The gender representation gap: implications for workplace union effectiveness

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*This article investigates how the gender of workplace representatives has implications for three dimensions of union effectiveness: (i) responsiveness to members; (ii) opportunity to influence management; (iii) ability to bring about change. Utilising original analysis of the 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS), we examine three core elements of workplace employment relations processes that cut across the three dimensions: (i) workplace representation processes and employer support for union activity; (ii) substantive areas of representative involvement; (iii) quality of relations between union representatives and management, and between union representatives and employees. Our analysis highlights significant gender differences embedded in all three processes. The conclusion considers the broader implications of these findings for the gender equality project of British trade unions, beyond the objective of merely seeking to increase the numbers of women representatives.*

gender, WERS2011, workplace unions, equality, quantitative

## Introduction

Despite the undeniable weakening of unions over the last 30 years (Darlington, 2010), the resilience of workplace union presence in the UK is notable particularly in the public sector (van Wanrooy *et al*. 2013). The Trades Union Congress (TUC, 2017) estimates that there are 170,000 workplace union representatives in the UK and nearly half of employees (46%) are located in a workplace with at least one on-site union representative (Van Wanrooy *et al*. 2013). However, since the mid-1990s, the dynamics of union representation at workplace level has not received the same level of attention in the literature as formerly or as much as national level strategies and structures (Darlington, 2010; Murray et al., 2013). Where workplace unionism is studied, it tends to be in connection with the union renewal debate and mobilising member activism (e.g. Calveley and Healy, 2003; Le Capitaine et al., 2013; McBride, 2009; Peetz and Pocock, 2009), or local organising/leadership (e.g. Darlington, 2002; Greene et al. 2000; Peetz and Pocock, 2009; Simms, 2013), rather than the everyday activities of workplace representation per se. While the turn to national strategies and union renewal, especially around the concept and practice of ‘organising unionism’, is understandable given the overall union membership crisis in many countries, the reality for most union members is that workplace representation is what matters most (Darlington, 2010; Hyman, 1997). Thus, workplace unions are not only sites for recruiting new members (see Simms, 2013), they are also critical to union effectiveness in the context of decentralised bargaining and consultation (Bryson and Forth, 2010; Greene et al. 2000; Hyman, 1997), as well as arguably the means for transforming or renewing trade unionism in a substantive sense including most crucially for our focus in this article, gender representativeness (Le Capitaine et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2013; Peetz and Pocock, 2009).

On the latter point, it has been observed many times that the stereotypical union representative of the 1960s and 1970s in the UK was a white middle-aged man employed in blue collar work, which to a large extent reflected male predomination of the industrial heartlands of the union movement (e.g. Charlwood and Forth, 2009). Despite the 1970s seeing the spread of workplace union representation to white collar workers in both public and private services (i.e. areas where women workers were numerous), in 1980 when the WERS (then called WIRS) series began, 77 per cent of senior workplace representatives were male. Moving forwards, headline figures from analysis of the 2011 (and last) WERS (Van Wanrooy *et al.*, 2013) indicate that women still remain under-represented among workplace representatives, especially relative to their now majority share of membership (BEIS, 2020).The majority (66%) of senior workplace representatives were male by WERS 2011 (Van Wanrooy *et al*., 2013), and moreover, the male share had increased from 56% in WERS 2004 (Kersley *at al*., 2006).

Female inclusion in workplace representation structures is important, however on its own it is not likely to be sufficient in achieving positive outcomes for female workers in particular and the union movement more generally. Thanks to the body of largely qualitative literature, we now know much about the dynamics of women’s participation in national union structures including their union orientations, activities and their agenda priorities (e.g. Colgan and Ledwith, 2000; Kirton and Healy, 2013). Far less is known, and there is much less debate, about women’s involvement in workplace union activities. In this article, we explore whether the gender of the representative has significance in aspects of three main employment relations processes that speak to workplace union effectiveness: (i) management support for union activity and workplace representation; (ii) substantive areas of workplace representative involvement in negotiations/consultations; (iii) quality of relationship between workplace representatives and management, and workplace representatives and employees.

The workplace representative questionnaire within WERS 2011 is an important but arguably underutilised source of information on employment relations structures and processes in the British workplace (Millward *et al*, 2016). The comprehensive report by Charlwood and Angrave (2014) is a notable exception, however the analysis within this is not disaggregated by gender. Therefore, our article represents one of the only systematic analyses of this dataset specifically from a gender perspective on these aspects of workplace union activities. We contribute to the literature on workplace unionism by examining the ramifications of the gender representation gap for workplace governance and employment relations and hence union effectiveness at workplace level, which is an underdeveloped area of enquiry. We begin by drawing on existing research highlighting two key themes which motivate this study: (i) the enduring importance of workplace representatives; (ii) workplace representation dynamics from a gender perspective. This is followed by a discussion of the analytical framework that we employ, then a description of the data and empirical strategy. The final discussion and conclusion sections consider the potential implications of the gender differences identified within the selected processes for the three dimensions of union effectiveness, setting out fruitful areas for future research.

**Setting the scene**

### **The enduring importance of workplace representatives**

In the UK, workplace representatives remain at the centre of employment relations processes. They are the face of the union for most members, giving voice to members’ concerns through their interactions with employers/managers, and representing the union and members vis-à-vis the employer in local consultations/negotiations (Murray *et al*. 2013). Darlington (2010: 130) characterises workplace representatives as ‘the backbone of the union movement in dealing with workers’ grievances, standing up to management and attempting to preserve/advance their members’ pay and conditions of employment’. Despite shifts in the balance of power in workplaces in favour of management, union representatives are still able to exert influence on local employment relations such as the way managers manage and implement organisational policies, and the way work is organised (Darlington 2010). Moreover, workplace representation has huge salience in the dominant model of decentralised employment relations entailing devolution of managerial responsibilities and the possibility of collective bargaining being merely a hollow shell (Hyman, 1997). This decentralised context has implications for local variations in working conditions such as pay, hours of work, availability of flexible work arrangements, health and safety, learning and training, all areas where employees may call upon union representation individually and/or collectively.

