

Militancy and Moderation in Teacher's Unions: Is there a fit between Union image and member attitudes?

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comparison of member attitudes in the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) and the National Unions of Teachers (NUT), often seen as the most “moderate and “militant” teacher unions respectively. Findings suggest that members of PAT were higher in job satisfaction, and both organizational and professional commitment, with NUT members higher in union citizenship behaviour (UCB) and general pro-union attitudes. For NUT members, pro-union beliefs had a significantly stronger effect on union commitment, and union commitment on UCB. These findings are consistent with the relative images of the two unions, and also with Bamberger et al.'s (1999) suggestion that the nature of the membership is likely to moderate the antecedents of union commitment and participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multi-unionism, defined as when employees at a particular workplace are represented by more than one union for the purposes of collective bargaining, is a declining but distinctive feature of the British industrial relations landscape (Cully et al, 1999). Aside from the fact that it may provide employees with a choice of union representation, the continuing prevalence of multi-unionism has raised concerns. From a union perspective, multi-unionism is seen as fragmenting union resources, increasing competition between unions, and undermining union effectiveness (Dobson, 1997). From an employers' perspective, multi-unionism complicates collective bargaining processes and is associated with increased strike rates, reduced business efficiency and productivity (Blanchflower and Cubbin, 1986; Ingram et al, 1993; Machin et al, 1993).

The concern of the Donovan Commission was that multi-unionism would result in more strikes due to demarcation, jurisdictional, and poaching/raiding disputes (Royal Commission, 1968). Also, there was a fear that unions would seek to be seen as more militant than their rivals in order to attract and retain members. However, in more recent years, some unions have competed on the basis of competitive moderation (Basset, 1986), with union “beauty parades”, whereby employers select unions for recognition on the basis of their moderate orientation and potential for cooperative partnership. Unions with no strike pledges, such as the Royal College of Nursing and the Professional Association of Teachers (PAT), have bucked the trend of union decline in the UK with substantial and sustained membership growth (Kessler and Heron, 2001). Such developments have led to debates on the relative efficacy for unions of “militancy” or “moderation” (e.g., Kelly, 1996).

Given the above, it is surprising that few studies have examined members' attitudes in allegedly "militant" and "moderate" unions. Beaumont and Elliot's (1989) study of employee choice of unions in nursing, and Bacon and Blyton's (2002) study of ISTC and TGWU attitudinal militancy and moderation in the steel industry are the main exceptions. However, Beaumont and Elliot's (1989) work examines a limited range of attitudes, with just four single-item scales. Bacon and Blyton's (2002) study was restricted to a small sample of shop stewards (n =49), rather than rank and file employees, and their militant moderation-scale appears to have limited reliability.

In this paper, we go beyond this existing research by using large samples of rank and file union members and established attitudinal scales to examine the extent to which the different organizational orientations of two competing teachers' unions (PAT and the National Union of Teachers [NUT]) are reflected in their members' attitudes and in the antecedent processes of commitment and union citizenship behaviour (UCB) in the two unions. The PAT and NUT have been characterized as the most "moderate" and "militant" of the teachers' unions respectively, and our concern is to establish the extent to which these images are reflected in the pattern of member attitudes and participation. In making this comparison, we examine members' attitudes and the antecedent processes of union commitment and participation across the two unions.

2. UNION MEMBERSHIP IN TEACHING

There are four main teachers' unions in England. Three are affiliated to the Trade Union Congress (TUC): the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), and the NUT. There is also a non-TUC union, the Professional Association of Teachers

(PAT). The NUT is the largest, and has been the most militant (Seifert, 1987). In this paper, our concern is with PAT and the NUT.

To some extent, each union has cultivated a distinctive image as part of recruitment competition. Thus, PAT's website informs potential members that "PAT doesn't believe in sound-bites, histrionics or threats but does believe in a professional approach and achieving results through determined negotiation". A recruitment video for use at student fairs stresses that PAT "resolves problems by communication and negotiation not conflict" and ends by stating it is "The independent non-striking association" and urges the potential new member to "Speak to the professionals". In contrast, the NUT's recruitment message is much more unionate. For example, in the "*Ten Good Reasons to be in the NUT*" (1999) pamphlet, potential members are told that the "NUT is demanding a proper national contract that protects teachers and improves their conditions of service"; "The NUT is demanding a fair and supportive inspections and advisory service to replace Ofsted and Ohmci", and that "The NUT is the only teacher organization campaigning against payment by results".

