Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations

Behind the Scenes: Gender Equality in Local Union Leadership

Marie-Pier Bernard Pelletier and Catherine Le Capitaine

Volume 78, Number 4, 2023

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1111514ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (print)
1703-8138 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Bernard Pelletier, M.-P. & Le Capitaine, C. (2023). Behind the Scenes: Gender Equality in Local Union Leadership. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, *78*(4). https://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

Article abstract

This article examines the experiences of local union presidents with respect to gender equality. Based on a qualitative case study of members of union committees dedicated to the status of women and local union presidents working in the Québec education sector, our research points to an unprecedented breakthrough of women serving as local presidents. Nevertheless, the existence of a "triple burden," the persistence of gender stereotypes and a male union culture, the lack of training and mentoring, and the reliance on solicitation are all hindering the achievement of gender equality. Our research findings also highlight a weak representation of the diversity of social identities within the union organization studied.

Summary

This article examines the experiences of local union presidents with respect to gender equality. In a context where equity, diversity and inclusion in the workforce are more relevant than ever, this paper aims to contribute to reflections on the democratic deficit of female representation in union organizations. The findings are based on a qualitative case study of members of two union committees dedicated to the status of women and sixteen local union presidents working in the Québec education sector. By gathering the views of these women and men, our research makes a case for the long-neglected place of women serving as local presidents within the union organization studied. It is the efforts made by the unions themselves that have gradually allowed women to enter the traditionally male-dominated union world. Behind this unprecedented breakthrough, however, are gaps that remain in achieving gender equality. Beyond a continuing numerical deficit of women, the difficulty of managing a "triple burden," the persistence of gender stereotypes, the prevalence of a male union culture, the lack of training and mentoring, and the use of solicitation are major obstacles that prevent women from accessing local union leadership positions. In addition, the representation of diverse social identities (age, family status, race, etc.) is still not well represented at the local decision-making level of the union organization studied, even among elected women. Diversity and gender equality representation remain challenges to be prioritized to ensure a more sustainable and democratic union organization.

Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations
78(4) 2023

Behind the Scenes: Gender Equality in Local Union Leadership

Marie-Pier BERNARD PELLETIER
Professor, School of Business Administration, Université TÉLUQ
marie-pier.bernardpelletier@teluq.ca

Catherine LE CAPITAINE
Professor, Département des relations industrielles, Université Laval
catherine.lecapitaine@rlt.ulaval.ca

Abstract

This article examines the experiences of local union presidents with respect to gender equality. Based on a qualitative case study of members of union committees dedicated to the status of women and local union presidents working in the Québec education sector, our research points to an unprecedented breakthrough of women serving as local presidents. Nevertheless, the existence of a "triple burden," the persistence of gender stereotypes and a male union culture, the lack of training and mentoring, and the reliance on solicitation are all hindering the achievement of gender equality. Our research findings also highlight a weak representation of the diversity of social identities within the union organization studied.

Summary

This article examines the experiences of local union presidents with respect to gender equality. In a context where equity, diversity and inclusion in the workforce are more relevant than ever, this paper aims to contribute to reflections on the democratic deficit of female representation in union organizations. The findings are based on a qualitative case study of members of two union committees dedicated to the status of women and sixteen local union presidents working in the Québec education sector. By gathering the views of these women and men, our research makes a case for the long-neglected place of women serving as local presidents within the union organization studied. It is the efforts made by the unions themselves that have gradually allowed women to enter the traditionally male-dominated union world. Behind this unprecedented breakthrough, however, are gaps that remain in achieving gender equality. Beyond a continuing numerical deficit of women, the difficulty of managing a "triple burden," the persistence of gender stereotypes, the prevalence of a male union culture, the lack of training and mentoring, and the use of solicitation are major obstacles that prevent women from accessing local union leadership positions. In addition, the representation of diverse social identities (age, family status, race, etc.) is still not well represented at the local decision-making level of the union organization studied, even among elected women. Diversity and gender equality representation remain challenges to be prioritized to ensure a more sustainable and democratic union organization.

