, co-ordination of the network was taken over by a non-Polish-speaking officer.

In contrast to the Polish network, the Filipino network was co-ordinated on an ongoing basis by the same officer who, at the end of the HW project, became a permanent employee of Unison. On 22 August 2016, following the Brexit referendum, membership of the Polish network was extended to all EU members and its name was changed to the Unison EU Members Network.³⁸ The Facebook group for the EU members' network had 719 members in July 2017.

³⁸ According to the Unison Annual Report (Unison, 2017: 6), *Representatives of the Polish migrant workers network agreed to open their network to all members whose right to live and work in the UK depended on them being a citizen of another EU country (EU members)*. See also Unison's press release from 22 August 2016 (Unison, 2016c).

Commenting on further development of the Polish network after the MWP project, a Polish Unison organiser who took over the network after my departure from Unison stated as follows.

Artur Polish organiser: ³⁹ *At the time Polish Activists Network was up and running already, and the beginning was promising, but when you left Unison it turned out that there is nobody to take over. (...) We also had [planned] another meeting of the Polish Activists Network, in 3 months, the meeting didn't happen, and people began feeling disaffected, some of them gave up their roles, some of them left Unison completely (...).*

The last meeting of the Polish Activists Network before it changed its name to the European Members Network took place in April 2016 will be described in further detail in section 5.5, which focuses on the sustainability of Unison strategies.

5.3 Challenges in implementing policies aimed at inclusion of Polish members

The analysis of interviews and policy documents as well as my observations suggest that there were a number of challenges with regard to greater inclusion of Polish workers within Unison policies and structures. Below I present the most important challenges which formed gaps in policy implementation. The order in which the challenges are presented does not aim to suggest a hierarchy of importance but rather intends to provide clarity of analysis by beginning with those focusing on more general issues that all unions in the UK face in relation to migrant workers, such as fragmentation of a labour market or cultural barriers; the list concludes with more specific issues related only to Unison-related factors such as the definition of migrants or regional structures.

5.3.1 Fragmentation and the precarious workforce

As indicated by the Labour Force Survey data presented in Chapter 4, Poles tend to work in workplaces in which trade union density is lower than in with workplaces where the employees are predominantly British (see Chapter 4). Poles are often employed by agencies or private contractors within the public sector. The privatisation of the workforce in the public sector meant that many branches had to deal with increasing numbers of private employers, so in

³⁹ Real name of the person.

many cases workers were not entitled to facility time. In addition, in those environments, union representatives of a public employer would not be allowed to represent members employed by private contractors. This is particularly visible within the NHS (National Health Service) and local government, where shop stewards employed by public bodies face difficulties in representing members employed by private contractors. Equally, in many instances, private contractors do not recognise a trade union or may limit a trade union's facility time. This will have an impact not only on recruitment of new members from within private contractors' workforce but will also influence their inclusion within the union's structure in terms of support they may receive. For instance, interviewed shop stewards based in NHS hospitals argued that they have limited contact with their branch as a result of the fragmentation.

In terms of care homes, the situation is even more complicated as many of them are spread across a large area, which makes organising a meeting very difficult. This is reflected in the following quote from a Polish steward, based in the East Midlands, who argued that Unison structures are fit only for the NHS:

Michał: I can say that Unison has a good handle on what is happening within the NHS but struggles when it comes to the private sector. It is not quite their fault but I don't really see any attempts to change the structure which doesn't seem to be aligned to the changing labour market. (...). I suspect that because 90% of members work in the NHS and I am in private sector, my influence is much smaller. And so I don't really count as much as others do.

As argued by Gumbrell- McCormick and Hyman (2013), trade unions find it difficult to engage with agency workers, regardless of whether they are migrants. This opinion was shared by my interviewees. The regional manager of Unison argued that organising migrant workers poses a similar level of difficulty to organising local workers if they had low-paid jobs, for instance in care homes. Similarly, the race equality officer from the TUC suggested that factors such as the precariousness of jobs, not country of origin, represent the greatest difficulties regarding migrants' inclusion in trade unions.

Low-paid jobs create a transient workforce in which individuals are not attached to their workplaces nor would they consider joining a union, let alone becoming more active. One of the Polish representatives expressed a similar opinion, saying that Poles came to the UK to

work and therefore were not interested in politics and would only stay in the country for a limited time, primarily for economic reasons (Chapter 2 provides a discussion on the motivation of Polish workers for staying in the UK).

At the same time, Unison branch officers seemed to similarly assume that Poles entered the UK only for a brief period and therefore would not be interested in the full range of services that the union had to offer.

Marcin: For instance, a couple of months ago, or maybe over a year ago, there was quite a big hurrah related to the issue of pensions here in the UK. I was trying to convince my branch that maybe it would be worth it to make the effort. I even offered my services as a volunteer, to translate a leaflet we were handing out. After all, sooner or later Poles will be affected by pension-related issues. But the answer I got was along the lines of, Poles are here for a short time only so they don't really need this kind of information.

The above approach of the branch towards Polish members based upon the expectation that they were in the UK for a short time mirrors the attitude of the head office towards Polish members. By temporarily employing a Polish officer for the MWP project and later the HW project, Unison's head office might have been thinking that Poles would not require an officer speaking their language in the long term because they would either leave the UK or be integrated into the union's structures.

5.3.2 Language and cultural barriers

The biggest challenge of inclusion, identified by several informants, was a language barrier. In fact, according to one of the union officers, there was potentially a discriminatory factor related to language issues:

MWP project officer: This country is very, very, kind of proud of their own language; they wouldn't learn any other language (...) and so when you are unable to do that, you're kind of discriminated against in the workplace. I was talking to a Lithuanian migrant who worked in the care sector, and she was a really, intelligent person, but she kept on telling me: 'My manager, she speaks to me like I'm stupid (...) and sometimes she comes to me and she says: (in high pitched voice) Do you know how to do this? (...)'.

As mentioned by this officer, the language barrier may have led to a somewhat condescending attitude towards European migrants. At the same time, getting the balance right was challenging for Unison officers as well. For instance, as discussed in section 5.5 (focused on the seminar for members of the Polish Activists Network), the attendees of the seminar complained that the Unison officers deliberately used simple English and that this felt just as condescending.

The Polish officer brought up communication issues when commenting on the declining membership of the Polish network and suggested this was due to lack of direct support of members' language. Similarly, the regional manager commented that even though the union was aware of the language barrier, many courses were delivered only in English.⁴⁰

Interestingly, one of the research participants, a Polish-speaking Unison member, suggested that to overcome this barrier there should be more Polish-speaking stewards. This would build trust in Unison among existing or potential Polish members. As another research participant argued, a Polish union member, language skills are important not only when it comes to knowledge of employment rights but also with regard to integration into the trade union and society.

Zofia: As a Polish citizen, I consider myself to be well informed and quite intelligent but here, if somebody gives me a complaints form, I mean, I don't really understand the title and so the language problem is indeed quite a large barrier. This links to problems with integration because lack of communication ability does create problems. I can't exactly sit down with an English person of my age and have a chat about, say cartoons we used to watch as kids because our upbringing was different. There's so many of those little things (...).

Zofia's comments are very important for understanding issues around the inclusion of Polish and other migrant workers within trade unions; they highlight that migrants need time to understand the local culture and other trade union members. Therefore, inclusion goes beyond merely enhancing language skills or providing information about labour regulations.

⁴⁰ However, it has to be noted that at the time of my involvement with Unison, a course book for steward training was translated into Polish along with other relevant information about the union.

Contrepolis (2016) in her comparative report on language in industrial relations, which compares countries such as the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, argues that linguistic diversity as such is rarely addressed by trade unions. She argues that trade unions lack awareness of the impact of language issues and, as a result, these are rarely identified as a matter of grievance or collective bargaining. Contrepolis adds that unions rarely conceptualise language issues as potentially discriminatory and so any exclusions due to language are often normalised. It is plausible to say that Unison's approach to Polish language issues confirms these conclusions.

5.3.3 Polish workers' attitude to trade unions and engagement within them

A somewhat surprising research finding was that majority of Polish interviewees had a neutral or positive approach to trade unions in general. Interestingly, most of the interviewees had never belonged to a trade union in Poland (where trade union density is low at 14% (ETUI, 2016)) and in several instances had never joined the labour force in Poland. Therefore, several interviewees did not have direct experience of trade union activism or employment; however, some had been indirectly influenced by their family members, as seen in the comment below:

Elżbieta: I had never been employed anywhere in Poland. I was in the education system, high school, university, I graduated and came here and only worked in Poland as a volunteer; as such I had no need [to join a union]. But both my parents were in trade unions (...) before the great transformation and during post-communist times. Dad used to represent Solidarity at his workplace (...) and it was my parents who convinced me to get involved in trade unionism here.

Moreover, the majority of Polish union members interviewed for this thesis expressed some interest in becoming representatives; they explained their current lack of activity as due to low confidence in their communication skills, language barriers or simply a lack of time. Looking back at my experiences of working for Unison Eastern, where I was involved in organising public sector workers, local British workers had very similar explanations for not being more active, apart from the language barrier. Interestingly, a few Polish members felt that British workers were similarly affected by their fear of how employers would react if they were to become more active in the union.

Furthermore, the analysis of the interviews suggested that a minority of members joined the union only to be protected at work in the event of disciplinary cases. This instrumental attitude mirrors the approach adopted by local members of Unison researched by Waddington and Kerr (1999).

Following analysis of the interviews with Polish members, it could be argued that their attitude towards Unison and potential greater involvement in trade union structures was not very different from the attitude of British workers. Furthermore, most interviewees had no trade union background and only came to know trade unions in the UK. As the regional secretary suggested, the low rates of Polish membership in the union could reflect declining membership of British trade unions and their power, commenting that British trade unions were *a pastime for British workers. They are not part of British culture any more* (regional secretary). This confirms the importance of Penninx and Roosblad's (2000) factor with regard to the social position of trade unions in society.

Interestingly, another aspect of challenges in terms of recruiting Polish migrants may be due to their age, given that trade unions overall struggle to attract younger workers (Vandaele, 2012), who view trade unions as belonging to the past. After all, as indicated by data on Polish migration to the UK (see Chapter 4), most Polish workers were relatively young and, as discussed earlier, usually did not have a substantial employment history in Poland and had next to no involvement with trade unions.

5.3.4 Lack of data on Polish migrants and imprecise definition of migrant workers

Unison records the following data regarding its members: workers' gender, job, salary and ethnic background. Ethnic background seems to be based on a postcolonial approach where workers other than white British would come from Ireland or a former UK colony and/or would not be white. As a result, Unison membership forms provide the following categories to identify the applicant's ethnicity: Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Asian UK, Asian other, Black African, Black Caribbean, Black UK, Black other, white UK, Irish, white other. Some of these categories are related to a particular nationality, e.g. Chinese, Indian or Pakistani, whereas others point to a geographic area, e.g. the Caribbean or Asia, and finally some

categories focus on skin colour, i.e. Black and white. These categories may lead to some confusion because, for instance, there is no category for Arab migrants from Africa.

Therefore, it is not possible to provide the precise number of Polish members in Unison because Polish workers upon joining could only choose the category of white other, which is shared with workers from Australia, New Zealand and the USA, as well as those from other EU countries. Moreover, within its policies, Unison doesn't really define a category related to a migrant's background or their country of origin. When asked about the number of Polish members in Unison, the MWP project manager gave the following answer.

MWP project manager: *The answer I can say with absolute confidence, is that we haven't got a clue. We didn't have a clue when we asked the question in 2008 or 9, and we still [in 2014] don't have a clue, because we keep statistical information about members in terms of gender and race and pay and job information but we do not have information who migrants are, and if we did – the question would be: how would we identify it? So how would you ask people to define themselves as migrants? Is somebody a migrant if their parents were migrants? Is somebody a migrant if they came here as a child from another country? (...) So these definitional issues were one of the biggest challenges to us in terms of target.*

For the purpose of the MWP project migrants were defined as workers who were born abroad.

While asked about the lack of a tick box for country of origin on the application form, high-level union officials explained that they were unaware of the reasons for that. Some believed that there was no room on the form itself or that it may have been as a result of a historical development. Interestingly, the assistant general secretary admitted the need to consider amendments to the form by adding a question on immigration background, although not necessarily on the application form itself, suggesting that the information could be recorded after someone joined the union.

The act of recording members' ethnic background or, in the case of CEE workers, their immigration status is significant from the perspective of the union's declared commitment to fair representation and proportionality. As Unison rules state:

Unison is committed to a policy of proportionality and fair representation to ensure that our members are properly represented at all levels of the union. Unison monitors participation and membership of all national and regional conferences and committees (Unison, 2015a: 50).

It is impossible to fulfil this commitment with regard to workers of Polish or other European origin when the union does not have a system in place for recording or monitoring the members' immigration status or their participation in relevant decision-making bodies. Moreover, when asked about the number of Polish elected representatives or the participation of Polish members at regional and national conferences, Unison officials were unable to provide even a vaguely accurate estimate.

Nevertheless, Unison has provided some estimates, which are probably based on the information recorded in the union database about members who classed themselves as *white other*. According to the analysis of surnames of Polish origin, conducted by a Polish-speaking officer in 2014, there were approximately 3000 members with Polish-sounding surnames in Unison at that time. The density of Polish members in Unison in 2014 could therefore be estimated at 0.002% (3000 out of 1.3 million members).⁴¹

Furthermore, some light can be shed on Polish membership of Unison thanks to data published in a Unison activists' magazine, *InFocus*, in December 2016 (Unison, 2016b: 22) and in the Unison Annual Report (2016a), showing that there were more than 67,000 members who were EU citizens or members of families of EU citizens in Unison. According to the magazine, the majority of those members came from France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Sweden and Bosnia. It is not clear whether the names of those countries were given in a descending order or in terms of membership numbers. It is equally unclear why there is a mention of Bosnia, which does not belong to the EU. The analysis was commissioned for internal purposes and I was unable to access further information about the approach or raw data. The data provide only a very provisional estimate of the number of EU migrants, since naturalised UK citizens would potentially be excluded from these statistics. However, this figure allows an estimation of the

⁴¹ See the comment below:

MWP project manager: *When we were tempted to track down Polish, we've looked at the forms which said: White/ Other, and then just list people with Polish names but... very haphazard, and not very clear cut. And I think it's an important issue, that this question how you identify people, as I say, it's not something where there's a simple answer either.*

number of EU members in Unison of 0.5%. This problem is not restricted solely to Polish workers but also to Filipino members, who were recorded as Asian other.

5.3.5 Challenges in defining Black and migrant members

A lack of a clear definition of migrant workers mirrors an imprecise definition of Black members in Unison structures and provides similar organisational challenges. Generally, the definition of Black members is not related to ethnic background and is based instead on political identification. According to the MWP project manager, who is responsible for addressing migrant worker issues in Unison:

Black workers' group is not defined on some colour chart that Unison maintains. Someone is Black if they define themselves as Black. So, I as a white UK citizen, in Unison terms, could identify myself as Black. I know it doesn't make much sense, I'm not recommending it, but this is part of the problem.

However, the likelihood that Polish workers would decide to join this group was probably low. As the manager of the MWP project reflected on whether a history of Black self-organisation could affect new migrant groups, he argued that Polish workers would not identify themselves as Black and that this meant that current Unison structures were not fit for purpose. This view was shared by many Polish members, and this was also my experience as during my involvement with Unison I was not invited to Black members' meetings, unlike my Filipino colleague.

An attempt to solve this structural problem hindering representation of CEE migrants within Unison was made in 2007⁴² when a motion was tabled for Unison's National Delegate conference in June calling for reconsideration of the name of the group so that it would *reflect the ethnic diversity of our membership and could even prevent workers from Eastern European backgrounds from becoming active or even joining Unison*.⁴³

⁴² This is the same year that the MWP project was launched. No connection has been found between this motion and the project.

⁴³ Unison National Conference Motion 12, *Black Members Self-Organised Group – Possible Name's Change* (Unison, 2007c).

The response of the Black Members Conference held the next year stated: *Black workers' issues in the workplace go beyond discriminative practices experienced by the A8 Nationals [CEE workers] and cover a load of issues from immigration to housing and this negates the view that both groups should be organised under the same banner* (Unison, 2008b).

The discussion on including CEE workers continued in the Black committee for the next six years. One of the motions adopted at the Black Members Conference in 2013 stated that *many members do not understand why it [Black term] is used – particularly when their employer and public bodies may use the term BME* (Unison, 2013c). The same conference stated that it wanted: *to agree a concise definition and explanation of the term 'Black' and suggests that this is used consistently throughout our Self Organised Group* (Unison, 2013c).

However, the final say in this debate was a motion of the Black Members Conference in 2015, which resisted the change and recommended using the old name for the group:

we believe that time changes many things, and language evolves, however using terminology is always important in the way we express our intentions and direction. Using 'Black' is about creating unity in our fight against deep rooted racism within our workplaces and society. We are and we will continue to be judged by the colour of our skin and therefore we cannot afford to be divided, we need to stand united under one definition 'Black' (Unison, 2015b).

While this adopted motion aimed to resolve issues around the concept of Black workers within the union, it did not specify which ethnic groups were out of its scope or, most importantly, whether ethnically white minority members such as CEE workers could also join this group.

It could be argued that Black members have been unintentionally excluding CEE workers from greater inclusion within Unison structures by not explicitly naming them as potential members of the self-organised group, especially given the privileged status of this group within Unison. For instance, Black members, who used to fight for the recognition of their interests within the union (see Chapter 4), could draw on principles of solidarity and self-organisation and invite Polish members to Black members' committees.

The debate on who may belong to Black members' committees in the union is reflected in the wider discussion on differences between white and non-white migrants and whether either of these groups need more support. This may be due to a common assumption that white migrant workers may experience less discrimination overall as their migrant status is *less visible* than that of non-white workers, as argued by trade unionists interviewed by Holgate and Fitzgerald (2010). These interviewees argued that there were key differences between Polish and non-European migrants and that the children of Polish migrants would be treated as white British citizens, avoiding any form of discrimination. When interviewed for the purposes of this research, the assistant general secretary, whose parents came from Jamaica, expressed a similar opinion. When asked why Unison did not record information about members' migrant status, he believed that CEE workers would be assimilated within the white British population, similar to previous flows of European immigration, and would not face the same discrimination as Black people; he added, however:

But I don't think that's an excuse not to try and deal with the very real problems and xenophobic difficulties that those workers are facing now, and to be able to do that we have to identify the scope of the problem.

5.3.6 Regional and branch structures

According to the manager of the MWP project, its implementation had to compete with the other priorities of the union, and the union had too many objectives: *if everything is a priority – nothing is a priority*. The project workers had to find different ways to reach out to migrant workers outside the trade union structures, for instance via migrants' groups or bodies such as the Federation of Poles.

The situation in which the project's aims had to compete with other union policies resulted in a very inconsistent implementation that depended on the individual motivation of branch and regional officials. That led to a situation in which the strategy regarding migrant workers was *not very much embedded within the whole, kind of policy implementation procedure of Unison* (MWP project officer). This quote illustrates the challenges brought about as a result of dominant perceptions of branch officials and their often unsubstantiated fears that increasing migrant participation would invariably become a strain on branch resources.

5.3.7 Lack of Polish-speaking organisers

One of the most important factors that hindered the inclusion of Polish migrants in Unison was the lack of Polish-speaking officers. This fact contributed to the less successful results concerning the integration of Poles in comparison to Filipino members, as argued by the MWP project manager:

I think the biggest mistake of the union made was not having Polish-speaking organisers. (...) I don't care how good somebody's English is, it's still comforting to see the Union having speakers of their own native languages. For instance, our Filipino colleague goes into a meeting room, you know that most Filipinos speak perfectly good English, but when she starts speaking Tagalog, what you see is people want her as they see it as the Union is reaching out to them, and I think that the same would be true with the Polish workers.

This opinion was shared by many Polish members during interviews with me, and this situation greatly influenced their involvement in the union. For instance, one of the members recommended that the union should employ Polish-speaking organisers in each of its regions.

As mentioned by the MWP project manager, Polish members sharing the same language could build trust between the trade union and migrant workers. To do so, Unison could employ more Polish-speaking organisers, but also, although this was not mentioned by the full-time union officials or by Polish members, Unison officers could learn foreign languages or at least languages of the most dominant migrant groups.

The issue of a lack of Polish-speaking organisers will also be covered in section 5.5 in the analysis of a meeting of Polish Unison members organised four years after the closure of the MWP project.

5.4 Implementation of the policies from the perspective of Polish union representatives

Since the research aimed to address the voice of unheard members (Holgate, 2005), it is important to analyse experiences of Polish members when it comes to their engagement with trade unions as well as their perception of the union's efforts targeted at organising them. Many Polish workers interviewed for this thesis were motivated by the need to help others and to represent the interests of other Polish workers. One of the shop stewards argued that Poles

should follow the examples of previous migration groups in order to advocate for fellow Poles and, more broadly, to support the needs of working-class and social justice causes:

Łukasz: You have to be active, go to meetings, put the message across (...). You can try and bury your head in the sand, pretend that nothing is happening, or you could try and have a go at changing things, the way that other minorities did it (...) through open activity and integration. At the end of the day we are fighting for the same thing, right? For social justice and justice for the working class, right?

However, in some instances, Polish union representatives were disappointed that their engagement in Unison and willingness to be active were not recognised by their branches and that the branches did not have time to provide support for them. For instance, one of the stewards commented on a lack of mentoring opportunities and a lack of support from the union to help support career planning or provide training opportunities. The same interviewee expressed his frustration with the lack of support for proposed initiatives; for instance, he mentioned his experience of putting forward a proposal for an awareness-raising campaign for young people which was not followed through by the branch. His experience, therefore, left him feeling frustrated and unable to influence the union in a meaningful way. Nevertheless, some interviewees had more positive experiences with their branches:

Andrzej: Of course. When I needed to gather some additional information, I would go to the local branch secretary and the feedback was immediate. Everything I needed would be explained, even going above and beyond with advice what to do if I needed anything more.