Union image has been seen as an important factor in an individual's decision on which union to join (Beaumont and Elliot, 1989; Craft and Abboushi, 1983). Teachers choose a union early in their careers, and the choice may reflect their preference for either a militant or moderate union (Healy, 1997). Survey evidence from new qualified teachers (NQTs) suggests that their factual knowledge of individual differences between teacher unions is rather limited and that the decision on which union to join is very much influenced by the union images portrayed (Riley, 1996; Labour Research Department, 2005). For example the Labour Research Department (2005) survey found many NQTs were unaware of differences between the teacher unions on key policy areas impacting on their jobs, such as workforce

remodelling, but that overall impression and image issues, such as being impressed with the recruitment message, were highly influential in their joining decisions.

There has been considerable pressure for further union mergers in teaching and the goal of one union for all teachers in the UK has been widely debated in the teaching unions. Explanations for the lack progress on merger tend to centre on historical differences in policy objectives and the resistance of General Secretaries and Executive Committees to being instrumental in the termination of their union's existence. However, one key underlying reason why union mergers in teaching have not been successful is argued that the unions have different images, which may be difficult to reconcile (Riley, 1996). The two unions with perhaps the most well defined and distinct images are the PAT and NUT. We now discuss each in turn.

The Professional Association of Teachers

PAT describes itself as an independent trade union and professional association for teachers. It was founded in 1970, in the same year that the NUT first affiliated to the TUC, by two Essex based teachers during a period of increased industrial action by teachers. The guiding principle in the formation of the union was a pledge to uphold professional standards in teaching and in particular, not to take strike action (Bryant and Leicester, 1991). The unions motto is "children first" and the no strike pledge is enshrined in the "Cardinal Rule", rule 4 of its constitution, which states: "Members shall not go on strike in any circumstances" The union has a "Code of Professional Action" to guide member behaviour in disputes. The code emphasises resolving disputes by negotiation and lobbying, with the strongest form of action, and one that is rarely taken, being to demonstrate outside of working hours.

PAT has a devolved, regional structure and recruits college lecturers in addition to teachers. It also has two specialist sections, the Professional Association of Nursery Nurses (PANN), recruiting nursery nurses, nannies and other child carers, and the Professions Allied to Teaching section (PAiT), recruiting school support staff, such as secretaries and administrators, librarians, technical staff, and classroom assistants. PAT had around 35,000 members in 2005, approximately evenly split between teachers and the other two sections. PAT's teacher membership tends to be older than the other teaching unions and one, according to Riley (1995), whose political convictions are akin to those of the Conservative Party.

The National Union of Teachers

The NUT is the oldest and largest teachers' union in England and Wales. The NUT was founded in 1870 as the National Union of Elementary Teachers, changing its name to the National Union of Teachers in 1889. For the last quarter of the nineteenth century the union had more male members than female, but in the twentieth century the position was reversed with women coming to form the majority of the membership, and this has been so ever since. In 2004, the NUT had some 240,000 members of which 76 percent were female.

Amongst teacher unions, the NUT has traditionally taken the most adversarial stance on general educational and employment issues. Recent examples of the former include the union's opposition to Trust Schools and Academies, and of the latter its protracted resistance to performance related pay (threshold payments) for teachers. The NUT has a relatively strong and longstanding left-wing bloc of activists and has the most militant orientation of the teaching unions (Seifert, 1984). Despite militant teacher unionism suffering badly under Thatcher in the 1980s, resulting in the loss of

national pay bargaining rights, there has been a recent resurgence of the left in the NUT, and the Deputy General Secretary elections in 2005 were won by a left-wing candidate.

The more militant orientation of the NUT is reflected in NQT views of the union. Riley's (1995) interviews of NQT's reported their perception of the NUT as the union with the most distinct image, and as a traditional supporter of the Labour Movement, a staunch defender of teachers' rights, and with a fundamentally left-wing, political and collectivist culture. The LRD (2005) survey of 1,500 NQTs found that perceptions of militancy were important in union joining decisions, and that the NUT was perceived as the most militant teacher union.

3. UNION COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Based on their meta-analysis, Bamberger, Kluger, and Suchard (1999) proposed and found support for an "integrative" model of union commitment and participation. According to their model, the impact of job satisfaction on union commitment is partially mediated by organizational commitment and that of union instrumentality by pro-union attitudes. Finally, union commitment has a direct effect on union participation.