Keywords: Union representation; local presidents; women; gender; education sector

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

1. Introduction

Women's access to the labour market and their employment retention, the fight against various forms of discrimination, achieving pay equity, and improving the conditions of parental leave and childcare services are just some of the issues that the union movement continues to advocate for on a daily basis. Subject to social pressure (Kirton, 2020), unions must embody the changes demanded by the population and civic movements that promote the values of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within all labour institutions. One of EDI's priorities is achieving gender equality. According to Harvey and Safier (2021), all individuals, regardless of their gender identity, must have equal access to channels of participation and decision making. Our contribution focuses specifically on women's issues, which are at the heart of struggles both inside and outside unions, and which pave the way—the voice—for other gender identities (Serrano and Viajar, 2022).

Unions, devised by and for men (Forrest, 1993), are now being shaken by the rise of multiple identities among their members and, in particular, by the massive increase in the number of female union members (Guillaume and Pochic, 2021). Despite the lack of statistics produced by union organizations (Guillaume, 2018), the profile of union members in Canada and around the world (Briskin, 2008) is moving further and further away from the traditional industrial model, in which the majority of workers were men (Ledwith and Colgan, 2002). Yet men are still omnipresent in union bodies (Kirton and Greene, 2021).

The place of women is a central issue in union renewal strategies (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002; Kirton and Healy, 2013a), especially at the local level. Strengthening gender equality in local union bodies would lead to better decisions on bargaining priorities, the ability to articulate the plurality of members' workplace issues, needs and experiences, and ultimately to new democratic union structures and practices fostering gender equality (Kirton and Greene, 2021).

What is the current state of gender equality in union organizations? How can the under-representation of women in local union leadership be explained, when more women than men are now union members? In answering these questions, this article, which looks at the experiences of local union presidents, has two aims. On the one hand, we are seeking to determine which union levers increase the numerical representation of women in elected local leadership positions. On the other, we want to better understand the obstacles that limit gender equality within these positions. To this end, the article is divided into five parts. The first raises the issue of the democratic deficit of women within unions. Drawing on materialist feminist theory, the second part proposes refocusing epistemology in industrial relations. The third part describes the study carried out with women and men serving as local presidents in a union organization in Québec's education sector. The fourth presents the results of the case study and reports, on the one hand, an improvement in the numerical representation of women, but confirms, on the other, that obstacles continue to limit the achievement of gender equality within local union leadership. In the final section, we set out four findings on gender equality representation in local union executives and, more broadly, on the need to include a greater diversity of identity groups.

2. The challenge of gender equality in unions: the urgent need for action

While the average unionization rate in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, at 15.4% in 2019, has been declining in most countries for several decades (OECD, 2023), the changing profile of union membership is nonetheless notable as the number of women has increased. For the first time in history, in several European and North American countries, women now outnumber men in union ranks, as female salaried employment has risen steadily (Gavin et al., 2022). This is the case in Canada, where the turning point in the feminization of membership came in 2006, and more recently, in 2016, in Québec. In 2022, in Québec, the union coverage rate, which corresponds to the percentage of workers covered by a collective agreement, was 39.9% for women compared with 37.7% for men (Institut de la statistique du Québec [ISQ], 2022).

Not only are there now more unionized women than men, women are also more supportive of union membership than men (Torre, 2023). However, women's representation in the union hierarchy has not kept pace with their unionization (Cuneo, 1993). Unions must therefore bridge this gender democracy deficit (Briskin, 2012) if they are to achieve proportional representation of their membership. Unions have implemented various strategies to increase and maintain the representation of women in union leadership positions (Kirton and Healy, 2013c; Serrano and Viajar, 2022),

which is influenced by factors specific to the union (Blaschke, 2011, 2015). Individual measures such as women-only training, personal development conferences and mentoring are designed to help women gain greater confidence in their ability to hold union office (Kirton and Healy, 2013c). Collective strategies seek to break away from the organizational mechanisms that maintain gender discrimination (Kirton and Healy, 2013c). This has led to the creation of women-only spaces within several unions, with women status committees and networks (Le Capitaine and Bernard Pelletier, 2022). This trend has prompted some unions to set up various statutory[1] or ad hoc committees for other identity groups (youth committees, LGBTQ2SA+ community committees, cultural diversity committees, etc.) (Briskin, 2002, 2008; Kirton and Greene, 2002; Wright et al., 2022). Despite the laudable intention of eliminating all forms of discrimination in their institutions, these union committees are criticized for "compartmentalizing" interests when individuals may, in reality, have multiple or intersecting interests (Wright et al., 2022). Some unions have also adopted affirmative action measures such as quotas or reserved seats (Serrano and Viajar, 2022). While these measures may have a beneficial impact on female representation (Kirsch and Blaschke, 2015), they are also controversial (Wright et al., 2022) when it comes to the under-represented being interested in taking advantage of these measures (Kirton and Healy, 2013c) and the legitimacy granted by other members to those elected by these means (Briskin, 2012).