The notion that interactions between representatives and employees can shape member attitudes towards the unions and beliefs about union instrumentality is borne out by available evidence suggesting high levels of employee confidence in union representatives (Tetrick *et al*. 2007; Charlwood 2002). However, reflecting the overall decline in union membership and collective bargaining from the 1980s onwards, numbers of workplace representatives according to WERS have fallen considerably from a peak of around 328,000 in 1980 to around 150,000 in 2011 (Charlwood and Angrave, 2014), although the TUC’s latest estimate is 170,000 (TUC, 2017). In terms of effectiveness, research suggests that workplace representatives spend far more time on individual representation than on involvement in collective negotiations (McKay and Moore, 2007) and they face ‘cross-cutting pressures’ from local managements and the contexts in which they work as well as from the members (Le Capitaine et al., 2013: 389). Still, Murray et al. (2013) state that “workplace representatives are in an intermediating position within the employee-union-employer nexus.”

### **Workplace representation dynamics from a gender perspective**

Our specific focus on workplace representation dynamics and gender is located within wider debates concerning women’s participation in unions. Despite the fact that women account for more than half of union members (BEIS, 2020), qualitative research in a number of individual unions highlights that women are under-represented in all union structures from grassroots workplace committees to the apex of national executive committees and paid national officers (e.g. Greene, 2015; Kirton 2015; Moore and Tailby 2015). However, the significant progress made by British unions in increasing women’s representation in previously male dominated national union structures including the member-comprised national executive committees is also well-documented (Kirton 2015). Such progress is important for two reasons. First, women bring different life experiences, ideas, beliefs and values to workplace trade unionism that influence their priorities, goals and practices enhancing union responsiveness to women’s interests and hence from a gender perspective, improving union effectiveness (Beirne and Wilson, 2016; Conley, 2005; Heery, 2006; Kirton, 2005). Second, previous research has found that women workers generally show lower favourability towards unions largely because of their experiences at the workplace rather than from political or ideological opposition, specifically experiences that tell women that union representatives are indifferent to their concerns (Beirne and Wilson, 2016; Gilbert *et al*., 2012; Cox *et al*., 2007; Tomlinson, 2005). Therefore, the effectiveness of female workplace representatives could also help to improve women’s propensity to join and remain in unions which self-evidently enhances union effectiveness and revitalisation prospects. Indeed, when it comes to gender and workplace unions, studies addressing the question of union renewal have argued that achieving greater diversity among paid officers and representatives and within union decision-making structures is critical to the future of the union movement and to unions’ effectiveness in the context of workforce diversity (Kirton and Healy, 1999; Munro, 1999).

**Analytical framework**

As Bryson and Forth (2010) state, unions can have both positive and negative effects on employment relations at the workplace depending on their effectiveness. Three main dimensions of workplace union effectiveness are outlined that may serve as a framework for analysis:

“First unions, as membership organisations, **must be responsive to their members’ interests**. This requires that they take note of the problems which their members experience at work. Second, in order to be able to represent their members’ interests, they **must have the opportunity to influence managers at the workplace**. This requires that they are viewed by managers as being able to play a legitimate agency role on behalf of their members. Third, in order to be considered effective, unions **must be perceived as having the ability to bring about change in the workplace**” (Bryson and Forth, 2010: 18. Original emphasis).

Underpinning these dimensions of union effectiveness – *responsiveness to members, opportunity to influence, ability to bring about change* – is workplace unions’ capacity to service their members well such that they are able to retain existing members and attract new ones. We argue that a gender perspective on these dimensions is important: how are these dimensions reflected in the day-to-day activities of workplace representatives and would we expect to see any gender differences in their attainment?

First, with respect to responsiveness to members’ interests, one can examine the specific areas that union representatives are involved in. For example, we would expect more responsive representatives to report higher levels of engagement with substantive issues that are commonly reported by employees to be of high significance to them (e.g. pay, pensions, hours of work, disciplinary and grievance procedures etc.). Many of these issues have gendered dimensions (Cox et al., 2007) and while it appears that women benefit from union membership in terms of higher pay, there remain questions around whether unions focus their organisational strength on tackling gender wage inequality (Bryson et al., 2020). It is argued that female representatives’ own gendered work and life experiences mean that their inclusion in workplace unions improves union responsiveness to issues of particular concern to women, which will include equality issues over and above gendered aspects to traditional bargaining issues (Heery, 2006; Kirton and Healy, 1999; Munro, 1999). For example, Charlwood and Angrave (2014:27) observe that the proportion of representatives spending time on equality issues had increased since 2004 and it would be interesting to analyse this WERS item from a gender perspective to gauge whether female representatives are more likely to spend any time on equality issues than their male counterparts.

Second, opportunity to influence managers is likely to be correlated with access to managers (e.g. via meetings) and to resources that improve the quality of the service that representatives can provide (e.g. access to facilities such as desk space and to training for representative work etc.). Bacon and Hoque (2012) and Cox *et al.* (2007) for example show that the more formalised and intense interaction with management, the higher their capacity to influence workplace decision-making and outcomes. However, opportunity to influence managers can be looked at not merely in terms of formal resources and arrangements, but also the nature of union-management relationships is likely to play a role. With regard to gender dynamics of the union-management relationship, it has been argued that the presence of female representatives potentially offers an opportunity to break away from the male-gendered stereotype of the trade unionist (i.e. militant, aggressive style) extracting concessions from management through adversarial confrontations (Sayce *et al*., 2006). This might conceivably mean that managers show greater willingness to interact with female representatives. For example, Kirton and Healy (2012) found that female managers might be more comfortable consulting and negotiating with female union representatives where they perceive women adopting a less adversarial style, particularly salient for example in the increasingly feminised management structures of the public sector. On the other hand, women might experience marginalisation from employment relations processes at workplace level, for example within meetings and negotiations (Kirton and Healy, 2013).