One of the most interesting perspectives on engagement in Unison came from a Polish shop steward, Marcin; a quote from his interview was included at the beginning of this chapter. Marcin, similarly to Anna from Unia (described in section 6.2.2), became more active in a trade union because he had free time and wanted to help his co-patriots. Similar to Anna, his level of English was better than that of his Polish colleagues, so he almost automatically became the leader of Polish members in his workplace and a local community. After the union approached his workplace within the framework of an organising campaign, he became engaged in this campaign and convinced a lot of CEE and local workers to go on strike. The one-year campaign was launched in 2010 as part of the *Three Companies Project* delivered with the American trade union SEIU, which focused on organising workers in the biggest private

companies operating in the public sector: Sodexo, Compass and Medirest (Unison, 2011a). The project was conducted from the head office with the support of the regional and local branches. Workers employed by a private company in Marcin's hospital comprised migrants and local workers, so the strike was not dominated by the Polish members, unlike the strike of predominantly Polish workers at Primula described in the next chapter. Nonetheless, thanks to Marcin, the vast majority of Polish and CEE workers participated in the industrial action. The strike concluded with a partial victory for workers, whose terms and conditions were partially aligned with those of NHS employees. After the *Three Companies Project* finished, the Unison branch in that hospital was not interested in continuing the campaign to fully align outsourced workers' terms and condition with those of people working directly for NHS, even though the workers were willing to campaign for improvements of their rights. Furthermore, the branch was even less interested in dealing with some collective cases where, for instance, women employed by a private contractor received less maternity pay than those employed directly by the hospital. The situation with maternity pay improved only after Marcin and his friends from the branch independently lodged a claim at the employment tribunal. Feeling that his potential was not recognised by his branch, he decided to reduce his involvement with Unison:

Marcin: If the whole idea is that I should pay membership fees and just be there as a member, great, just let somebody tell me that and this is what I will do. And if they want me to be very active, absolutely, I can do that, I would like to know that my activity has some sort of direction, that we are creating something great, something that will be beneficial to me as well and in some way will fulfil my dreams (...) and will be good for the union.

The quote above sheds important light on the relationship between active members and trade union organisation: Polish members felt that Unison's structures overall were not designed to accommodate those members or fully appreciate their potential. This interviewee commented on yet another quality of Polish activists that Unison perhaps failed to fully recognise, that is, their strong collective agency:

Marcin: I still remember when we were organising the strikes and we had this big meeting when suddenly a couple of my colleagues stood up and gave this beautiful explanation in English about how to organise the strike so that it is more successful

and sells better in the media. Well, the Polish colleagues' solutions were really radical and typically Polish as in blocking the pedestrian crossings in more or less legal ways.

Similarly, another interviewee commented on the disparity between the radical approach of Polish colleagues and what she perceived as the diplomatic and soft tactics of Unison. Importantly, she seemed disappointed that Unison overall did not support a more radical approach. This lack of fulfilment of the expectations of Polish members by union officials could be classified as *goal displacement* (Zald and Ash, 1966). *Goal displacement*, according to Zald and Ash (1996), appears *when formalized mechanisms of organizational sustainability and self reproduction take priority over the original substantive goals of articulating the interest and representation of a particular group* (in Alberti and Però, 2018: 697). A similar goal displacement appeared in the research of Alberti and Però (2018) looking at the experiences of Latin American migrants involved in the organising campaigns of British trade unions.

Issues related to the strong labour agency of Polish workers will be analysed in greater depth in Chapter 6, which focuses on the strike of Polish care workers in Switzerland.

5.5 Sustainability of Unison policies: Participant observation of Polish Members seminar in 2016

The meeting consisted of a full-day seminar which took place on the 16 April 2016 at Unison's head office in London and was entitled *Unison Polish Members Seminar: Your Skills, Your Future: A seminar on current EU migrant issues* (see also Figure 7 below). The key issue being discussed was the forthcoming referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in June that year. The seminar gathered together 25 participants with different levels of involvement in trade union activism, including both lay members and shop stewards from across all Unison regions apart from Northern Ireland. Several of them had participated in previous seminars of the Polish Activists Network and/or the subsequent Polish Members network.

UNISON Polish Members Seminar

**16 April 2016 at UNISON Centre,
130 Euston Road, London, NW1 2AY**

**Your Skills, Your Future:
A seminar on current EU migrants issues**



- Meeting other UNISON Polish members
- Build up your confidence and skills
- Developing the Polish Network

The seminar is open to all Polish members. The event is free of charge but for catering purposes you will need to return the form. Please see overleaf for the application form.

For more information about the above please contact

Katia Widiak on 07508 080 397 or
k.widiak@unison.co.uk
Marta Chaba on 07950889765 or
m.chaba@unison.co.uk



UNISON Polish members Seminar Application Form

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Your Details</p> <p>Surname: _____</p> <p>First name: _____</p> <p>Membership Number: _____</p> <p>Branch: _____</p> <p>Service Group (e.g. Health, Local Government): _____</p> <p>Address for correspondence: _____</p> <p>Postcode: _____</p> <p>Employer: _____</p> <p>Department: _____</p> <p>Job Title: _____</p> <p>Contact Number(s): _____</p> <p>Special Requirements</p> <p>Do you have special dietary needs? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Do you require disabled facilities? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Are you disabled? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Do you require assistance with child/dependent care to attend this event? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><small>Details if yes to any of above:</small></p> | <p>Monitoring</p> <p><small>To help us work towards fair representation, please answer the following questions:</small></p> <p>Do you identify yourself as being (please specify & circle)</p> <p>A <input type="checkbox"/> White</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">British</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Irish</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Any other White background)</p> <p>B <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">White & Black Caribbean</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">White & Asian</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Any other Mixed background</p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Indian</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Pakistani</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Bangladeshi</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Any other Asian background</p> <p>D <input type="checkbox"/> Black & Black British</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Caribbean</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">African</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Any other Black background</p> <p>E <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese or other ethnic group</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chinese</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Any other background</p> <p><small>This information is held in confidence and is used for the purposes of equality monitoring.</small></p> <p>Email address: _____</p> <p>Applicant's Signature: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Please return this form to: Katia Widiak, UNISON Centre 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY Email: k.widiak@unison.co.uk Tel: 07508 080 397</small></p> |
|--|--|

Figure 7. Flyer with invitation to Unison Polish Members Seminar in 2016

I wanted to participate in the seminar to find out about the aftermath of the MWP and HW projects as well as about how the Polish Activists Network was faring four years on. I learnt about the meeting from the Facebook page of Polish Members of Unison and used my previous contacts to gain permission to participate in the capacity of a researcher.

Participation in the meeting offered me an opportunity to conduct interviews directly with 5 attendees; these included 1 union representative and 4 rank and file members who worked across a range of different public services (3 care workers, 1 hospital cleaner and 1 security person). The interviews were conducted during and after the meeting. I preferred to use the space of the seminar rather than try and schedule the interviews to be conducted at a later stage via Skype, as this may have introduced unnecessary communication barriers.

As described in the invitation, the objectives of the meeting included meeting other Unison Polish members, building up confidence and skills and developing the Polish network. An objective related to building up confidence and skills carried an implicit assumption that Polish members lack adequate confidence or skills. It has to be noted that this workshop was not

designed specifically for Polish members but was instead adapted from a pre-existing curriculum, as mentioned in Unison's Annual Report (Unison, 2016: 10). In addition, the manner of facilitation seemed to give an initial impression that Polish workers were less confident than their British colleagues and as such needed special attention. On the one hand, it could be argued that Unison singled out Polish members by organising a seminar whose aims included developing the Polish network. On the other hand, there were certain aspects of the meeting that could have been interpreted as not fully supportive of the stated objectives. For instance, the meeting was conducted in English and facilitated by two non-Polish-speaking Unison officers, one Filipino (previously mentioned MWP project officer) and another one French (responsible for the Polish Activists Network). The Filipino worker was my former colleague. While there was a Polish-speaking education officer present, representing Unison's Scotland region, her role was mostly to provide interpreting services rather than facilitation. In addition, invitations to the seminar were issued in English only and participants received a monitoring form that included questions on ethnic but not national background (see Figure 7). This attracted my attention as it seemed questionable why such a form would be sent to attendees of an all-Polish seminar, especially since the only option they would be able to choose was *white other*⁴⁴. It seems that organisers of the meeting did not tailor the form to the needs of Polish members.

Some participants complained that the seminar was held in English, with one person commenting rather angrily that she had not expected she would have to speak English with other Polish participants. Another attendee mentioned that she found it difficult to fully participate in English even though this was supposedly a Polish seminar:

Beata: This is supposed to be a Polish seminar organised by Unison but we are operating in English and are supposed to use English to answer any questions.

Despite communication difficulties, facilitators tried to make the seminar inclusive and welcoming by using plain and simple language. This, however, felt quite patronising to some attendees, including me. There were other aspects of the seminar where I felt that the attendees were perhaps treated in a way that was too simplistic. For instance, one activity included working in groups to complete a jigsaw puzzle displaying Unison structures, as if the

⁴⁴ Although some Polish people could be ethnically non-white, the probability is very low given that the ethnicity of the Polish population is predominately white.

participants needed basic education on how Unison functioned when in fact a number of them were experienced shop stewards with fairly long tenure in the union. This condescending attitude towards Polish members – although hopefully unintentional – mirrors the attitude of some local workers that the MWP project officer referred to in section 5.3.1 when commenting on language and cultural barriers.

The meeting included workshops and a discussion panel, with one of the workshops focusing on building up skills and confidence as well as recognising skills that Polish workers would be able to offer their UK employers. The majority of participants argued that their key skill involved the ability to adapt to new situations. A number of participants mentioned a lack of confidence related to language and cultural issues.

The meeting finished with a presentation of the Unison campaign to remain in the EU that was to be put in place prior to the referendum due to be held in June that year. The presentation was followed by a discussion on how Polish members could participate and provide support. Given the really strict UK regulations with regard to political campaigns, participants were advised to be careful when distributing Unison's materials, and I couldn't help but think that this message may discourage some seminar participants from more active involvement.

The meeting took place almost four years after I left Unison, and I realised that the network has almost completely dismantled and that there was very little continuation of my work mentoring Polish activists. The same could be said about Unison's efforts, pointing to low sustainability of the projects which took place between 2008 and 2011 aimed at integrating Polish migrants. Some of the former members of the Polish Network did not participate in the meeting either because they were not invited or had resigned from their positions in the union. Other activists had left Unison because they went on to other jobs. Others may have stayed in their original workplaces, but overall received very little support from their branches and were perhaps even less active than prior to the start of the projects.

5.6 Conclusions

As this chapter suggests, the key trigger for launching a project focused on migrants, including recent ones from Poland, was connected to government funding, with the initiative driven by

full-time Unison officials. The decision to focus the project and the strategy only on Polish workers was clearly understandable as this was the larger group from among CEE migrants who started arriving in the UK after the EU enlargement in 2004. However, Filipino members had been moving to the UK a long time before that, and by the same token, Unison should, a long time before MWP project, have launched a similar strategy and implemented it through a project to include this group of migrants within its structures. This, however, would have required additional financial resources to, for instance, finance the position of a Filipino-speaking officer, which was not available externally through, for instance, a governmental fund. Consequently, it is plausible to say that the creation of a Unison strategy aimed at Polish migrants and its implementation would have been less likely if it had not been supported by the external funding existing at that time.

Nonetheless, this chapter confirmed the research presumptions that factors related to trade unions' internal dynamics, structures and framing processes (Frege and Kelly, 2003) had an important impact on the implementation of the projects. This is because Unison's approach to Polish migrants, including its policy and strategies, could be framed as a contradictory and short-term approach. To start with, Unison embraced an inclusion approach (Penninx and Roosblad, 2010), for instance supporting the freedom of movement of workers within the EU, as well as a special treatment approach by adopting a dedicated strategy to organise Polish workers within the framework of the MWP project, later followed by the establishment of a Polish Activists Network. This strategy was only short-term as there was only one Polish-speaking officer allocated to the project for a limited duration. Most importantly, Unison did not have existing structures in place that could accommodate long-term inclusion of Polish workers and, as discussed previously, the structures that did develop in the 1980s and 1990s to accommodate the inclusion of Black workers were not suitable for meeting the needs of recently arrived CEE migrants. In addition, while Unison declared its commitment to the principles of proportionality and equal representation, this was not supported by adequate reporting and monitoring mechanisms that would capture members' nationality and provide data on how many Polish and CEE workers were involved as members or activists. Unison may have intended to follow the route of offering special treatment to its Polish members but in practice seems to have approached them in the same way as precarious British workers and did not take into account issues that may have been unique to Polish workers, such as language needs or a lack of a common understanding of the culture of British trade unionism. This was

perhaps most pronounced in the context of the HW project. While the initiative was framed as a continuation of the MWP project, it did not have an exclusive focus on migrants. Similarly, Tapia (2014: 56) argues that British trade unions overall adopt a *dialectical approach* whereby they support the self-organising of ethnic minority workers but at the same time consider workers as workers, regardless of their background. Unison's contradictory approach is also reflected within its policies and strategies. Drawing on the experiences of some Polish active members, the analysis suggests that Unison's lower structures also represent an ambivalent approach to Polish workers. On the one hand, Unison wants them to join and pay subscription fees; on the other hand, it does not tell them what it wants from them because it gives them mixed messages, as reflected in the comment by one of the activists, quoted earlier: *I do not know what Unison wants from me.*

As discussed in section 5.5, which focuses on the Polish Members Seminar, Unison did not put in place mechanisms to provide ongoing support to Polish members recruited through the MWP project initiative. As mentioned previously, the membership of the Polish Activists Network declined, and it is quite likely that the decline was due to frequent changes of the network lead as well as the fact that it was handed over to a non-Polish-speaking project officer. This was in contrast to the Filipino network, which was growing in strength and attracting members (see, for instance, Tapia, 2014 or Connolly and Sellers, 2017) thanks to ongoing support from a Filipino Unison officer. The decline of the Polish members confirmed the importance of a particularistic approach to organising migrant workers in line with Alberti et al.'s (2013) specific needs approach as well as Holgate's (2004) research findings. More importantly, this suggests that in relation to Polish workers, Unison did not continue to use the principle of *like-recruits-like* (Holgate, 2005). As such, the project confirmed one of the early findings of this research, i.e. that through provision of a dedicated resource it would be possible to influence and increase migrants' engagement in the union.

Looking at Unison's approach to Polish workers through Connolly et al.'s (2014) framework, Unison could be positioned between class (organising) and race (community) but lacks social rights (institutional regulations). However, lacking institutional regulations does not explain the gaps in the projects' aims and their implementation or why Unison did not decide to continue its efforts to organise Polish migrants. Even if the government decided to support further funding for projects aimed at Polish and CEE workers, thus allowing Unison to continue

employing a Polish-speaking organiser, this factor would not be sufficient. Crucially, to be fully inclusive, Unison would have to make changes in its structures, such as widening the membership of the Black committees to include Polish workers or creating a designated committee for white migrants. In addition, Unison would have to create systems and processes for recording the nationality of CEE/Polish migrants. Without these structural changes, Unison will not be able to implement principles of equality and proportional representation in relation to Polish workers.

Finally, a number of Unison (and TUC) documents portray Polish and other recent migrants as victims of exploitation, largely lacking agency. However, as demonstrated here, the experience of research participants was different and they did not see themselves as victims – quite the opposite – and their perceived lack of engagement was due to structural barriers rather than personal oppression. For instance, when expressing their desire to become more involved in union activities, Polish activists often struggled to receive appropriate support or to have their voices heard.

Chapter 6 Organising Polish workers in Unia

In my opinion, the truth is that in many cases Poles cope perfectly fine without Unia, however Unia will not be able to cope without migrant members, whether these are Poles or other nationalities.

(Sławek, Polish organiser)

6.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the policies of Unia targeting Polish members and has a similar structure to the previous chapter. This included a presentation of key Unia policies aimed at migrant and Polish workers prior to the CEE project, a description of the project and its implementation, an analysis of the Polish Activists Network, identification of the main challenges and the implementing Unia policies from the perspective of Polish members. The chapter also includes an analysis (using a case study approach) of a strike of predominantly Polish workers which took place during the final months of the CEE project. The case study to some extent mirrors the participant observation of a meeting of Polish members of Unison and shows how Unia organised Polish and CEE workers in practice. The analysis of the case study was published in November 2018 in *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* (Rogalewski, 2018). The case study will be presented in a comparative manner, with reference to Dutch and British trade unions' campaigns to organise migrant workers.

6.2 Analysis of Unia policies related to Polish workers

Unlike in the case of Unison, Unia's policies focusing on European workers have been an integral part of strategies addressing migrant workers because historically the vast majority of labourers came from Southern European countries. As discussed in Chapter 4, in Unison migrants were mainly non- Europeans from former British colonies. As the Unia president commented below, the organising of migrant workers has always been at the core of the policies developed by the union and its predecessor organisations:

Unia president: *Since the 70s we've been aware in our organisations (predecessor organisation GBI) that organising of migrant workers must be at the core of a trade union's work. This is also the reason why we have organised migrants in a systematic way and why migrants constitute a large part of our membership.*

It is plausible to say that an awareness of organising migrants represents the union identity as described by Frege and Kelly (2003) and it influenced the union's strategic choices focusing on their integration.

As the current Unia president pointed out, the union prioritised the rights of migrants from its inception. Importantly, at the formation congress in 2004, Unia adopted a resolution entitled *For diversity and Integration! Against Discrimination and Racism (Für Vielfalt und Integration! Gegen Diskriminierung und Rassismus!)* (Unia, 2004). The migration commission which tabled the resolution demanded a change in the approach to migration and improvement of immigration and asylum rights. It also demanded that integration policies should be introduced for migrants in which their qualifications are recognised and undocumented workers are provided with voting rights and their migration status regulated.

This approach related to protecting and improving migrant workers' rights was reinforced at the congress in 2008, when the position paper (Unia, 2008a) stated that within Unia, all members, *women and men, Swiss and migrants, young and elderly workers should feel equally represented and feel like home (...)* (*Frauen und Männer, SchweizerInnen und MigrantInnen, Junge und ältere Arbeitnehmende fühlen sich gleichermassen vertreten und zu Hause (...)*) (Unia, 2008:6). The same congress adopted a policy document introducing an action plan for the integration of migrants in Switzerland (Unia, 2008a).

The 2012 congress was held two months after the start of the CEE project and, importantly, it named one of Unia's long-term objectives as focusing on better integration and political rights for migrants (Unia, 2012b). The 2012–2016 strategy, approved by the same congress, included an objective aimed at improving the position of the migrant population in Switzerland and the union was called upon to become more engaged in opposing any legislative changes that may have a negative impact on migrants (Unia, 2012b). The strategy called for automatic naturalisation of third-generation migrants and supported the services for the integration of migrants (Unia, 2012b). Finally, the trade union priorities adopted at the same congress once again emphasised the migration policy, committing the union to leading an awareness and anti-xenophobia campaign, *No Switzerland without us (Ohne uns keine Schweiz)* (Unia, 2012b).

The campaign was run in the period preceding the CEE project and aimed to make the local population aware of the importance of migrants for the Swiss labour market. It ran until the beginning of 2014 and included posters showing groups of workers from sectors such as construction and care. In the posters, an empty space would represent some workers to make the viewers reflect on the fact that, for instance, 40% of care workers were not Swiss citizens.

Furthermore, since its creation, Unia has drawn significant attention to migrant workers' issues in its annual objectives. Every year between 2004 and 2015 at least one objective was dedicated either to immigration issues or to tackling social dumping.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Unia had previously organised some projects aimed at migrant workers such as German courses organised on construction sites since 2012 together with employer organisations. However, these projects did not specifically aim to recruit migrant workers, and, as confirmed by the head of the construction sector at the time of the project and later a regional secretary (regional secretary, Basel)⁴⁵, the project to organise CEE migrant workers was the first initiative of this kind run by Unia's head office, and had the following special features.

Regional secretary, Basel: *Firstly, this was not a project that was embedded in the regions as was the case for all other organising projects but was embedded in the head office and in various regions, depending on the needs, contributed to the creation of local structures for Polish workers. And secondly, the project was run relatively independently from the existing trade union structures.*

6.2.1 Overview of Unia's approach to the inclusion of migrants (CEE project)

After the Swiss labour market opened to CEE workers in 2011, senior Unia officers noticed that the numbers of Polish and CEE workers coming to Switzerland were on the rise. According to the Unia president, the union responded by employing a Polish-speaking organiser to support the CEE project. This decision was not solely due to the inflow of Polish workers; quite importantly, it was embedded within the union's strategy and a logic of action (Frege and Kelly, 2003; Connolly et al. 2014) to employ officers speaking the language of migrant members. Accordingly, the Unia president in her interview emphasised that the number of Polish workers

⁴⁵ At the time of the project, this person was the head of the construction sector and a member of the executive board of Unia.

was on the increase in Switzerland and that the creation of the CEE officer post was meant to address this change.

Further interviews with the Unia president and the manager of the migration unit confirmed that the initiative to employ a Polish-speaking officer and to launch the project came directly from them. The idea of employing a Polish-speaking officer was embedded within Unia's approach to migrants organising migrants in the context of British and American trade unionism (compare Holgate, 2005), and its aim was to build up trust between Unia and its members.

In her doctoral research on organising migrant workers, Holgate (2004) found that employing an organiser from the same ethnic background as the migrant workers helped build trust in the union, and this became one of her recommendations for British trade unions. This strategy suggests that Unia has adopted a community approach in its mode of action in relation to migrant workers (Connolly et al., 2014) that is similar to the Unison approach.

The idea of employing a person directly from a Polish trade union came from a member of the migration team who met the director of OPZZ's international department at a trade union conference. The director was aware that I was considering changing jobs and potentially leaving Unison, given that I was no longer involved with migrant workers' projects. The rationale for employing someone from OPZZ rather than NSZZ Solidarnosc, another Polish trade union, was due to closer alignment of OPZZ with Unia's left-wing ideology.