Union instrumentality refers to the perceived impact of the union on valued outcomes, such as pay and employment conditions (Fullagar and Barling 1989). Pro-union attitudes is defined as the perceived desirability of unions in general (McShane 1986), rather than attitudes towards the individual's own union in particular. Bamberger et al. (1999) find that pro-union attitudes has a larger direct effect on union commitment than does union instrumentality, arguing that unions should pay more attention to social exchange aspects of the member-union relationship, since

pro-union attitudes reflect perceived mutual support and solidarity, in contrast to the purely instrumentally-based economic exchange perspective. This implies that unions should adopt a campaigning approach, emphasizing rank-and-file and community involvement and building pro-union attitudes, rather than relying solely on appeals to narrow instrumentality, as in the traditional US “business union” model.

Bamberger et al. (1999) found evidence of dual commitment to union and employer, in that there was a positive relationship between organizational and union commitment. They also found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a negative relationship between job satisfaction and union commitment. However, findings on the latter relationship have generally been mixed (e.g., Fuller and Hester 1998; Tan and Aryee, 2002).

Bamberger et al. suggest that “... researchers should begin to focus their attention on how multivariate union commitment models may vary with the nature and composition of the workforces examined as well as with environmental characteristics, such as the industrial relations context” (1999: 315). They suggest that the nature of the membership may influence the relative importance of pro-union attitudes and instrumentality. In this paper, we focus on the members of two teaching unions, PAT and NUT. As we have seen, PAT is a relatively moderate union emphasizing “professionalism”. In contrast, the NUT is a more traditional and ostensibly “unionate” organization (Blackburn and Prandy, 1965; Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1983), emphasizing vigorous representation of members’ interests, and not necessarily eschewing militant action. Whilst the occupation and industrial relations context is common for both unions, they are nevertheless attempting to present very different images to members, potential members and others. Our primary research

question is whether these organizational orientations are reflected in members' attitudes and in the antecedent processes of commitment and UCB in the two unions.

Our model is based on the Bamberger et al. (1999) "integrative" model, although we differ in that we conceptualize members' participation in their union as a form of union citizenship behavior (UCB). This is consistent with recent developments in the union literature (e.g., Fullagar, McLean Parks, Clark, and Gallagher, 1995; Skarlicki and Latham, 1996; Tan and Aryee, 2002). In addition, we also test an alternative version of the model, in which we replace organizational commitment with professional commitment. As with organizational commitment, we suggest that professional commitment is a potential antecedent of union commitment, and also that satisfaction with the job may be an antecedent of professional commitment.

The rationale for including professional commitment in the model is as follows. There are longstanding debates about the potential significance of professional commitment as an antecedent of union orientations. One strand of research suggests that professionals make uneasy union members, as the competing roles of professional and member pull in opposite directions. Corwin (1970) describes the tension teachers' face between commitment to profession and union as akin to a "split personality". Shedd and Bacharach have argued that the distinction between union and professional issues for teachers is artificial, and that there is an implicit anti-union undertone to much of the debate, with "professionalism" being a veil for "cooperation" and "servility" (1991: 180-181). Whatever, the merits of these polar views, during the 1960s and 1970s teachers in many countries, including the UK and the US, turned increasingly to unions (Jessup, 1978), *and* to militant union action (Cox, 1980; Deem, 1974; Fox and Wince, 1976).

Explanations for this growing militancy have centred on the changing social origins of the teaching workforce, the growth in school size and the associated bureaucratisation, increased feelings of powerlessness in educational decision making, and reduced job influence (Bacharach, Bamberger and Conley, 1990; Cole, 1968; Fox and Wince, 1976). However, there has been relatively little formal testing of the impact of professional commitment on union outcomes. What few studies there are have provided mixed findings, with studies reporting both negative correlations (Black, 1983), and positive correlations between teachers professional commitment and union outcomes such as militancy (Alutto and Belasco, 1974; Kadyschuk, 1997).

4. METHOD

Samples and procedure

PAT sample. A self-completion questionnaire was mailed to a sample of 3,500 PAT members in England. Completed questionnaires were returned by individual respondents directly to the university in sealed reply-paid envelopes. We received 1,256 completed responses, providing a response rate of 36 percent. For the purposes of this paper, we focused on main scale teachers only, excluding Heads (n=19), Deputy Heads (n=82), and senior teachers/others (n=2), and we also excluded a small number of respondents who were also members of other unions as well as PAT (n=6). Along with a small number of cases with missing values on the study variables, this produced a sample of 1086 cases for analysis. The mean age of this sample was 49.41 years, with an average of 22.67 years working in teaching and 13.93 years of PAT membership. Over ninety percent were female, 81 percent were married or living as married, 30 percent worked part-time, 3 percent were supply teachers and almost 8 percent were on fixed-term contracts. Because of changes to the membership

database management it proved impossible to fully assess the representative nature of the respondents, for example on age and tenure in PAT. However, we could assess the representative nature of the sample on gender which suggested that our sample was fairly representative of the overall union, which was made of 90 percent female members. Discussion with the senior officers of PAT suggested that our sample was also broadly representative of the age profile of members.

