sciendo

DOI 10.2478/doc-2024-0010

Gail T. Fairhurst

School of Communication, Film, & Media Studies

University of Cincinnati, USA

fairhug@ucmail.uc.edu

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9225-8284

Spencer G. Hall

School of Communication, Film, & Media Studies

University of Cincinnati, USA

hall4sr@uc.mail.edu

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-2375-3893

Discursive Leadership and Material Concerns: The Union Context

Article history:

Received	**14 September 2024**
Revised	**8 October 2024**
Accepted	**10 October 2024**
Available online	**16 December 2024**

The authors would like to thank Zhuo Ban, Dana Cloud, Delaney Harness, Nina Lozano, Linda Putnam, and Mathew Sheep for their help with this paper.

Abstract: This paper explores discourse-material relationships in union leadership contexts. We searched several databases and journals across the social sciences, focusing on the negotiative, relational, material, and cultural aspects of union leader and rank-and-file discourse and communication. We found 33 discursive leadership studies and conducted a thematic analysis to find three material themes broadly reflected in the literature: economics (wages, benefits), bodies (gender, race), and technology (surveillance, social media, automation). We address the implications of these findings in terms of the relevancy of retaining the term 'discursive leadership' and the necessity for further studies on discourse-material pairings in union contexts.

Keywords: discursive leadership, discourse, materiality, unions

Introduction

The study of discursive leadership has proceeded in fits and starts since the linguistic turn in Western philosophy, which focused on language as constitutive and not merely reflective of social reality (Rorty, 1967). 'Starts' included early work by Gronn (1983), Komaki (1998), and Fairhurst (Courtright et al., 1989; Fairhurst et al., 1995), which positioned talk and interaction as central, defining, and constitutive of leadership processes. Fairhurst (2007) subsequently referred to 'discursive leadership' as a communicative lens that was as central

to leadership processes as a cognitive lens, which has dominated leadership study since its inception (especially in the U.S.).

Discursive leadership captured the many forms of discourse analysis that could be applied to leadership and followership, including those involving language and social interaction (little 'd' discourse) and sociohistorical systems of thought (or big 'D' Discourse) (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; for reviews, see Fairhurst & Putnam, 2014; Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Leadership studies using conversation analysis (Boden, 1994; Gronn, 1983), narrative analysis (Parry & Hansen, 2007; Watson, 2001), semiotic analysis (Fiol, 1989), relational control analysis (Courtright et al., 1989; Fairhurst et al., 1995), critical discourse analysis (Brenton, 2009; Wodak et al., 2011), dialectics (Fairhurst et al., 2002; Kreiner et al., 2015), Foucauldian analysis (du Gay et al., 1996; Parker, 2005) and more appeared in the literature with growing frequency. Instead of surveys and seven-point scales that retrospectively summarize the ebb and flow of social interaction (Fairhurst, 2007), these studies focus on meaning construction and negotiation, sequence and temporal form, category work, power effects, storytelling, relationship markers, identity work, and the like to say something about the dynamic patterns and micro--foundations of leadership and followership (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014).

However, 'fits' or, more precisely, the social science twists and turns that upend current thinking, must include the decentering of discourse relative to that of materiality wrought by new materialism (Barad, 2003; Kuhn, 2024; Kuhn & Simpson, 2020; Kuhn et al., 2017) and communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) perspectives (Cooren, 2004, 2018; Taylor & Van Every, 2000). While Fairhurst's (2007) discursive leadership includes a chapter on material mediations in charismatic leadership, in fact, CCO perspectives relegate her Foucauldian view to social constructionism, which gives primacy to d/Discourse (Putnam, 2015). While a rapprochement casts discourse and materiality in a dialectical relationship (Cloud, 2011; Mumby, 2005; Putnam, 2015), new materialism's relational ontology transcends this dichotomy altogether by rejecting the view that the material world is a separate external reality (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015). On the contrary, it is a fully-fledged co-participant

in constituting actions and practices (Barad, 2007), evolving organically as "buzzing hives of *sociomaterial* activity" (Kuhn et al., 2017, p. 39, emphasis added).

What, then, are we to make of 21st century discursive leadership? Certainly, many discourse scholars are now focusing on sociomaterial practices and performances, animated by a focus on leadership bodies (Ford et al., 2017; Johansson et al., 2017; Sinclair, 2005), texts (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), objects (Cooren et al., 2012; Deye & Fairhurst, 2019), and spaces (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009; Van De Mieroop et al., 2020). In this work, material actants are as likely to surface as much as human actants, with varying attempts to explain their hybridity, that is, how human and material actants are made different by the presence of the other (Latour, 1994).

However, there is still much we do not know about the discourse-materiality relationship (Putnam, 2015), especially for the study of leadership and followership (Fairhurst, 2007). For example, scholars often reject an equally constitutive relationship between discourse and materiality in empirical settings in favor of what Suchman (2007) calls a 'durable dissymmetry.' Here, materiality asymmetrically mediates the discursive based on the nature of the (historical or organizational) practices involved (Putnam, 2015). In effect, discourse and materiality reflexively influence one another, but not to the same degree (p. 713). Additionally, some material influences are much less dependent upon the presence of discourse or the symbolic realm (Reckwitz, 2002), such as the occasioning of leadership based on catastrophic effects from the natural world (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009). Finally, in any given leadership setting, multiple types of materiality are present in objects, sites, and bodies, although it is common for scholars to focus narrowly on only one form of materiality (Hardy & Thomas, 2015). Thus, multiple materialities likely play a *constitutive* role along with discourse, but are they *consequential* for leadership and followership? The challenge, in most instances, is to decipher the latter.

For these reasons, we sought to understand one particular understudied discursive leadership context, which is that of unions (Kaminski, 2023). While unions regularly make the news and are a familiar labor relations context, as we will show, studies of the *discourse* of union leadership and membership are relatively infrequent. Not only that, but the discourse-materiality relationship has been a source of critique in this work, with the centrality of discourse questioned (Cheney & Cloud, 2006; Cloud, 2005). One other complicating factor has been the emergence

of dissident union leaders who oppose not only management, but their own union leadership (Cloud, 2011). Thus, power and politics figure prominently, a topic of relative neglect in CCO predisposed to equally weighting the symbolic and material.

Thus, in this paper, we pose three research questions. First, how does union leadership and membership emerge through a discursive and material lens? Second, what does this mean for the study of discursive leadership? Third, what does this mean for the study of union leadership? We begin by defining the terminology used in this paper.

Definitional criteria

We articulate our definitions for the very simple reason that much of the terminology in this paper is elsewhere contested or vague, especially for our central themes of discursive union leadership and materiality (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Cloud & Cheney, 2006; Fairhurst et al., 2024). Below we define these and related terms such as relationality, culture, negotiative aspects, and performativity.

With one exception, we define 'leadership' in keeping with DeRue (2011, p. 126), as "a social interaction process where individuals engage in repeated leading–following interactions, and through these interactions, co-construct identities and relationships as leaders and followers. These leader–follower identities and relationships are influenced but not entirely constrained by formal authority structures, such that the direction of influence in leading–following interactions can move up, down, and/or lateral in formal organizational structures." We prefer this broad definition to capture leadership's plasticity and the ways it may be accorded to formal roles, informal shifts toward expertise or task advancement in group settings (regardless of role), and influential acts of organizing (Fairhurst et al., 2024), all of which might elicit attributions of leadership in union settings. However, instead of "social interaction," we would say "sociomaterial interaction" to better reflect the social and material (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2024).

'Unions' are labor or trade organizations whose primary purpose is to accord workers more power in relations with their employers (Cloud, 2011). Unions organize workplaces, bargain for higher wages and more benefits, seek

enforcement of laws intended to ensure labor's safety and health, and more (Kelly & Frege, 2004; Mishel & Walters, 2003). 'Union leadership' can be found in formally elected positions, but also in the dissident organizing found in union democracy groups dissatisfied with the way union leaders represent rank-and-file interests (Cloud, 2011). Such informal leadership comes directly from the rank-and-file and mobilizes resistance towards management *and* union leadership.

We define 'discourse' in two ways, the first of which considers systems of meaning, history, culture, and power (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Foucault, 1975, 1983). This approach is also known as big 'D' Discourse (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Cooren, 2015), which focuses on time-bound cultural assumptions and core ideas of language and thought systems (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2019). The second way is little 'd' discourse, which focuses on language use in unfolding scenes of social interaction. Here, analysts might focus upon sequential behavior, category use, silences, talk-overs, and the like. Both terms conflate with 'communication,' the most common term across social science disciplines. Thus, in union leadership communication studies, we must look to see whether d/Discourse is further specified.

'Relationality,' or 'organizing potential,' refers to the ways in which people use language and social interaction (little 'd' discourse) to position themselves and materialities with respect to one another. In effect, they define themselves *relationally* through sequential behavior (first/second), category use (inclusion/exclusion), talk-overs (dominance/submission), and so on. The repetition of such patterns form the micro-foundations of *organizing* (Boden, 1994); for example, in the ways that talk time, talk-overs, and forms of address can signal relational dominance and status.

We define 'culture' in terms of big 'D' Discourses. While Discourses can only surface in little 'd' discourse, the former is evidenced by the repertoire displayed i.e., the tool bag of terms, arguments, stories, materials, and actions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998). These tool bags are relatively easy to spot because they have a ring of familiarity and they 'go together' thematically, much the way any given sport has its own interconnected vocabulary (Fairhurst, 2011; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2019). As such, this is a particularly useful way to capture international and intercultural differences in union leadership communication vis-à-vis the linguistic, behavioral, and material tool bags deployed.