Third, as regards perceptions of union ability to bring about change, where employers are supportive of union involvement, union representatives have been found to be more confident and active in influencing workplace change, indicating a virtuous circle of union effectiveness (Peetz and Pocock 2009). Workplace representatives’ self-perceived ability to bring about change is likely (amongst other things) to be related to their perceptions about management attitudes towards unions, the extent to which management takes unions seriously by involving them in the processes of information, consultation and negotiation, and in recognising their legitimate claims to represent employees such that the union has the capacity to achieve positive organisational and servicing outcomes (Bryson and Forth, 2010: 6). Equally, *members* need to perceive the union as effective in addressing their concerns and raising them with management. Again, having women among workplace representatives can help to improve members’ attitudes towards unions given women’s high share of membership (Cox et al., 2007; Kirton and Healy, 1999), as well as potentially help smooth out union-management relationships which in turns helps to boost unions’ ability to influence change (Greene et al., 2000; Kirton and Healy, 2012).

In summary, we argue that there is significant value in research which returns to the workplace level as an important site of activities affecting union effectiveness. Moreover, there is added value in looking at union activities at the workplace level specifically through a gender lens, as a larger body of research indicates that the gender representativeness should have a significant influence on key dimensions of union effectiveness. Combining gender analysis of WERS 2011 with Bryson and Forth’s (2010) three dimensional framework provides the opportunity to explore this.

**Data and analytical strategy**

This article uses WERS 2011 data. The survey was administered in workplaces with five or more employees across the private and public sectors in all industries apart from agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying. In 2011, the survey gathered responses from 2,680 workplaces and 1,002 worker representatives. Large workplaces were over sampled but the use of weights supplied by WERS in our analyses corrects for biases introduced by sample selection and non-response. In particular, where the level of analysis is the workplace, we weight the data by the inverse of each workplace’s probability of selection into the sample, which aligns the working sample with the profile of the respective population. Similarly, to account for non-response in the worker representative survey, when the unit of our analyses are employee representatives we apply the employee representative weight. Finally, we apply the employee weight variable when we are analysing the employee questionnaire.

We draw on the survey of worker representatives, the survey of managers and the survey of employees either individually or merged. With regards to the worker representative element of the data set, managers in workplaces with union representatives were asked to allow an interview with the most senior lay representative. In cases where the most senior representative was not available and another representative was selected for the interview, we have excluded these observations from our sample on the basis that we would expect the most senior representative to be directly involved in handling the issues and processes that we examine in this study. As the focus of this article is the dynamics of representation of union members rather than ‘voice’ more generally, we also exclude non-union representatives from our analysis. The resulting sample consists of 768 senior worker representatives who were representing the largest union in their workplace (either recognized or not). Within our sample, 33% of these senior representatives are women (255 representatives). The analysis proceeds as follows. We fit several regression models to examine whether the gender of the senior representative is associated with differences in representation processes, representation support and degree of involvement in the handling of various employment relations issues within workplaces. Each of these three dimensions is examined below.

We operationalise the representation processes and support dimensions by first examining the *regularity of meetings* with managers and employees respectively, as well as the *amount of time spent on representative duties* by respondents. Regular planned meetings with managers is a binary indicator coded as 0= ‘No’ and 1= ‘Yes’. The frequency of meetings between senior union representatives and employees is measured using a five-point scale which ranges from ‘not at all’ to ‘at least once a month’. Hours spent is measured as a continuous variable.

With respect to representation support, we exploit the question on whether the organization provides any facilities for this role (e.g. telephone, office space, access to meeting rooms, and space on the company intranet). We use the range of responses available for this item to create a nine-point scale ranging from ‘no facilities’ to ‘all types of facilities listed’. Our second indicator of organisation support is whether the representative is paid by the employer for the time spent on representative duties (coded as 0= ‘No’ and 1= ‘Yes’). Finally, we exploit the item asking whether the senior representative has received any training for their role in the last 12 months (coded as 0= ‘No’ and 1= ‘Yes).

To assess the degree of involvement of representatives, we draw on a series of questions asking senior representatives to assess whether management at their workplace negotiates, consults, informs or does not inform the union representatives with regards to various substantive and procedural issues that concern the day-to-day representation of employees such as pay setting, conditions of work and the development of disciplinary and grievance procedures. Respondents are required to rank their level of participation on such decisions using a four-point scale that ranges from 1= ‘*no involvement at all’* to 4= ‘*negotiation*’. We take this to be a measure of the opportunities offered to female representatives, vis-à-vis their male counterparts, to get involved in important decisions about procedural and substantive matters that affect the working lives of the employees they represent.

The above indicators of process, support and involvement are entered as the dependent variables which take the form of ordinary least squares (OLS) models in the case of dichotomous dependent variables and ordered logistic regression in the case of categorical ones. For each dependent variable, we estimate two specifications. First, a specification that examines the unadjusted relationship between the gender of the representative and a second that includes a set of standard control variables relating to the organisation (number of employees at the workplace, whether public or private sector, union density). We also control for the proportion of employees who are women and the proportion of female union members to address any endogeneity associated with selection of females into the senior representative role.