NUT sample. As part of a wider study of NUT members, a questionnaire was mailed to 1,174 members, the complete membership of two territorial divisions of the union. Questionnaires were again returned directly to the university in sealed reply-paid envelopes. We received 420 responses, for a response rate of 36 percent. Again, we focussed on main scale teachers only, excluding Heads (n=2) and Deputy Heads (n=15). After deleting cases with missing values, this provided a sample of 386 cases. The mean age of this sample was 43.34, with an average of 17.20 years in teaching and 15.67 years union membership. Seventy-three percent were female, 80 percent were married or living as married, 11 percent worked part-time, 2 percent were supply teachers and 4 percent were on fixed-term contracts. Whilst the union could not provide us with an exact and detailed breakdown of the demographic characteristics of members, the available figures show that 75.8 percent of members were female, broadly consistent with our sample, and union leaders assured us that our sample was broadly representative of the membership of the two divisions surveyed.

Measurement

The constructs were measured as follows. Unless otherwise mentioned, responses were on a seven-point scale, from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). *Job satisfaction* was measured with three items from the Michigan

Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Spector, 1997), for example: “All in all, I am satisfied with my job”. *Organizational commitment* focused on commitment to the school in which the teacher was employed, with four items reflecting Meyer and Allen’s (1997) affective dimension, for example: “I really feel as if my school’s problems are my own”. *Professional commitment* was measured with four items, based on Meyer, Allen and Smith’s (1993) measure of affective occupational commitment, for example: “I am proud to be in the teaching profession”.

Union commitment also involved four items, again reflected an affective commitment, and paralleled those for organizational commitment. For example: “I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to the union” (reverse scored). *Union instrumentality* was measured using Sverke & Kuruvilla’s (1995) “instrumental rationality-based commitment”, which reflects a self-interested commitment, based on the satisfaction of salient personal goals. The measure included eight items, each formed by taking square root of the product of an item such as “The union’s chances of improving my pay are great” and a corresponding item such as “To get higher pay is...”. (The latter was answered on a 7 point scale anchored from 1 (*very unimportant to me*) to 7 (*very important to me*). We added one pair of items to this scale, referring to the provision of membership benefits by the union. *General pro-union attitudes* refers to attitudes towards unions in general (McShane 1986), and was measured with six items, for example: “Unions are a positive force in this country”.

Union citizenship behaviour (UCB) reflects members’ extra-role behaviours, and was measured as a response to the question: “Think about how you behave in relation to the union and your work colleagues. How often do you do each of the following?”. We used ten items and responses were made on a five-point scale, “not at all” (1) to “at every available opportunity” (5). Exploratory factor analyses of the

ten items in each of both the PAT and NUT samples suggested an interpretable three-factor solution. “*Activist UCB*” was measured with four items concerned with attending union meetings, helping with union campaigns or elections, volunteering to be a union official, committee member or delegate, and attending a union rally or demonstration. “*Rank & file UCB*” was measured with three items: reading union literature, voting in union elections, and speaking well of the union. Finally, three items measured “*individual-oriented UCB*”, including advising work colleagues on union-related matters and grievances, and helping them put their case to management.

In this paper, our analysis is based primarily on respondents’ answers on our structured scales. However, all survey respondents were also asked to provide any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the questionnaires. We also draw to some extent on our analysis of these written comments.

5. RESULTS

Measurement model

We estimated a measurement model with each of the above constructs measured by the individual questionnaire items. The nine-factor measurement model (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, professional commitment, union commitment, union instrumentality, pro-union beliefs, and three dimensions of UCB) provided a reasonable fit for the PAT sample ($\chi^2 = 2510.993$; $df = 666$; $GFI = 0.887$; $AGFI = 0.868$; $CFI = 0.914$; $RMSEA = 0.051$). All indicators loaded significantly ($p < 0.001$) on their latent variables. A single-factor model provided a poor fit ($\chi^2 = 14175.053$; $df = 702$; $GFI = 0.444$; $AGFI = 0.383$; $CFI = 0.372$; $RMSEA = 0.133$), with a significant deterioration in chi-square relative to the hypothesized model (change in $\chi^2 = 11664.060$; change in $df = 36$; $p < 0.01$). A reasonable fit was also