'Negotiative aspects' is a special case of the organizing potential of language and social interaction (or little 'd' discourse) because of its relevance to the union context in which bargaining and negotiation occur on a regular basis (Putnam, 2004; Putnam et al., 1990). As Sweetman (2018, p. 245) argues, "Trade or labor unions are historically the democratizing force in the economic sphere of life, having been pivotal in bringing about collective bargaining over wages, weekends, the eight-hour day, and a host of other worker rights and protections" (see Dray, 2010; Hobsbawn, 1996; Zinn, 1980).

Finally, while some treat materiality as a "catch-all category for the hard stuff of existence" (Cheney & Cloud, 2006, p. 511), the union context requires that we define materiality in at least two ways. First are the economic and structural forces as they impact agency and discourse in organizational life (e.g., wages, benefits), while the second focuses on the physical aspects of work life involving bodies, texts (e.g., schedules), technology, spaces, and so on (Cloud, 2005, 2011; Fairhurst & Putnam, 2014).

In turn, 'performativity' is akin to how the material and social/discursive combine (read, sociomaterial) to 'matter' with respect to the enactments and practices of organizational life (Barad, 2007; Kuhn et al., 2017). This would include those of union leadership and rank-and-file membership.

In short, our goal is to articulate something of the performative nature of discursive leadership in union contexts. We seek to understand its underpinnings from which we draw broader lessons about the relationship between discourse and materiality in this understudied, yet instructive work context. What follows next is a discussion of our methods.

Methods

We started our review of literature searching for articles that generally centered on leadership in labor union contexts. To find these resources, we searched several databases, including Leadership & Management Source, Communication Source, Business Source Complete, SocINDEX, Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection, and JSTOR. This yielded a multitude of journals (e.g., *Gender,*

Work And Organization, Gender & Society, Work And Occupations, Labor Studies Journal, ILR Review, International Migration Review, Management Communication Quarterly, Journal of Industrial Relations, Social Problems, British Journal of Industrial Relations, Negotiation Journal, Journal of Applied Communication Research, Labor Studies Journal, and *Critical Studies in Media Communication*) across the communication, management, psychology, economics, and sociology disciplines.

In each database, we looked for articles using key words such as unions or union campaigns; leadership and related terms including authority, membership, and rank-and-file; communication, d/Discourse, and/or negotiation; culture or nationality; organizing or organization; and various material forms (e.g., wages, bodies). This review of the databases yielded 33 references and the creation of Table 1, which we categorize by their year of publication to capture the evolution of ideas and trends in union leader and rank-and-file communication over time.

We primarily focused on journal-based research and, to a much lesser extent, books and book chapters. We separately considered papers that were exclusively survey research (e.g., transformational leadership style), which have implications for union leadership communication, but not the broader discourse-materiality relationship (11). We also separately considered papers involving organized resistance, which have implications for union and dissident union leadership, but are not specific to the union context (29). (Both survey and resistance tables are available upon request.)

After creating Table 1, we thematically analyzed the papers based on how they spoke to the discourse-materiality relationship. Given this scope, a thematic analysis was best suited to capturing how the mix of our key terms configure in the literature to which we now turn.

Discursive-material union leadership studies

As we surveyed the research in Table 1, three dominant themes surrounding the discourse-materiality relationship emerged: 1) discourse and economics, 2) discourse and gendered/racialized bodies, and 3) discourse and technology.

Discourse and economics

Across many union contexts, unions generally yield higher wages and other economic benefits for workers than non-union shops (Burgoon et al., 2010; Kerrissey & Meyers, 2022). Union and company leaders are often, although not always, the chief bargaining agents (Donohue et al., 1984). Yet, as Table 1 demonstrates, there is very little journal research that establishes a direct link between unions' negotiative capacity and wage increases or, for that matter, any formal or informal union leadership communication and direct material gain (or loss). Rather, using naturalistic interactions, researchers have been fascinated by the negotiation process itself. There is a long history of parsing arguments in policy deliberations (Putnam et al., 1990), fantasy themes in bargaining rights (Putnam et al., 1991), rhetorical tropes in bargaining formulas (Putnam, 2004), and different negotiation phases, tactics, and strategies (Bednar & Curington, 1983; Donohue et al., 1984; Putnam, 1995; Putnam et al., 1990).

Cloud (2005, p. 516) is very critical of this lack of attention between discourse and economics: "To examine texts to the exclusion of the material contexts in which they operate is to miss important features of organizational life, namely the real demands for material redress and the real antagonisms among divergent interests that are economic as well as discursive." Others like Reed (2000, 2004) and Conrad (2004) argue against 'discourism,' which melds the material into the discursive, thereby ignoring what Marx (1906) suggested was a dialectical relationship between lived experience and the economy i.e., separate but interdependent influences.

Ironically, work by Kochan (1980) and Bednar and Curington (1983, p. 401) made an early case for the complementarity of economic and behavioral science models of negotiation:

> First, many economic theories imply that strikes can result from mistakes in bargaining. This analysis can be amplified by determining whether the interaction patterns leading to impasse differ from those leading to settlement. Second, concession behavior can be studied to see whether, or under what circumstances, concessions are reciprocated and how concession rates change as negotiations progress. A related question is whether concession patterns change with the onset of a strike.

However, Bednar and Curington did not actually link aspects of their coding scheme to material outcomes; they merely argued for its possibility. Like many in the 1970's and 80's, they cast communication as simple information transmission and receipt ("the process of sending and receiving messages," p. 390). This generalized view of communication strips the negotiation process of meaning, power, history, and culture, although Bednar and Curington were careful to demarcate bargaining phases. Whether or not leadership was occasioned was not mentioned.

Similarly, Donohue et al. (1984, p. 423) argued that negotiation studies often fail to impart interactants' sense of coherency from the discourse, such as how specific tactics might contribute to some overall strategy, the multi-functionality of utterances, and the simultaneity of mixed motive situations in which one is "cooperative and competitive almost in the same breath." Putnam's (2004) work tried to capture that sense of coherency from teacher negotiations by showing how bargaining formulas emerge from the way dialectical tensions (e.g., contract language vs. money; control vs. yielding) play out in the discourse.

Others have called attention to the divided loyalties that surface in negotiation contexts because of formal and informal allegiances among interacting groups that develop outside of the negotiation context (Putnam, 1994), although here, too, leadership of these groups was not a focus. However, outside information management by union leaders and company officials does impact the negotiative context (Bednar & Curington, 1983; Donohue et al., 1984; Putnam, 1994), which can help form such allegiances and, presumably, economic outcomes. Finally, Holm, Fong, and Anteby (in press) assert that how management chooses to address successfully negotiated concerns matters every bit as much as whether and how workers voice their concerns in the first place. Their study of Disney puppeteers found that while management met their contractual demands, the company simultaneously reduced their dependency upon puppeteers, in turn, diminishing the impact of their voice.

In short, power dynamics and the complexity of the communication process pose significant challenges to directly linking economic outcomes to negotiations or to formal or informal union leadership communication of any kind. While we are of the opinion that it can still be done, it is much more likely

that more comprehensive, critical, and ethnographic forms of research are necessary beyond a sole reliance on tapes of bargaining sessions, interview data, or surveys with the relevant parties, as the current research suggests.

Discourse and gendered/Racialized bodies

While unions play a role in social and economic change for the workers they represent, historically they have also perpetuated gender, racial, and ethnic inequalities (Cranford, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Kerrissey & Meyers, 2022). This includes limitations on how historically oppressed and marginalized populations lead (Bryant-Anderson & Roby, 2012; Kirton & Healy, 2012) and barriers to entry in leadership positions within many union contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Twarog et al., 2016). Unfortunately, there is not a lot of union discursive leadership research from which to draw inferences around the intersectionalities of gender and race, but what little research there is suggests more complexity. For example, gendered and racialized bodies are readily observable as categories of actors, but elided are issues of bodily presence, body language, body work, and embodied knowledge (cf. Lundemark, 2021), in contrast to the leadership literature more generally (Fisher & Robbins, 2014; Ford et al., 2017; Ropo & Parviainen, 2001; Ropo & Sauer, 2008; Sinclair, 2005). Sexism and racism in the modern workplace is also more covert than overt. In part, this is due to structural token dynamics, in which the ratio of majority to minority members alone may create added performance pressure, social isolation, and role entrapment i.e., stereotyping (Kanter, 1977; Fairhurst & Snavely, 1983a, 1983b).

Gendered Bodies. Consider gender issues around leadership style (Franzway, 2000). Women and men both must handle the commitment, workloads, and emotional labor required by union leaders (Franzway, 2000). Stereotypes and societal expectations play a significant role in shaping leadership styles, with women often expected to exhibit nurturing, empathetic, and collaborative behaviors, while men are expected to be assertive, decisive, and authoritative (Bryant-Anderson & Roby, 2012; Kirton & Healy, 2012; Franzway, 2000). Women and other minority leaders might also experience imposter syndrome or

self-doubt due to pervasive negative stereotypes, which can influence their confidence and behavior as leaders.

Yet, women union leaders can draw on their diverse experiences and identities to build resilience and authenticity in their leadership style (Bryant-Anderson & Roby, 2012; Cranford, 2007). In contrast to traditional leadership models stressing compliance with authority, this can result in a more inclusive, empathic, and community-focused approach to leadership, which can foster greater solidarity and support within their union organizations. Additionally, when biological differences cause their gender to be treated differently as leaders, women develop distinctive strategies to navigate biases and stereotypes – including capitalizing upon them.