Initially, Unia planned to appoint a Polish-speaking officer for a year, starting from September 2012, but this was extended for another year once the project turned out to be successful, especially with regard to identifying cases of social dumping. The project was approved by Unia's Executive Committee (Zentralvorstand), the equivalent of Unison's National Executive Council.

Finally, recognising that Polish and Central Eastern European workers had become a permanent part of Unia's membership and would require ongoing support, the union's Executive Committee decided in 2014 that the head office should create a post for an officer responsible for CEE workers. Therefore, following project closure, the officer was then directly

employed by Unia's head office in the department of collective bargaining and self-organised groups (Vertags- und Interessengruppen Politik) within the migration unit. In contrast to the Unison project, the Unia project was financed entirely by the union from the internal fund for innovative projects. In contrast to the Unison project, I was employed directly by Unia and not seconded by OPZZ. Nevertheless, my links with OPZZ remained strong as one of the objectives of the project was to sustain connections with OPZZ.

In the first year, the project was conducted jointly with the Eastern region (mainly St. Gallen Canton and surrounding areas), where the number of Polish workers was on the rise, and in the second year with the North West region (Basel City and Basel Country cantons). Accordingly, my office was initially in St Gallen and later in Basel and therefore I reported to two managers, the regional manager as well as the head of the migration unit. I was expected to participate in meetings both within the region and at the head office.⁴⁶

The project aimed to increase the membership of Polish workers and improve their integration into Unia, identify and tackle cases of social dumping to strengthen flank measures⁴⁷ and build links with Polish community organisations, the Polish Embassy and OPZZ. The project focused predominantly on two sectors of Unia: construction, historically connected with large numbers of migrant workers, as well as the recently targeted care sector. Given similarities between the languages, I was also expected to provide support to Slovakian workers.

According to the project manager, the most important objective of the project was recruitment; it launched a network of active members and highlighted exploitative practices of social dumping, especially in the context of posted workers. Unia quickly realised that there were few Polish workers in the Eastern region and so a decision was made to relocate my post from St Gallen to the head office in Bern.

I was recruited to work on this project due to my previous involvement with Unison. In the early stage of the project, I replicated some of Unison's practices in terms of the integration of Polish workers; these included creating a Polish Activists Network in January 2013 and

⁴⁶ The approach of splitting my time between the regional and the head office allowed me to gain a better insight into how the union structures operated.

⁴⁷ For a definition of social dumping see section 1.4.8; for a definition of flank measures see section 4.8.1.

organising three training courses for activists based on materials from similar Unison courses. Furthermore, I collaborated with the Polish Embassy, which led to publication of a joint brochure for Polish workers; I was also able to secure the involvement of Polish consuls in the annual meetings of Polish activists in Unia. In contrast with the Unison project, I worked more independently given that I was the only person responsible for CEE migration in Unia. As such, I could freely choose which approach to adopt when it came to meeting the project's overall objective of increasing Polish membership and integrating these members into the union.

It is important to mention that I was not the first Polish-speaking officer employed by the union. In July 2012, the Geneva region employed a Polish activist in the service sector, although his post did not carry a requirement to organise Polish workers and he was employed because of his previous involvement with the union. In 2014, the Zurich region of Unia employed a Polish-speaking organiser to work alongside a Hungarian officer in a dedicated unit whose aim was to investigate cases of social dumping. The role predominantly consisted of recruiting all workers to Unia regardless of their nationality. Their Polish language skills were, however, an asset given that those two regions had the largest proportion of Polish and CEE workers.

Since I spoke German, I was predominantly responsible for the German-speaking part of Switzerland and not so much for the Italian part, which together comprise about 70% of the Swiss population (Federal Statistical Office, 2015). As already mentioned, in the French-speaking part there was already a Polish-speaking officer who could provide support as and when required. I worked very closely with this officer, for instance when creating the Polish Activists Network (described in the next section) and when initiating a mentoring scheme for active Polish members. Since I did not speak French, he was involved in various cases of social dumping affecting Polish workers in the French-speaking regions of Unia.

According to the project's internal report (Unia, 2015a), in terms of membership growth, the number of Polish members from 2012 to 2014 increased more than twofold from 591 to 1354, and the number of active members from 1 to 36. As Figure 8 below indicates, there were some Polish members before the project began but the increase was observed during the project and after its completion.

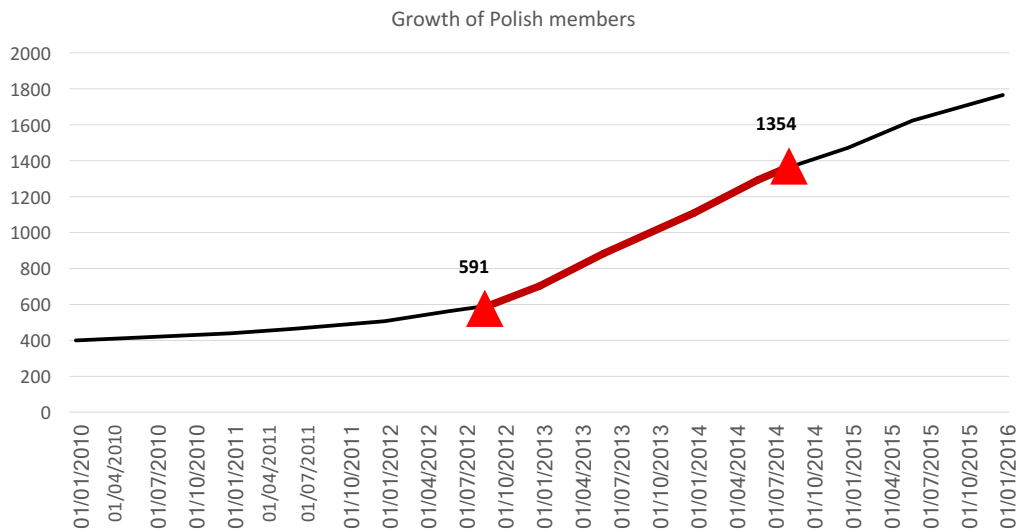


Figure 8. Growth of Polish members in Unia from 1 January 2010 to the 30 June 2016 (Unia, 2015a)

At the beginning of the project the average monthly joining rate was 30 members, with the trend continuing into 2015. It is clearly visible from Figure 8 that the fees collected by the union from Polish members not only covered the costs of employing a Polish organiser but brought additional profit for the union. Furthermore, the report (Unia, 2015a) indicates that the retention of Polish members was comparable with other nationalities and that, overall, more workers were joining the union than leaving it, even though they were employed in precarious working conditions (described in detail in section 6.3.1).

As mentioned previously, Unia created the Polish Activists Network in January 2013. In addition, further informal networks of care domestic workers were created in the Italian-speaking region (Ticino) in February 2013 and in Zurich in 2014. One of the project's visible outputs was that the Ticino region began to organise domestic care workers, a previously overlooked group. Meetings of care workers in Zurich allowed workers from Primula to gain better knowledge of Unia's structures. Undoubtedly, this was helpful later when these workers became involved in the first strike of migrant care workers in Switzerland (June 2014), described in more detail in section 6.5. Furthermore, the project established a Polish page on Unia's website. In addition, the regular newspaper for migrants, called *Horizonte* (Horizons),

produced in the six main migrant languages, Spanish, Portuguese, Albanian, Turkish and Serbo-Croatian, was now also published in Polish, although in a shorter, electronic version. In March 2013, Unia, OPZZ and the Polish Embassy in Switzerland jointly published a brochure on employment, social rights and the benefits of joining Unia (Unia, 2013c). The project also delivered three training courses on organising techniques and employment and trade union rights for Polish activists as well as two annual meetings for members of the Polish network; these were continued after the end of the project. Lastly, the project team organised German language courses in Zurich and Basel.

In terms of improving the protection of foreign workers and improve the regulations on flank measures the project officer was involved in identifying and addressing many social dumping cases that affected Polish and Slovakian workers.

Table 9. The most important cases of social dumping identified by the project (Unia, 2015a)


| |
|--|
| December 2012, electricians from hotel in Andermatt, Swiss Alps, holiday destination |
| October 2013, bogus self-employed workers from Zurich central railway station |
| November 2013, plasterers from hotel in Davos (location of World Economic Forum) |
| December 2013 posted Slovakian solar panels assembler from Ikea in Pratteln |
| June 2014, successful strike at Primula of Polish and Slovakian care workers in Zurich (described in detail in section 6.5) |
| July 2014, posted workers from Rocheturm in Basel – claimed by Unia to be the biggest case of workers’ exploitation in Switzerland |

I have chosen to analyse only the strike of Polish and Slovakian care workers in Zurich, since this event took place towards the end of the project. There was another potentially interesting collective action at the Basel Rocheturm which I initially planned to include in the thesis but I was more involved in the Basel strike, rather than the one in Zurich.

The initiative faced similar difficulties to the Unison project when it came to convincing the regions that recruitment of Polish workers should be a priority. From my recollection, the

largest Unia region (Zurich-Schaffhausen) was particularly unwilling to co-operate at the beginning. This early negative approach changed when I identified the first case of workers' exploitation: bogus self-employed workers from Zurich central railway station. The case was then taken over by the regional officers, with a successful outcome for both the region and the workers⁴⁸. The outcome was claimed by the union as one of its most significant victories regarding social dumping, with the largest ever awarded in Switzerland compensation to the workers. Later on, Unia prepared a leaflet addressed to Polish and other CEE workers in Polish, Slovakian and Hungarian encouraging migrants from those groups to fight for their rights (It was entitled You have rights, too).

Również Wy macie swoje prawa!



Nasi koledzy protestowali i dzięki temu otrzymają zaległe wynagrodzenia w wysokości 700.000 franków szwajcarskich.

Walczyć o swoje prawa!

Grupa polskich pracowników od miesięcy pracowała przy rozbudowie dworca głównego w Zurychu otrzymując za swoją pracę dumpingowe wynagrodzenie (od 5 do 11 euro za godzinę). Obowiązujące w Szwajcarii stawki są praktycznie dwukrotnie wyższe. Pracownicy nie byli zatrudnieni bezpośrednio w Szwajcarii, tylko oddelegowani do pracy przez pewną niemiecką firmę. Żądała ona od nich, by podawali się za osoby samozatrudnione. Korzystając z pomocy związku zawodowego Unia, polscy pracownicy zażądali od zleceniodawcy wypłaty należnych im wynagrodzeń we właściwej wysokości. Ten, kto pracuje w Szwajcarii ma bowiem prawo do otrzymania wynagrodzenia w takiej wysokości, w jakiej jest ono tutaj wypłacane.

Podjęto negocjacje – polskim pracownikom i związkowi Unia udało się przeforować swoje postulaty. Dzięki temu naszym kolegom zostaną wypłacone zaległe wynagrodzenia w wysokości 700.000 franków szwajcarskich!

To, co wydarzyło się w Zurychu nie jest odosobnionym przypadkiem. Pozbawieni skrupułów pracodawcy cały czas próbują wykorzystywać swoich pracowników i stosując podejrzane mechanizmy obchodzić stosowanie szwajcarskich stawek i dostosowywanie się do tutejszych warunków pracy.

Protest się opłaca! Także Tobie!

W przypadku pytań lub jakichkolwiek problemów prosimy zwrócić się do: hau@unia.ch

UNIA

Figure 9. You have rights, too (Unia, 2013a)

You have rights, too – Fight for your rights; the leaflet depicts Polish workers engaged in a successful dispute in the Zurich region. The title reads: You have rights, too. Our colleagues protested and thanks to doing so, received compensation. The top title on the second page reads

⁴⁸ The social dumping case at Zurich's main railway station in 2013. See, for instance, an article from the Swiss daily newspaper (24.10.2013): www.tagesanzeiger.ch/zuerich/stadt/Streik-am-Zuercher-HB-abgewendet-Unia-erkaempft-700-000-Franken/story/19054337 (Accessed: 13 September 2018).

Fight for your rights and the sentence finishing the text of the leaflet reads Protest is worth it! Also for you!

When it came to other regions, according to my notes and recollections, regional secretaries were not that interested in enhancing the participation of Polish members. However, they expected that I should support them in identifying and reporting further cases of social dumping. I therefore seemed to act primarily as a researcher into cases of potential social exploitation, and once these were identified, I was expected to encourage the members to begin collective action and act as an interpreter, if needed. It is unsurprising, then, that one of Unia's active members commented that the union was more interested in highlighting collective cases of exploitation of migrant workers than in focusing on issues experienced by individuals.

Romuald: *If there is for instance, let's call it a problem, if there is a major issue on the construction site, where there are for instance thirty or forty people who are badly paid then you can count on the press, TV and big hoorah, then everybody [in Unia] gets involved. However, when it comes to something that affects just one or two people, this is what I have to deal with quite a lot, this is then quite often dismissed.*

I also recollect that Unia's regional secretaries were more interested in media-friendly cases of social dumping than in cases which would not attract similar attention from the media. For instance, issues in the agricultural sector affecting many Polish workers did not attract the same attention as cases of social dumping or other forms of exploitation in the construction sector. Furthermore, regional secretaries were only interested in those cases where workers were still employed and so could potentially go on strike or organise other forms of action. Overall, Unia officials have extensive experience in using the media for putting the union's message across, particularly when it comes to conducting campaigns prior to referenda and people's initiatives, and so it is understandable that they preferred to continue supporting actions that could have similar media traction.

I received referrals of exploitation cases through the already mentioned Polish Activist Network. Based on my experience in community-organising in the UK, I also established a good relationship with the Polish Embassy, the Polish Catholic mission and Polish organisations. These relationships were beneficial for the project because many Polish workers

heard about Unia from those organisations. The relationship with the Polish Embassy was particularly relevant as this is how many Polish workers ended up joining Unia or reaching out for my support. In many cases, the Polish Embassy was referring cases of exploitation of Polish workers to me as it did not have the resources to provide support. According to the CEE project manager, engaging Unia with the local community and following strategies used in the UK's community-organising was very beneficial for the CEE project.

Working with Unia's complex structures (regions, sections and interest groups) required a new approach when reaching out to Polish workers. On the one hand, I had to take into consideration the democratic structure of the union, which meant following relevant procedures to inform regional secretaries and heads of sections (e.g. construction, services, etc.) about my activities with a specific group of workers. For instance, when a potential case of Polish construction workers in Zurich came up, I had to inform the head of the construction sector and the regional secretary as both had to be involved. However, when it came to activities focused on enhancing integration of Polish workers, the regional structures demonstrated low interest and so I could act more independently, bypassing existing structures. For instance, I was able to invite Polish activists to national migration committee meetings or to national seminars or trainings without having to formally request the approval of the regions. However, the Polish members would then attend those meetings as observers, not formal delegates. I first relied on this approach when recruiting Polish participants for Unison national conferences and this proved efficient in the context of Unison. My colleague from the migration unit suggested that this could be described as a top-bottom approach which helped stimulate a two-way dialogue:

Member of migration unit 1: For me it is something in between. Well, on the one hand, it is an approach from top to bottom. That means the head office organises something, sends information, co-ordinates the structures. And the officer from the head office passes it on. But at the same time the movement comes also to the top. Well you know, this is the movement in two directions.

Similarly, the regional secretary in Basel quoted in section 6.2 argued that I introduced an approach that differed from previous Unia initiatives as it was led mostly from the head office and was independent of the union's existing structures. Its independence was due to the specificity of Polish migration in Switzerland. For instance, Portuguese workers were concentrated in the construction sector whereas Poles were more isolated as domestic care

workers. Importantly, according to my interviewees from the migration unit, this new approach to organising Polish workers seemed to be more effective in terms of enhancing the visibility of Polish members in Unia's structures.

6.2.2 Creation of Polish Activists Network in Unia

The network was created in January 2013 and mirrored in its structure and aims the Polish Activists Network in Unison, given that it functioned successfully during my involvement in the union. At Unia, I initially came up with the idea of creating the network, which was then approved by my line manager. Participants at the first meeting included members from all Unia regions together with a Polish-speaking organiser from Geneva. As was the case with Unison, the Unia network created its own Facebook group⁴⁹ and the participants were reimbursed for participating in meetings. The objectives were also similar and related to supporting the integration of Polish members.

During the time of the project network, members met twice at annual meetings (in January 2013 and 2014) and were also invited to weekend courses (in June 2013 and 2014). Annual meetings were attended by Polish consuls and in that way the network focused not only on employment issues but also all on topics relevant to the Polish community. Members were encouraged to set up local groups of Polish members. This took place only in the largest region of Zurich where one of the activists decided to organise monthly meetings for members and non-members. Through participation in the network, its members were expected to learn about the union and were invited to its formal meetings such as the national migrant members' committee meetings and annual conferences. Finally, after the completion of the project, supervision of the network became part of my job description.

6.2.3 Overview of project aimed at Hungarian workers

One year after the start of the project to organise Polish workers, the Eastern region in St. Gallen collaborated with the head office to employ a Hungarian-speaking organiser, funded by the innovative internal fund for three years. The head of the Migrant Workers' Unit initiated the creation of the post and the aims of the project were very similar to those of the Polish initiative, the key difference being that the Hungarian project was based in a region and would

⁴⁹ In December 2017 the group had 513 members.

only last for three years. Initially, Unia asked Hungarian trade unions for a recommendation but failed to identify a suitable person so recruited internally, selecting a female member from the service sector.

Even though the organiser was involved in relevant migrant members' networks and had some experience of regional organising and worked on exploitation cases, she was not successful in building a group of Hungarian activist members. Overall, her work performance was not deemed satisfactory and she left after two years. My respondents suggested that the failure of the Hungarian project was due to that officer's lack of relevant organising skills and the fact that the initiative was limited to the Eastern region, rather than embedded in the head office.

The fact that the Hungarian project was unsuccessful due to the organisers' insufficient skills in organising workers and her commitment to trade union values echoes the conclusions reached by Connolly et al. (2014), who argue that the success of British trade unions when it came to activities targeting migrants was dependent on circumstances, including the availability of dedicated (and presumably skilled) union officers.

6.3 Challenges in implementing policies aimed at organising Polish members

Similarly to the chapter dedicated to Unison, this section presents the most important challenges in organising Polish workers which significantly contributed to implementation gaps. The section has the same structure as the previous chapter by beginning with more general challenges of trade unions organising migrants and concluding with specific issues related only to Unia.

6.3.1 Atypical, precarious work and new type of migration in Switzerland

Similar to research undertaken by Gumbrell- McCormick (2011) on trade unions challenges in organising atypical workers, the non-standard work⁵⁰ performed by many Polish workers presented a significant obstacle for Unia regarding organising Polish workers. For instance, many Polish workers that Unia dealt with arrived in Switzerland as posted workers. According

⁵⁰ See definition of this term in the List of main terms and acronyms.

to the bilateral agreements regulating the secondment of workers, this is only allowed for a maximum of 90 days within a two-year period. Another strand of vulnerable workers included those employed in precarious occupations, such as isolated care domestic workers, agricultural or temporary workers. Posted workers, as the regional secretary from Zurich explains below, presented a difficulty for the union:

It is difficult, because you have many people who are here for 90 days and then come back. Membership is a difficult subject in this context. There is an opportunity [to organise Polish workers] on a project basis [as was the case of] Primula or a group of Polish workers, who complain about something. Then you could do something for them.

As argued by the head of the construction sector, the rise in the number of precarious workers has become a feature of the Swiss labour market, making it more likely that CEE workers find themselves in a more precarious situation than previous group of migrants arriving in Switzerland after WW2. Equally, this precariousness made it difficult to organise those workers.

Organising a precarious workforce means less stability for the union due to members' fluctuating employment situation; it also means diminished stability of income from membership fees. However, as pointed out by the Unia president, the union should have invested resources in organising these workers from an ethical point of view, even if it was challenging due to the high turnover of members. At the same time, it was equally important to regulate the precarious sectors of the economy in general. This attitude represents a general trend of trade unions changing their stance on organising precarious workers, as suggested by Gumbrell- McCormick (2011) in their research on Western European trade unions.

At the same time, while precarious working conditions are an issue when it comes to organising Polish workers, Polish Unia organisers have suggested that some Poles may in general not be interested in union membership as they intended to work in Switzerland only for a short period of time. As such Unia's efforts to include them have been hindered by the unwillingness of workers to stay in Switzerland. Furthermore, this type of Polish migrants could be described as storks, as defined by Eade (2007) when analysing Polish migrants in the UK (see section 2.4).

6.3.2 Language and cultural barriers

Informants had different views on whether language constituted a barrier to the inclusion of Polish members in Unia. Those who were at the top of union structures suggested that Poles had better knowledge of languages spoken in Switzerland (German, French and Italian) than, for instance, Portuguese workers. The regional secretary from Zurich argued, however, that language was an important tool for approaching Polish workers and that it was important to employ organisers speaking Polish, just as it was important for other migration groups to have organisers who spoke their languages. As with Unison (section 5.3.2), neither Unia officials nor Polish members mentioned the need for union officials to learn the languages of the migration groups targeted by Unia. This was not considered necessary even on a basic communication level to show a trust towards them.

Another informant, Sławek, a Polish organiser (and so at the lowest level of Unia's structures), who was involved in recruiting Polish members daily, argued that Poles had a good level of German and that this supported their integration into Swiss society:

Sławek, Polish organiser: *I mean I would like to add that I read somewhere that Poles are an ethnic group that has best integrated within those countries [UK and Germany] and really, when I observe my Polish members, I am really proud of the fact that each of them is able to communicate quite well in German and so can organise within the union and very often, after spending a couple of years here, can blend into the society.*

This quote aligns with the views of the assistant general secretary of Unison (quoted in Chapter 5), who argued that Polish migrants would easily integrate into British society.