found for the NUT sample ($\chi^2 = 1378.946$; $df = 666$; $GFI = 0.846$; $AGFI = 0.819$; $CFI = 0.911$; $RMSEA = 0.053$), with all indicators loading significantly ($p < 0.001$) on their latent variables. Again, a single-factor model provided a poor fit ($\chi^2 = 5860.596$; $df = 702$; $GFI = 0.399$; $AGFI = 0.332$; $CFI = 0.360$; $RMSEA = 0.138$), with a significant deterioration in chi-square relative to the hypothesized model (change in $\chi^2 = 4481.650$; change in $df = 36$; $p < 0.01$). These findings provide support for the hypothesized measurement model in both samples.

Comparison of attitudes and UCB

A comparison of our two samples on the study variables reveals that whilst union commitment and perceived union instrumentality were not significantly different between the PAT and NUT members, PAT members were significantly higher in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and professional commitment, whilst NUT members were higher in all three dimensions of UCB and in general pro-union attitudes (see table 1). These findings were essentially unchanged when we controlled for gender, age, job level, school type, and part-time, supply and temporary contract status. This accords to some extent with the relative images of the two unions: it appears that PAT members are more satisfied with their jobs and more highly committed to their employer (their school) and to their profession (teaching), whilst NUT members are more pro-union in general and more prone to participate actively in their union, although not necessarily having higher commitment or perceived instrumentality for their union.

Our further analysis of survey respondents' open-ended written comments suggests that, for PAT members, legal protection was essential in an increasingly litigious climate, and this was the key reason, and only reason in many cases, for

joining a union. PAT was then their union of choice because of its no strike clause.

For example:

“My main reason for belonging to any union is in case any child in my care has an accident, when I would call on it to support me. My reason for belonging to PAT is their no strike clause and children first philosophy.”

“I chose PAT because it is a non-striking union. I agree with unions in principal – much good is achieved generally. However, as a professional teacher I don’t agree with strike action that disrupts pupils’ education.”

“I joined PAT because it offered the benefits of legal back up and it allowed me not to take industrial action. Cynical but true.”

“I am a geography teacher and often take children on field trips. I belong to a union because of the legal protection in case of accidents etc. I belong to PAT because of its no-strike clause.”

“I belong to PAT only because I need to belong to a union for insurance protection. I belong to PAT because it is the only one I can join that won’t ask me to strike.”

In sharp contrast to the PAT responses, no NUT members mentioned legal protection as their reason for choosing the NUT. Respondents’ comments in the NUT surveys reflected a different set of issues. The most frequent issue raised was that the union should be doing more to deal with key concerns of workload, work-life balance, and working conditions. Some PAT members also noted these concerns, but they did not link them to criticisms of the union; rather they blamed the government for the problems of the teaching profession. Many NUT members felt that their union should be more active in engaging Government to bring about the necessary reforms. For example, the following comments were provided by NUT members:

“To me the union misses the point. I feel many teachers are not so concerned about their pay as the ridiculous conditions and hours they work under. The union should do more about these issues.”

“The union needs to ignore Government more and stick up for the teachers more. It would then get more respect in my school.”

“The biggest let down on the part of the union is the failure to prevent Baker days; the failure to prevent a seriously awful national curriculum;

and the failure to prevent the threshold nonsense. Apart from this it's doing ok”

“The profession is on the verge of collapse as result of serious exploitation of teachers. We are too stressed, over-worked, and under-valued and constantly under pressure to achieve. The union should do more to support us in issues where it really matters.”

Interestingly, a small number of PAT members said that they were considering switching to the NUT, not because of any conviction that this was the right thing to do, but because of friction with other NUT teachers in their schools. Their concern was that they were made to feel like free-riders on the more militant actions of NUT members. As two PAT members put it:

“My biggest area of concern at the moment is the relationship in my school with NUT members. They feel that they earn the benefits for teachers by threatening strike action and the like, and PAT members freeloader on their efforts. It makes my life in the school very uncomfortable.”

“What makes me think of changing my union is not any sense of dissatisfaction with it, but it is because I feel very unfairly treated by NUT members in my school who constantly goad me about sponging off their efforts.”

A NUT member also noted that:

“A large number of NQTs are joining PAT. They are seen as the “quiet union”, more like a professional association really, that will give them protection without having to get involved. But we make sure their life is not so quiet here. We remind them who is fighting for their terms and conditions – and it's not PAT.”