For example, consider the case of 'Mother' Mary Harris Jones (Tonn, 1996), an Irish-American labor organizer for the United Mine Workers at the turn of the 19th century. Jones adopted a 'militant motherhood' leadership style, alternating between feminine cultural expectations of the time (e.g., women as mothers, not bread-winners) and the expected (masculine) nature of leadership in the 1910's stressing strength and dominance (Tonn, 1996). As a community organizer, Mother Jones adopted a nurturing role towards the rank-and-file (e.g., referring to workers as "her boys"), while also being a confrontational leader and successful agitator for the cause of labor. She simultaneously affirmed gender expectations with an orientation to 'family,' while forcefully challenging the very same expectations to battle union officials seeking to exclude women and migrant workers. As a skilled orator, her use of stories was especially effective in creating solidarity and increasing collective action (Tonn, 1996).

More recently, Kirton and Healy (2012) compared union women in leadership positions in the UK versus the US, showcasing how cultural differences affect how women discursively construct leadership when they face a dominant male culture. Like Mother Jones, Kirton and Healy found that women union leaders often simultaneously engaged in both masculine and feminine/feminist leadership talk patterns, although US and UK women tended towards different combinations of them. By studying the d/Discourses in these situations and others, we learn the ways union women lead differently from men (Franzway, 2000) and the ways they may develop differently as leaders. As such, the literature consistently points

to the necessity of creating equitable opportunities for professional growth and leadership training in order to develop the skills and confidence needed to excel (Sweetman, 2018; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Kirton & Healy, 2012; Twarog et. al, 2016).

Racialized Bodies. Like women in general, women of color are often absent from leadership positions, even in unions where they are the demographic majority (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Sweetman, 2018). Gapasin (1998) argues that unions must address its governance structure and organizational culture, while Sweetman (2018) wants them to fight against institutionalized racism through winning the trust of minority members and making leadership look more representative.

For example, consider Foerster's (2004) case study of a Black led union with many other racial groups making up the membership. To foster racial solidarity, Foerster charted d/Discourses that helped coalesce a shared identity of working--class individuals based on common struggles and shared interests. Union leadership specifically expanded its definition of itself as an organization with a "panethnic black identity" to integrate newcomers from immigrant populations (Foerster, 2004, p. 404). However, the organization's culture, with its history of building and valuing inclusion, also fostered the extant structures necessary to handle the waves of immigrants coming through. This, in turn, provided union leaders and members with the cultural repertoires necessary to link immigrant union workers' current struggles with the historic struggles of the union's pioneers.

However, Lundemark (2021) shows how the construction of migrant workers in two Danish trade unions vis-à-vis class and trade union practice were bound up with union officials' discursive constructions of nation, ethnicity, and race. Semiotic elements such as language facility were a primary focus, but material elements such as bodily appearance, especially for non-European/non-western migrant backgrounds, were also salient. Instead of the inclusionary practices of Foerster (2004), Lundemark draws attention to the exclusionary union practices of ignorance/denial and misrepresentation legitimized by drawing on Discourses of nation, colour-blind universalism, and Nordic exceptionalism.

Overall, unions have had a complicated history with respect to immigrants' racialized bodies. According to Burgoon et al. (2010, p. 937), "The labor movement

has been neither uniformly restrictionist towards immigrants nor uniformly solidaristic with them." More research is necessary to learn how unions enroll these workers and the differences minority leaders can make in union campaigns, much the way Latino labor leaders shaped the political perspectives of Mexican American workers in the first four decades of the 20th century (Sanchez, 1994; cited in Burgoon et al., 2010). The United Farm Workers grassroots movement in the 1960's similarly saw Cesar Chavez mobilize immigrant farm workers to achieve victories against powerful agricultural interests. His charismatic leadership style, ability to relate to farm workers, and strategic insight proved integral to his success (Ganz, 2009). These examples and others show minority representation in union leadership is critical to enrolling and engaging minority union members (Sweetman, 2018).

In sum, while unions have been pivotal in advocating for workers' rights and material gains, gender and racial inequalities persist (Cranford, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 2005, Kerrissey & Meyers, 2022). The overall decline of unions and scant numbers of women, Blacks, and Latinos in union leadership positions explain the dearth of research (Twarog et al., 2016). But the need to understand both the constraining and inventive ways (e.g., identity management) in which they lead in order to foster solidarity and inclusivity is all important given their rising union membership (Burgoon et al., 2010). Also, excepting Lundemark (2021), union leadership research implies corporeal practices (e.g., Mother Jones), but does not actually explore the embodied, material, and mundane aspects of gendered or racialized leadership bodies. Another key sociomaterial realm that may influence union leadership communication is that of technology.

Discourse and technology

In the contemporary labor movement, technology plays a crucial role in shaping organizational practices and the experiences of workers (Tauman & Weiss, 1987). The dynamics between discourse and technology tie directly to a technology's affordances, which are its enablements and uses (Gibson, 1986; Treem & Leonardi, 2013). The material changes wrought by technology alter the physical and organizational aspects of work, requiring unions to adapt their

strategies (Tauman & Weiss, 1987). Here, too, there is not a lot of empirical work, but there is the added wrinkle of new and rapidly changing technologies and union leaders' need to keep current with them (Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015). Nevertheless, we explore three key areas where technology intersects with labor movements, including surveillance, automation, and social media.

Surveillance. Surveillance technology in labor movements represents a significant site of tension between employers and employees. Discourses that arise surrounding surveillance are often framed around issues of control, efficiency, privacy, and power (Bennett & Taras, 2002; Hilstob & Massie, 2022; Hogan et. al, 2010). For example, 49 out of 50 states in the U.S. are at--will employment states, effectively giving employers termination latitude and employees the freedom to switch jobs. While union contracts play a role in articulating criteria for termination, there are still laws in place that can get one fired for something as minor as smoking on or off the clock. Employers advocate for surveillance technologies as tools for efficiency, safety, and accountability, arguing that monitoring employee activities ensures productivity and compliance with workplace standards. However, from the workers' perspective, surveillance is frequently perceived as a mechanism of control and undermines the power of the union (Hennebert et al, 2021). Although citizens may appreciate surveillance if it makes them feel safer in potentially unsafe environs (Sewell & Barker, 2006), employees resist being watched constantly by management. As such, there is significant pushback against invasive surveillance practices, with unions advocating for stricter regulations and transparency regarding the use of monitoring technologies (e.g., CCTV, biometrics, surveillance tracking systems, and so on), along with technology in general (Lommerud & Straume, 2012, Ajunwa et al., 2017). The presence of these surveillance devices in the workplace physically embodies the power dynamics at play, either making the discourse of control and autonomy tangible (Ajunwa et al., 2017) or opaque by shifting attention away from other critical issues (Harness et al., 2024).

Social Media. Social media (e.g., social networking sites, discussion forums, image-sharing networks, and so on) are powerful tools for labor movements, transforming the way unions organize, communicate, and advocate for workers' rights. Their democratizing potential allows workers to organize across digital

spaces (Carneiro & Costa, 2022), amplify their voices, and build solidarity across geographic boundaries (Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015; Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

One of the primary affordances of social media is its unparalleled capacity for rapid communication and widespread dissemination of information (Carneiro & Costa, 2022). This immediacy and broad reach can amplify union campaigns, drawing national or even international attention to local labor disputes and enhancing solidarity among workers (Hennebert et al, 2021; Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015). Social media also facilitates grassroots organizing by allowing unions to connect with workers who might not be reached through traditional means, such as young adults, migrants, or people of color (Carneiro & Costa, 2022, p. 41). Additionally, these platforms provide a space for unions to share success stories, educate members about their rights, and counteract negative narratives propagated by anti-union entities.

However, these affordances come with significant constraints. First, the open and public nature of social media means that unions are constantly under the scrutiny of employers, who can monitor union activities and potentially use the information to undermine organizing efforts (Hennebert et al., 2021). This surveillance can lead to increased tensions and retaliation against union activists. Second, the fast-paced and transient nature of social media interactions can dilute the depth and quality of engagement (Leonardi & Treem, 2020), making it challenging to foster sustained commitment and active participation among members (Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015, Carneiro & Costa, 2022). Third, reliance on social media can create a digital divide, excluding workers who may not have access to these technologies or are less comfortable using them. This can lead to a fragmented membership base and unequal representation within the union (Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015). Finally, the risk of misinformation and the spread of false narratives also pose significant challenges, as unions must constantly monitor and address misleading information that could damage their credibility and cause internal conflicts.

Despite these constraints, the strategic use of social media remains a powerful tool for labor unions, offering new roads for organizing, advocacy, and member

engagement – if leaders choose to use these new technologies, which some research suggests they have yet to embrace (Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015).

Automation. Automation represents another critical intersection of discourse and materiality in labor movements. The introduction of automated technologies, such as robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) is on the rise. Organizations large and small are implementing AI tools like ChatGPT into their workflow to improve efficiencies and achieve high levels of performance (IRI Consultants, 2024). But it has also sparked significant debate over the future of work, especially for unions. The d/Discourse is polarized between narratives of progress and displacement (Hilstob & Massie, 2022; Kostøl & Svarstad, 2023; Nissim & Simon, 2021).