In our final set of models we examine whether the gender of the senior workplace representative is associated with any differences in management and employee perceptions about the legitimacy and effectiveness of unions at their workplace. WERS includes one item on the managers’ perceptions regarding the quality of the representative-manager relationship and two items on managers’ attitudes towards at their workplace unions more generally. Employees are asked about their satisfaction with union representation at their workplace, whether the union takes notice of the members’ problems and complaints and if they believe management in their organization takes trade unions seriously[[5]](#endnote-1). Responses are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1= ‘strongly *disagree*’ to 5= ‘*strongly agree’*. We draw on these measures by matching the union representative dataset with the management and employee data sources respectively and use them as our dependent variables in our OLS models. For each dependent variable, we estimate four specifications. First, a specification that examines the unadjusted relationship between the gender of the representative and a second that includes a set of standard control variables relating to the organisation (number of employees at the workplace, whether public or private sector, union density) and to the representative (average hours worked by the representative per week, number of years as employee representative). To gauge whether a pure gender effect exists or any differential is accounted for by density or resourcing characteristics, in our final specification we include: (i) union density; (ii) whether paid by the organisation for representative work (iii) training received as part of representative role and (iv) facilities offered to the representative as covariates. Throughout our analyses, we cluster standard errors to account for the non-independence of observations clustered within workplaces. The characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

## Results

*Management support for union activity and workplace representation*

Here, we argue that all three dimensions of union effectiveness require some management support and union-management engagement. Previous analysis of WERS 2011 reveals broad stability (when comparing with WERS 2004) in the facilities provided to workplace representatives in terms of both paid time and access to physical resources such as meeting rooms, office, telephones, computers and photocopiers (Charlwood and Angrave, 2014). However, looking at the support and representation processes indicators from a gender perspective, we find that a female representative spends less time on representative duties and are less likely to be given facilities to undertake representative duties, but they are more likely to receive employer-paid facilities time. In addition, female representatives are more likely to have received training for their representative duties (Table 2), which is important for enhancing representatives’ capacities (Le Capitaine et al., 2013). Charlwood and Angrave (2014) also find that a high proportion (44%) of workplace representatives never meet with management and only 27 per cent meet at least monthly. These authors suggest that never meeting with management could be a sign that the workplace union at a large number of workplaces is merely a ‘hollow shell’ (ibid). Importantly in this regard, we find that having a female senior representative is associated with fewer regular planned meetings with management as well as fewer general meetings with employees in the organisation.

The size of all the observed effects is high in the unadjusted specification and remains so even when the controls are added. They are all statistically significant, with the exception of the general meetings and the training indicators. Interestingly, the proportion of female employees in the organisation is negatively associated with the dependent variables indicating that female dominated workplaces are less likely to be benefiting from these support mechanisms.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

*Substantive areas of workplace representative involvement in negotiations/consultations*

As regards the effectiveness dimension of *ability to bring about change,* workplace representatives must have involvement in negotiations/consultations. The findings here need to be put in the broader context of an overall shift away from workplace level negotiations in favour of consultations (see also McKay and Moore, 2007). However, the range of issues that workplace representatives reported negotiating on broadened between the WERS of 2004 and 2011, indicating an increase in the scope of the bargaining agenda following years of decline (Charlwood and Angrave, 2014). The results of our OLS models with respect to our gender analysis of involvement in substantive issues are shown in Table 3. Overall, we find significant differences in the level of involvement afforded to union workplace representatives across all our dependent variables conditional on the gender of the senior representative. Female representatives are less likely to report that management involves the union in decisions relating to hours of work, holiday entitlement, pensions, training, disciplinary and grievance procedures and health and safety at their workplace. The coefficients are of high magnitude ranging from .475 to .631 and with the exception of pensions, they are also significant. With regard to Charlwood and Angrave’s (2014:27) finding that representatives are spending more time on equality issues in 2011 than 2004, we attempted analysis to gauge whether there was any gender effect here. However, given the small number of answers to this question within the dataset, particularly from female respondents, we are not in a position to make any firm claims regarding the direction of this relationship[[6]](#endnote-2). The only area where female representatives are more likely to report being involved than male representatives is in pay setting, conditional on the organisation being in the public sector and having high union density although the relationship is not statistically significant at conventional levels (Column 2).

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

*Quality of relationship between workplace representatives and management, and workplace representatives and employees*

The quality of the relationship between workplace representatives and management is an important area of consideration regarding both *opportunity to influence* and *ability to bring about change.* Therefore, ourfinal area of analysis sought to explore whether the gender of the senior workplace representative is associated with any differences in perceptions about the relationship between the union and managers and the union and employees at workplace level.

Our findings indicate that in workplaces with female senior representatives, management is more likely to report: favourable views towards unions, the view that trade unions improve workplace performance and the view that trade union representatives are trustworthy, with the size of the effect being much stronger in the case of the latter two (Table 4). However, it is possible that the observed effects are due to variations in union density levels and support offered to the organisation by the representative. To account for this, we introduce more elaborate specifications where we add these as covariates (Column 3). For all the dependent variables, the magnitude of the gender of the representative effect increases indicating that the gender effect is conditional on these covariates[[7]](#endnote-3).

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

With respect to the effectiveness dimension of *union responsiveness* to member interests, we examine employee perceptions about union representation at their workplace (Table 5). We do find a small gender effect for all the satisfaction measures in our unadjusted specification (Columns 1). However, once we control for union density and support provided to the representatives by the organisation, the effect becomes strong and statistically significant for all the indicators, indicating that perceived union effectiveness by employees is conditional on the resources afforded to the representatives (Columns 3). Interestingly, the resources (representative training and facilities) have a stronger effect than union density in our data. One interpretation is that that employee satisfaction with workplace unionism is better explained by differences in the support offered to unions and workplace membership levels than the gender of the representative. However, it is also important to consider that our analysis also indicates a significant related gender effect in that female dominated workplaces are less likely to be benefiting from these support mechanisms (see discussion above related to Table 2).