From my personal experience, language represented a significant inclusion barrier, and a major part of my workload was related to translating documents and interpreting for Polish members. Without my translation skills, Unia could not reach out to members or win cases of workers' exploitation, at least not initially. Moreover, this was the reason Unia set up a website in Polish and decided to print a Polish version of migrant members' newspaper. This difference in opinion on the language skills of Polish workers could be explained by the fact that senior officers like the Unia president and colleagues from the head office met with more experienced Polish members, who, naturally, would need to have better language skills to be able to fully participate in union meetings. Furthermore, there were also different types of workers that Unia had to dealt with. The regional secretary from Zurich dealt predominantly with workers who

were posted or temporarily based in Switzerland and as such did not need to speak good German. It must be noted that Unison did not deal with issues specific to posted workers as Polish workers organised by Unison in the public sector were employed by UK-based companies.

6.3.3 Polish workers' attitude to trade unions and engagement within them

Similar to Polish members in Unison, many Unia members did not belong to a trade union back in Poland. Even though some believed that the overall perception of trade unions in Poland was generally negative, their personal opinion of the unions was quite positive, as suggested by a trade union representative from Zurich who was also president of an informal group of care workers.

Anna⁵¹: I never belonged to a trade union in Poland, but I think this may be connected with what is happening in the country. I mean with the general political situation in Poland. And I think there is a negative association with trade unions [in Poland]. I used to work for Polish Mail. They do have trade unions; I didn't belong. I don't know why.

Another interviewee commented similarly on the negative perceptions of Polish trade unions in Poland and that this posed a challenge for him when it came to recruiting workers to Unia:

Rafał⁵²: It is a problem; Poles have very bad experiences of trade unions in Poland because it is well known, Polish trade unions are what they are, and it is very difficult to convince people that it works very differently in Switzerland. I don't know how it works in England, but Switzerland is really different than Poland and [the difficulty is] to reaching out to the people.

Nevertheless, the same organisers commented that some new Polish members were keen to be active and kept enquiring about what they could do for Unia. He also added that Polish members overall had quite a deep sense of labour agency and a strong trade union consciousness, even though they may not have been fully aware of this.

Kacper, Polish organiser: Poles have a high level of trade union awareness without consciously knowing that this is the case. I don't know if I am explaining this well, but

⁵¹ The real name of the person.

⁵² The real name of the person.

Poles know what they can demand as employees, what should be the work conditions (...) as such, Poles have expectations and a high level of awareness as employees but low awareness as unionists.

As described in Chapter 4, in contrast to Unison, within Unia there are no significant differences between regular and active members (trade union representatives). To become a trade union representative, a member generally does not need to be elected by workplace representation or attend special training as is the case for shop stewards in the UK. This makes it easier for members to move between being active or non-active (in the Unia membership database, active members are marked by union full time officers) although it is more difficult for them to be elected to the position of a delegate to regional and national committees. As a result, it is easier to be an active Unia member as there is no requirement for strong communication skills or knowledge of employment regulations. Importantly, trade union representatives have fewer representative rights than members of Unison.

Finally, Unia members gave similar reasons for not being active to Unison members (described in section 5.3.3) – mainly the language barrier and a lack of free time.

6.3.4 Definition of migrants

According to Unia migrant committee's rulebook (Unia, 2005) migrants are only those who are foreign workers (ausländische Arbeitnehmende). This is inconsistent with the definition used by the Swiss government (Federal Statistical Office, 2018), which is based on the definition of the United Nations in which migrants are described as people with at least one parent born abroad (Hamel et al., 2015). Furthermore, this narrow definition may suggest that those who have been naturalised can no longer be represented on the migration committees. Nevertheless, as mentioned in Chapter 4, Swiss naturalisation is a much more difficult and longer process than in the UK or other European countries. It is only since the referendum in 2017 that third-generation migrants have had easier access to naturalisation. As a result, a worker's nationality is more important for Unia than their ethnicity or race.

Regional secretary, Basel: *Well I am not concerned with the concept of race. We generally make no differences here [as opposed to the UK AR] (...) For instance Swiss nationality Swiss means that you have a Swiss passport. Then you could be black,*

yellow, white... I can be born in Africa, in Europe... I can be naturalised here or there [in all countries]. This is maybe interesting for sociologists. For us it is not relevant: We all have equal rights. But we need [information about] nationality among other things, because we are not all confronted with the same problems.

The above comments may be related to the fact that most migrants still come to Switzerland from Europe and are predominantly white. Nevertheless, senior Unia officers seem to be slowly changing their perspective, and as suggested by the head of the migration unit (between 2015 and 2016), there may be more awareness of race, even though discrimination in Switzerland is related more to immigration status, especially in the case of so-called undocumented migrants, rather than race.

6.3.5 Regional structures

According to Unia officers from the head office, the implementation of the project and further integration of Polish migrants within Unia faced difficulties because of the union's structure. This confirms Frege and Kelly's (2003) theory of the importance of structures for unions' strategy choices.

The regions have a lot of freedom in choosing what work they can do, and as my colleague put it, some of them may have felt irritated that the head office was trying to tell them what to do.

Member of migration unit 1: Well I think it has to do with it coming from the top to the bottom. This was difficult. Suddenly the head office has appointed someone to organise workers in the region. Surely this has irritated some regions. And this has to do with a federal system of our work. This [decision to appoint me by the head office] went a little against the [principle of] of the independent way of working of trade union regions. I think this was the biggest difficulty of this project.

This mirrored the situation in Unison in which regions did not feel that the Polish project was relevant for them. Similarly, the Zurich regional secretary complained during the interview that the project was not relevant for the region and he lacked adequate resources to take on yet another priority.

According to the head of the migration unit, this perspective was not new and was related to an ongoing tension caused by the regions trying to protect their autonomy against the power

exerted by the head office. The difficulties in working with the regions also stemmed from the federalist Swiss model, where cantons are quite independent of the federal government. In addition, there were differences in terms of ways of working, starting with issues around different regional languages. The challenge caused by Unia's structures combined with a federal way of thinking meant in practice that regions felt less committed to prioritising the inclusion of Polish workers in their structures and were instead more focused on highlighting cases of workers' exploitation, as described in section 6.2.1. It is not surprising that the head of the Zurich region argued that an officer from the head office could only support the region in organising Polish workers and therefore organising Polish workers had to be done at the regional level and by regional organisers. However, this perspective seems to contradict the experience of interviewed Polish-speaking organisers who said that they were willing to organise Polish workers in their regions but they were not allowed by the regions to do it.

6.3.6 Lack of Polish-speaking organisers

During interviews with Polish members and Unia organisers, they often mentioned that there were not enough Polish-speaking organisers. This issue was not, however, brought up by senior Unia officers. In comparison with Unison, at the time of conducting the interviews, Unia employed 3 Polish-speaking officers but I was the only one entirely responsible for organising Polish members.

For instance, as a Polish representative indicated, there were shortages not only of Polish-speaking organisers but also of organisers in general. Shortages of Polish organisers meant, for instance, that the Polish officer from Geneva had to support Polish members on top of his main employment duties as there were no other Polish-speaking Unia employees in his region.

Kacper, Polish organiser: *Despite the extent of my duties I really do a lot for Poles in all cantons, and then I also take the calls from Poles calling from Poland who want information, and my immediate boss, the head of the sector, he is well aware of this and he says that is not a problem as long as I am fulfilling all of my other obligations to the best of my ability.*

However, as mentioned by another organiser, resources were not always properly used, and regions did not co-operate when it came to deploying Polish organisers:

Sławek, Polish organiser: *What would have an influence... Well I mean the most important thing is reaching Poles through Polish secretaries, Polish-speaking secretaries. I still think there are too few of them in the first instance; and then secondly, those very limited resources are being utilised inadequately – all of that is due to conflicts or maybe competition between the regions. They do not consider the fact that I speak Polish when thinking about what is needed in a different region; they do not really have a habit of sending requests to a different region.*

6.4 Implementation of the policies from the perspective of Polish members

As in the case of Unison, many active members explained that their motivation for being more active in Unia was for reasons related to social solidarity and willingness to help others. As mentioned by Anna, a member of the Polish Members Network from Zurich (described in section 6.2.2), she created a group of Polish care workers in Zurich⁵³ because she wanted to meet other people, especially since she had some free time available. Similar to Unison's trade union representatives (as discussed in Chapter 5), some active Unia members also complained about their lack of influence and that the union failed to fully utilise their potential:

Romuald: *I feel like I am one of the smallest cog wheels in that massive machine. Sure, the machine wouldn't keep going without these small cogs, but whether I can influence anything... no one talks to me or takes me seriously (...) even though I have more time and I have the experience. I am a pensioner but I am still working (...) In theory you could be thinking 'right, this person has more time, wants to be more engaged, now can be engaged' but they are deaf to that.*

As can be seen in this section, a lack of engagement on the part of Unia was one of the most important challenges hindering the implementation of Unia policies aimed at the inclusion of Polish workers. As discussed, in a small number of cases, members felt that Unia regions were not willing to let them become more involved or start influencing local structures. At the same time, while Unison experienced⁵⁴ similar challenges, within Unia the problem was not so

⁵³ See the Unia website for the project Good Care (Gute Plege): <http://www.guteplege.ch/cee-en/> (Accessed: 14 September 2018).

⁵⁴ In the context of both unions, it is plausible to say that unions face problems not only in using the potential of Polish activists but, more importantly, in terms of unions' internal democracy (see Marino, 2015).

widespread and so it will be argued that this was one of the reasons why Unia was more successful in terms of including Polish members.

6.5 Sustainability of Unia policies: Case study of a strike of mainly Polish care workers in Switzerland in 2014

The case study approach has been chosen because the strike demonstrates the implementation of Unia's policies related to migrant workers. Secondly, I was aware of the issue due to my involvement in the region and had pre-existing contacts there, including, Anna, who put me in touch with the workers, who put me in touch with the workers.

The main research question focuses on the reasons why carers successfully managed to influence union officials to launch industrial action and whether Unia's support for them was successful. The outcome was successful despite the migrants' limited knowledge of industrial relations and their lack of prior experience of involvement in strike action in their home countries. Furthermore, the strike is presented in a wider perspective of other Western trade unions' efforts to mobilise migrant workers. Importantly, there was no similar strike of Unison members to which this strike could be compared. Moreover, given the specificity of the strike, such as the fact that it took place at a small company, or factors such as the occupation and nationality of workers, there is very limited discussion of similar strikes in the existing literature to which this one could be directly compared. However, there are some similarities between the strategies adopted by Unia and those adopted by British and Dutch trade unions when it comes to migrant workers' mobilisation and union revitalisation, as well as reliance on the organising strategies of American trade unions. Therefore, I have chosen to compare Unia's approach with the efforts of British and Dutch trade unions. Both were well analysed in the literature, particularly British unions (e.g. Holgate, 2005; Alberti, 2014; Connolly et. al, 2014), as well as Dutch unions (Connolly et al., 2017).

For the purposes of the case study, agency is defined as *the ability to exert some degree of control over social relations* (Sewell, 1992: 20).

6.5.1 Overview of the care sector in Switzerland

CEE care workers are employed mainly on precarious employment contracts in part-time, temporary posts as well as on a bogus self-employment basis; some of them may even be undeclared workers (Wigger et al., 2013). Since 2011, some terms and conditions (including a minimum wage) for care workers have been regulated by the national labour agreement (NAV Hauswirtschaft) (SECO, 2015). The agreement regulates the employment of all workers engaged in domestic duties and was introduced to prevent wage discrimination against female workers from Central and Eastern Europe (Erne and Imboden, 2015). Because this is not a collective bargaining agreement and does not regulate all working conditions (such as stand-by work), the working regulations for carers are open to abuse.

In May 2014, Unia and members of the employers' organisation *Zu Hause Leben* (Living at Home) ratified a collective bargaining agreement that stipulated improved working conditions for care workers employed by care companies. The demands of the trade unions during the strike were based on this agreement and the union requested its ratification by the employer.

6.5.2 Description of the strike

The strike took place at a small care company, Primula, specialising in private care and operating in a city near Zurich. At that time, Primula employed 15 workers, including 13 carers and 2 administrative officers. Out of all the care workers employed by the company, 7 participated in the strike and all of them were migrants (Polish, Slovakian and one of Polish origin from Germany) who had moved to Switzerland recently. Those who did not participate in the strike were also of migrant or Swiss origin, including administrative officers who were Swiss.

The front-line workers at Primula were employed on several different contract types and patterns. The main issues faced by carers who did not work on a live-in basis was unpaid travel time, which was often longer than the time of their assignments. Carers employed on live-in care duty contracts did not receive compensation for overtime and stand-by work.

I met with some of the workers at the monthly meeting for Polish workers in the Zurich region in January 2014. At the end of May 2014, the manager of Primula decided to introduce new contracts for the workers, which worsened the terms and conditions of workers' employment

by introducing a six-month anti-competitive⁵⁵ clause and reducing the hourly rate for night work. The workers also faced ongoing issues in terms of unpaid travel time and delays in overtime payment. The deadline for accepting new contracts was set up individually for every employee but all of them were informed that they should either resign or accept the new conditions by the end of June.

Strikers demanded removal of the anti-competitive clause and the introduction of a collective bargaining agreement to include a higher salary (specifically, a higher rate for night work) as well as paid overtime and travel time. Unia requested a meeting with the employer on behalf of the workers but the parties were unable to reach an agreement. As a result, the carers were left with no options other than to go on strike.⁵⁶ The strike commenced on 14 June and after 11 days concluded on 26 June 2014.

Three major events took place during the strike: a rally was held in front of the company's office involving almost 50 Unia members and supporters, including strikers; a film documentary about the strike was broadcast after the main news on the state TV, and the cantonal office for conciliation and arbitration became involved in the strike and invited the trade union and the employer to a formal negotiations meeting. The media attention during the strike was very important, and, as already mentioned in this chapter, this was a common strategy used by Unia to gain public support for social dumping cases and other industrial actions (see also the quote from Romuald).

The meeting at the conciliation and arbitration office secured a major victory for the union. All demands, including removal of the anti-competitive clause, higher wages, an annual pay bonus (one-thirteenth of salary) and paid travel time, were accepted apart from the introduction of the collective bargaining agreement. This occurred even though all the claims accepted by the employer were based on terms and conditions stipulated by the collective agreement. Finally, workers participating in the strike received protection against dismissal for one year. The agreement was implemented on 11 July 2014, 14 days after the settlement.

⁵⁵ The anti-competitive clause prohibited workers from taking any similar posts for six months from the end of employment, and according to the trade union, effectively, this might result in a professional ban.

⁵⁶ In terms of the legislation on the strike action, see section 4.2.

During the initial days of the strike, I tried to take more of an active role, but once it became apparent that Unia's regional officials did not want the involvement of an officer from the central office, I stepped back and took on the role of participant observer, with a view to discussing the events of the strike in this dissertation. At the same time, it was not crucial for me to be more engaged in the strike because I had previously been involved in a number of successful labour disputes involving Polish and Slovakian workers, including one that took place in the same region in October the previous year (see Table 9), and I was happy with the role given to me by the regional office.

6.5.3 Discussion and findings

What can be gleaned from the interviews as well as from fieldwork notes is that the workers were highly motivated to go on strike. This was even more remarkable given the fact that they lived in accommodation provided by the employer and because of the strike they stood to lose not only their jobs but also a place to stay in Switzerland.

Their motivation was high enough to put pressure on the union to call for industrial action even though the union was not prepared for the strike at that moment. Moreover, the workers had never portrayed themselves as victims but more as self-confident individuals who were able, with adequate support, to protect their rights and who expected equal participation in the decision-making processes.

Nonetheless, it is important to underline my role in the strike as I am firmly convinced that it was more substantial than that of an interpreter. First of all, I may have played the role of a catalyst for the strike, as without me, the women would not have been able to contact the relevant regional organiser and confirm the legality of their demands, which in turn contributed to the *cognitive liberation* (McAdam, 1988) necessary to trigger the strike action. Second, my presence showed the workers that the union recognised their specific needs as migrant workers by providing a Polish-speaking organiser, thus allowing them to fully exercise their collective agency; this also fully showcased Unia's approach to organising Polish migrants.

Interactions between the migrants and the union

As all the interviewed officers indicated, it was not the workers who initially came up with the idea of striking; instead, they took the decision once strike action was presented as one of the

options available to them by union officials. Once the decision was taken, the carers took ownership of and responsibility for the strike. The sense of collective engagement and belonging was also emphasised by the union officials. They insisted that Polish workers were better than Swiss workers in terms of their trade union mobilisation and activism potential.

Unia organiser 1: *In my experience Polish women are quite strong (...) well at least the ones whom I have met. We've supported them, without them having to rely on us too much(...). The sense of belonging was very strong among them. So ... the strike really belonged to them.*

Regional manager: *These women had a certain experience, and they knew what their work was worth. They had no doubt how unfairly they were treated, and this is impressive because, especially with Swiss people, they try to excuse their bosses all the time.*

The mobilisation potential of the carers was fostered by the level of solidarity of local members. This is how one of the women explained her reasons for joining the strike, following a solidarity demonstration organised by Unia in front of the company's office:

Monika: *I was going to go home and calmly analyse the proposed contract but it turned out that they were going on to this demonstration, so straight away I said: I'm going with you!*

Repertoire of action

There are some inconsistencies between the accounts of officers and those of strikers with regard to who acted as leaders of the strike. While the officers suggested that the workers had the ownership, some strikers believed that the union officials were the real leaders of the strike.

Maria: *I was surprised (...) because in general the leadership in this whole situation (...) [we] the strikers (...) had (...) clearly laid out the structure of the strike, we were updated regularly and decisions [were] made regularly (...) Generally, this is the most important [thing about] the union, that they were able to lead the strike especially [for] such an inexperienced person as me, who had not taken part in strikes before, and had no idea about how it all works.*

Considering the above comments, as well as the author's recollection of the events, the statements of the workers and trade union officials do not actually contradict one another, as may initially seem to be the case. The workers, who were unaware of strike regulations in Switzerland, had to be informed and consulted concerning any proposed further steps by the union. As a result, they had to rely on recommendations from the union officials, including the author, who had to explain to them the differences between Polish and Swiss trade unions and collective disputes. On the other hand, the union trusted the workers to act independently where they could have a positive influence, for instance when speaking to the media.

When asked about their reasons for going out on strike, the strikers explained that they had acted in a spirit of collectivism.

Agnieszka: I could have refused to sign [the new contract] and walk away, look for another job. But the next people who'd come to work for the company would experience the same problems. So in a way I was doing something for myself while also doing something for others, and I think it's important – that you can fight for something not only for yourself.

All of the Swiss union officials, when asked about their perception of the Polish workers' motivation, admitted that they were very impressed with their sense of pride and dignity, especially when contrasted with the local workers.

Unia organiser 2: They never thought of themselves as victims, and they also didn't want to be represented in that way. Whenever the word 'victim' came up they would stop and say: 'We are not victims!' It's quite amazing when you think about it. When I spoke to people from this sector many of them said that they were exploited and that people were horrible to them and there was nothing to be done about it. But when it came to the Polish women, the minute the word 'victim' was used they would stop and say: We're not victims. We may have come here without knowing what to do, but now we have learnt to help ourselves.

It is quite remarkable that the strikers refused to categorise themselves as victims given that, as a result of the strike, they could have become homeless because they lived in flats provided by their Swiss employer. At the same time, if the worst happened, as EU citizens they would be allowed to remain in the country and would be entitled to unemployment benefits. For this

reason, they were perhaps in a less precarious position than non-EU workers, who are dependent on their employer to secure their stay in the country (compare Anderson, 2010 or Jiang and Korczynski, 2016 on the situation of non-EU domestic workers in the United Kingdom).

Workers' education as a possible factor enhancing collective agency

The fact that the foreign carers were more determined to protect their rights than Swiss workers may be related not only to their migration status but also to their overall higher level of education, because the majority of foreign carers had at least secondary-level education and in some cases university degrees. This may explain why they might have had higher expectations when it came to employment rights.

In fact, some carers had previously been employed in fairly prestigious positions in Poland, such as teachers and personal assistants, and there was a nurse who used to be the director of social services in her home town. All of them left their previous posts due to a low salary or redundancy. The fact that the Polish women had a higher level of education may contradict Penninx and Roosblad's theory (2000) that factors related to migrants' characteristics do not influence their participation in trade unions, at least not in terms of their mobilisation potential. As this case study suggests, a higher level of education may increase career confidence; this leads to higher awareness of employment rights, which, along with a *sense of injustice* and a *perception of personal efficiency*, are the core elements of the *cognitive liberation* that constitutes an important part of McAdam's (1988) theory of collective action.

6.5.4 Strike legacy and lessons learned

The strike was an important event for the union both externally and internally. Externally, it helped to raise the union's profile among the newly targeted group of workers. The strike also demonstrated the organisational power of the union as the most influential one in the care sector in Switzerland, in line with its already strong position in the construction and metal sectors. The organisational power of the union was important because a few months before the strike the union signed a collective bargaining agreement with an employer organisation from the care sector. Internally, the union had been provided with an opportunity to assess its mobilisation capabilities.

The strike was a learning process both for the workers and for the trade union. However, even though the strike was a victory for the workers, most of them left the company. Those who stayed were the two workers who broke the strike as well as one of the carers, who at the time of the strike was going through the process of revalidating her nursing diploma, which would allow her to find a better-paid job. The company changed its name and the managing director stepped down, with the company closing in mid 2015.

This is why, after the strike ended, union officials found it difficult to assess whether the employer respected the agreement. The carers who had not participated in the strike did not join the union even though the agreement also improved their conditions of employment. However, although the union representatives struggled to reach out to existing employees, the successful outcome of the strike gave significant hope to other carers. It also provided an opportunity for the trade union to effectively organise more employees in the care sector and improve their working conditions.

As a result, Unia as well as the Swiss Confederation of Trade Unions SGB (USS) held the event up as a huge victory, presenting the strike at the SGB (USS) congress in October 2014 as one of the most important successes in organising care workers by trade unions in the past four years. Furthermore, the strike has been chosen as one of the most successful collective actions in Unia's history and included in a book commissioned by Unia to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Swiss general strike (Alleva and Rieger, 2017).