Specifically, proponents of automation emphasize a d/Discourse of innovation and efficiency (Nissim & Simon, 2021). They argue that automated technologies enhance productivity, reduce human error, and allow workers to focus on more complex and creative tasks. Conversely, other Discourses center on job security and displacement (Hilstob & Massie, 2022), as AI makes it easy to track and rank employee activities, performance data, work habits, and communication patterns (Leonardi & Treem, 2020). This sets the stage for predictive analytics, where AI algorithms infer future behaviors based on past actions that can then become the basis for dismissal. Workers and unions thus express concerns that automation leads to job loss and increased economic inequality (Nissim & Simon, 2021). This perspective emphasizes the material consequences of automation, such as layoffs and wage reductions, and calls for policies that protect workers' rights and ensure equitable distribution of the benefits of technological advancements.

Overall, the existing literature highlights key takeaways, including the role of technology to both empower and undermine labor unions, depending on how it is leveraged. Unions can utilize digital tools for organizing, communication, and advocacy, but must also navigate the risks of surveillance and automation that threaten job security. As such, there appear to be unique challenges and opportunities for workers and unions, shaping an ever-changing landscape of control, power, and union resistance in the workplace.

Discussion

This paper began with an interest in investigating the discourse-materiality relationship in union leadership research. The union context is especially important because an overemphasis on the discursive aspects glosses the materialities of why unions exist in the first place, which is to secure economic justice and safe working conditions. Thus, for RQ1 we were keen to know if and how economic and other materialities surfaced in the literature on union leadership communication and discourse. Across social science journals in communication, management, psychology, economics, and sociology, we found some 33 papers with an explicit communication and/or d/Discourse focus, as Table 1 shows. A thematic analysis found three materialities consistently linked to union leadership discourse: economics, bodies, and technology, from which we note the morphing of the discourse-material relationship.

For example, we show how *economic issues* are difficult to explain in communicative terms (Mumby, 2018), much as we saw with the negotiation studies and, overall, the relative lack of attention to economic outcomes (except by way of general reference) throughout in Table 1. Although it would be highly labor intensive, the combined use of negotiation transcripts, interviews with the parties before and after settlements, union and company archival documents, and current data in public sphere[1] appears minimally necessary to understand how discourse and wage increases come together. Even then, the animated energy of negotiations from which leadership may be occasioned (or not) or the give-and-take breathing of the bargaining process that leads to settlements is often off-limits to researchers who will be forced to rely on secondary accounts.

Compounding this neglect is that unions have largely lost the value proposition linked to contributions to capital accumulation. As Mumby (2018) argued, industrial capitalism under Fordism created economic value by managing the indeterminacy of labor in the production process in order to realize surplus value. Under neoliberal capitalism, managing the indeterminacy

[1] For example, United Auto Workers used 2023 data on CEO compensation packages showing their CEO makes 362 times the median UAW worker (Kaye & Hsu, 2023).

of meaning inherent in the brand creates surplus value. To wit, the core mission for corporations shifted away from the manufacturing process towards the management of image, meaning, and identity (p. 104). While one might argue that it was certainly no picnic for unions under industrial capitalism, they have been left out of the conversation entirely with neoliberalism, which may partly explain their rapid decline in this period (Hyde et al., 2017). Thus, the discourse--economic challenge for unions remains.

For *gendered and raced bodies*, Table 1 reflects what Ford et al. (2017, p. 1554) call an "ontology of absence" with respect to bodily presence, body language, body work, and embodied knowledge, reflecting only a minimal engagement with the discourse-material relationship on this score (e.g., Lundemark, 2021). Much is to be gained by attending to the small but growing leadership literature on embodiment, corporeality, and materiality (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009; Hansen et al., 2007, Pullen & Vacchani, 2013; Sinclair, 2005, 2013), especially vis-à-vis issues of gender and race.

Additionally, sexism and racism produce particular challenges for union leadership in development opportunities, differential treatment (e.g., wage discrimination) (Twarog et al. 2016), and unseen structural influences that promote stereotyping when the ratio of minority to majority members reaches token status. As Kanter's (1977) early research on female managers demonstrated, high visibility due to token status leads to performance pressure, social isolation, role entrapment. But Table 1 also tells a more positive story, such as when Mother Jones adopted a 'militant motherhood' style to embrace rather than choose between two seeming opposite gender roles (Tonn, 1996). Foerster's (2004) study of a Black led union likewise shows a similar level of inventiveness when leaders espoused a 'panethnic black identity' to be inclusive of rather than differentiate immigrant populations. Although not undertaken with union members, research on executive Black women shows them embracing the overt *and* covert social dynamics of their raced/gendered bodies by becoming wise to the strategic opportunities of knowing when to time their visibility and invisibility (Smith et al., 2019). Amidst the negative effects, there are glimmers of hope for discourse-gender/raced bodies in union contexts, especially when opposites are recast as complementarities.

For *technology*, we are at the precipice of understanding the hybrid agencies of technology and humans and what they portend for the simultaneity of union empowerment and subjugation (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). If they can be mastered, social media are powerful organizing and democratizing tools for labor movements (Carneiro & Costa, 2022; Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015). At the same time, the surveillance they invite is a difficult hurdle, as is the rapidly changing nature of all technologies witness the AI revolution whose projected effects are incredible and concerning in equal measure. The discourse-technology relationship is on a continuous rise in union contexts.

For RQ2, we sought to understand what the above findings mean for the study of discursive leadership. This is especially important because, contrary to the research we reviewed, a strong argument to be made is that discourse and materiality should not be bifurcated and viewed as independent forces joining together (Mumby, 2018). They are co-configuring, with one indeterminately informing the other (Orlikowski, 2007). The value proposition of unions, generally, and union leadership's of the rank-and-file, specifically, is inextricably linked to economic gain (or lack thereof). But it is also tied to an agreed-upon economic system with biases against raced and/or gendered bodies, not to mention rapidly changing technologies whose material affordances impact power, politics, and the meaning of work.

What, then, of the term 'discursive leadership'? Should we be embracing new materialist terminology, something akin to 'sociomaterial leadership' or more than human 'assemblages' (Kuhn, 2024; Kuhn & Simpson, 2020)? It is a difficult question to answer, especially for a journal entitled, *Discourses on Culture*. On the one hand, the union context underscores the criticality of the discourse-materiality relationship – especially when, Cloud (2005) argued, extant research has yet to show how labor-management negotiations (or other discursive forms) specifically link to economic outcomes, the *raison d'etre* of unions. Materialities cannot be ignored. On the other hand, neither actor nor analyst can communicate without language (little 'd' discourse) and broader systems of thought, speech, and action (big 'D' Discourse), simultaneously shaping and being shaped by a material world. As Foucault (1975) argued, it is

nigh impossible to communicate without d/Discourse; one merely jumps from one discursive network to another. Discourse, too, is *sine qua non*.

Perhaps Karen Barad (1998, 2003, 2007) is right to argue that nothing in the world is inherently separate from anything else; relationalities are all that matter. However, this would require a shift away from 'discursive leadership' to the 'discursive-material *practices* that produce leadership.' It is a radical shift away from pre-existing substances like individual leaders or discursive forms like narratives coming together to produce a practice (Kuhn & Simpson, 2020). Instead, the practice is generative of the participants through what Barad (2007) calls 'agential cuts.' Analysts can only say leadership is relevant in a given practice when it is made to matter in practice i.e., when that practice centers leadership as a concern (Kuhn & Simpson, 2020). Mother Jones, therefore, is a product of juxtaposed practices of consistently referring to union members as 'her boys' and continually agitating on behalf of the United Mine Workers. Leadership is a performative vis-à-vis the ongoing, if fleeting, nature of discourses, material affordances, and actions and interactions.[2]

Discourse is decidedly decentered in a new materialist view, thus rendering the term 'discursive leadership' obsolete at best. However, there are other forms of materialism (e.g., historical materialism) that neither reject new materialist insights nor decenter discourse and human agency. Cloud (2024) asserts that "new materialism collapses the material/discourse dialectic into one analytic category, flattening the dialectic and making it difficult to evaluate discourse by a materialist standard, since the discourse is always-already material." As such, new materialism fails to explain the materialities of violence against women,

[2] For this reason, researchers, not just actors, must configure *themselves* as part of a sensing, legitimizing, and measurement 'apparatus' parsing phenomena into the seen and unseen based on habits of culture, thought, and speech. Barad's (2007) 'agential cuts' suggests that 'discursive leadership,' 'sociomaterial leadership,' 'assemblages,' or even 'leadership psychology' are but 'cuts' made through the scientific research apparatus. Each are phenomena realized through cuts that render knowable the relationship between measures of collective action practices and the 'leadership' outcome(s) engendered, including 'think leader, think (white, Western) male.' What this radically performative view of organizational life means for the study of leadership, generally, and union leadership, specifically, certainly invites more exploration.

whether physical or economic, by its disavowal of human agency (Lozano, 2019). Lozano and others (e.g., Allhutter et al., 2020; Cloud, 2024) thus look to a multi-theoretic lens to acknowledge new materialist insights while maintaining the discourse-materiality dialectic for more efficacious critiques of structures of domination and transformative change. Discursive leadership, by implication, would live on.

Finally, as RQ3 queried, what do our findings suggest for the study of union leadership? We believe the union context is not just useful for studying the discourse-material relationship, it is *necessary* for the continued democratization of the workplace for the rights of workers (Feurer, 2022). Unions have achieved historic gains in wages, benefits, safety, job protections, and voice. They are an important counterweight to unrestrained capitalism (Feurer, 2022), as union workers have higher wages and better benefits than the underrepresented (Burgoon et al., 2010; Kerrissey & Meyers, 2022). They are also a counterweight to union leadership that colludes with management against the interests of workers, in turn, spurring dissident union leadership (Cloud, 2011). Studying the union context is also necessary for reasons of diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially as women, Blacks, Latinos, and immigrants become the faces of union membership yet remain underrepresented in union leadership (Twarog et al., 2016). Finally, we must understand better how the rights of workers may simultaneously be enabled and usurped by new technologies in the workplace, creating complex power dynamics neither easily apprehended nor resisted.