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

**Discussion**

This article has utilised WERS 2011 to explore the three dimensions of union effectiveness outlined by Bryson and Forth (2010) from a gender perspective – (i) responsiveness to members; (ii) opportunity to influence management; (iii) ability to bring about change. To do so, we considered three core elements of workplace employment relations processes: (i) workplace representation processes and employer support for union activity; (ii) substantive areas of representative involvement; (iii) quality of relations between union representatives and management, and between union representatives and employees.

The first and second areas of analysis identified significant gender differences with respect to representation processes, workplace support for union activity, and substantive areas of representative involvement which have potential effects on all three dimensions of union effectiveness. Our finding that female senior representatives spend less time overall on union business is problematic from a gender equality perspective because it could potentially become a source of member dissatisfaction, especially the lower level contact with members (Cox et al., 2007; Waddington, 2006), which could undermine responsiveness to members’ interests. Formal and informal interaction between workplace unions and their members is an essential element of union responsiveness and in turn linked to sustaining employee perceptions of union legitimacy and instrumentality. Further, less time spent on union work could also diminish workplace union effectiveness if representatives do not accumulate vital experiences or practise essential skills that enable them to bring about change in the workplace.

With regard to whether female senior representatives are engaging in processes likely to make a difference to workplace decision-making in critical employment relations areas, the finding that having a female senior representative is associated with fewer meetings with management is also of concern from a gender equality perspective. This is particularly in combination with the analysis that shows that management is less likely to negotiate and involve unions in decision-making in workplaces where the senior representative is female, on all issues (except pay-setting - and here only on the condition of the organisation being in the public sector and having high union density). One interpretation of this lesser involvement is that it potentially undermines opportunities to influence management and therefore bring about change, mitigating that ‘virtuous circle of capacity’ (Peetz and Pocock, 2009). If they do not, or have fewer opportunities to, meet with management over critical employment relations issues, then representatives do not accumulate vital experiences or practise essential skills that enable them to bring about change in the workplace. Second, and in specific relation to being responsive to member interests, all of these workplace issues have gendered dimensions, which are not always immediately obvious, but of which it is argued women are more likely to be aware. Women’s relative absence from union-management discussions about such issues can mean that gender dimensions may go unnoticed and not acted upon by unions, affecting union effectiveness in representing women in particular (McBride, 2001; Beirne and Wilson, 2016; Cox *et al*., 2007; Heery, 2006).

In looking for possible explanations, here we hit the limits of the WERS dataset as we cannot say from analysis of WERS data alone why senior female representatives spend less time on representative duties or why management involve women less than men. Considering that it appears that they are more likely to receive paid facilities time than their male counterparts, we conjecture that they spend less of their own time on union business than their male counterparts, perhaps because of their time poverty discussed below. Furthermore, WERS data does not offer details of the facilities time arrangements – for example, how much paid time do representatives typically get for union work and is there any gender difference? Reflecting on the qualitative work in this area, paid facilities time needs to be considered within the wider discussion of unions as ‘greedy’ institutions. Here the model is that to be a successful (effective) representative, you must be able to put in considerable hours beyond paid time, which is a problem within the context of women’s relative time poverty due to domestic responsibilities as revealed by previous research on women in unions (Kirton, 2005; Munro, 2001).

With regard to possible explanations for the results showing less involvement of female representatives, it might not be the case that this reflects a (gendered) management agenda to exclude workplace unions per se (especially given the favourable management attitudes discussed in the next paragraph). Rather, it might indicate that women representatives are less likely to be found in workplaces where unions are historically deeply involved in the handling of important employment relations matters, leaving the union weaker in regard to power and influence on substantive issues. It may be that involvement is affected by the fact that female representatives are perceived to be less well equipped to deal with the range of senior representative duties possibly because they have less physical support facilities than men. However, in terms of some aspects of support, we find that women representatives are more likely to receive paid facilities time than men and to have accessed training for their representative role. Furthermore, the WERS dataset does not tell us what kind of training was accessed, so as to ascertain whether the skills and knowledge developed would be useful in addressing aspects that might affect the dimensions of union effectiveness we consider.

It is also important to highlight that the WERS worker representative questionnaire focuses on *senior* representatives. It is therefore possible that outside the small ‘elite’ group of those surveyed, other female representatives are in an even more disadvantaged position with fewer resources and even less involvement resulting in little chance to enhance workplace union effectiveness. The broader problem is that women do not feature in the role of senior representative in the proportion that they should relative to the number of women who are union members (Charlwood and Angrave, 2014).

Our third area of analysis considered the quality of relationship between workplace representatives and management, and workplace representatives and employees. Again, this is highly relevant for an exploration of all three dimensions of union effectiveness. Given that in the present era employers and managers set the terms of union-management engagement and define the employment relations terrain overall (Darlington, 2010), management attitudes to unions are highly salient. Here the finding that managers have more favourable views of the union where there are female senior representatives is particularly encouraging from a gender equality perspective. This is on both important indicators such as management’s belief that unions find ways to improve workplace performance and a preference for a collectivist approach to employment relations. This obviously has the potential to positively affect the ‘ability to bring about change’ dimension of union effectiveness. However, our findings also highlight some apparently conflicting tendencies – if the presence of female representatives is linked to more favourable views of the workplace union, why are they given less resources, why do they meet with management less, and why are they involved less in substantive employment relations issues than their male counterparts? Explanations for this cannot be found within the WERS dataset or within existing literature but would clearly be very interesting questions to explore in further research.