As stated by the regional manager: *I think [that] these seven women made a lot of people working in this sector proud. Many people were shocked that it's possible, that [it] can really work. That uniting was successful and it was a good sign for the workers of that sector.*

6.5.5 Concluding remarks on the strike

If we compare the strike with the mobilisation of cleaners in London hotels (Alberti 2014) or at Amsterdam airport (Connolly et al., 2017) further similarities appear in terms of Unia's approach. These include using the media to gain public support or organise a solidarity demonstration, methods used by Unite and FNV-Bondgenoten in organising cleaners in

London and Amsterdam. Similarly, including strikers in decision-making processes suggests that the union approach was a combination of *top down* direction with *bottom up* mobilising, which, according to Milkman, has proved to be successful in organising migrants in the United States (Connolly et al., 2017; Milkman, 2006). Another similarity with the Dutch trade unions was that, following the strike, Unia employed one of its participants as an organiser to support the mobilisation of migrant workers.

There are additional similarities with Dutch and British trade unions regarding internal discussion of the sustainability of mobilisation efforts (Connolly et al. 2017; Alberti 2014). It has to be noted that because the care company no longer exists it is difficult to assess how the success of the strike influenced membership growth and the position of Unia in the care sector. Moreover, the collective agreement, which provided a basis for the strike settlement, was later terminated by the employers' organisation. The collective agreement should have been legally recognised by the Swiss government and covered all companies providing private care in the German-speaking part of Switzerland from January 2015. However, at the beginning of 2015 the employers terminated the agreement claiming they were unable to find a sufficient number of care companies willing to join their organisation. In addition, the government raised some concerns, arguing that there was no need for a new nationally binding collective agreement. As a result, the employer organisation terminated the agreement, which was replaced by the national collective bargaining agreement for agency workers, with Unia being a partner for that agreement.

The most distinguishing feature of Unia's approach to organising migrant workers is its commitment to special treatment, which is embedded within the experiences of its former union GBI, described in section 4.4.1. Following on from GBI's experience of supporting migrant workers through formal committees and informal (language) groups, Unia responded to the needs of CEE care workers by appointing a Polish-speaking organiser and by supporting the self-organisation of Polish members.

Crucially, as this case study demonstrates, from the beginning of the strike, the role of the workers was on an equal footing with Unia officials regarding initiating and leading the

industrial dispute. Unia drew on the strength of the strikers' motivation, allowing them to play an important and equal role in the industrial action. They maintained their collective agency in dealing with events before and during the strike.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter suggests that Unia's decision to launch the strategy to organise Polish workers came explicitly from the trade union's senior full-time officials. The CEE project which constitutes the implementation of this strategy was funded entirely by Unia.

The initiative was created due to Unia's background of employing organisers speaking the language of potential members. This historically embedded commitment to special treatment (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000), or the particularistic approach (Alberti et al., 2013), meant that Unia already had the relevant structures in place such as migrant workers' regional and national committees which could include Polish and other ethnically white migrants and support their inclusion and organisation. Those committees, unlike Black workers' committees in Unia, were open to all workers considering themselves migrants, including second- and third-generation migrants, regardless of the colour of their skin, although theoretically, according to the rule book of the committees, they were only for workers without a Swiss passport. The creation of an informal Network of Polish Activists in Unia mirrored Unison's network and aimed to implement the new organising techniques by reaching out to the workers outside the formal structures and harnessing their inclusion potential. The concept of the network was based on the tradition of self-organised informal language groups that were established informally by groups of migrants within GBI (Unia's predecessor organisation). Furthermore, by collecting data on members' country of origin, Unia officers knew how many Polish workers joined the union and how many of them became active members.

Unlike Unison, Unia did not represent a *dialectical approach* (Tapia, 2014) to the inclusion of Polish workers and organised them as migrants within the principle of special treatment.

The project faced similar difficulties to that of Unison in terms of its implementation at the regional level, where it was not perceived as a priority. However, as the number of successful

cases of workers' exploitations rose, the regions increasingly relied on the Polish organiser to support their work in tackling and highlighting examples of social dumping.

The focus on the identification of cases of social dumping was one of the core objectives of the Unia project which differentiated this project from Unison's MWP project.

After the end of the CEE project, Unia decided to continue the project by creating a permanent post for an officer responsible for organising CEE workers within the migrant workers' department. The creation of the permanent post contributed to making Unia's policies on organising Polish workers more sustainable.

Implementation of the policies at the regional level was challenging with regard to the support and creation of groups aimed at the inclusion of Polish workers but not in the context of their mobilisation when dealing with cases of workers' exploitation. Another challenge was the lack of Polish-speaking organisers.

Looking at Unia's approach to Polish workers through Connolly et al.'s (2014) framework, Unia could be leaning more towards class (organising) and social rights (institutional regulations) but lacks a focus on race (community). However, as this research demonstrates, Unia was similarly committed to representing the rights of migrant workers around the same time that Unison supported the establishing of Black workers' committees. In addition, the language groups for migrants mirrored the self-organisation of Black members in Unison. Furthermore, Unia adopted the approach of establishing a network of Polish activists which aimed to reach out to the Polish community in Switzerland.

Drawing on the concept of unions' strategic choices theories (Frege and Kelly, 2003), it is plausible to say that Unia decided to continue its strategy to organise Polish workers because of the successes of social dumping cases and the mobilisation of Polish workers in the care workers' strike. The research theories will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Finally, Polish migrants were not treated by Unia as victims of exploitation that lacked collective agency. Although, as the analysis of the strike showed, the union officers were initially surprised by the level of collective agency of the Polish workers, they were able to

utilise it during the strike and after. The strike action and other cases of the mobilisation of Polish workers show that, unlike Unison, Unia was successful in deploying the mobilisation potential of Polish workers not only to protect their rights but also to support local workers and to increase the union's influence in the Swiss labour market.

Chapter 7 Comparative chapter with final conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The final chapter of my thesis will provide a comparative perspective on trade union policies towards Polish migrants and aims to explain the reasons for the gap between unions' policies and their implementation in relation to Polish migrants, with an emphasis on why the gap was wider in the case of Unison. The chapter begins by presenting the reasons for the MWP and CEE projects, discusses the attitude to trade unions of Polish migrants vis-à-vis other migration groups and compares the strategies of Unison and Unia towards Polish workers. It then analyses factors explaining implementation gaps and discusses migrant contribution to trade union renewal. Particular attention will be given to reasons why, unlike Unia, Unison did not continue with the special treatment (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000), or particularistic approach (Alberti et al., 2013), in relation to Polish workers. I primarily draw on theories discussed earlier in this thesis, revisiting issues related to trade unions' internal dynamics such as union identity, rooted practices and structures (Hyman, 2001, Frege and Kelly 2003, Connolly et al. 2014, Marino et al., 2017) given their importance regarding the implementation gaps. Theories related to revitalisation strategies are helpful to understand how organising migrants could help enhance the organisational power of unions.

Finally, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, one of the aims of my research was to provide recommendations for unions on how to organise Polish and other European migrant workers. Accordingly, this chapter presents a set of recommendations based on the research findings, in the hope that these will be taken up by trade unions in the future.

7.2 Reasons for the projects

As described in Chapter 4, over time, Unison and Unia, along with their forming unions (NALGO and GBI), were two of the most pro-migrant unions in their countries and were at the forefront of developing special treatment (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000); this have provided a positive foundation for establishing projects aimed at Polish workers. The key trigger for both unions to develop projects targeting Polish workers (in 2008 by Unison and in 2012 by Unia) was the increase in the number of Polish migrants in labour markets in the UK and Switzerland

and their trade union participation after Poland's accession to the EU in 2004. The Unia project started later, given that Switzerland is not part of the EU and that through various bilateral agreements, most of the restrictions on CEE citizens were only lifted in 2011. Both unions had a long tradition of employing organisers on a *like-recruits-like* principle and so decided to employ an organiser fluent in Polish, the language of the largest CEE migrant group. Both unions supported self-organisation, with Unia establishing formal committees and informal language groups for migrant workers and Unison establishing the Black workers' group for ethnically non-white workers. The decisions to launch the MWP and CEE projects were taken at a time when the economic and labour market situation both in Switzerland and in the UK was fairly stable (with very low unemployment rates of 3.6% and 4.7% respectively [Figure 1 in Chapter 4 and later in the text]) and positive, which, according to Penninx and Roosblad (2000), constitutes one of the four factors determining the pro-migrant approach of trade unions. This positive approach changed just before the economic crisis of 2008 when the TUC changed the name of its working group from migrants to vulnerable workers in 2007 (Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010). This was linked to the change in funding priorities for the project supported by Round 3 of the UMF, which focused on precarious workforces. Accordingly, Unison focused on precarious workers in the HW project. The only continuation of Unison involvement in migration was the creation of the Network of Polish Activists and the Filipino Activists Network in 2011.

It is plausible that the unions' decision to employ only one organiser speaking the language of the largest CEE migrant group was due to limited financial resources, which mirrors the observations of a number of scholars (James and Karmowska, 2012; Connolly et al., 2014; Tapia, 2014) regarding the approach of British trade unions to CEE migrants. Unison had the opportunity to employ a Polish-speaking organiser thanks to government funding from the UMF, which supported the MWP project that aimed at improving the representation of migrants in British trade unions. While the MWP project was taking place, the TUC's Northern region was also successful in receiving UMF project funding and employed a Polish-speaking organiser.⁵⁷ At the same time, the Unia project was financed entirely from internal funds supporting innovative projects.

⁵⁷ The phenomenon of employing Polish-speaking organisers is discussed in Chapter 2.

The research questions focused on formal and informal reasons behind the launch of Unison's and Unia's respective projects. Informal reasons (as opposed to formal reasons) were those not explicitly mentioned in the project descriptions, but which later came up in the process of analysis. Informal reasons were particularly important for Unison because its project was partly funded by the government and there was only one informal reason, that is, growth of Unison membership. Both projects focused on the integration of Polish workers and included increasing the number of active members within their formal aims. Additionally, for Unia, formal reasons included membership growth and identifying cases of social dumping.

As discussed in previous chapters, both projects were initiated in a top-down manner by senior officials who sought approval from union leaders, with those senior officials later becoming project managers. In both cases, Polish members were not involved at the outset. There was some limited involvement of members with a migrant background in the case of Unison, where a member of the executive committee supported the initiative.

7.3 Polish migrants vs. other migrant groups

It is important to mention the target of these two projects, that is, Polish migrants, and their approach to trade unions in general and the trade unions being researched in this thesis in particular. Whether the Polish community could follow a pattern of inclusion that the trade unions adopted for other migrant groups is an important research question. After all, the attitudes of Polish workers towards trade unions might have hindered unions' efforts to include those members and therefore created a bigger gap between the projects' aims and their implementation.

Overall, the interviews with Polish members in Switzerland and the UK conducted for the purposes of this research support the findings of Anderson et al. (2008), who suggested that CEE workers in the UK had an overall positive attitude towards trade unions. Furthermore, the interviews with full-time union officials and Polish-speaking officers confirmed that Polish workers were mostly positive towards trade unions, a trait they shared with other migrant groups. This suggests that Polish workers may follow patterns of inclusion, as long as unions opted for the special treatment approach, as was the case for previous migrant groups (Penninx

and Roosblad, 2000). As Holgate (2004) argues, this approach recognises migrants' different needs, as well as different understandings and expectations of trade unions.

The difficulties that unions had when reaching out to Polish workers can be explained by the fact that many Polish workers were employed on a non-standard type of contract, that is, outsourced services in the case of Unison or being posted in the case of Unia (see Chapter 4). As argued by the senior Unia official, the rise in the number of precarious workers has become a feature of the Swiss labour market, making it more likely that CEE workers will find themselves in a more precarious situation than previous groups of migrants.

Polish workers in the UK between 2001 and 2011 (Table 2) were predominantly employed in the following industries: distribution and hospitality (27%), manufacturing (19.2%), business services (including administrative and support services) (16.5%), public administration and education and health (11.6%). Administrative and support services include work on a part-time basis, and many workers covered by this category are agency workers working for other industries. As discussed in section 5.3.1, agency employment contributed to fragmentation of the workforce in the public sector and represented one of the challenges Unison encountered when trying to organise Polish workers. Furthermore, Polish workers, as opposed to previous flows of migration, worked in sectors of economy which were less unionised, such as distribution and hospitality.

In Switzerland, Polish workers were predominantly employed in the service sector and industry and craft sectors. As presented in Table 3, the majority of workers who arrived in Switzerland between 2012 and 2014 were employed in the service sector (61.37%), followed by industry and craft (19.55%) and agriculture (19.08%). The largest subsectors employing Polish workers were planning, consulting and IT, followed by agriculture, hospitality and household services. Many workers arrived for a period of less than one year as posted workers or agricultural seasonal workers (Table 4). Between 2012 and 2014, the number of workers arriving on a short-term basis significantly exceeded the number of workers who registered to work in Switzerland for one year or more. A significant number of Polish workers arriving as posted workers or working for less unionised sectors of the economy such as the care sector was one of the central factors hindering their integration into Unia (section 6.3.1).

As discussed in Chapter 4, the migration waves from CEE countries and Poland to the UK and Switzerland were more feminised than previous waves, with the number of Polish and CEE women exceeding the number of Polish and CEE men in Switzerland. This is not a surprise because women had outnumbered men in the recent global trends of migration (*feminisation of migration*) (Castels and Miller, 2009). In both countries, women were predominantly employed in less unionised and less visible sectors than the male workforce, in the so-called *feminised domains* (Wetterer, 2002) such as the service sector and the care sector, which were traditionally connected with low wages, low status and limited occupational mobility. Furthermore, as Holgate et al. (2006: 312) argue, *the intersection of other social and cultural processes such as ethnicity and gender also affect participation in the labour process*. The gender segregation of the labour market and the feminisation of some types of employment mean that, even when female migrants have legal rights, these were less likely to be enforced than the rights of male migrants. This is because female migrants are less aware of their rights than unskilled migrant men working in relatively better-regulated, visible and better-paid sectors (Garcia et al., 2002). Moreover, to maintain work–life balance, some female workers are employed on a part-time basis. As various research argues, due to family duties, female workers in general are less likely to have the time to attend trade union meetings (see, for instance, Bradley, 1999; Cavendish, 1982). Work patterns of Polish migrants, in particular female workers, represented significant challenges for Unison and Unia. To support Polish workers' integration and to address the *democratic deficit* (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002), both unions created Polish Activists Networks (sections 5.2.5 and 6.2.2) and meetings of those bodies were organised at the most convenient time for the workers, that is, at weekends. Those meetings, as well as training courses organised at weekends, were accessible for members with care responsibilities, and both unions covered childcare expenses to allow greater participation of women. Furthermore, Unia created informal groups for Polish care workers in Zurich and Ticino, which were aimed at improving working conditions of care workers and tackling their isolation. The group in Zurich played an important role in initiating and supporting the strike of care workers in 2016 (section 6.5). Research shows that female migrants were not a homogenous group in terms of their socio-economic and educational characteristics. For instance, the participants in the care workers strike in Zurich were educated to university level. Finally, looking at Polish care workers, at least those involved in Primula strike, there were many similarities between them and Black women in the UK, whose *experiences in trade*

unions may be a product of both their gender and class, but they are also active agents seeking to change the conditions they face (Healy et al., 2006: 291).

It is also important to mention that according to the interviews conducted with Polish informants, their attitudes towards trade unions were similar to those of local workers in terms of adopting an instrumental approach, as discussed previously by Waddington and Kerr (1999) in the context of British workers; these authors suggest that workers often became Unison members due to benefits offered by union membership. Similarly, some Polish informants also joined trade unions for instrumental reasons.

Interestingly, in the Swiss case, there was one factor related to Polish migrants' characteristics which differentiated Polish workers from previous immigration groups. The perception of senior Unia officers was that some Polish members were better qualified or had better language skills than previous waves of migrants coming, for instance, from Portugal or the former Yugoslavia. A higher level of education or better knowledge of language may, on the one hand, have been a factor which positively influenced their collective action (as was the case regarding the strike of the care workers described in Chapter 6), but on the other hand it may have provided a recruitment challenge for the union. As mentioned by the Polish-speaking organisers, due to their language skills and qualifications, Polish workers did not need to rely on Unia to integrate into Swiss society.

7.4 Unison's and Unia's strategies towards Polish workers

As described in previous chapters, the strategies of Unison and Unia towards Polish workers demonstrate many similarities. The MWP project between 2008 and 2012 and the CEE project from 2012 to 2014 were developed to implement the unions' strategy regarding including Polish migrants who had recently moved to the UK and Switzerland (see Chapter 4).

The strategies of Unison and Unia focused on the organisation of Polish workers through recruitment and supporting their active participation in trade union structures by encouraging them to become active members. Both unions organised training courses (for instance *Pathways into Unison*) for newly recruited Polish migrants and prepared information material in Polish about the benefits of being a union member.

Apart from focusing on the integration of Polish workers within trade union structures, Unison and Unia deployed community-organising techniques by closely co-operating with Polish community organisations and the Polish Embassy. They not only aimed to harness the integration of Polish workers within their structures but also to support their integration into the respective societies. Unison's campaign to encourage Polish workers to participate in the European elections from 2009 (described in Chapter 5) clearly went beyond workplace issues, fostering social integration of Polish workers. Given that Switzerland is not part of the EU and European workers were not allowed to vote in European or local elections, this type of campaign could not be organised there.

The strategies were deeply rooted in the identities and practices of Unison and Unia which stem from the unions' historical commitment to supporting ethnic minority and migrant workers through self-organisation. As described at the beginning of the thesis and more in depth in Chapter 4, these unions were at the forefront of introducing the special treatment approach (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000) for ethnic minority and migrant workers in their countries. Concerned about membership loss, Unison and Unia were committed to introducing organising techniques used in the USA. As described previously, both unions co-operated closely with the American trade union SEIU and Unite Here, and this co-operation led to them also using these unions' organising techniques in their strategies regarding including Polish migrants within their structures. The MWP and CEE projects reflected this commitment by hiring a union organiser.

Due to limited resources, these strategies were delivered by each head office by a limited number of officers (3 in Unison, with the author of this thesis being responsible for CEE workers) and only 1 person in Unia, although with the support of the migrant workers' unit.

Both projects were conducted in close co-operation with the Polish Confederation of Trade Unions (OPZZ), and I was either seconded by OPZZ (in the case of Unison) or directly employed (Unia). Both unions used contacts with OPZZ to inform Polish workers who were considering moving to Switzerland and the UK about the benefits of joining Unison and Unia. Cross-border co-operation with OPZZ was important for Unia in terms of transnational cases of workers' exploitation in which Polish companies were involved.

When it comes to major differences between the unions, Unia's strategy was to focus on identifying cases of social dumping and to support collective mobilisation of Polish workers, which in some instances led to industrial actions (such as described in Chapter 6). Highlighting the cases of social dumping was important for Unia to improve its power through the legislative framework of *flank measures* (see section 4.8.1).

Unison had a different approach which involved encouraging Polish and other workers to join the union and become active as a shop steward or other type of member. Unison focused more on the education aspect of its strategy by organising training courses (for instance *Pathways into Unison* within the framework of the MWP project) with the objective of encouraging and empowering active participation of migrants in union structures. Therefore, it could be said that Unison's strategy sometimes led to a situation where – as the example of Marcin in Chapter 5 shows – some Polish shop stewards were not sure what Unison required from them and what their role in the union was. Or, in other words, there were expectations of active members of Unison which were not met by the expectations of the union from its members, and, as described in Chapter 5, this can be classified as *goal displacement* (Zald and Ash, 1966). Unlike in Unison, *goal displacement* among Unia Polish member was less visible.

Looking at the implementation of Unison's and Unia's strategies, both of them faced similar difficulties due to limited financial resources. Initially, both strategies were due to be implemented through time-limited projects, the MWP and the CEE projects. In terms of Unison, the MWP project was partly financed by the British government and the union's approach was limited by not focusing on recruitment but rather on the integration of migrant workers and supporting them in their process of becoming union representatives. Unia was not limited by state funding, and when implementing its strategy, the union could extend the integration aim of its project by focusing on workers' recruitment and mobilisation.

The unions' strategies could not be implemented without close co-operation with regional and local structures, and this is where both organisations faced similar difficulties when it came to applying their objectives at the regional level. Overall, the regions were overwhelmed by a high workload and struggled with adding on yet another priority, reflected in a comment by a Unison manager, quoted in Chapter 5, that *when everything is a priority – nothing is a priority*.

One of the measures used to overcome the problem of union structures was to develop parallel structures which allowed for direct outreach to Polish members. In both unions, those structures involved creating activists' networks and drawing on a community-organising approach (Milkman, 2006; Connolly et. al., 2014). However, these structures were highly dependent on the availability of Polish organisers, and as the Unison example demonstrates, the activities of the Polish Activists Network significantly reduced once the Polish organiser left the union. This confirms the argument put forward by authors such as James and Karmowska (2012), Connolly et al. (2014) and Tapia (2014) that the effectiveness of British unions in supporting migrants depended on unions' personal resources.

Both projects faced similar challenges in reaching out to Polish workers employed in non-standard forms of employment. As statistical data in Chapter 4 show, a significant number of them were either employed by labour agencies in the UK or Switzerland or worked in outsourced workplaces with limited trade union representation, as was the case for Unison members or, in the case of Unia, were posted employees or bogus self-employed. Some Polish union members from Unison complained that because they worked for private companies, their branch had limited resources to represent them. The position of Polish workers within the fragmented labour market in the UK and to a lesser extent in Switzerland hindered the efforts of the CEE and MWP projects to successfully integrate this group of workers.