We now turn to our analysis of the antecedents of union commitment and UCB in the two unions.

Structural models

We estimated two structural models, as shown in figures 1 and 2, one including organizational commitment and the other including professional

commitment. Each of the constructs in the models was measured by the individual questionnaire items, apart from union citizenship behaviour, where for the sake of parsimony the three UCB dimensions referred to above were used as indicators of a single UCB construct. We estimated two-group structural models, with PAT and NUT members respectively forming the two groups. First, this was estimated as an unconstrained model, with all parameters free to vary across the two groups. Second, we estimated a constrained model, with the structural parameters constrained to be equal across the two groups. To test the hypothesis that the structural relationships differed between the PAT and NUT samples, we compared the fit of the constrained and unconstrained models.

For the organizational commitment analysis, the unconstrained model provided quite a good fit ($\chi^2 = 2468.003$; $df = 684$; $GFI = 0.887$; $AGFI = 0.866$; $CFI = 0.917$; $RMSEA = 0.042$, which was superior to that provided by the constrained model (change in $\chi^2 = 20.432$; change in $df = 8$; $p < 0.01$). This suggests that there are significant differences in the structural parameters between the PAT and NUT groups.

The structural parameters for the unconstrained model are shown in figure 1. For both PAT and NUT members, job satisfaction positively predicted organizational commitment, but neither were significantly associated with union commitment. Union instrumentality predicted union commitment directly, and also pro-union attitudes, through which there was an additional indirect positive effect on union commitment. Finally, union commitment positively predicted UCB.

We explored the differences between the PAT and NUT findings further by reviewing the critical ratios for differences in specific parameters between the two groups. Just two of the structural parameters were significantly different between the PAT and NUT groups: that from pro-union beliefs to union commitment and that

from union commitment to UCB. In each case, the parameter was significantly higher for the NUT sample. These findings suggest that pro-union beliefs were more salient amongst NUT members in motivating union commitment and UCB, and that union commitment was more likely to translate into active participation amongst NUT members than amongst members of PAT.

Turning to the analysis involving professional commitment, the results were very similar. The unconstrained model again provided quite a good fit ($\chi^2 = 2492.711$; $df = 684$; $GFI = 0.885$; $AGFI = 0.864$; $CFI = 0.916$; $RMSEA = 0.042$, again superior to the constrained model (change in $\chi^2 = 22.433$; change in $df = 8$; $p < 0.01$). The structural parameters for the unconstrained model appear in figure 2. The basic findings were similar to the analysis for organizational commitment, with just one exception: for professional commitment the path to union commitment was significant (although only marginally). Once again, the structural parameters from pro-union beliefs to union commitment and from union commitment to UCB were significantly higher for the NUT sample.

6. DISCUSSION

In this paper, we have focused on a comparison between the PAT and the NUT, commonly perceived as the most “moderate and “militant” teacher unions respectively. Our comparison of member attitudes across the two unions revealed that union commitment and perceived union instrumentality were not significantly different, the latter suggesting that the two unions were not viewed fundamentally differently by their members in terms of effectiveness. However, other attitudes did differ significantly, with PAT members generally higher in job satisfaction, and both organizational and professional commitment, and with NUT members higher in union

citizenship behaviour and general pro-union attitudes. The image of PAT is one of “moderation”, one almost of reluctant unionism, and these member attitudes, of relatively high job satisfaction, and organizational and professional commitment, are consistent with this. It is notable that PAT members expressed higher levels of commitment to the teaching profession, consistent with PAT’s claim to be both an independent union and a professional association for teachers. Furthermore, especially in respondents’ open-ended comments, there was a suggestion that PAT members joined more for insurance reasons rather than to get effective collective representation. In contrast, the NUT is the more unionate and “militant” organization, and again the attitudes of members appear to be consistent, with NUT members having more strongly pro-union attitudes in general and being more prone to participate actively in their union. Again, respondents’ open-ended comments were consistent with this, with NUT members focusing on issues of collective representation.

Bamberger et al. (1999) suggested that member characteristics may influence the antecedents of union commitment and participation. We evaluated this by replicating their model for the two groups of members. Our findings suggest that for both PAT and NUT members, job satisfaction positively predicted organizational commitment, but neither were significantly associated with union commitment. Again for both samples, union instrumentality positively predicted both union commitment and pro-union attitudes, and the latter also had a positive effect on union commitment. As expected, union commitment positively predicted UCB. When professional commitment was substituted for organizational commitment in the analysis, the findings were essentially unchanged, except that professional commitment predicted union commitment for the PAT sample only.