From the employee perspective, union representatives need to maintain credibility with members in the way they interact with managers (Greene *et al*., 2000). We also identified that whether it was viewed that representatives are taken seriously by management was positively correlated with the senior representative being female. Also encouraging from a gender equality perspective is the finding that employees do not report any variance in whether they feel the union makes a difference at their workplace based on the gender of the senior representative. This may be interpreted as signalling a break with a ‘think representative, think male’ stereotype of the union representative which bodes well for effectiveness dimensions on responsiveness to member interests and ability to bring about change. Female representatives seem to be generating more positive attitudes than their male counterparts around issues which relate clearly to responsiveness to member interests. These favourable attitudes to female representatives do not seem to be affected by the other findings in our analysis that female representatives are less involved in employment relations processes. However, we must also recognise that favourable views of the workplace union were correlated strongly with perceived levels of organisational support mechanisms, which appear to be less within female-dominated workplaces, in which there is more likely to be a female representative (van Wanrooy et al., 2013).

Again, analysis of the WERS dataset alone cannot explain these apparent contradictions which again would be a fruitful area for future research. For example, it may be that members are satisfied with the individual servicing that they receive from their female union representative, and/or do not have deep knowledge of the level of union representative-management engagement. While one interpretation of the finding that female representatives have less meetings with management, is that this could have a potentially negative impact on union effectiveness as discussed in the previous paragraph, an alternative interpretation could be more positive. In the context of more favourable management and employee attitudes, which could be reflective of more harmonious employment relations, perhaps there is simply a requirement for fewer meetings to achieve beneficial outcomes for members.

**Conclusion**

There are clearly limitations to our analysis as it is constrained by the content of the WERS dataset. As with any cross-sectional study, it is possible that selection on unobservables biases our findings. It could be for example that workplaces with female representatives differ from those with male representatives in some ways that we cannot observe in our data. Therefore we are unable to make causal statements.

However, we believe that our study adds to existing knowledge of workplace union effectiveness in that significant gender differences in some important areas are flagged. Our gender analysis of aspects of the WERS dataset has allowed us to find the nuances beyond the headline figures about the gender composition of workplace representatives (Charlwood and Angrave, 2014). This highlights significant gender differences in employment relations processes at workplace level which we argue have potential effects on union effectiveness. Most notably around paid facilities time, time spent on representative activities, involvement in employment relations processes and attitudes of managers and employees. This has broader implications for the gender equality project of British trade unions, beyond merely seeking to increase the numbers of women representatives, because our analysis indicates that once in post, there are significant differences in access and involvement in processes which may have an important impact on aspects of union effectiveness.

What we need now is further research on the interesting and sometimes contradictory findings of these gender differences, to understand further what substantive effects these have on the effectiveness of employee relations at workplace level. To what extent do these differences relate to differential treatment/perceptions of female and male representatives by management and the individual ability of representatives to carry out their duties especially around time commitment, facilities time arrangements, physical support resources and timing and location of meetings? We need to understand more about how the differences highlighted in this analysis are entangled with the gender structure of workplace unions and how female representatives might be marshalled as a resource to enhance union effectiveness in increasingly gender-diverse workplaces.

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**TABLES**

*Table 1. Descriptive statistics*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | All | Male Rep | Female Rep | Diff. between (2) and (3) | |
| Mean | Mean | Mean | Diff. | t-stats |
| (s.d.) | (s.d.) | (s.d.) |
| Number of employees | 913.08 | 915.06 | 909.09 | -5.971 | -0.050 |
| (1744.899) | (1834.694) | (1552.003) |
| Union density | 0.517 | 0.523 | 0.504 | -0.019 | -0.700 |
| (0.290) | (0.293) | (0.286) |
| Public sector organisation | 0.620 | 0.564 | 0.733 | 0.169\*\*\* | 4.650 |
| (0.486) | (0.496) | (0.443) |
| Proportion of employees women | 0.524 | 0.444 | 0.685 | 0.241\*\*\* | 12.6307 |
| (0.273) | (0.270) | (0.196) |
| Involvement in pay | 3.036 | 3.156 | 2.793 | -0.363\*\*\* | -4.300 |
| (1.104) | (1.065) | (1.144) |
| Involvement in working hours | 2.997 | 3.085 | 2.817 | -0.268\*\* | -3.500 |
| (0.985) | (0.938) | (1.055) |
| Involvement in holiday entitlement | 2.826 | 2.916 | 2.641 | -0.275\*\* | -3.300 |
| (1.074) | (1.071) | (1.059) |
| Involvement in pension entitlement | 2.449 | 2.478 | 2.391 | -0.087 | -1.100 |
| (1.011) | (1.011) | (1.012) |
| Involvement in disciplinary processes | 3.065 | 3.119 | 2.957 | -0.162\* | -2.200 |
| (0.974) | (0.920) | (1.068) |
| Involvement in health and safety | 2.999 | 3.069 | 2.857 | -0.212\* | -3.200 |
| (0.861) | (0.799) | (0.959) |
| Number of facilities, besides training and pay, provided by management | 5.585 | 5.635 | 5.482 | -0.153 | -1.050 |
| (1.940) | (1.949) | (1.921) |
| If paid for representative work | 1.100 | 1.074 | 1.153 | 0.079\*\* | 3.450 |
| (0.301) | (0.262) | (0.361) |
| If ever received training from management for representative work | 1.325 | 1.284 | 1.407 | 0.123 | 1.950 |
| (0.469) | (0.452) | (0.494) |
| Frequency of informal meetings with managers | 3.939 | 4.230 | 3.351 | -0.879\*\*\* | -7.000 |
| (1.689) | (1.470) | (1.933) |
| Frequency of formal meetings with managers | 3.426 | 3.583 | 3.110 | -0.473\* | -3.050 |
| (2.037) | (1.934) | (2.200) |
| How favourable managers views are about union | 2.634 | 2.627 | 2.647 | 0.020 | 1.950 |
| (0.511) | (0.519) | (0.495) |
| How trustworthy managers view representatives | 3.985 | 3.905 | 4.152 | 0.247 | -7.000 |
| (0.910) | (0.944) | (0.811) |
| If managers think unions improve workplace performance | 3.470 | 3.460 | 3.490 | 0.030 | -3.050 |
| (0.951) | (0.966) | (0.922) |
| If managers would prefer to consult directly with employees rather than unions | 2.945 | 2.887 | 3.062 | 0.175\*\*\* | -3.800 |
| (1.128) | (1.095) | (1.186) |
| How favourably does management view trade unions? | 3.763 | 3.752 | 3.790 | 0.038 | 1.650 |
| (0.847) | (0.859) | (0.820) |
| Unions are taken seriously by management | 3.494 | 3.461 | 3.571 | 0.11\*\*\* | 4.400 |
| (0.907) | (0.924) | (0.861) |
| Unions make a difference to what it is like to work here | 3.305 | 3.306 | 3.304 | -0.002 | -0.100 |
| (0.938) | (0.948) | (0.916) |