Directions for future research

Resistance to management overreach is sine qua non to democratic organizational values, and sound leadership is necessary to effectively challenging the status quo. However, as Kaminski (2023) argued – and as we have seen in this paper – there is a dearth of journal research on union leadership despite a vast literature on leadership in business and educational environments. While traditional survey research on union leader transformational leadership styles predictively

encourages leaders to create an appealing vision and inspire workers to form collective goals (Cregan et al., 2009; Kaminski, 2023; Twigg et al., 2007; Cregan et al., 2009), direct links between style and material substance remain a mystery. The literature on organizational resistance, more generally, is heavily discursive (e.g., Fleming & Sewell, 2002; Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007). However, suggestions by others to focus on massing (e.g., of bodies) (Scott, 1990), the economic force of strikes (Cheney & Cloud, 2006), and technology-base forums (e.g., websites, chat rooms, newsletters) not subject to management control (Ainsworth et al., 2005; Real & Putnam, 2005) are steps in the right direction for unpacking the discourse--material relationship in union contexts.

The lack of union leadership research also explains why there is so little journal-based research on leading in cultural contexts, including nations and cultural groups, for whom the discourse-materiality relationship almost assuredly would vary. However, studies like the aforementioned Lundemark (2021) and Kirton and Healy (2012) might also give greater weight to the intersectionality of bodies, economic outcomes, and technology uses. It could also be that this work is better suited to presentation in books, which was not a particular emphasis in this paper.

Finally, under neoliberal capitalism, it appears that union leadership must embrace union branding, which involves constructing and communicating a union's identity, mission, and values (Mumby, 2016, 2018; Kuhn et al., 2017, p. 103) and has significant implications for member recruitment, retention, and overall influence (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). The interplay between the discursive practices that shape a union's brand and the material conditions (e.g., economic realities, labor market dynamics) that influence these practices is not yet fully understood (Kuhn et al., 2017). Future studies should explore how unions can effectively use discourse-material relationships to craft brands that resonate with diverse membership bases while also aligning with the material needs and expectations of these groups. Additionally, research could investigate how branding strategies impact the public perception of unions and their ability to mobilize support in an increasingly digital and fragmented media landscape (Mumby, 2016, 2018).

Conclusion

This paper peered into the nuanced relationship between discourse and materiality within union leadership research. While we are concerned with a lack of union leadership research overall, there is a strong tendency to favor the discursive and gloss economic and other material concerns, the *raison d'etre* of unions. Through an exploration of how such material themes as economics, bodies, and technology appear in this literature, we see many further opportunities to unpack the discourse-materiality relationship. We also believe that doing so is necessary for the ongoing survival of unions, which must adapt to the ongoing challenges of shifting social, technological, and economic landscapes.

References

Ainsworth, S., Hardy, C., & Harley, B. (2005). Online consultation. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *19*(1), 120–145. DOI: 10.1177/0893318905276562.

Ajunwa, I., Crawford, K., & Schultz, J. (2017). Limitless Worker Surveillance. *California Law Review*, *105*(3), 753–776.

Allhutter, D., Bargetz, B., & Meißner, H., & Thiele, K. (2020). Materiality-critique-transformation: challenging the political in feminist new materialisms. *Feminist Theory*, *21*. DOI: 10.1177/1464700120967289.

Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, *53*(9), 1125–1149. DOI: 10.1177/0018726700539002.

Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies*, *39*(5), 619–644. DOI: 10.1111/1467-6486.00305.

Artz, B. (2012). Does the impact of union experience on job satisfaction differ by gender? *ILR Review*, *65*(2), 225–243. DOI: 10.1177/001979391206500202.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel (C. Emerson, & M. Holquist, Trans.). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (pp. 259–422). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (C. Emerson, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Banks, M. J. (2010). The picket line online: Creative labor, digital activism, and the 2007–2008 Writers Guild of America Strike. *Popular Communication*, *8*(1), 20–33. DOI: 10.1080/15405700903502387.

Barad, K. (1998). Getting real: Technoscientific practices and the materialization of reality. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, *10*(2), 87–128. DOI: 10.1215/10407391-10-2-87.

Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *28*(3), 801–831. DOI: 10.1086/345321.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. DOI: 10.1215/9780822388128.

Bednar, D. A., & Curington, W. P. (1983). Interaction analysis: A tool for understanding negotiations. *ILR Review*, *36*(3), 389–401. DOI: 10.2307/2523018.

Bennett, J. T., & Taras, D. G. (2002). E-Voice: Information technology and unions. *Journal of Labor Research*, *23*(2), 171–174. DOI: 10.1007/s12122-002-1000-z.

Boden, D. (1994). *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Brennen, B. (2011). Lockouts, protests, and scabs: A critical assessment of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner strike. In J. Peck, & I. L. Stole (Eds.), *A moment of danger: critical studies in the history of U.S. communication since World War II*. Marquette University Press.

Brenton, A. L. (1993). Demystifying the magic of language: Critical linguistic case analysis of legitimation of authority. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *21*(3), 227–244. DOI: 10.1080/00909889309365369.

Brimeyer, T. M., Eaker, A. V., & Clair, R. P. (2004). Rhetorical strategies in union organizing: A case of labor versus management. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *18*(1), 45–75. DOI: 10.1177/0893318904265128.

Bronfenbrenner, K. (2005). Organizing women. *Work and Occupations*, *32*(4), 441–463. DOI: 10.1177/0730888405278989.

Bryant-Anderson, R., & Roby, P. A. (2012). The experience of leadership: Women and men shop stewards' perspectives in ten trade unions. *Labor Studies Journal*, *37*(3), 271–292. DOI: 10.1177/0160449×12453771.

Burgoon, B., Fine, J., Jacoby, W., & Tichenor, D. (2010). Immigration and the transformation of American unionism. *The International Migration Review*, *44*(4), 933–973. DOI: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2010.00831.x.

Carneiro, B., & Costa, H. A. (2022). Digital unionism as a renewal strategy? Social media use by trade union confederations. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *64*(1), 26–51. DOI: 10.1177/0022185620979337.

Cheney, G., & Cloud, D. L. (2006). Doing democracy, engaging the material. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *19*(4), 501–540. DOI: 10.1177/0893318905285485.

Cloud, D. L. (2005). Fighting words: Labor and the limits of communication at Staley, 1993 to 1996. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *18*(4), 509–542. DOI: 10.1177/0893318904273688.

Cloud, D. L. (2011). *We the union: Democratic unionism and dissent at Boeing*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Cloud, D. L. (2024, Sept. 5). Personal communication.

Conrad, C. (2004). Organizational discourse analysis: Avoiding the determinism – voluntarism trap. *Organization*, *11*(3), 427–439. DOI: 10.1177/1350508404042001.

Cooren, F. (2018). Materializing communication: Making the case for a relational ontology. *Journal of Communication*, *68*(2), 278–288. DOI: 10.1093/joc/jqx014.

Cooren, F. (2015). *Organizational discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Cooren, F. (2004). Textual agency: How texts do things in organizational settings. *Organization*, *11*(3), 373–393. DOI: 10.1177/1350508404041998.

Cooren, F., Fairhurst, G. T., & Huët, R. (2012). Why matter always matters in organizational communication. In P. Leonardi, B. Nardi, & J. Kallinikos (Eds.), *Materiality and Organizing: Social Interaction in a Technological World* (pp. 296–314). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Courtright, J. A., Fairhurst, G. T., & Rogers, L. E. (1989). Interaction patterns in organic and mechanistic systems. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *32*(4), 773–802. DOI: 10.2307/256568.

Cranford, C. J. (2007). "It's time to leave Machismo behind!": Challenging gender inequality in an immigrant union. *Gender & Society*, *21*(3), 409–438. DOI: 10.1177/0891243207301501.

Cregan, C., Bartram, T., & Stanton, P. (2009). Union organizing as a mobilizing strategy: The impact of social identity and transformational leadership on the collectivism of union members. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *47*(4), 701–722. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8543.2009.00733.x.

DeRue, D. S. (2011). Adaptive leadership theory: Leading and following as a complex adaptive process. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *31*, 125–150. DOI: 10.1016/j.riob.2011.09.007.

Deye, J. M., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2019). Dialectical tensions in the narrative discourse of Donald J. Trump and Pope Francis. *Leadership*, *15*(2), 152–178. DOI: 10.1177/1742715018806404.

Donohue, W. A., Diez, M. E., & Hamilton, M. (1984). Coding naturalistic negotiation interaction. *Human Communication Research*, *10*(3), 403–425. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.1984.tb00025.x.

Douglas, A. (1957, March). The peaceful settlement of industrial and intergroup disputes, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *1*(1), 75.

Dray, P. (2010). *There is power in a union. The epic story of labor in America*. New York: Doubleday.

Du Gay, P., Salaman, G., & Rees, B. (1996). The conduct of management and the management of conduct: Contemporary managerial discourse and

the constitution of the 'competent' manager. *Journal of Management Studies*, *33*(3), 263–282. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.1996.tb00802.x.