In spite of the basic similarities in these findings, there were some significant differences in the magnitude of effects across the two samples. In the NUT sample, pro-union beliefs had a significantly stronger effect on union commitment, and union commitment had a stronger impact on UCB. These findings were the same in both the organizational and professional commitment analyses. They suggest that pro-union beliefs were more salient amongst NUT members in motivating union commitment, and that union commitment was more likely to translate into active participation amongst NUT members than amongst members of PAT. Again, these findings are consistent with the image of the NUT as the more “militant” and unionate organization. Overall, these findings are consistent with Bamberger et al.’s (1999) suggestion that the nature of the membership is likely to moderate the relationships in the model, and in particular may influence the relative importance of pro-union attitudes.

There are also implications for the debates on union strategy. Discussions of “moderation” and “militancy” as union strategies have tended to focus on the relative viability of these, as alternative ways forward for the union movement (e.g., Kelly, 1996). However, our findings demonstrate that, at least in teaching, both may be viable, in that they may address members and potential members with different preferences, on the one hand for a union emphasizing “professionalism” and eschewing strike action under any circumstances, and on the other for an effective defender of teachers’ rights, willing to give strong voice to members’ concerns on educational policy and terms and conditions. Whether this also holds true in other sectors is a moot point, but similar competitive multi-unionism exists in other parts of the public sector (e.g., the civil service, local government, and the health service), and perhaps also in the private sector (Cully et al., 1999; Dobson, 1997).

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Table 1
Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities

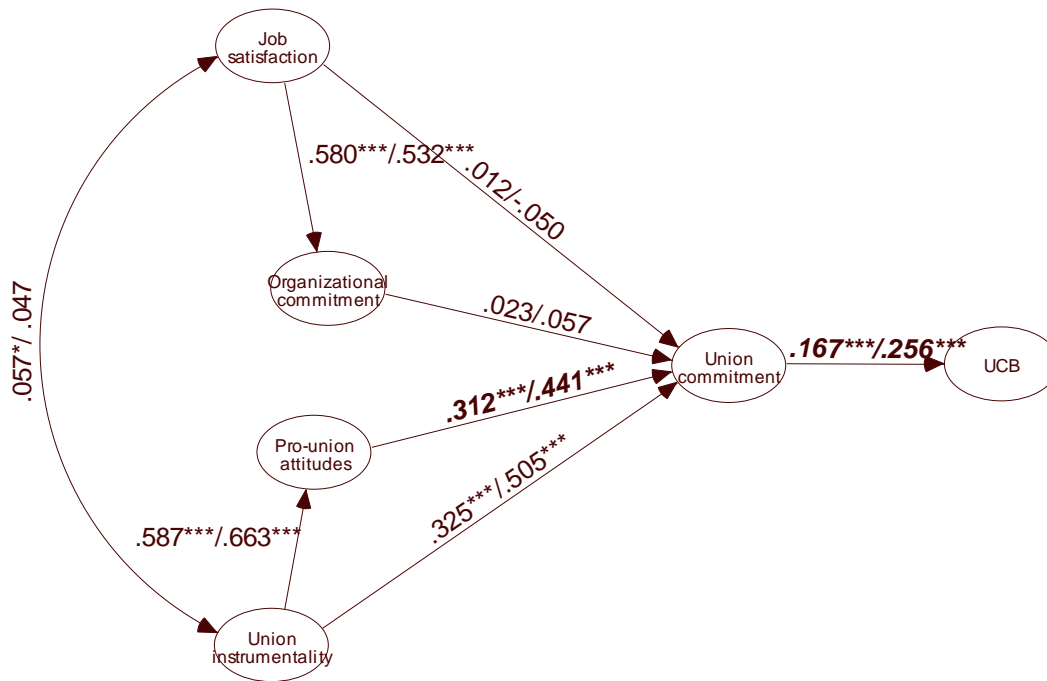
	PAT		NUT		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Mean	Std. devn.	Mean	Std. devn.									
1. UCB - Activist	1.12 [†]	.38	1.60	.71	.76/.66	.30***	.38***	.29***	.12*	.30***	-.24***	-.36***	-.14**
2. UCB – Rank & file	3.13 [†]	1.02	3.28	.98	.26***	.69/.70	.44***	.43***	.27***	.35***	-.17**	-.12*	-.05
3. UCB - Individual	1.99 [†]	1.09	2.16	1.08	.33***	.42***	.83/.85	.27***	.14**	.30***	-.15**	-.13**	-.05
4. Union commitment	4.50	.97	4.53	1.09	.23***	.53***	.37***	.76/.80	.49***	.51***	-.03	-.03	.03
5. Union instrumentality	4.33	.89	4.35	.97	.10**	.30***	.23***	.48***	.92/.93	.36**	.06	.08	.09
6. Pro-union attitudes	4.91 [†]	.96	5.64	.93	.13***	.34***	.25***	.49***	.40***	.84/.79	-.08	-.07	-.02
7. Job satisfaction	5.52 [†]	1.27	4.72	1.58	-.02	.04	.00	.09**	.10**	.08**	.86/.88	.70***	.69***
8. Organisational commitment	5.22 [†]	1.19	4.58	1.36	-.06*	.01	-.02	.10**	.11***	.07*	.63***	.75/.78	.49***
9. Professional commitment	5.85 [†]	.99	5.28	1.28	-.06	.08**	.08*	.18***	.16***	.18***	.67***	.48***	.81/.83