Note: Data are weighted.

*Table 2. Multivariate analyses of representation processes and support*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Representation Processes | (1) | (2) |
| *Do you have regular planned meetings with managers?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -1.120\*\*\*  (0.305) | -0.512\*\*  (0.368) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.001  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.651\*  (0.314) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -1.779\*\*\*  (0.532) |
| Union Density |  | 0.974  (0.615) |
| R2 | 0.085 | 0.141 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.084 | 0.133 |
| N | 767 | 510 |
| *In the past 12 months how often have you called a general meeting with the employees that you represent at this workplace?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.539\*\*  (0.242) | -0.419  (0.323) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.515\*  (0.270) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.933  (0.537) |
| Union Density |  | 0.739  (0.524) |
| R2 | 0.034 | 0.136 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.033 | 0.127 |
| N | 767 | 510 |
| *On average, how many hours do you spend per week on representative duties?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.219\*\*  (0.120) | -0.198\*\*  (0.103) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.096\*  (0.101) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.003  (0.234) |
| Union Density |  | 0.145\*  (0.078) |
| R2 | 0.097 | 0.141 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.032 | 0.115 |
| N | 767 | 510 |
| Representation Support |  |  |
| *Number of facilities provided by management to the representative to use as part of representative duties* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.255\*  (0.388) | -0.209\*  (0.578) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.001  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.691\*  (0.548) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.268  (1.046) |
| Union Density |  | 0.354  (0.652) |
| R2 | 0.003 | 0.045 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.002 | 0.035 |
| N | 768 | 510 |
| *Are you paid by the employer for the time spent on representative activities while at work?* |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.159\*\*  (0.0595) | 0.137\*  (0.057) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.061  (0.047) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.032  (0.091) |
| Union Density |  | 0.125  (0.109) |
| Pseudo-R2 | 0.056 | 0.089 |
| N | 767 | 509 |
| *Have you received training or instruction for your job as an employee representative in the last 12 months?* |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.457\*  (0.103) | 0.377  (0.105) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.294\*\*  (0.111) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.065  (0.186) |
| Union Density |  | 0.419\*\*  (0.153) |
| Pseudo-R2 | 0.070 | 0.026 |
| N | 243 | 174 |

Source: *Merged Workplace and Worker Representative Datasets, WERS 2011*

Notes: Coefficients obtained from ordered logit models paid-time and training for rep duties (log odds reported) and OLS models for the others. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by workplace. Data are weighted. Statistical significance: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

*Table 3. Multivariate analyses of level of involvement*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) |
| *How involved are representatives in pay setting?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.296  (0.249) | 0.135  (0.286) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.279  (0.267) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -1.758\*\*\*  (0.486) |
| Union Density |  | 0.236  (0.423) |
| R2 | 0.014 | 0.176 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.013 | 0.168 |
| N | 757 | 504 |
| *How involved are representatives in working hours?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.389\*  (0.187) | -0.475\*  (0.239) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | -0.281  (0.246) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.048  (0.435) |
| Union Density |  | 0.402  (0.370) |
| R2 | 0.031 | 0.066 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.030 | 0.056 |
| N | 755 | 502 |
| *How involved are representatives in holiday entitlement?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.364\*  (0.205) | -0.631\*\*  (0.233) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | -0.290  (0.257) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.279  (0.445) |
| Union Density |  | 0.292  (0.375) |
| R2 | 0.025 | 0.082 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.024 | 0.073 |
| N | 758 | 504 |
| *How involved are representatives in pension entitlement?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.249  (0.190) | -0.417  (0.243) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | -0.464  (0.254) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.899\*  (0.452) |
| Union Density |  | 0.174  (0.378) |
| R2 | 0.013 | 0.072 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.012 | 0.062 |
| N | 752 | 500 |
| *How involved are representatives in employee training?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.522\*\*  (0.180) | -0.509\*  (0.207) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.204  (0.171) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.216  (0.296) |
| Union Density |  | 0.570  (0.348) |
| R2 | 0.061 | 0.111 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.060 | 0.102 |
| N | 760 | 504 |
| *How involved are representatives in disciplinary and grievance processes?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.386\*  (0.178) | -0.511\*\*  (0.185) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | -0.002  (0.192) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.033  (0.289) |
| Union Density |  | 0.025  (0.355) |
| R2 | 0.032 | 0.062 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.030 | 0.053 |
| N | 765 | 508 |
| *How involved are representatives in health and safety?* |  |  |
| Female representative | -0.540\*\*\*  (0.143) | -0.566\*\*\*  (0.153) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.122  (0.149) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | -0.033  (0.218) |
| Union Density |  | -0.035  (0.303) |
| R2 | 0.083 | 0.095 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.082 | 0.085 |
| N | 761 | 507 |