Fairhurst, G. T. (2007). *Discursive leadership: In conversation with leadership psychology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fairhurst, G. T. (2011). *The power of framing: Creating the language of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Cooren, F. (2009). Leadership as the hybrid production of presence(s). *Leadership*, 5(4), 469–490. DOI: 10.1177/1742715009343033.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Connaughton, S. L. (2014). Leadership: A communicative perspective. *Leadership*, *10*(1), 7–35. DOI: 10.1177/1742715013509396.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. L. (2019). An integrative methodology for organizational oppositions: Aligning grounded theory and discourse analysis. *Organizational Research Methods*, *22*(4), 917–940. DOI: 10.1177/1094428118776771.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L.L. (2014). Organizational discourse analysis. In L. L. Putnam, & D. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 271–296). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. L. (2024). *Performing organizational paradoxes* (1st ed.). Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781003014010.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Snavely, B. K. (1983a). Majority and token minority group relationships: Power acquisition and communication. *Academy of Management Review*, *8*(2), 292–300. DOI: 10.2307/257757.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Snavely, B. K. (1983b). A test of the social isolation of male tokens. *Academy of Management Journal*, *26*(2), 353–361. DOI: 10.2307/255983.

Fairhurst, G. T., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2012). Organizational discourse analysis (ODA): Examining leadership as a relational process. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *23*(6), 1043–1062. DOI: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.10.005.

Fairhurst, G. T., Cooren, F., & Cahill, D. (2002). Discursiveness, contradiction, and unintended consequences in successive downsizings. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *15*(4), 501–540. DOI: 10.1177/0893318902154001.

Fairhurst, G. T., Endres, C. J., & Jian, G. (2024). Leadership communication. In V. D. Miller, & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Organizational Communication Theory and Research* (pp. 127–148). DeGruyter.

Fairhurst, G. T., Green, S. G., & Courtright, J. A. (1995). Inertial forces and the implementation of a socio-technical systems approach: A communication study. *Organization Science*, *6*(2), 168–185. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/2635120.

Feurer, R. (2022). Labor unions and democracy: A long view. *Labor Studies Journal*, *47*(2), 149–159. DOI: 10.1177/0160449×221080379.

Fiol, C. M. (1989). A semiotic analysis of corporate language: Organizational boundaries and joint venturing. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *34*(2), 277–303. DOI: 10.2307/2989899.

Fiorito, J., Padavic, I., & Russell, Z. A. (2014). Union beliefs and activism: A research note. *Journal of Labor Research*, *35*(4), 346–357. DOI: 10.1007/s12122-014-9186-4.

Fisher, K., & Robbins, C. R. (2015). Embodied leadership: Moving from leader competencies to leaderful practices. *Leadership*, *11*(3), 281–299. DOI: 10.1177/1742715014522680.

Fleming, P., & Sewell, G. (2002). Looking for the good soldier, Švejk: Alternative modalities of resistance in the contemporary workplace. *Sociology*, *36*(4), 857–873. DOI: 10.1177/0038038502036004004.

Foerster, A. (2004). Race, identity, and belonging: "Blackness" and the struggle for solidarity in a multiethnic labor union. *Social Problems*, *51*(3), 386–409. DOI: 10.1525/sp.2004.51.3.386.

Ford, J., Harding, N. H., Gilmore, S., & Richardson, S. (2017). Becoming the leader: Leadership as a material presence. *Organization Studies*, *38*(11), 1553–1571. DOI: 10.1177/0170840616677633.

Foucault, M. (1975). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Trans. A. Sheridan. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1983). The subject and power. In H. L. Dreyfus, & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 208–226). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Franzway, S. (2000). Women working in a greedy institution: Commitment and emotional labour in the union movement. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *7*(4), 258–268. DOI: 10.1111/1468-0432.00113.

Frege, C., & Kelly, J. (2004). *Varieties of unionism: Strategies for union revitalization in a globalizing economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199270149.001.0001.

Gangemi, C. R., & Torres, J. J. (1996). The corporate campaign at caterpillar. *Journal of Labor Research*, *17*, 377–394. DOI: 10.1007/BF02685854.

Ganz, M. (2009). *Why David sometimes wins: Leadership, organization, and strategy in the California farm worker movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gapasin, F. E. (1998). Local union transformation: Analyzing issues of race, gender, class, and democracy. *Social Justice*, *25*(3), 13–30. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/29767083.

Gibson, J. J. (1986). The theory of affordances. In J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (pp. 127–143). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Gronn, P. (1983). Talk as the work: The accomplishment of school administration. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *28*(1), 1–21. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2392382?origin=JSTOR-pdf.

Gutiérrez Crocco, F., & Jordana, C. (2024). Becoming a union leader in an unfavorable industrial relations system. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *66*(1), 56–78. DOI: 10.1177/00221856231204996.

Hansen, H., Ropo, A., & Sauer, E. (2007). Aesthetic leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, *18*(6), 544–560. DOI: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.09.003.

Hardy, C., & Thomas, R. (2015). Discourse in a material world. *Journal of Management Studies*, *52*(5), 680–696. DOI: 10.1111/joms.12113.

Harness, D., Ganesh, S., & Stohl, C. (2024). Visibility agents: Organizing transparency in the Digital Era. *New Media & Society*, *26*(10), 5575–5596. DOI: 10.1177/14614448221137816.

Harris, K. L., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2023). Deferring difference no more: An (im)modest, relational plea from/through Karen Barad. *Organization Studies*, *44*(12), 1987–2008. DOI: 10.1177/01708406231169424.

Hennebert, M., Pasquier, V., & Lévesque, C. (2021). What do unions do… with digital technologies? An affordance approach. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, *36*(2), 177–200. DOI: 10.1111/ntwe.12187.

Hilstob, K., & Massie, A. (2022). Artificial Intelligence and labour: Perspectives from organized labour in Canada. *Labour / Le Travail*, *90*, 223–253. DOI: 10.52975/llt.2022v90.009.

Hobsbawn, E. J. (1996). *The age of revolution 1789–1848*. New York: Vintage.

Hogan, J., Nolan, P., & Grieco, M. (2010). Unions, technologies of coordination, and the changing contours of globally distributed power. *Labor History*, *51*(1), 29–40. DOI: 10.1080/00236561003654701.

Holm, F., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2018). Configuring shared and hierarchical leadership through authoring. *Human Relations*, *71*(5), 692–721. DOI: 10.1177/0018726717720803.

Holm, A. L., Fong, B. T., & Anteby, M. (in press). The perils of voice veneer: The case of Disneyland puppeteers' unionization efforts. *Academy of Management Discoveries*.

Hyde, A., Vachon, T., & Wallace, M. (2017). Financialization, income inequality, and redistribution in 18 affluent democracies, 1981–2011. *Social Currents*, 5(2), 193–211. DOI: 10.1177/2329496517704874.

IRI Consultants (2024, January 3). Quick tips to enhance your labor communications in 2024. *Projections*. Retrieved from https://projectionsinc.com/quick-tips-to-enhance-your-labor-communications-in-2024/.

Johansson, J., Tienari, J., & Valtonen, A. (2017). The body, identity and gender in managerial athleticism. *Human Relations*, *70*(9), 1141–1167. DOI: 10.1177/0018726716685161.

Kaminski, M. (2023). Effective union leadership: Evidence from the Harvard Trade Union Program. *Labor Studies Journal*, 49(1), 5–27. DOI: 10.1177/0160449×231199823.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation*. New York: Basic Books.

Kaye, D., & Hsu, A. (2023, Sept. 14). *Sky-high CEO pay is in focus as workers everywhere are demanding higher wages*. National Public Radio. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2023/09/13/1198938942/high-ceo-pay-inequality-labor-union-uaw-workers.

Kerrissey, J., & Meyers, N. (2022). Public-sector unions as equalizing institutions: Race, gender, and earnings. *ILR Review*, *75*(5), 1215–1239. DOI: 10.1177/00197939211056914.

Kirton, G., & Healy, G. (2012). 'Lift as you rise': Union women's leadership talk. *Human Relations*, *65*(8), 979–999. DOI: 10.1177/0018726712448202.

Kochan, T. A. (1980). Collective bargaining and organizational behavior. In B. M. Staw, & L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 2 (pp. 129–176). Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press.

Komaki, J. L. (1998). *Leadership from an operant perspective*. London: Routledge.

Kostøl, F. B., & Svarstad, E. (2023). Trade Unions and the process of technological change. *Labour Economics*, *84*, 102386. DOI: 10.1016/j.labeco.2023.102386.

Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., Sheep, M. L., Smith, B. R., & Kataria, N. (2015). Elasticity and the dialectic tensions of organizational identity: How can we hold together while we are pulling apart? *Academy of Management Journal*, *58*(4), 981–1011. DOI: 10.5465/amj.2012.0462.

Kuhn, T. (2024). *What do corporations want? Communicative capitalism, corporate purpose, and a new theory of the firm*. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press.

Kuhn, T., & Simpson, J. (2020). Discourse, communication, and identity. In A. Brown (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of identities in organizations* (pp. 150–168). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kuhn, T., Ashcraft, K., & Cooren, F. (2017). *The work of communication: Relational perspectives on working and organizing in contemporary capitalism*. NY: Routledge.

Landsberger, H. A. (1955). Interaction process analysis of the mediation of labor-management disputes. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *51*(3), 552–558. DOI: 10.1037/h0043533.

Latour, B. (1994). On technical mediation. *Common Knowledge*, *3*(2), 29–64. Retrieved from https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-02057233.