Looking at the outcome of both strategies analysed in Chapters 5 and 6, Unia's approach turned out to be more effective in terms of supporting the long-term inclusion of Polish migrants and its strategy had less implementation gaps overall. More members and union representatives were recruited during the time of the project; in addition, Unia was able to recruit more Polish members to national and local decision-making bodies. Furthermore, although both unions claim that their projects aimed at implementing union strategies to integrate Polish workers were successful, only Unia decided to fund a permanent post for a dedicated Polish-speaking officer who would be responsible for the integration of Polish and other CEE migrants.

Unison decided not to continue the MWP project but instead to include Polish migrants within activities aimed at outsourced, precarious workers within the HW project. At the same time, there were limits to the inclusion of Polish workers given that the funding was provided specifically to support precarious workers; however, Unison was able to carry on some of the

previous work by continuing to employ officers involved in the MPW project. Importantly, this allowed the union to create Filipino and Polish Activists Networks. However, at the end of the HW project, when there was no funding for a Polish-speaking officer at the union's head office, the Polish Activists Network struggled to sustain its activism and was dissolved and transformed into a network of European members (see section 5.5). As the interviews with senior Unison officers showed, Unison was aware that for the sustainable continuation of its strategy towards Polish workers, there was a need to have a permanent post of a Polish-speaking organiser, particularly given that the example of the Filipino Activists Network had shown that having a Filipino-speaking person in charge of this network improved the integration of Filipino workers into the union; however, nothing has been done to create a permanent post for a Polish-speaking organiser. As Chapter 5 demonstrates, after the end of my employment for Unison, it hired a Polish-speaking officer but only for 10 months. This officer did revitalise the network but decided to leave because the union could not offer him a permanent position.

Unison, as opposed to Unia, also faced structural challenges as there was no scope to record members' nationality within its database, and, seemingly, the union was unwilling to change the situation. Furthermore, it did not have formal structures that could easily be used to support the inclusion of Polish or other white migrant workers given that those members would not be able to take advantage of existing mechanisms such as a Black members' group.

The next section will analyse in depth the main factors explaining implementation gaps and why Unia was more successful regarding its strategy to include Polish workers.

7.5 Factors explaining implementation gaps

7.5.1 Fragmentation, non-standard work and language and cultural barriers

Fragmentation of workplaces and non-standard work provided organising challenges for both unions. As presented in the previous chapters and in section 7.3, Polish migrants in both countries worked in fragmented workplaces, that is, were employed by private companies or agencies in the UK and many of them being posted workers or having a bogus self-employed status in Switzerland.

As discussed in section 5.3.1, in practical terms the fragmentation of workplaces or a two-tier workforce in public services meant that in many instances, Unison local branch officials working for a public employer would face difficulties when representing members employed by private contractors, even though those private companies recognised the union. Although many Polish migrants worked for agencies or private contractors in the UK, the problem of workplace fragmentation was not specific to those groups of workers or all migrant workers. As one of the Unison Annual Reports says, *as many as one in four public service workers, or around 1.2 million workers, are employed by contractors* (Unison, 2010: 26), and the issue of outsourcing public services affects all workers in the UK.

In Switzerland, non-standard work was particularly visible in the construction sector – with workers being temporarily posted to Switzerland, having a bogus self-employment status or working in the long-term care sector (in particular live-in care workers). Fortunately, due to the *flank measures* legislation, all workers working in sectors with a collective bargaining agreement (including the construction sector) have become entitled to the same terms and conditions regardless of their country of origin and employer. This legislation allowed the union to successfully support workers who did not receive proper salaries, such as those mentioned in Table 9. For instance, workers from the Zurich railway station were bogus self-employed workers and were posted from Poland. As the research shows, Unia was effective in targeting cases of social dumping and mobilising workers in the long-term care sector (see the Primula strike, section 6.5). This was due to the fact that, as mentioned by the union president, even if organising non-standard workers was challenging due to the high turnover of members, it was equally important to try and regulate the precarious sectors of the economy in general.

Interestingly, none of the interviewed officers explicitly mentioned anything that would suggest there is a relationship between the existing model of industrial relations in their countries on organising Polish workers or that there could be a potential influence.

Furthermore, as in examples of other trade unions organising migrants (Penninx and Roosblad, 2000), the language and cultural barriers played a role that hindered the efforts of Unison and Unia to include Polish migrants. This was one of the reasons why both unions decided to employ a Polish-speaking organiser and prepared information materials in Polish. Language issues were also one of the reasons why informal language groups of Polish members were

created in the largest Unia regions, following the example of informal language groups formed by previous migration groups (Spanish and Portuguese).

Even though Unison officers suggested that language represented a significant barrier to the inclusion of Polish migrants, this was not reflected in the overall approach of the union. In particular, as participant observation of the Polish Members' Seminar in 2016 (section 5.5) demonstrates, Polish workers were expected to speak English at their own meeting. Given that language, along with gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality, is an important part of workers' identity, in this case national identity (see the intersectionality theory of Crenshaw, 1993), Unison's failure to recognise the importance of language contributed to larger implementation gaps in this union's inclusion strategy regarding Polish workers.

7.5.2 Factors related to trade unions' structures, definition of migration, lack of organisers

In both organisations, the projects were managed from within the head office, which led to some resistance from regions, particularly in Switzerland. As mentioned previously, these projects were not a priority for regional managers and reflected mostly a high-level and abstract commitment to the projects at senior management level at central offices.

Both unions experienced challenges in terms of regional structures, as not all regions were supportive of the projects, particularly those from the largest cities, such as London or Zurich, at least initially. Furthermore, existing structures were not always ready to use Polish members' potential and their willingness to be active, as discussed in earlier chapters. Equally, there were a number of instances in which the expectations of Polish workers did not match those of the unions (goal displacement).

Unison's example seems to confirm Holgate's (2004) findings that British trade unions were unprepared for the different needs and expectations of ethnic minority workers – in this case, the Polish migrants. Unison attempted to solve this problem by creating parallel informal structures in the form of the Polish Activists Network; however, as mentioned in section 5.5, the network disintegrated after the project closed and the support from the Polish-speaking officer was no longer in place.

Similarly, both unions struggled to an extent with ongoing access to Polish-speaking organisers. Unison did not have a Polish-speaking organiser after 2014 and Unia had access only to a part-time organiser with Polish language skills. It is unclear why the unions did not employ more organisers given that there was a clear need, especially since in theory, the fees collected from Polish members in Unia could provide an adequate resource to fund this. It could be similarly argued that there was similar potential for Unison, given the informal assessment that there may have been as many as 3000 Polish members in 2013.

Both unions similarly struggled with defining who could be considered a migrant. According to Unia's migration committee, a migrant was someone without a Swiss passport; however, a number of committee members were naturalised Swiss citizens or may even have been born in Switzerland and defined themselves as second-generation migrants. Unison defined migrants as those who were born abroad to non-British citizens; however, some migrant members could fall into other categories, for instance Filipino workers were primarily classed as Black, enabling them to participate in the relevant structures for Black members.

This thesis also focused on differences in terms of how the terms *migrant* and *migration* were applied by both unions. Whereas in Unison, as in the whole of the UK, the word migrant had some potentially negative connotations, in Unia this term had a more positive meaning. For instance, in many statements of senior union officials as well as in policy documents, Unia openly and proudly claimed to be the largest migrants' organisation in Switzerland. In addition, the term second-generation migrant has a more neutral meaning in Switzerland than in the UK. For instance, the Unia president would frequently bring up her second-generation migrant status as she was born in Switzerland to Italian parents. Applying the term second-generation migrants to, for instance, Black members of Unison, even though their parents did migrate to the UK, may appear to be offensive. For instance, at the beginning of my work for Unison, I was advised not to call the members of Unison's Black committees' migrants or second-generation migrants in order not to offend them. These different attitudes to migration could be explained by the fact that in Unia more than half of rank and file members are of migrant origin; in addition, more than half of its full-time officials are first or second-generation migrants (see also section 4.4), which creates a strong foundation for building and supporting a migrant workforce within Unia's core identity. For instance, Unia claims to be the largest migrant organisation in Switzerland (Unia, 2014). Due to the lack of data on the migration

background of members, this information is not available for Unison. This finding reflects the importance of public discourse in unions' approach to migration, as argued by Marino et al. (2017).

Further challenges relate to the membership database. Unison did not record members' nationality or country of origin and it was therefore impossible to find out how many Polish members it had. As a result, it would have been impossible to determine whether the project helped generate more Polish members and increased their activity overall. This situation contradicted Unison's principle of proportional representation of workers given that the union was not aware how many Polish members were in its structures. Interviews with senior officials in Chapter 5 suggest that all but one of the informants (the project manager) did not see this as a problem. Conversely, Unia recorded members' country of origin and nationality and recruited 763 Polish members during the project, reaching 1354 when it had finished (see Chapter 6).

The most important factor in Unison was the lack of formal structures at national and regional levels to support the integration of Polish workers that would be equivalent to the support offered to groups such as the Black members committee. Undoubtedly, this would have hindered the integration of Polish workers. It has to be noted that Black or migrant workers' committees are important because they will have reserved seats in various decision-making bodies (congresses or national executive councils), and so in Unison Poles were denied those opportunities. The situation was different in Unia, and so in 2016 two Polish members were able to become delegates of the Unia National Delegate Conference, one acting as a co-president of a regional migrant workers' committee (in the Geneva region), and some Polish members were also members of the union's national migrants' committee.

Finally, when it comes to the presumption that the issue of racism affects the inclusion of Polish members, this was not confirmed. In fact, none of the interviewees mentioned that they were confronted with xenophobic attitudes from local members or workers.

7.5.3 Importance of union identity, rooted practices and revitalisation theories in explaining differences in implementation gaps

This thesis argues that issues such as fragmentation of the workplace, the language barrier and institutional circumstances, including different models of conducting industrial relations, were

relevant; however, they were overshadowed by challenges related to union structures, and identities. Importantly, resistance to implementing the projects was greater at local level, i.e. at the level of regions or branches in Unison and regional offices in Unia. As the interviews with informants representing all levels in both unions suggest, the internal organisational factors were probably most significant for successful delivery of the projects.

Looking at the different ways in which the unions approached the inclusion of Polish workers, it could be argued that the primary reason Unia was more successful than Unison was its decision to employ a Polish-speaking organiser on a permanent basis. This decision was crucially important, and Holgate (2004) argues that putting in place a dedicated officer from within a migrant group is crucial for building trust in a union. In addition, Unia did not need to establish new structures to meet the needs of Polish members as they could access the existing migrants' committees. While the number of Polish workers in Switzerland was lower than in the UK, Unia was keen to extend the protection against *social dumping* to both local and Polish workers. In theory, Unison had more potential to recruit Polish members given the higher numbers of Polish workers overall (see Chapter 4); however, as discussed, Unison failed to secure adequate resources to employ a Polish-speaking organiser on a permanent basis.

The key aim of this research was to assess industrial relations theories in the context of trade union responses to migration. That is, the theory of Penninx and Roosblad (2000), which was later advanced with Marion et al. (20017), as well the recently developed theory of Connolly et al. (2014), which modifies Hyman's (2001) triangle of union identity. Finally, the research aimed to assess the industrial relations theories of Frege and Kelly (2003) related to trade unions' revitalisation.

Looking at the Penninx and Roosblad (2000) theory, the reason why Unia's strategy towards Polish workers was more successful was due to the fact that Unia adopted the special treatment dilemma. This treatment involved having designated committees accessible to Polish migrants, namely local and national migrant workers' committees, reserved seats on the union's executive committees for any migrant workers regardless of their ethnicity and, more importantly, the creation of a permanent post so that there was a designated person working on the integration of CEE workers. Unison chose to use equal treatment approach to Polish workers.

Regarding the characteristics of migrants, there are not many differences between the unions because they dealt with the same group of Polish migrants. Based on the information collected for this research (see section 7.3 or in chapters 5 and 6), Polish workers in both countries had similarly positive attitudes towards trade unions.

Regarding society's attitude towards migrants and, in particular, Polish migrants, as described in Chapter 4, the Swiss case represents a much more negative attitude towards migration. It is important to add that Unison's strategy was analysed in the period before the EU referendum (2008 to 2012), when the anti-CEE migrant narrative was less dominant. As mentioned in Chapter 2, according to Fitzgerald and Hardy (2010), CEE migrants became more easily accepted in workplaces than previous waves of immigration due to their *Europeanness*. Similarly, McDowell (2009) argues that the *whiteness* of Polish/CEE post-2004 migration to the UK meant that they had more privilege on the labour market than BAME workers or previous groups of migrants.

Overall, the UK labour market situation at the time of Poland joining the EU was very positive. The UK had a low level of unemployment – 4.3% in 2004 – as did Switzerland, at 3.6% (see Chapter 4). However, the situation in the UK changed after the beginning of the economic crisis of 2008, which occurred during the MWP project, when the UK observed an increase in the unemployment rate.

When it comes to the factors related to the position of trade unions in society, as Connolly et al. (2014) rightly argue, one of the key challenges for British trade unions (including Unison) was the lack of state support for collective rights and regulation. Undoubtedly, the regulatory position of Unia was stronger than that of Unison as Unia operates in the neo-corporatism model of industrial relations (as opposed to the liberal market economy in the UK). Swiss trade unions were successful and more powerful in terms of imposing the introduction of *flank measures* legislation (see section 4.8.1) by using the political *leverage* provided by the Swiss system of direct democracy (Wyler, 2012). Moreover, when comparing the coverage of collective bargaining agreements with that in the UK (51% in Switzerland and 29% in the UK (see Table 1)), the influence of trade unions on labour market policies was much stronger in Switzerland than in the UK. However, when we look at the micro level and compare Unison

and Unia in relation to the regulatory frameworks in the sector of the labour market they operate in, Unia's position in terms of power was not necessarily better than that of Unison. Unison operates in the public sector where there are a number of significant collective agreements in place, such as in the NHS or local government, that secure the union's position in terms of its negotiation position with employers. In many cases, it was up to the union to focus on negotiating better working conditions for migrant workers, such as securing the provision of English classes during working hours or making similar arrangements that would support migrants' rights. Furthermore, not only do British union members receive stronger protection against dismissal related to trade union issues but also they are often provided with more time off for trade union duties than their Swiss counterparts. Moreover, there is a higher trade union density among public sector employees (see Barratt, 2009 on the situation in the UK), which suggests that public sector employers are friendlier towards unions than private sector employers, who are the bargaining partner of Unia.

According to Hyman's (2001) trade unions' identity framework, historically Unison could be seen as having a business union identity because it focused more on the labour market, whereas Unia could be described as a more class-oriented trade union, and as this research shows, Unia had a stronger commitment to collective mobilisation than Unison. At the same time, in both unions some other identity aspects were visible, such as class aspects in Unison (focus on organising) and a focus on the labour market situation in Unia due to a better-developed social dialogue. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the two unions were left-wing oriented.

The research indicates, like Connolly et al.'s (2014) theory, that there were some tensions within the two unions as to whether migrants should be organised as a separate group (focus on community) or as a part of a wider working-class constituency (focus on class). The model of self-organisation adopted by Unison mirrors the language groups for migrants established in Unia. This tension was probably lower in Unia given that workers without a Swiss passport represented almost 50% of members (Unia, 2016b). In addition, migrants dominated some sectors, such as construction and care. Importantly, many full-time Unia officials were migrants (second generation) themselves, including the regional secretaries and the president of the union.

Furthermore, deploying Connolly et al.'s (2014) theory, position of Unia and Unison regarding organising migrant workers are different. In terms of the *logic of action*, Unison is located more between class (lack of special treatment for Polish workers) and race (community campaign encouraging Polish citizens to vote in the EU elections) and lacks a focus on social rights. Regarding unions' strategies, Unison focuses on organising and engaging with communities but, due to lack of tripartite institutions in the UK, it lacks institutional regulations. As described in Chapter 6, putting Unia within this triangle proves more difficult. In terms of a logic of actions, Unia is located between ethnicity and social rights, and lacks the logic of class. However, as stated previously, Unia was more than Unison class oriented and historically considered migrants as a part of the wider working class. Moreover, migrant workers constituted the vast majority of sectors where Unia operates (with migrant membership of Unia at 50% – see Chapter 4), and therefore Unia's focus on workers means automatically focusing on migrant workers. Secondly, regarding its strategies relating to Polish workers, Unia, within Connolly et al.'s (2014) triangle, may be located between institutional regulations and organising but lacks engagement with communities. As described in the conclusions to Chapter 6, similarly to Unison, Unia focused on engaging with communities – it adopted the approach of establishing a network of Polish activists, which aimed to reach out to the Polish community in Switzerland. In terms of Unia, it could be said that the success of its strategy regarding Polish workers was due to the fact that its approach to Polish workers was located at all three points of the triangle and that Unia did not have any weaker points. This conclusion, however, contradicts the principle of this model, which requires one of the points to be weaker. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge this: *We are aware that our model oversimplifies reality and that many limitations inevitably arise from its use* (Connolly et al., 2014: 17), and therefore their theory does not provide a clear answer about why Unison was less successful in organising Polish workers. However, the research confirmed Connolly et al.'s (2014) findings that contextual variables (such as social, economic or institutional frameworks, etc.) do influence the responses of trade unions to migrant workers. At the same time, the authors advise that any potential impact is mediated via internal factors such as organisational resources or historical legacies and that these will determine the exact shape of the framing logic (Connolly et al., 2014: 18).

The role of internal factors, that is, structures and framing processes (including unions identities) is emphasised within the concept of union revitalisation theories proposed by Frege

and Kelly (2003). These factors were also included in the continuation of the Penninx and Roosblad book with Marino in 2017 (Marino et al., 2017) in which theory was extended by an additional fifth factor: internal union variables and dynamics. Their strategic choices theory, which links framing processes, including Hyman's (2011) notion of union identities, with union structures, sheds more light on why implementation gaps were wider in Unison. First of all, Unia's commitment to supporting migrants was part of its own identity as well that of its forming union (GBI). Secondly, Unia already had in place structures such as migrant committees on national and regional levels that could accommodate the needs of Polish workers, with support from the dedicated Polish-speaking officer. This was not the case for Unison, where Black members' committees would not include Polish migrants and Unison did not provide alternative structures for white migrant workers. While Unison created an informal group for Polish members, there was no ongoing support provided by a Polish-speaking officer, unlike in Unia. Furthermore, Unison did not collect information about members' nationality and so there were no data on the number of rank and file Polish members. Crucially, the top-level officials interviewed in the context of this project were not interested in changing this situation and did not see the contrast between Unison's official commitments to the proportionality principle while refusing to collect data to support that very principle.

As the next section will show, Polish migrants were more important for trade unions' revitalisation and increasing their industrial power in Unia than in Unison, and this was the main reason why Unison was less successful and less interested in organising Polish workers.

7.6 Polish migrants' contribution to trade unions' renewal

As the case study of the Polish care workers' strike in Switzerland demonstrates, the impact of the successful outcome extended beyond just this particular group of workers and significantly strengthened Unia's position within the care sector overall. Similarly, successful cases of social dumping in the construction sector affecting Polish workers increased the union's position in that sector. Highlighting the cases of exploitation meant that Unia could put more pressure on the government to improve the regulatory contexts (including *flank measures* legislation) and ensure Unia's dominant position in key sectors, attracting potential members. The success of those collective cases may also explain why Unia was keen to continue employing Polish-

speaking officers, even though Polish workers constituted a low percentage of migrant workers in Switzerland overall, in contrast to quite high numbers in the UK (see Chapter 4).

Another reason Unia may have chosen to focus its efforts on supporting Polish migrants could be due to anticipated growth in the number of Polish workers in the expanding Swiss long-term care sector, given the ageing Swiss population. This was similar to Unison focusing on Filipino workers, who constitute the largest migration group employed in the care sector in the UK.

Moreover, the concept of migrants as a power resource for the union is embedded within Unia's overall approach to diversity. As stated in the policy document of Unia's forming union GBI: *The diversity of cultures could bring new impulses to solve our problems (Gerade die Vielfalt der Kulturen kann neue Impulse zu Lösungen unsere eigene Probleme bringen)* (GBI, 1993). This approach suggests that a trade union may choose to focus on organising migrants for a pragmatic reason, that is, some migrants may have greater collective agency and therefore make a positive contribution to solving the problems of the local workforce. This was the case regarding the successful strike of Polish care workers as well as other instances of Polish mobilisation related to cases of social dumping in the construction sector. Thus, the commitment of Polish workers to social justice and their willingness to go on strike could help the union bring new impulses and support its renewal as well as help enhance membership. In other words, if we assume that Unia perceived organising migrants as a means to increasing its industrial power and supporting the revitalisation process, this may explain why the union decided to move from the project-based approach to a longer-term strategy by including Polish migrants within its structures.

It could be argued that the Unison case demonstrates an overall lack of interest in ongoing support for Polish migrants. The migrant workers were organised because of a moral imperative the union had to provide support for vulnerable migrant workers; however, the union did not perceive migrants to be a resource that could help increase its power. Interviews with senior union officials seem to suggest a lack of clarity as to what the role of Polish members should be. Similarly, this lack of clarity at the top level in Unison was reflected in the decision not to continue with the migrants' project but to focus on organising outsourced workers instead. The decision was related to the fact that governmental funding was available only for projects aimed at that group of workers. Given how many migrants were employed in

outsourced services (Unison, 2010), there was still some scope to support migrants, including Polish ones, within the HW project. At the same time, because of the change in focus, the union no longer needed to support a dedicated Polish-speaking officer within its structures after the HW project concluded in 2011. As such, Unison's approach was project based and relied on Polish-speaking organisers employed on a temporary basis to support the inclusion of Polish workers, initially employing me between 2008 and 2011. The Polish Activists Network later converted to the Polish Members Network, and without the dedicated support of a Polish-speaking organiser it was gradually losing its members. In 2016, it was finally transferred into the EU Members Network (Unison 2017), which was co-ordinated by a French-speaking officer from Unison's head office. The success of the Filipino activists' network provides another argument in favour of Unison's pragmatic approach to organising migrants. It is reasonable to say that due to Unison's decision to continue employing a full-time Filipino-speaking organiser, the network was able to grow, and the union sustained its commitment to the inclusion of Filipino migrants. Unison's commitment was based not only on moral reasons but was also influenced by the fact that Filipinos were predominantly employed in care homes, which historically have been important for Unison and organised by its regions. For instance, Unison reached an agreement with the leading care home company Four Season Health Care (Unison, 2013a), which employed a significant number of Filipino carers. Unison needed Filipino workers to secure a collective agreement and consequently increase its power in the care sector.