Source: *Merged Workplace and Worker Representative Datasets, WERS 2011*

Notes: Coefficients obtained from OLS models. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by workplace. Data are weighted. Statistical significance: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

*Table 4. Multivariate analysis of Representative and Management Attitudes*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Managers’ Opinions of Trade Unions | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| *‘How favourably does management view trade unions?’* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.028  (0.077) | 0.050  (0.089) | 0.156  (0.158) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.114  (0.090) | 0.088  0.135 |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.195  (0.162) | 0.162  (0.280) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.059  (0.214) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.071  (0.130) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | -0.218  (0.198) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | -0.016  (0.021) |
| R2 | 0.001 | 0.033 | 0.075 |
| R2 (Adj.) | -0.001 | 0.028 | 0.030 |
| N | 767 | 756 | 174 |
| *‘Unions help find ways to improve workplace performance’* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.194  (0.154) | 0.251  (0.163) | 0.256  (0.269) |
| Number of Employees |  | 0.000  (0.000) | 0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | -0.109  (0.156) | 0.0502  (0.228) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.255  (0.263) | -0.217  (0.473) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.325  (0.373) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.0401  (0.258) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | -0.527\*  (0.236) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | -0.051  (0.045) |
| R2 | 0.010 | 0.017 | 0.101 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.009 | 0.011 | 0.057 |
| N | 768 | 757 | 174 |
| *‘Union representatives here can be trusted to act with honesty and integrity in their dealings with management’.* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.376\*\*\*  (0.106) | 0.241\*  (0.101) | 0.290  (0.181) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.139  (0.140) | 0.270  (0.272) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.325  (0.254) | -0.058  (0.362) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.002  (0.345) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.007  (0.225) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | 0.131  (0.162) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | -0.012  (0.038) |
| R2 | 0.048 | 0.073 | 0.096 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.047 | 0.067 | 0.047 |
| N | 687 | 676 | 158 |

Source: Merged Workplace and Worker Representative Datasets, WERS 2011

Notes: Coefficients obtained from OLS models. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by workplace. Data are weighted. Statistical significance: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

*Table 5. Multivariate analysis of employee satisfaction with workplace representation*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| *‘Unions at this workplace take notice of members’ problems and complaints’* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.055  (0.025) | 0.067  (0.134) | 0.134\*  (0.121) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.102  (0.070) | 0.078  (0.124) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.078  (0.162) | 0.065  (0.180) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.078  (0.045) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.098  (0.023) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | 0.124\*  (0.065) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | 0.256\*\*  (0.019) |
| R2 | 0.005 | 0.014 | 0.051 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.004 | 0.011 | 0.049 |
| N | 5478 | 5478 | 5478 |
| *‘Unions at this workplace are taken seriously by management’* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.028  (0.109) | 0.076\*  (0.145) | 0.211\*\*  (0.098) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.049  (0.192) | 0.48  (0.178) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.092  (0.177) | 0.087  (0.180) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.067  (0.039) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.087\*  (0.024) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | 0.113\*  (0.056) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | 0.154\*  (0.017) |
| R2 | 0.001 | 0.032 | 0.091 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.001 | 0.029 | 0.078 |
| N | 5478 | 5406 | 5406 |
| *‘Unions at this workplace make a difference to what it is like to work here’* |  |  |  |
| Female representative | 0.067  (0.089) | 0.065\*  (0.111) | 0.101\*  (0.113) |
| Number of Employees |  | -0.000  (0.000) | -0.000  (0.000) |
| Public Sector Organisation |  | 0.035  (0.079) | 0.032  (0.076) |
| Proportion of Female Employees |  | 0.100  (0.124) | 0.091  (0.122) |
| Union Density |  |  | 0.080\*  (0.121) |
| Paid by Organisation for Representative Work |  |  | 0.115\*\*  (0.134) |
| Training Provided for Representatives |  |  | 0.090\*  (0.117) |
| Number of Other Facilities Provided by Organisation |  |  | 0.098\*  (0.213) |
| R2 | 0.002 | 0.014 | 0.029 |
| R2 (Adj.) | 0.002 | 0.012 | 0.028 |
| N | 5406 | 5406 | 5406 |

Source: *Merged Worker Representative and Employee Datasets, WERS 2011*

Notes: Coefficients obtained from OLS models. Standard errors in parentheses are clustered by workplace. Data are weighted. Statistical significance: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

1. Centre for Sustainable Work and Employment Futures (CSWEF), School of Business, University of Leicester. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Centre for Research in Equality and Diversity (CRED), School of Business and Management, Queen Mary University of London. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. School of Business and Management, Queen Mary University of London. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bristol Business School, University of the West of England. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. WERS asks employees to indicate their agreement to the following statement ‘Unions at this workplace are taken seriously’. While the senior representative is likely to play an important role in shaping management perceptions about the union, we acknowledge the likely impact of other factors in this respect. We therefore only claim to be providing a broad but nevertheless informative measure of how the union/management relationship differs depending on the gender of the representative. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
6. The results of our regression models seem to indicate the gender of the representative is not associated with the likelihood of working on equality and diversity issues. However, due to very small sample sizes we refrain from making any firm claims. Results are available from the authors. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
7. We note the drop in the sample size in Tables 2-4 once we add covariates to the models. To assess whether it is the sample size (as opposed to the model specification) that causes the coefficients to shift we estimated the same models holding the sample size constant. The direction of the relationships did not change, however, as expected there we some small changes in the size of the coefficients and the standard errors. Results are available from the authors. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)