Leonardi, P. M., & Treem, J. W. (2020). Behavioral visibility: A new paradigm for organization studies in the age of digitization, digitalization, and datafication. *Organization Studies*, *41*(12), 1601–1625. DOI: 10.1177/0170840620970728.

Lommerud, K. E., & Straume, O. R. (2011). Employment protection versus flexicurity: On technology adoption in unionised firms. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, *114*(1), 177–199. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9442.2011.01663.x.

Lozano, N. M. (2019). *Not one more! Feminicidio on the border.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press.

Lundemark, M. (2021). *Constructing workers of migrant background: A study of class and nation myths in trade union practice* (dissertation). Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, Uppsala.

Lundström, R. (2017). Going green–turning labor: A qualitative analysis of the approaches of union officials working with environmental issues in

Sweden and the United Kingdom. *Labor Studies Journal*, *42*(3), 180–199. DOI: 10.1177/0160449X17704054.

Marx, K. (1906). *Capital: A critique of political economy* (S. Moore, & E. Aveling, Trans. Vol. 1). NY: Modern Library.

Mishel, L., & Walters, M. (2003). How unions help all workers. *Economic Policy Institute*. Retrieved from https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/x0k8xf.

Mumby, D. K. (2016). Organizing beyond organization: Branding, discourse, and communicative capitalism. *Organization*, *23*(6), 884–907. DOI: 10.1177/1350508416631164.

Mumby, D. K. (2018). Targeting Alex: Brand as agent in communicative capitalism. In B. H. J. M. Brummans (Ed.), *The agency of organizing: Perspectives and case studies* (pp. 98–122). NY: Routledge.

Mumby, D. K. (2005). Theorizing resistance in organization studies: A dialectical approach. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *19*(1), 19–44. DOI: 10.1177/0893318905276558.

Murguia, E. (1994). [Review of *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, culture and identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945*, by G. J. Sanchez]. *Contemporary Sociology*, *23*(5), 649–650. DOI: 10.2307/2074261.

Nissim, G., & Simon, T. (2021). The future of labor unions in the age of automation and at the dawn of AI. *Technology in Society*, *67*, 101732. DOI: 10.1016/j.techsoc.2021.101732.

Orlikowski, W. J. (2007). Sociomaterial practices: Exploring technology at work. *Organization Studies*, *28*(9), 1435–1448. DOI: 10.1177/0170840607081138.

Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2015). Exploring material-discursive practices. *Journal of Management Studies*, *52*(5), 697–705. DOI: 10.1111/joms.12114.

Osborn, M., & Bakke, J. (1998). The melodramas of Memphis: Contending narratives during the sanitation strike of 1968. *Southern Communication Journal*, *63*(3), 220–234. DOI: 10.1080/10417949809373095.

Panagiotopoulos, P., & Barnett, J. (2015). Social Media in Union Communications: An international study with uni global union affiliates. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *53*(3), 508–532. DOI: 10.1111/bjir.12060.

Parker, P. S. (2005). *Race, gender, and leadership: Re-envisioning organizational leadership from the perspectives of African American women executives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Parry, K. W., & Hansen, H. (2007). The organizational story as leadership. *Leadership*, *3*(3), 281–300. DOI: 10.1177/1742715007079309.

Phillips, M., Eifler, D., & Page, T. (2019). Democratizing the union at UC Berkeley: Lecturers and librarians in solidarity. *Library Trends*, *68*(2), 343–367. DOI: 10.1353/lib.2019.0043.

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology. Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. London: Sage.

Pullen, A., & Vacchani, S. (2013). The materiality of leadership. *Leadership*, *9*(3), 315–319. DOI: 10.1177/1742715013486038.

Putnam, L. L. (2004). Dialectical tensions and rhetorical tropes in negotiations. *Organization Studies*, *25*(1), 35–53. DOI: 10.1177/0170840604038179.

Putnam, L. L. (1995). Formal negotiations: The productive side of organizational conflict. In A. M. Nicotera (Ed.), *Conflict and organizations: Communicative processes* (pp. 183–200). NY: State University of New York Press.

Putnam, L. L. (2015). Unpacking the dialectic: Alternative views on the discourse – materiality relationship. *Journal of Management Studies*, *52*(5), 706–716. DOI: 10.1111/joms.12115.

Putnam, L. L., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2001). Discourse analysis in organizations. In F. M. Jablin, & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 78–136). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Putnam, L. L., Van Hoeven, S. A., & Bullis, C. A. (1991). The role of rituals and fantasy themes in teachers' bargaining. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 55(1), 85–103. DOI: 10.1080/10570319109374372.

Putnam, L. L., Wilson, S. R., & Turner, D. B. (1990). The evolution of policy arguments in teachers' negotiations. *Argumentation*, 4, 129–152. DOI: 10.1007/BF00175419.

Real, K., & Putnam, L. L. (2005). Ironies in the discursive struggle of pilots defending the profession. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *19*(1), 91–119. DOI: 10.1177/0893318905276561.

Reckwitz, A. (2002). The status of the "material" in theories of culture: From "social structure" to "artefacts". *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *32*(2), 195–217. DOI: 10.1111/1468-5914.00183.

Reed, M. (2000). The limits of discourse analysis in organizational analysis. *Organization*, *7*(3), 524–530. DOI: 10.1177/135050840073011.

Reed, M. (2004). Getting real about organizational discourse. In C. Hardy, D. Grant, C. Oswick, & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational discourse* (pp. 413–420). London: Sage.

Ropo, A., & Parviainen, J. (2001). Leadership and bodily knowledge in expert organizations: Epistemological rethinking. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *17*(1), 1–18. DOI: 10.1016/S0956-5221(00)00030-0.

Ropo, A., & Sauer, E. (2008). Corporeal leaders. In D. Barry, & H. Hansen (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of new approaches in management and organization* (pp. 469–478). London: SAGE Publications.

Rorty, R., Ed. (1967). *The linguistic turn: Essays in philosophical method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rubio, P. F. (2016). Organizing a wildcat: The United States postal strike of 1970. *Labor History*, *57*(5), 565–587. DOI: 10.1080/0023656X.2016.1239881.

Scheiber, N. (2023, May 19). Amazon is everywhere. That's what makes it so vulnerable. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/19/business/amazon-union-choke-points.html.

Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sewell, G., & Barker, J. R. (2006). Coercion versus care: Using irony to make sense of organizational surveillance. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*(4), 934–961. DOI: 10.5465/amr.2006.22527466.

Sinclair, A. (2013). A material dean. *Leadership*, *9*(3), 436–443. DOI: 10.1177/1742715013485859.

Sinclair, A. (2005). Body possibilities in leadership. *Leadership*, *1*(4), 387–406. DOI: 10.1177/1742715005057231.

Smith, A. N., Watkins, M. B., Ladge, J. J., & Carlton, P. (2019). Making the invisible visible: Paradoxical effects of intersectional invisibility on the career experiences of executive black women. *Academy of Management Journal*, *62*(6), 1705–1734. DOI: 10.5465/amj.2017.1513.

Suchman, L. (2007). *Human-machine reconfigurations: Plans and situated actions*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511808418.

Sweetman, J. (2018). When similarities are more important than differences: "Politically Black" union members' experiences of racism and participation in union leadership. *Journal of Social Issues*, *74*(2), 244–264. DOI: 10.1111/josi.12267.

Tauman, Y., & Weiss, Y. (1987). Labor unions and the adoption of new technology. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 5(4, Part 1), 477–501. DOI: 10.1086/298158.

Taylor, J. R., & Van Every, E. (2000). *The emergent organization: Communication at its site and surface*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Tonn, M. B. (1996). Militant motherhood: Labor's Mary Harris "mother" Jones. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *82*(1), 1–21. DOI: 10.1080/00335639609384137.

Treem, J. W., & Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Social media use in organizations: Exploring the affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *36*(1), 143–189. DOI: 10.1080/23808985.2013.11679130.

Twarog, E. E., Sherer, J., O'Farrell, B., & Coney, C. (2016). Labor education and leadership development for union women: Assessing the past, building for the future. *Labor Studies Journal*, *41*(1), 9–35. DOI: 10.1177/0160449×16630634.

Twigg, N. W., Fuller, J. B., & Hester, K. (2007). Transformational leadership in labor organizations: The effects on union citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Labor Research*, *29*(1), 27–41. DOI: 10.1007/s12122-007-9039-5.

Van De Mieroop, D., Clifton, J., & Verhelst, A. (2020). Investigating the interplay between formal and informal leaders in a shared leadership configuration: A multimodal conversation analytical study. *Human Relations*, *73*(4), 490–515. DOI: 10.1177/0018726719895077.

Watson, T. (2001). Beyond managism: Negotiated narratives and critical management education in practice. *British Journal of Management*, *12*(4), 385–396. DOI: 10.1111/1467-8551.00216.

Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse & Society*, *9*(3), 387–412. DOI: 10.1177/0957926598009003005.

Wodak, R., Kwon, W., & Clarke, I. (2011). 'Getting people on board': Discursive leadership for consensus building in team meetings. *Discourse & Society*, *22*(5), 592–644. DOI: 10.1177/0957926511405410.

Zinn, H. (1980). *A people's history of the United States*. London, UK: Longman.

Zoller, H. M., & Fairhurst, G. T. (2007). Resistance leadership: The overlooked potential in critical organization and leadership studies. *Human Relations*, *60*(9), 1331–1360. DOI: 10.1177/0018726707082850.