I am not saying that the rationale behind the approach of both unions towards Polish migrants was based only on the pragmatic approach presented by Jefferys (2007) or Haus (2002) or that trade unions treated Polish workers only instrumentally when it came to increasing or sustaining their influence. Although, this pragmatic approach was a necessity at a time of a declining membership base and diminished trade union power, both unions were equally committed to improving migrant rights and including them within their structures. Nonetheless, Polish migrants were more relevant for enhancing Unia's power in its key sectors than for Unison. And as such, within the logic of trade unions' strategic choices (Frege and Kelly, 2003), reaching out to Polish migrants contributed more to the revitalisation of Unia than the revitalisation of Unison. However, while the pragmatic argument was possibly the most compelling for Unia, this was not the only reason why the union continued its efforts aimed at

enhancing the inclusion of Polish workers. Unia was also historically committed to solidarity between workers and aimed to support their integration within its structures.

Finally, perceiving Polish workers as a source of trade union power also allows us to combine all research factors presented to explain implementation gaps and their interdependencies in terms of unions' decision-making processes. As already mentioned, factors regarding trade unions' internal variable and dynamics such as union identity, rooted practices and structures were more influential than contextual variables, including social and economic factors, institutional frameworks or society's attitude towards migrants. For instance, Polish workers in Switzerland were not only a potential source of new members. Thanks to their presence in some of the most exploitative sectors, such as care and construction, they could be used as a vehicle for Unia to increase its presence in these sectors and to regulate them. Furthermore, Unia could use the mobilisation of Polish members to influence the government and employers and strengthen its overall position within the Swiss industrial relations model.

7.7 Conclusions

The thesis shows that Unia's strategy regarding organising Polish migrants was more successful because Unia recognised the potential of Polish workers to increase the union's industrial power and contribute to its renewal. Unia's strategy was built on the historically embedded commitment to special treatment of migrants that resulted in having designated structures in place or employing organisers from within the migrant group. Unlike Unison, Unia's structures were more accommodating for Polish workers because participation was based on a concept of language and nationality rather than ethnicity. Furthermore, Unia used the opportunity provided by direct democracy, such as influencing the results of referenda, which resulted in establishing *flank measures* that not only protected migrants' wages but increased the trade union's powers.

The study shows that factors such as union identities and structures were more important in implementing policies on organising Polish workers than contextual variables (industrial relations models, the labour and economic market situation or the attitude of society towards migrants). In this way, the study contributes to the findings of other researchers (see Wrench 2004; Jefferys, 2007 or Marino, 2012) who have criticised Penninx and Roosblad's theory from

2000 for drawing too much attention to the institutional context when analysing unions' responses to migrants. Furthermore, the study tested the theory of Connolly et al. (2014) in relation to Unison and Unia as well the strategic choice theory of Frege and Kelly (2003), which has an emphasis on union structures and framing processes (i.e. unions' identities, leadership and repertoire of action). The latter theory provides a more convincing framework for understanding why Unia was more successful in the organisation of Polish workers. Drawing on the identity of its forming union and its commitment to migrants' inclusion, Unia was able to create relevant structures supporting the inclusion of migrants and to perceive them as a source of trade union power and renewal. Furthermore, Unia did not separate migrant workers from the core union's policies and strategies, as was the case for Unison (see also Tapia, 2014). Even though Unison was historically committed to the special treatment approach, its commitment in relation to Polish members was not long lasting, and after the MWP and HWP projects concluded, Polish workers were treated in the same way as local workers.

Unia's different approach suggests that trade unions may treat Polish migrants instrumentally and use them to support unions' own interests. However, even if the pragmatic approach to organising Polish migrants was an important factor in terms of strategy-making, there were also other factors involved, such as Unia's historical commitment to protecting migrants' rights.

The study argues that through the provision of a dedicated resource it would be possible to influence and increase migrants' engagement in the union. In addition, successful inclusion of migrant workers depends on the regional and local structures, which are important in delivering the strategy.

Polish workers are similar to other migrant groups in terms of their approach to trade unions; and the challenges of organising them are mostly related to the non-standard nature of the jobs they undertake. Organising these workers requires not only the use of new organising techniques, but a strategy based on special treatment, the particularistic approach, which recognises them not simply as workers but workers of a particular cultural or ethnic group (Alberti et. al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1993).

The comparison of the Unison and Unia case studies shows that a higher level of institutional embeddedness (in this case Unia) does not negatively impact the union's effort to include migrants. Although the research is located at micro level, that is, individual trade unions' approach to a single group of workers, it is plausible to say that these findings challenge the argument that unions which are more institutionally embedded or have more developed internal structures perceive the issue of migrant workers' integration as less important (see Krings, 2009; Wrench 2004; Marino, 2012; Kranendonk and Beer 2016). The inclusive approach to migrants is thus more connected with issues related to unions' identity than to their political or institutional influence.

Finally, this study suggests, in line with Milkman (2006), that migrant workers, in this case Polish migrant (mobile) workers are keen to join trade unions and can be mobilised to advance their economic and social position. It is up to the Western European trade unions to recognise and use the labour agency of these migrant workers for the benefit of local workers and trade union renewal.

7.8 Recommendations for trade unions on organising migrant workers

1. The research confirmed that having a dedicated officer who shares a cultural background and language with the target workers helps support long-lasting inclusion of migrant workers within the trade union. The role of these officers does not solely consist of helping workers overcome language barriers; after all, as discussed earlier, in many situations that was not required. Instead, their key function is to build trust between the members and the union. That is, it is recommended that the trade unions need to focus equally on workplace issues and community-building when it comes to organising migrant workers.
2. Organising Polish workers should not be undertaken solely through a time-limited project as these are time-bound and do not always allow enough time for trust to develop. For instance, the example of Unison shows that active members recruited during the project left the union when they were not provided with the support required in the form of dedicated resources and structures.
3. Formal structures, such as self-organised groups which support disadvantaged workers, need to be made available to migrants regardless of their ethnicity. Within Unison, ethnically white migrant members did not have access to formal structures where their

interests could be appropriately represented. Migrant workers should not be defined only through the lens of their ethnicity; instead, it is necessary to consider aspects such as language, culture and country of origin. When it comes to European migrants, language can be a crucial aspect of their identity, as demonstrated in the context of the Swiss case, where the common language between striking members helped enhance their inclusion.

4. Union structures overall should be flexible enough to support the organisation of migrant workers. This thesis describes some examples of good practice, such as the creation of informal networks of Polish migrants in Unison and Unia which successfully built links with Polish communities in the UK and Switzerland.
5. There is a need to come up with a terminology which allows differentiation between ethnic minority (Black) British members and migrant European members as the current terms can be confusing for both migrants and local workers.⁵⁸
6. Unions need to ensure that there is a match between the expectations they have of migrants and the expectations that the migrants have of the trade union. Otherwise, as discussed elsewhere, active migrant members will find themselves unsure as to what contribution they can make to the union.
7. Overall, migrants should be considered as a potential power resource that could allow unions to increase their industrial power and could support their revitalisation strategy.

⁵⁸ Holgate (2004) similarly found that migrant workers of Asian origin were not sure whether they could join Black members committees because they were not Black.

8 Bibliography

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Appendix 1 List of interviewees

| | Trade union | Region | Role/unit | Job/position | Code or name used in text | Gender | Age range | Language |
|----|-------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| 1. | Unison | South East | Activist | health care assistant | Łukasz* | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 2. | Unison | Scotland | Activist | care worker | UK10 | F | 20–30 | Polish |
| 3. | Unison | South East | Activist | hospital cleaner | UK12 | F | 40–50 | Polish |
| 4. | Unison | East Midlands | Activist | care worker | Michał | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 5. | Unison | South East | Activist | hospital cleaner | Marcin | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 6. | Unison | Head Office | Assistant general secretary | official | Assistant general secretary | M | 40–50 | English |
| 7. | Unison | South West | Member | community worker | Elżbieta | M | 40–50 | Polish |
| 8. | Unison | London | Member | security | Zofia | F | 30–40 | Polish |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---|-------|---------|
| 9. | Unison | South West | Member | hospital porter | Andrzej | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 10. | Unison | East Midlands | Member | care worker | Bozena | F | 30–40 | Polish |
| 11. | Unison | Eastern | Member | care worker | Beata | F | 40–50 | Polish |
| 12. | Unison | Head Office | MWP project manager | official | MWP project manager | M | 60–70 | English |
| 13. | Unison | Head Office | MWP project officer | official | MWP project officer | F | 40–50 | English |
| 14. | Unison | South East | Polish organiser | official | Polish organiser 2 | F | 30–40 | Polish |
| 15. | Unison | Head Office | Polish organiser | official | Artur*, Polish organiser | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 16. | Unison | Eastern | Regional manager | official | Regional manager | F | 40–50 | English |
| 17. | Unison | West Midlands | Regional secretary | official | Regional secretary | M | 40–50 | English |
| 18. | Unison | Scotland | Education officer, Polish | official | Education officer | F | 30–40 | English |
| 19. | TUC | Head Office | Race equality officer | official | Race equality officer | M | 50–60 | English |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---|-------|--------|
| 20. | Unia | Geneva | Co-president of migrants' group | cycling courier | Rafał* | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 21. | Unia | Basel | Activist | construction | Romuald* | M | 60–70 | Polish |
| 22. | Unia | Wallis | Activist | care worker | CH10 | F | 60–70 | Polish |
| 23. | Unia | Ticino | Co-president of care workers' group | care worker | Alina* | F | 60–70 | Polish |
| 24. | Unia | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Co-president of care workers' group | care worker | Anna* | F | 40–50 | Polish |
| 25. | Unia | Head Office | CEE project manager | official | CEE project manager | F | 60–70 | German |
| 26. | Unia | Head Office | Head of migration | official | Head of migration | F | 30–40 | German |
| 27. | Unia | Geneva | Member | construction | CH11 | M | 50–60 | Polish |
| 28. | Unia | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Member | construction | CH12 | M | 40–50 | Polish |
| 29. | Unia | Central Switzerland | Member | construction | CH13 | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 30. | Unia | Bern | Member | construction | CH14 | M | 40–50 | Polish |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---|-------|--------|
| 31. | Unia | Ticino | Member | care worker | CH18 | F | 60–70 | Polish |
| 32. | Unia | Head Office | Migration Unit | official | Member of migration unit 1 | F | 40–50 | German |
| 33. | Unia | Head Office | Migration Unit | official | Member of migration unit 2 | M | 50–60 | German |
| 34. | Unia | Region | Polish organiser | official | Kacper, Polish organiser | M | 30–40 | Polish |
| 35. | Unia | Region | Polish organiser | official | Sławek, Polish organiser | M | 40–50 | Polish |
| 36. | Unia | Basel | Regional secretary | official | Regional secretary, Basel | M | 60–70 | German |
| 37. | Unia | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Regional secretary | official | Regional Secretary, Zurich | M | 30–40 | German |
| 38. | Unia | Head Office | President | official | Unia president | F | 40–50 | German |
| 39. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Swiss organiser | official | Unia organiser 1 | F | 20–30 | German |
| 40. | Unia | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Swiss organiser | official | Unia organiser 2 | F | 20–30 | German |

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|---|-------|---------|
| | (strike) | | | | | | | |
| 41. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Regional manager | official | Regional manager | M | 40–50 | English |
| 42. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Member | care worker | Monika | F | 50–60 | Polish |
| 43. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Member | care worker | S02 | F | 40–50 | Polish |
| 44. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Member | care worker | Agnieszka | F | 40–50 | Polish |
| 45. | Unia (strike) | Zurich-Schaffhausen | Member | care worker | Maria | F | 40–50 | Polish |

* Real name of the person.

Appendix 2 Interview questions

Interviews with Polish members in Unison and Unia

1. How long have you lived in the UK/ Switzerland?
2. Why have you decided to move to the UK/ Switzerland?
3. What were your living and working conditions like when you arrived?
4. Could you tell me more about your current job?
5. Is Unison recognised in your workplace? Does Unia have a collective agreement in your workplace?
6. Could you tell me why and when you joined the union?
7. Did anyone encourage you to join the or it was your own decision?
8. Did you used to be a trade union member back in Poland?
9. Do you think your needs are taken into consideration by Unison/ Unia?
10. Do you think Unison/ Unia should pay more attention to you and your particular needs as a Polish member?
11. Have you ever thought of becoming a union rep?
 - a. What kind of role would like to take? or
 - b. Why not?
12. Do you think that all members are treated in the same way within Unison/ Unia?
13. Would you say that there is any discrimination within Unison/ Unia?
14. Have you ever experienced any discrimination in Unison/Unia?
15. Do you want to add anything more to what you have just said?

Interviews with Polish activists in Unison and Unia

1. How long have you lived in the UK/ Switzerland?
2. Why have you decided to move to the UK/ Switzerland?
3. What were your living and working conditions like when you arrived?
4. Could you tell me more about your current job?
5. Is Unison recognised in your workplace? Does Unia have a collective agreement in your workplace?
6. Could you tell me why and when you joined the union?
7. Did anyone encourage you to join the union or it was your own decision?
8. Have you been a trade union member back in Poland?
9. Do you think your needs are taken into consideration by Unison/ Unia?

10. Do you think Unison/ Unia should pay more attention to you and your particular needs as a Polish activist?
11. How did you become a union representative? Was it your own decision or you have been encouraged by someone else?
12. How far do you think you could influence what is going on in your trade union (local branch/ region)?
13. Do you think that all members/activists are treated in the same way within Unison/Unia?
14. Have you ever experienced any discrimination in Unison/ Unia?
15. Do you want to add anything more to what you have just said?

Interviews with Polish organisers in Unison and Unia

1. How long have you lived in the UK/Switzerland?
2. Why did you decide to move the UK/Switzerland?
3. How did you become a union organiser?
4. What do you do as an organiser?
5. Do you work with Polish workers?
6. Have you heard about the MWP/ CEE project?
7. What do you think about this project?
8. Do you think the project met its expectations?
9. What do you think should be done to support the inclusion of Polish workers in the union?
10. Do you think that all members/activists are treated in the same way in the union?
11. Do you want to add anything more to what you have just said?

Interviews with regional secretaries and managers in Unison and Unia

1. Could you tell me about your career in the union? How long have you worked for Unison/Unia?
2. Could you tell me more about your region's policy on migrant and ethnic workers and how this is being implemented?
3. Are there particular migrant communities that Unison/ Unia is interested in?
4. Did you hear about MWP/ CEE project?
 - a. Could you tell me more about this project? How it was implemented in your region? or
 - b. Why do you think you have not been informed about this project?

5. Could you tell me more about your experience of working with migrants?
6. How many migrant workers are in workplaces organised by the union in your region?
7. How does your region organise migrant workers?
8. Could you tell me more about CEE workers joining Unison/Unia?
9. In your opinion, what will influence how well Unison/Unia organise Polish and other migrant members and activists?
10. *(only for Unison) Do you have any data on Polish migrant workers' participation in your region?*
 1. *How many Polish members and reps does Unison have in your region?*
 2. *How many of them participate in regional events i.e.: committees, conferences?*
11. Could you tell me why Union does not record its members' nationality, country of origin or immigration background/ why Unia does not record its members' ethnicity?
12. Do you want to add anything more to what you have just said?

Interview with the MWP project manager/CEE project manager

1. Could you tell me about your career in the union?
2. Could you tell me more about Unison/ Unia policy on migrant workers?
3. How the policy is being implemented?
4. Are there particular migrant communities that Unison/ Unia is interested in?
5. Why has Unison decided to launch the MWP/ CEE project? Have you participated in the decision making process of initiating this project?
 - a. If not, how did you become engaged?
6. What were the aims of the project?
7. How was the project implemented?
8. Do you think the project met its objectives?
9. When you implemented the project you presumably had to work with regions?
 - a. How do you feel the project was perceived by regional and branch officers?
10. If you met difficulties during this project, what were they and do you think they were different from those encountered in other union projects?
11. What the integration of Polish workers looks liked after the project finished?
12. In your opinion, what will influence how well the union keeps Polish members and activists recruited through this project?
13. *(only for Unison) Do you have any data on Polish migrant workers' participation in Unison/ Unia structures?*

- a. *How many Polish members and reps does Unison have?*
 - b. *How many of them participate in regional and national Unison events i.e.: committees, conferences?*
14. Why does Unison not record nationality of its members/ why does Unia not record the ethnicity of its members?
15. Would you like to add anything more to what you have said?

Interviews with the MWP project officer and members of the migration unit of Unia

1. Could you tell me about your career in the union? When did you start working for the union?
2. Could you tell me more about your union's policy on migrant workers?
3. How is the policy being implemented?
4. Are there particular migrant communities that Unison/Unia is interested in?
5. How did you become engaged in the MWP/CEE project?
6. What was your role in the project?
7. What are your feelings about the project?
8. How did you implement the project? Did you meet any difficulties in implementing the project?
9. If you met difficulties during this project, what were they and do you think they were different from those faced in other union projects.
10. When you implemented the project you presumably had to work with regions?
 - a. How do you feel the project was perceived by regional and branch officers?
11. What the integration of Polish/ migrant workers looks liked after the project finished?
12. In your opinion, what will influence how well Unison/Unia keeps Polish members and activists recruited as a result of this project?
13. *(only for Unison) Do you have any data on Polish migrant workers' participation in Unison structures?*
 - a. *How many Polish members and reps does Unison have?*
 - b. *How many of them participate in regional and national Unison events i.e.: committees, conferences?*
14. Would you like to add anything more to what you have said?

Interview with Unison assistant general secretary

1. Could you tell me about your career in Unison/Unia? When did you start working for the union?
2. How did you come to work on migrant workers?
3. Are there particular migrant communities that Unison is interested in?
4. Could you tell me more about Unison policy on migrant and Black members workers?
How the policy is being implemented?
5. Have you heard about the MWP project? Could you tell me more about this project?
6. In your opinion, what are the outcomes of this project for Unison?
7. Are you envisaging another project of this kind in future?
8. In your opinion, what will influence how well Unison recruits Polish members and activists?
9. Could you tell me why Union does not record members' nationality, country of origin or immigration background?
10. Would you like to add anything more to what you have said?

Interview with Unia president

1. What do you think is important for Unia's engagement with migrant workers?
 - a. Is there any formal policy on Unia engagement with migrants?
2. How the policy is being implemented?
3. In a trade union context, what does integration of migrants mean to you?
4. How would you judge if the union's approach to migrants was successful?
5. Are there any groups of migrants that Unia is particularly interested in?
6. What do you think about Polish workers in comparison with other migration groups?
7. How do you think the CEE project fits into Unia strategy on migrant workers?
8. What do you think will represent successful integration of Polish workers in Unia?
9. Do you want to add anything more to what you have said?

Interview questions for case study of strike care workers in Switzerland

Interview with Polish care workers

1. How did you start working as a carer for elderly people?
2. Why did you join the trade union?
3. Why did you decide to go on strike?
4. Have you ever taken part in a strike in Poland?

5. How well did Unia support you during the strike?
6. What do you think Unia should do now?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interview with Unia organisers and a regional manager

1. What do you do in Unia? What is your role?
2. How long have you worked for Unia?
3. Do you work with migrant workers?
4. Why and how did the recent strike begin?
5. What were your demand when the strike started?
6. What was this strike like?
7. What are your reflections on working with Polish migrant women in Switzerland?
8. Any lessons learnt from the strike?
9. What are your plans for the future?
10. Do you want to add anything more to what you have said?

Appendix 3 Quotes in original languages

Quotes from Chapter 5

Today I don't really know what Unison wants from me, a Polish activist within the organisation, I feel a bit like a burden. I have absolutely no clue what else I could do for Unison apart from the things I have already done. (Marcin, Polish activist).

Na dzień dzisiejszy ja nie wiem co Unison ode mnie chce jako Polaka działającego w tej organizacji, będącego trochę balastem. Ja nie mam zielonego pojęcia, co ja mógłbym dla takiego Unisonu zrobić, poza tym, co już zrobiłem.

Artur, Polish organiser: *At the time Polish Activists Network was up and running already, and the beginning was promising, but when you left Unison it turned out that there is nobody to take over. (...) We also had [planned] another meeting of the Polish Activists Network, in 3 months, the meeting didn't happen, and people began feeling disaffected, some of them gave up their roles, some of them left Unison completely (...).*

Wtedy Network Polskich Aktywistów działał i zapowiadał się dobrze. Ale jak odeszłeś z Unison to okazało się nie ma nikogo kto mógłby przejąć twoją pracę. (...) Planowaliśmy potem kolejne spotkanie za trzy miesiące, ale ono się nie odbyło i ludzi byli bardzo niezadowoleni. Niektórzy z nich nie są aktywni w Unison niektórzy wystąpili (...).

Michał: *I can say that Unison has a good handle on what is happening within the NHS but struggles when it comes to the private sector. It is not quite their fault but I don't really see any attempts to change the structure which doesn't seem to be aligned to the changing labour market. (...). I suspect that because 90% of members work in the NHS and I am in private sector, my influence is much smaller. And so I don't really count as much as others do.*

Moja obserwacja jest taka, że Unison dobrze sobie radzi w NHS, ale zupełnie nie w sektorze prywatnym. To nie jest do końca wina Unison ale nie widzę tam skłonności żeby zmienić strukturę, która wydaje mi się nie dostosowana do tego, jak rynek pracy się zmienia. Podejrzewam, że to przez to, że 90 procent członków pracuje w NHS, a ja jestem sektor prywatny, dużo mniejszy. W związku z tym nie liczy się tak samo, jak cała reszta.