Given these efforts, how can the persistence of gender inequalities in unions be explained? A wealth of literature (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002; Gavin et al., 2022; Guillaume, 2018; Guillaume and Pochic, 2021; Kirton and Healy, 2013c; Serrano and Viajar, 2022) has examined the obstacles to women's presence in union hierarchies. Rejecting the essentialist view that women are not interested in union positions (Pocock, 1995), the literature reveals several obstacles encountered in unions' operations. Authors agree that a male union culture, strongly rooted in union institutions, persists. Unionism has traditionally been a place of advocacy where the term "fraternity," which used to be included in union names, reflected the underlying principles of a boys' club, i.e. male solidarity and the exclusion of women (White, 2007). As a result, women's demands are not sufficiently taken into account in union bodies or during negotiations (Serrano and Viajar, 2022). Other research has highlighted how union mechanisms produce inequalities because they do not allow for diversification among those with formal power (Guillaume, 2007, 2018). The importance

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

given to informal networks and, in particular, the use of solicitation in the election process lead to an "organizational production" of union officials (Guillaume, 2007). The role of gatekeeper left to the leaders already in place, most of whom are men, perpetuates an inner circle that excludes women (Guillaume, 2018).

Studies also highlight the complex interplay of a "triple burden" between personal, professional and union life (Guillaume, 2018). Union work requires constant geographical and temporal mobility, which is difficult to reconcile with the gendered division of domestic labour, thus heightening the constraints on women (Gavin et al., 2022) and making union participation even more difficult for female members with young children (Pocock, 1995; Serrano and Viajar, 2022). There are fewer studies on constraints for women serving as caregivers (Bernard Pelletier, 2022). In addition, women face personal challenges due to a lack of confidence and impostor syndrome, which are more prevalent among women than men, leading them to believe that they lack the necessary skills to take on union responsibilities (Serrano and Viajar, 2022).

While the levers for and obstacles to female representation in union positions are increasingly documented, our study's originality lies in its examination of the experience of elected union leaders at the local level, often overlooked in the scientific literature in favour of people carrying out union mandates at higher organizational levels (Kirton and Healy, 2013b). Despite the existence of some research on the experience of union delegates (Gagnon and Beaudry, 2019; Hege et al., 2011; Le Capitaine et al., 2013), few studies have been carried out so far on local union leadership from a gendered perspective (Kirton and Healy, 2013b).

The reason we are interested in leaders at the local level is because they occupy a dual position: an "*intermediary position*" (Fortin-Bergeron et al., 2013:410) [translation] between rank-and-file members and the higher union body, and a "*mediating role*" (Bilge et al., 2006:12) [translation] between the people represented by the union and the employer. Their multi-dimensional union role, focused on the administration, mobilization and application of the collective agreement, requires them to ensure coordination between members, the local union and the higher bodies of the union organization. Moreover, the local level is a space where women are more likely to be visible (Briskin, 2011) and a springboard to other decision-making levels (Gray, 1993). This study therefore proposes to enrich our knowledge of industrial relations by examining the gendered representation of local union leadership. Taking a feminist perspective, we will look in particular at the experience of these democratically elected individuals, and at the levers and obstacles encountered at the local level in terms of gender equality.

3. Materialist feminist approach

The field of industrial relations has long considered people in employment relationships to be homogeneous and asexual (Edwards, 2010). The invisibility of women in classical, mainstream theories of industrial relations has made this field quintessentially male territory (Forrest, 1993), even being qualified as "*malestream*" (Kirton and Healy, 2013a:2). Feminist theories have emerged in industrial relations as a result of, among other things, gender blindness (Danieli, 2006; Forrest, 1993; Greene, 2003; Hansen, 2002; Holgate et al., 2006) and the little recognition of the different experiences of women and men in labour market institutions (Wajcman, 2000). More recent developments also demonstrate the absence of intersectionality in social relations (Lee and Tapia, 2021; McBride et al., 2014) and call for the incorporation of multiple dimensions of diversity in labour and employment research.