Table 1. Studies of Union Leadership Communication

Author	Summary	Data Forms	Leadership/ Followership
Landsberger, 1955	Mediation cases of labor mediators, employers, and union officials. Successful mediation characterized by a structured communication flow.	Naturalistic transcripts of 12 mediation cases.	Leadership implications for fostering positive interaction, emotion management, and recognizing negotiation phases.
Douglas, 1957	Negotiating and settling differences without resorting to strikes through government mediation. Bargaining as a strategic resource to magnify conflicts.	Uncoded union bargaining transcripts.	Company leaders should not equate 'deal-making' with bargaining, which involves opportunities (phases and tactics) to avoid strikes.
Bednar & Curington, 1983	Navigating power dynamics and informational asymmetries in bargaining processes. Emphasis on balancing the assertive and cooperative.	Coded transcript of labor--management wage negotiations.	Negotiators from either side must use relational messages to manage power relations and command respect while content must be strategically stable to maintain credibility and consistency.
Donohue, Diez, & Hamilton, 1984	Union negotiations require the ability to respond to prior utterances and cue subsequent ones. Naturalistic data is superior to bargaining simulations.	Coded transcript of actual and simulated union negotiations.	Unions and management often employ professional bargaining agents who may not be the actual leaders of either side.
Putnam, Wilson & Turner, 1990	Argument in policy deliberations on teachers' and administrators' argument types.	Arguments (reason-giving, defining issues) in negotiation.	School Board administrators and (elected) teachers specialize in argument types during bargaining.
Putnam, Van Hoeven, & Bullis, 1991	Fantasy themes and bargaining rights of two teachers' negotiation units in two school districts.	Multi-method including observations, interviews, field notes, documents, surveys.	Administrators and teachers hold similar meanings for common enemies and past negotiations, but they diverge in meanings for the bargaining rite.

Putnam, 1994	Bargaining serves crucial communication functions (signal problems, clarify misunderstandings, inform). Ritualized conflict management facilitates organizational adaptation, growth, and stability by balancing power relations.	Multi-method including interviews, observation.	Union leaders must engage in clear and constructive communication with their own members to bridge gaps with management.
Gangemi & Torres, 1996	Campaign tactics and strategies employed by the United Auto Workers (UAW) during Caterpillar campaign. Disseminating propaganda played a pivotal role in rallying support and justifying their actions.	UAW texts, journalistic reporting.	Outside UAW leadership trained local union leaders in tactics, work-to-rule, and encouraging resistance against the company.
Tonn, 1996	Historical case study of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, a prominent union leader with effective agitation strategies, intertwining motherhood with militancy.	Rhetorical analysis of narratives and argument forms, familial terms of address, ad hominem attacks, and voicing characters in speech.	By embracing contrasting gender roles, Jones fostered a collective identity and overcame gender resistance within the union movement.
Osborn & Bakke, 1998	Memphis sanitation workers' strike, its use of melodramatic rhetoric, and impact on community dynamics.	Rhetorical textual analyses, observations of the strike as melodrama (narrative).	Underscores need for union leaders to be represented positively in media narratives. Melodramatic rhetoric can divide, impede negotiations
Franzway, 2000	Union women who navigate family demands and union life, with complex negotiations between gendered discourses and union practices.	Interviews with union women in South Australia.	Feminist discourses enable women to resist traditional union norms (of white male leaders) and create political opportunities even amidst work-family tensions.

Putnam, 2004	Use of rhetorical tropes, metonymy and synecdoche (strategic use of ambiguity), tacit norms, and bargaining formulas in union negotiations.	Metonymy, synecdoche in actual union negotiations and interviews.	Confronting tensions between language-money, controlling-yielding, and independence-interdependence, enables bargainers to develop formulae for settlements and employ flexibility in making sense of ambiguities and uncertainties in negotiations.
Brimeyer, Eaker, & Clair, 2004	Rhetorical strategies in union organizing campaigns by organizers and management.	Union and management texts, rhetorical analyses.	Leadership through strategic rhetoric to instill confidence, unity, and a sense of moral justice among workers
Foerster, 2004	Challenges and strategies in fostering unity among a diverse union membership. Shared identity ('panethnic black identity') based in pride builds solidarity and more easily accommodates immigrant groups.	Ethnography, interviews.	Leaders must encourage members' common struggles and form alliances against common oppressors.
Brennen, 2005	Historical case study of Los Angeles Herald newspaper strike 1967–77 and portrayal of unions in local and national media.	Media framing, word choice, negative consequences (biased against labor) e.g., "scabs" as messaging by management to avoid collective bargaining.	Management's refusal to negotiate reinforced the collective identity of union members. Publisher was lionized in the press for his leadership.
Cloud, 2005	Manufacturing setting of a losing union campaign at Staley shows the limits of discourse relative to material gains and losses, company coercion.	Narratives and the role of victim metaphors in union newsletters seen through dialectical materialism.	Rank-and-file as newsletter writers had low power due to few material gains.

Real & Putnam, 2005	Historical tensions between professionalism and unionism, especially within elite professions like pilots.	Tensions, military metaphors, and ironies in central themes of newsletters, websites, news reports.	Resistance leadership from within the pilots' union and why unions are also bureaucracies to be resisted. Leadership is dispersed vis-a-vis dissidents.
Cranford, 2007	Union renewal efforts of Latina/Latino immigrant union ('Justice 4 Janitors') weakened traditional gender divisions and fostered feminist leadership values.	Ethnography, interviews, observation.	Union focus on leadership development enables women to challenge gender equalities, have leadership roles, and personal and political empowerment.
Ganz, 2009	Case study of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in the 1960s. Chavez's charisma and moral authority organized farm workers to achieve victories against powerful agricultural interests.	Historical accounts, texts.	Chavez's leadership combined strategic insight, charismatic appeal, and a commitment to nonviolent action.
Banks, 2010	Writers' Guild of America mobilization of A-list writers to join negotiation committees and picket lines as a pressuring tactic.	Interview accounts.	Leadership drew on what writers do well regarding digital media and images to challenge traditional media relations tactics.
Burgoon, Fine, Jacoby, & Tichenor, 2010	American unionism and immigration discussion, challenging that unions are universally opposed to immigration and revealing a deep divide within the labor movement.	Historical narratives.	Union leaders' public stance on immigrants' shown helping or hurting the cause of labor.
Cloud, 2011	Informal leadership by dissident union members, pushing back against both Boeing and union bureaucracy in the 1995 machinists' strike.	Narratives, archival quotes.	Rank-and -file members fight for democracy over their union leadership's complicity with Boeing.

Artz, 2012	Relationship between leadership styles and organizational resilience in US and European corporations in the post-financial crisis period of 2008.	Case studies, interviews, financial reports.	Adaptive leadership in crisis management is characterized by flexibility, strategic thinking, and willingness to engage employees at all levels.
Bryant-Anderson & Roby, 2012	Impact of gender and race on union stewards involving discrimination and tokenism; the way marginalization positions leaders to better achieve racial and gender justice.	Broad thematic analysis of interviews based on frequencies.	Women stewards emphasized care for members while white men adopted a direct, assertive style. Women stewards of color reported styles that were strong, direct, and uncompromising.
Kirton & Healy, 2012	How gender, race, and class influence women's union discourses; tensions between masculine leadership models and feminist ideals; how women leaders navigate these complexities.	Women's discursive framing of leadership in interviews.	Women leaders' emphasis on inclusive, transformational leadership addressing gender and racial inequalities. American women were more individualistic, while British women were more collectivistic.
Fiorito, Padavic, & Russell, 2014	Role of union leadership in fostering member enrollment, engagement, and solidarity.	Surveys, interviews, case studies.	Union leaders' are linchpins in mobilizing members and fostering participation.
Rubio, 2016	Historical case study of 1970 U.S. Postal strike. Explores the communication strategies used by union leaders and members during the strike.	Historical documents, transcripts, interviews.	Sustaining a strike and reaching settlements depend on leaders' ability to articulate demands and maintain strong lines of communication.
Twarog, Sherer, O'Farrell, & Coney, 2016	Union leadership development programs and their effectiveness in enhancing leadership skills.	Program evaluations, participant surveys, interviews.	Leadership development programs are essential for union members, especially women leaders.

Lundstrom, 2017	Contrasts two leaders with different styles that influence team dynamics and organizational performance.	Case studies, interviews, organizational records.	A participative approach led to higher engagement and morale, while an authoritative style resulted in efficiency but lower team satisfaction.
Phillips et al., 2019	History of librarian union at UC Berkley and its involvement in cultural changes within the organization.	Discourses of neoliberalism, social justice/ democracy, anti-unionism.	Targets 'one-party' oligarchy of unions in favor of democratic/ social movement leadership i.e., informal, collective leadership
Krantz & Fritzén, 2021	Swedish teacher's union and the tensions with collective identities.	Compared texts vs. discursive practices vs. social practices.	Leadership implications for collective identity and responding to external forces that create identity contradictions and inconsistencies.
Lundemark, 2021	Union officials' construction of migrant workers in two Danish trade unions vis-à-vis class and trade union practice was bound up with union officials' discursive constructions of nation, ethnicity, and race.	Ethnography, interviews, Discourses of race, nationality, and gender.	Leadership implications for migrant workers and the role of discursive and nondiscursive elements in addressing the tension between inclusion and exclusion.
Crocco & Jordana, 2023	Tracks the evolution of union leadership in Chile across different generations, highlighting the impact of changing regulatory frameworks.	Interview accounts.	Communication gap between established union leaders and young members just starting out as leaders. Encouragement from senior leaders increases member participation.

Source: own elaboration.