Marcin: *For instance, a couple of months ago, or maybe over a year ago, there was quite a big hurrah related to the issue of pensions here in the UK. I was trying to convince my branch that maybe it would be worth to make the effort, I even offered my services as a volunteer, to translate a leaflet we were handing out, after all, sooner or later Poles will be affected by pension-related issues. But the answer I got was along the lines of, Poles are here for a short time only so they don't really need this kind of information.*

Kilkanaście miesięcy temu było dość słynne zamieszanie, związane z tematami emerytalnymi tu w Wielkiej Brytanii, które ja powiedzmy, usiłowałem przekonać branch, żeby się może też pofatygować i spróbować. Bym sam to chętnie zrobił na ochotnika przetłumaczyć taką piękną ulotkę, którą rozdawaliśmy po angielsku na język polski, ponieważ tak według mojego widzimisie, no to te tematy emerytalne tych Polaków, kiedyś mniej czy bardziej będą dotyczyć. Odpowiedź dostałem taką, że Polacy są tutaj tylko na chwilę, w związku z tym jest im to do niczego niepotrzebne.

Zofia: *As Polish citizen, I consider myself to be well informed and quite intelligent but here, if somebody gives me a complaints form, I mean, I don't really understand the title and so the language problem is indeed quite a large barrier. This links to problems with integration because lack of communication ability does create problems. I can't exactly sit down with an English person of my age and have a chat about say cartoons we used to watch as kids because our upbringing was different. There's so many of those little things (...).*

Ja, jeśli chodzi o obywatelstwo polskie, czuję się osobą inteligentną, natomiast jeśli tutaj ktoś mi daje formę, która dotyczy skarg, to ja nawet nie rozumiem tego tytułu, tak że problem językowy jest dużą barierą. To też jest problem z integracją, bo jednak brak swobody w porozumiewaniu się to duży problem. Nie mogę na przykład usiąść z Anglikiem w moim wieku i porozmawiać o bajkach z dzieciństwa, dlatego że oglądaliśmy inne bajki, byliśmy inaczej wychowani. To jest mnóstwo takich drobnych rzeczy.

Elżbieta: *I had never been employed anywhere in Poland. I was in the education system, high school, university, I graduated and came here and only worked in Poland as a volunteer as such I had no need [to join a union]. But both my parents were in trade unions (...) before the great transformation and during post-communist times. Dad used to represent Solidarity at his workplace (...) and it was my parents who convinced me to get involved in trade unionism here.*

Ja w Polsce nigdy nie pracowałam. Ja w Polsce byłam w zasadzie w systemie edukacji, skończyłam szkołę średnią, poszłam na uniwersytet, skończyłam uniwersytet i wyjechałam tutaj, tak że ja nie miałam okazji w Polsce pracować, bo w Polsce pracowałam tylko jako wolontariusz. W związku z tym nigdy takiej potrzeby jako tako nie było. Ale oboje rodzice byli w związkach zawodowych (...) przed wielkimi zmianami i w czasach postkomunistycznych. Tato, tato był reprezentatorem w „Solidarności” u siebie w pracy (...) i właśnie moi rodzice namówili mnie do tego, żeby łączyć się w związki tutaj.

Łukasz: *You have to be active, go to meetings, put the message across (...). You can try and bury your head in the sand, pretend that nothing is happening, or you could try and have a go at changing things, the way that other minorities did it (...) through open activity and integration. At the end of the day we are fighting for the same thing, right? For social justice and justice for the working class, right.*

Znaczy trzeba być aktywnym, trzeba chodzić na spotkania, trzeba po prostu jakoś mówić ten swój punkt widzenia, prawda? Jak to się mówi, put the message across. Można, schować głowę w piasek, udawać, że nic się nie dzieje, a można próbować zmienić, to podejście, tak jak zrobiły to inne mniejszości narodowe (...) przez działalność w związkach zawodowych, właśnie przez otwartą działalność i przez integrację. Bo na koniec dnia my wszyscy walczymy o to samo, prawda? O sprawiedliwość społeczną i o sprawiedliwość dla, dla klasy pracowniczej, prawda?

Andrzej: *Of course. When I needed to gather some additional information, I would go to the local branch secretary and the feedback was immediate. Everything I needed would be explained, even going above and beyond with advice what to do if I needed anything more.*

Oczywiście. Jak kiedyś miałem potrzebę dowiedzieć się dodatkowych informacji, szedłem do sekretarza branżowego i miałem natychmiastowy odzew. Wszystko, co mi było potrzebne było wytłumaczone, nawet więcej, z poradą co zrobić jeżeli coś potrzebuję.

Marcin: *If the whole idea is that I should pay membership fees and just be there as a member, great, just let somebody tell me that and this is what I will do. And if they want me to be very active, absolutely, I can do that, I would like to know that my activity has some sort of direction,*

that we are creating something great, something that will be beneficial to me as well and in some way will fulfil my dreams (...) and will be good for the union.

Jeżeli to ma polegać na tym, że mam płacić składki i po prostu być to ja bardzo chętnie, niech mi tylko ktoś to powie, a ja będę to robił. A jeżeli ktoś chce, żebym był bardzo aktywny, a ja mogę być nawet bardzo aktywny, to chciałbym wiedzieć, że ta moja aktywność idzie gdzieś w jakąś stronę, że tworzymy coś fajnego, coś co będzie korzystne i dla mnie i w jakiś sposób spełni moje marzenia (...)i będzie korzystne też dla związku.

Marcin: *I still remember when we were organising the strikes and we had this big meeting when suddenly a couple of my colleagues stood up and gave this beautiful explanation in English how to organise the strike so that it is more successful and sells better in the media. Well, the Polish colleagues' solutions were really radical and typically Polish as in blocking the pedestrian crossings in more or less legal ways.*

Pamiętam to do dziś jak organizowaliśmy strajki i mieliśmy takie piękne wielkie spotkanie, gdy nagle wstało na nim kilku moich polskich kolegów i po angielsku ładnie wytłumaczyli, co należałoby zrobić, jak należałoby zorganizować ten strajk, żeby to odniosło większy skutek i lepiej się sprzedawało medialnie. Owszem, rozwiązania były bardzo radykalne i były takie typowo polskie – typu blokowanie przejść dla pieszych w mniej czy bardziej legalny sposób.

Beata: *This is supposed to be a Polish seminar organised by Unison but we are operating in English and are supposed to use English to answer any questions.*

To jest niby Polish seminar z Unisonu, ale cały czas operujemy angielskimi zdaniem i odpowiadamy w języku angielskim na pytania.

Quotes from Chapter 6

In my opinion, the truth is that in many cases Poles cope perfectly fine without Unia, however Unia will not be able to cope without migrant members, whether these are Poles or other nationalities (Sławek, Polish organiser).

Moim zdaniem prawda jest taka, że Polacy potrafią w wielu przypadkach obejść się bez Unii, natomiast Unia nie będzie w stanie się obejść bez członków i czy to będą Polacy czy inne grupy narodowościowe.

Unia president: *Since the 70s we've been aware in our organisations (predecessor organisation GBI) that organising of migrant workers must be at the core of a trade union's work. This is also the reason why we have organised migrants in a systematic way and why migrants constitute a large part of our membership.*

Seit den 70er Jahren ist in unserer Organisation (in unserer Vorgängerorganisation GBI) das Bewusstsein, dass Organisierung der Migrantinnen und Migranten eine zentrale Arbeit der Gewerkschaften sein muss. Das ist auch der Grund warum wir systematisch Migrantinnen und Migranten organisiert haben und wieso wir einen grossen Anteil an unserer Mitgliedschaft, Migrantinnen und Migranten sind.

Regional secretary Basel: *Firstly, this was not a project that was embedded in the regions as was the case for all other organising projects but was embedded in the head office and in various regions, depending on the needs, contributed to the creation of local structures for Polish workers. And secondly, the project was run relatively independently from the existing trade union structures.*

Das eine ist, es ist nicht ein Projekt das, wie sonst praktisch alle Aufbauprojekte in der Region angesiedelt ist. Sondern es ist etwas was national angesiedelt ist und was in verschiedenen Regionen dann, je nachdem wo es eben Möglichkeiten gibt zum Strukturaufbau geführt hat. Und zweitens es ist ein Projekt, das relativ unabhängig von den bestehenden gewerkschaftlichen Strukturen angelegt wurde.

Romuald: *If there is for instance, let's call it a problem, if there is a major issue on the construction site, where there are for instance thirty or forty people who are badly paid then you can count on the press, TV and big hoorah, then everybody [in Unia – AR] gets involved. However, when it comes to something that affects just one or two people, this is what I have to deal with quite a lot, this is then quite often dismissed.*

No tak. Moim zdaniem, wiesz, jeżeli jest jakaś, nazwijmy to jakiś problem, jest na budowie jakaś wielka afera, gdzie jest na przykład trzydziestu czy czterdziestu ludzi, którzy są źle opłacani, do tego wtedy jest prasa, telewizja i wielkie halo, to wtedy wszyscy się angażują [w Unii]. Natomiast jeżeli chodzi o jednego człowieka czy dwóch, tak jak ja mam często z takimi przypadkami (...), to jest wszystko lekceważone.

Member of migration unit 1: *For me it is something in between. Well, on the one hand, it is an approach from top to bottom. That means the head office organises something, sends*

information, co-ordinates the structures. And the officer from the head office passes it on. But at the same time the movement comes also to the top. Well you know, this is the movement in two directions.

Ich finde, ich habe das Gefühl beim polnischen Projekt. Für mich, ist eigentlich etwas dazwischen. Also zum einen ist da von Top zu Bottom. Das heisst die Zentrale organisiert etwas, schickt die Information, organisiert die Organe. Und der Sekretär der in der Zentrale ist, liefert das weiter, aber dann kommt auch von unten etwas nach oben. Also weisst du, das ist eine Bewegung in zwei Richtungen.

Regional secretary from Zurich: *It is difficult, because you have many people who are here for 90 days and then come back. Membership is a difficult subject in this context. There is an opportunity [to organise Polish workers AR] on a project basis [as was the case of] Primula or a group of Polish workers, who complain about something. Then you could do something for them.*

Also es ist auch wirklich schwierig, weil du dort viele Leute hast, die sind 90 Tage hier und dann gehen sie wieder. Mitgliedschaft ist dort ein schwieriges Thema. Das ist eher Opportunität je nach Projekt. Primula oder eine Gruppe polnische Arbeiter, die sich über etwas beklagt. Dann kannst du mit denen etwas machen.

Slawek, Polish organiser: *I mean I would like to add that I read somewhere that Poles are an ethnic group that has best integrated within those countries [UK and Germany] and really, when I observe my Polish members, I am really proud of the fact that each of them is able to communicate quite well in German and so can organise within the union and very often, after spending a couple of years here, can blend into the society.*

To znaczy ja chciałbym dodać to, że gdzieś czytałem że Polacy są najlepiej integrującą się grupą narodowościową w tychże krajach [Wielka Brytania i Niemcy] i rzeczywiście, jak obserwuję moich Polaków, to jestem dumny z tego, że każdy z nich w miarę komunikatywny sposób rozmawia po niemiecku i jest w stanie się tutaj dosyć szybko zorganizować i częstokroć, po kilku latach, praktycznie wtopić tutaj w społeczeństwo.

Anna: *I never belonged to a trade union in Poland, but I think this may be connected with what is happening in the country. I mean with the general political situation in Poland. And I think*

there is a negative association with trade unions [in Poland]. I used to work for Polish Mail. They do have trade unions; I didn't belong. I don't know why.

Nie wiem, dlaczego. Ja nigdy w Polsce nie należałam do związków zawodowych, ale myślę, że to może związane jest z tym, co się dzieje u nas w kraju. Znaczy z naszą sytuacją, jaka jest w Polsce, polityczną w ogóle. To myślę, że związki zawodowe się źle kojarzą. Ja pracowałam w Poczcie Polskiej, tam też są związki zawodowe, ja tam nie należałam. Dlaczego – nie wiem.

Rafał: *It is a problem; Poles have very bad experiences of trade unions in Poland because it is well known, Polish trade unions are what they are, and it is very difficult to convince people that it works very differently in Switzerland. I don't know how it works in England, but Switzerland is really different than Poland and [the difficulty is] to reaching people.*

Jest to problem taki, że Polacy mają bardzo złe doświadczenia ze związkami zawodowymi w Polsce, bo wiadomo – związki zawodowe w Polsce są, jakie są i bardzo ciężko jest ich przekonać do tego, że w Szwajcarii działa to zupełnie inaczej. Nie wiem, jak w Anglii, ale w Szwajcarii działa to zupełnie inaczej, niż to działa w Polsce i mówię – dotrzeć do nich. To jest najtrudniejsze, żeby do nich dotrzeć po prostu.

Kacper, Polish organiser: *Poles have a high level of trade union awareness without consciously knowing that this is the case. I don't know if I am explaining this well, but Poles know what they can demand as employees, what should be the work conditions (...) as such, Poles have expectations and a high level of awareness as employees but low awareness as unionists.*

Polacy mają świadomość taką związkową bardzo wysoką, nie mając świadomości tego, że ją mają. Nie wiem czy się dobrze wyraziłem, ale Polacy wiedzą, czego oni jako pracownicy mogą wymagać, jakie powinny być mniej więcej warunki pracy i Polacy mają zawsze jakieś oczekiwania i wysoki poziom świadomości pracownika, ale niski poziom świadomości związkowca.

Regional secretary, Basel: *Well I am not concerned with the concept of race. We generally make no differences here [as opposed to the UK AR] (...) For instance Swiss nationality Swiss means that you have a Swiss passport. Then you could be black, yellow, white... I can be born in Africa, in Europe... I can be naturalised here or there [in all countries]. This is maybe interesting for sociologists. For us it is not relevant: We all have equal rights. But we need*

[information about] nationality among other things, because we are not all confronted with the same problems.

Also das Konzept der Rasse ist mir so völlig fern. Also wir machen grundsätzlich hier keine solche Unterscheidung (as opposed to the UK) (...) Zum Beispiel, also die Nationalität Schweizer Bürger. Bedeutet einen Schweizer Pass zu haben. Da kann ich dann schwarz sein, gelb sein, weiss sein. Ich kann früher . . . ich kann in Afrika geboren sein, ich kann in Europa geboren sein, ich kann eingebürgert sein oder ich kann hier... Das mag vielleicht für Soziologen interessant sein. Für uns ist das dann nicht mehr relevant. Für uns ist relevant: Wir haben alle die gleichen Rechte. Aber die Nationalität brauchen wir unter anderem, weil wir nicht alle mit den gleichen Problemen konfrontiert sind.

Member of migration unit 1: *Well I think it has to do with it coming from the top to the bottom. This was difficult. Suddenly the head office has appointed someone to organise workers in the region. Surely this has irritated some regions. And this has to do with a federal system of our work. This [decision to appoint me by the head office] went a little against the [principle of] of the independent way of working of trade union regions. I think this was the biggest difficulty of this project.*

Also ich denke es hat eben damit zu tun, es war, wie das eben von oben nach unten kam. Das war sicher eine Schwierigkeit. Also das plötzlich die Zentrale jemanden angestellt hat um in der Region polnische Arbeiter zu organisieren. Das hat einige Regionen sicherlich irritiert. Und das hat ein bisschen mit dem föderalistischen System unserer Arbeit zu tun. Das war ein bisschen gegen die Unabhängigkeit der Gewerkschaftsarbeit in den Regionen, ich glaube das war eine Schwierigkeit.

Kacper, Polish organiser: *Despite the extent of my duties I really do a lot for Poles in all cantons, and then I also take the calls from Poles calling from Poland who want information, and my immediate boss, the head of the sector, he is well aware of this and he says that is not a problem as long as I am fulfilling all of my other obligations to the best of my ability.*

Pomimo mojego zakresu obowiązków to ja i tak robię dla Polaków tak dużo, we wszystkich kantonach, a do tego dzwonią też Polacy z Polski, żeby się dowiadywać różnych rzeczy i mój szef bezpośredni w moim sektorze, czyli tym sektorze usług wie o tym doskonale i powiedział że nie ma problemu, o ile moja praca jest wykonana na tyle, na ile potrafię.

Slawek, Polish organiser: *What would have an influence... Well I mean the most important thing is reaching Poles through Polish secretaries, Polish-speaking secretaries. I still think there are too few of them in the first instance; and then secondly, those very limited resources are being utilised inadequately – all of that is due to conflicts or maybe competition between the regions. They do not consider the fact that I speak Polish when thinking about what is needed in a different region; they do not really have a habit of sending requests to a different region.*

Co miałyby wpływ... No na pewno bardzo istotną rzeczą jest tutaj docieranie do Polaków poprzez polskich sekretarzy, polskojęzycznych sekretarzy, których, uważam, jest za mało po pierwsze, a po drugie – wciąż bardzo niewielkie zasoby są niewłaściwie wykorzystywane, ponieważ poprzez konflikty, lub może inaczej, rywalizację pomiędzy regionami to, że ja mówię po polsku, nie jest wykorzystywana przy zapotrzebowaniu w innych regionach. One nie mają zwyczaju wysłać prośby do innego regionu.

Romuald: *I feel like I am one of the smallest cog wheels in that massive machine. Sure, the machine wouldn't keep going without these small cogs, but whether I can influence anything... no one talks to me or takes me seriously (...) even though I have more time and I have the experience. I am a pensioner but I am still working (...) In theory you could be thinking 'right, this person has more time, wants to be more engaged, now can be engaged' but they are deaf to that.*

Ja jestem najmniejszym kółeczkiem zębatym w tej wielkiej maszynie, to coś może to jedno... Pewnie, że bez tych małych kółeczek maszyna też się nie kręci, nie? Ale żebym miał jakikolwiek wpływ na to... Tym bardziej wiesz, że jestem w gruncie rzeczy rencistą teraz ale też sobie dorabiam (...) a w gruncie rzeczy rencista ma teoretycznie więcej czasu i mam, mam doświadczenie, mam więcej czasu, jeszcze pracuję (...) teoretycznie można pomyśleć :„Aha, ten człowiek ma więcej czasu, chce się angażować, to może się teraz angażować, ale to jest wiesz, zamknięte na głucho.

Unia organiser 1: *In my experience Polish women are quite strong ... well at least the ones whom I have met. We've supported them, without them having to rely on us too much. ... The sense of belonging was very strong among them. So ... the strike really belonged to them.*

Aber ich glaube schon, also das die Frauen aus Polen, also die, die ich kennengelernt habe, sind sicherlich auch nicht alle so, sie hatten einfach eine dicke Haut. Sie haben nie aufgehört zu kämpfen und sie haben auch nie den Anspruch an uns gestellt, dass wir jetzt was für sie machen müssen. Und das fand ich eigentlich auch beeindruckend. Und was ganz speziell war, das ist ja auch der Zusammenhalt. Das war ihre Strike.

Monika: *I was going to go home and calmly analyse the proposed contract but it turned out that they were going on to this demonstration, so straight away I said: I'm going with you.*

Miałam pojsć do domu i spokojnie przenalizować przedstawioną umowę ale okazało się że odbywa się demonstracja więc powiedziałam: Idę z wami na demonstrację.

Maria: *I was surprised ... because in general the leadership in this whole situation ... [we] the strikers ... had ... clearly laid out the structure of the strike, we were updated regularly and decisions [were] made regularly ... generally this is the most important [thing about] the union, that they were able to lead the strike especially [for] such an inexperienced person as me, who had not taken part in strikes before, and had no idea about how it all works. (...).*

To znaczy ja po prostu byłam w szoku... Tutaj po prostu pełny profesjonalizm. później wszystko mi zostało wytłumaczone, na czym to polega ten strajk to nie my jakby, to nie my jesteśmy organizatorami strajku, ponieważ jesteśmy prowadzeni przez profesjonalistów i to oni wiedzą, jak powinien ten strajk... Wszystko jest konsultowane z nami, to jest konsultowane, dyskutowane, omawiane na wszystkie sposoby i to jest najważniejsze w związku. To jest dla takiej niedoświadczonej osoby jak ja bardzo ważne. Bo nie brałam wcześniej udziału w strajku i nie wiem jak to się robi (...).

Agnieszka: *I could have refused to sign [the new contract (AR)] and walk away, look for another job. But the next people who'd come to work for the company would experience the same problems. So in a way I was doing something for myself while also doing something for others, and I think it's important – that you can fight for something not only for yourself.*

Mogłam jej nie podpisać i po prostu odejść z firmy, szukać innej pracy, ale następne osoby, które do tej firmy by przyszły, miałyby te same problemy, więc tutaj można powiedzieć: robiłam coś dla siebie, a przy okazji dla innych, no i to uważam, że jest fajne właśnie. Że można walczyć nie tylko dla siebie?

Unia organiser 2: *They never thought of themselves as victims, and they also didn't want to be represented in that way. Whenever the word 'victim' came up they would stop and say: 'We are not victims!' It's quite amazing when you think about it. When I spoke to people from this sector many of them said that they were exploited and that people were horrible to them and there was nothing to be done about it. But when it came to the Polish women, the minute the word 'victim' was used they would stop and say: We're not victims. We may have come here without knowing what to do, but now we have learnt to help ourselves.*

Sie wollten nie als Opfer dargestellt werden. Sobald man das Wort Opfer gesagt haben, haben sie protestiert und gesagt: wir sind keine Opfer. Das war extrem spannend. Wenn ich mit Leuten in dieser Branche spreche. Viele beklagen sich und sagen: alle sind gemein zu mir und ich werde ausgenutzt und ich kann halt nichts machen und sowieso. Oftmals Leute in dieser Branche sehen sich als Opfer, aber gerade jetzt bei den Polinnen. Sobald man das Wort Opfer gesagt haben sie gesagt: Hey Stopp Moment, überhaupt nicht so. Ich bin einfach hierhergekommen und ich wusste es halt nicht besser, aber jetzt weiß ich es besser.