Note. Correlations for PAT below the diagonal, for NUT above the diagonal. Reliability coefficients are shown on the diagonal (PAT/NUT). 2-tailed tests. PAT *N*=1086; NUT *N*=386.

* *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001.

[†] Shows that the PAT and NUT means are significantly different (.05 level of significance or better, on an independent samples T-test).

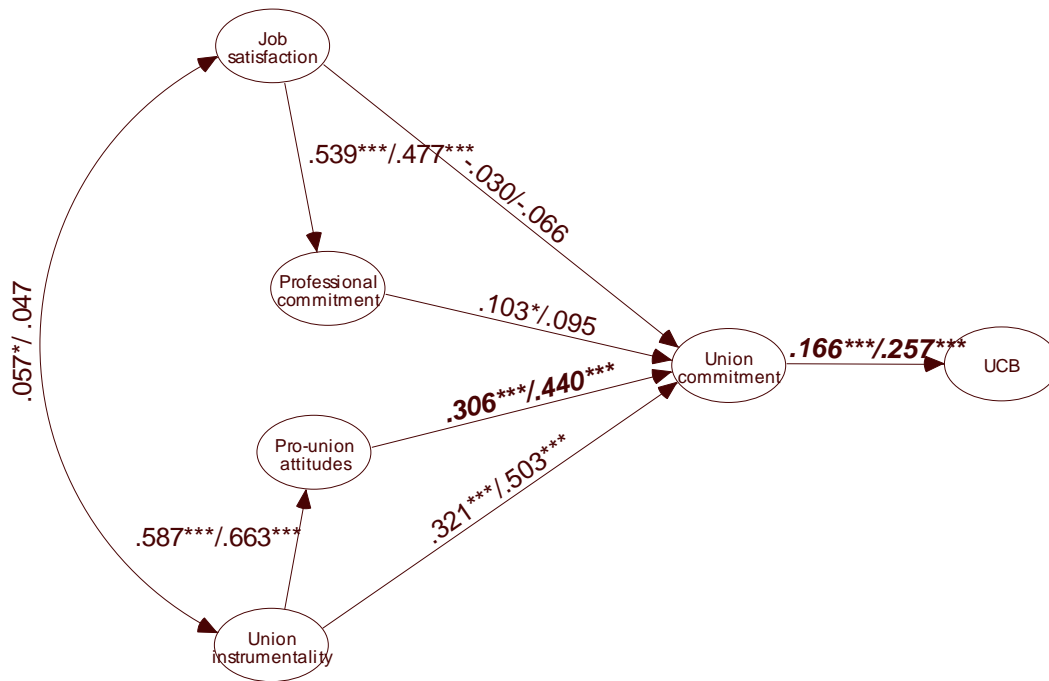
Figure 1.
Antecedents of union commitment and citizenship behaviour: with organizational commitment.



Note. PAT $N=1086$; NUT $N=386$. Unstandardized coefficients. Coefficients on the left/right are for the PAT/NUT sample. Pairs of coefficients in bold italic script are significantly different from each other ($p < .05$).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Figure 2.
Antecedents of union commitment and citizenship behaviour: with professional commitment.



Note. PAT $N=1086$; NUT $N=386$. Unstandardized coefficients. Coefficients on the left/right are for the PAT/NUT sample. Pairs of coefficients in bold italic script are significantly different from each other ($p < .05$).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.