Without disregarding the theoretical advances made with regard to intersectionality, we are using a materialist feminist framework (Delphy, 1998) to specifically examine gender differences between women and men. We seek to highlight, without referring to biological imperatives, the

social construction of women's experience in local union leadership. Our analytical framework enables a relational reading of women and men; in other words, women's and men's social groups are not thought of separately, but as integral parts of a "specific social relationship" (Kergoat, 2000:20) [translation]. Gender is therefore not seen as a feminine experience, but rather as *"a social process whereby women and men experience work and its institutions in markedly different ways"* (Holgate et al., 2006:311).

Constructing the article within a materialist feminist framework allows us to go beyond the boundaries built up between the public (productive) and private (reproductive) spheres, in order to understand the gender inequalities that manifest themselves within union organizations (Briskin, 2006). Without taking into account women's contributions in the private sphere, it becomes impossible to capture the full extent of their experiences as elected local union leaders and to explain more generally, beyond the factors that facilitate their inclusion and their career path, the reasons for their democratic deficit.

4. Case study in the Québec education sector

This article presents a case study of a union organization in Québec's education sector, a predominantly female sector that is highly unionized. According to Statistics Canada data (2022), the union coverage rate for Québec teachers is 79.5%. Working conditions of school personnel are governed by the *Act respecting the process of negotiation of the collective agreements in the public and parapublic sectors* (R.S.Q., chapter R-8.2). While wages and benefits are negotiated centrally, local or regional matters are negotiated between the local union and each school service centre or school board. In other words, the local union presidents at the heart of our study are key players in representing and defending their members' interests.

The qualitative study carried out enabled us to gain an in-depth understanding of the experience of the presidents we met, in terms of women's experiences in local union positions and the gender inequalities that ensue. Aiming for a detailed understanding of a complex phenomenon in its context (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2016; Yin, 2009) rather than its generalization (Bardin, 2007), the empirical material for this research comes from a triangulation (Miles and Huberman, 2003) of three data sources.

The first source of data relates to the exploratory phase of the research. Two voluntary focus groups, each lasting three hours, were conducted with three members from the status of women committee of the union organization studied and three members from the statutory committee of the central labour body with which it is affiliated. Participants were allowed to think aloud and interact freely with one another (Flick, 2006). These meetings, recorded with consent and transcribed in their entirety, enabled the researchers to become familiar with the case being studied and to gather feedback from women in the field to perfect the interview template.

The second data source sought the voice of local union presidents, and it forms the core of the empirical research. We approached all individuals elected to this level, i.e. 19 presidents (8 women and 11 men). As a result, 16 individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with 6 women and 10 men sitting as president of a local union affiliated with the union organization under study. During these interviews, we listened to the opinions of women and of men to understand the gender-related issues associated with the under-representation of women in representative bodies and, more specifically, as presidents of local unions. The voice of men, rarely solicited in the exploration of the gender democracy deficit, brings an additional dimension. In our view, it enriches and complements the women's point of view.

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

The interview template included seven themes (descriptive union information; career path and motivation; role and tasks; relationships with members; relationships with the employer; union life; challenges and future prospects). The meetings lasted an average of two hours, were recorded with the consent of the participants and were transcribed in full, generating 497 pages of verbatim. The data were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti software.

To enrich the comments gathered from the presidents, the third source of data was documentary analysis. Taking documents and artifacts into account can be *"an additional source for fieldwork"* (Gaudet and Robert, 2018: 107) [translation]. Several of the presidents interviewed provided union documents explaining the workings, mission and history of their union. We also consulted various union websites presenting their democratic structure. These important written records were useful for understanding the context in which our research was carried out, and they gave meaning to the reality expressed by our interviewees.

The main data collection took place over several years at a time when the union gains made by school staff were being disrupted and the increasing precariousness of their jobs was evident (Bernard Pelletier, 2022). It is against this backdrop that we present the results of our research, focusing on the rise of women in local union positions on the one hand, and the incomplete progress in gender equality on the other.

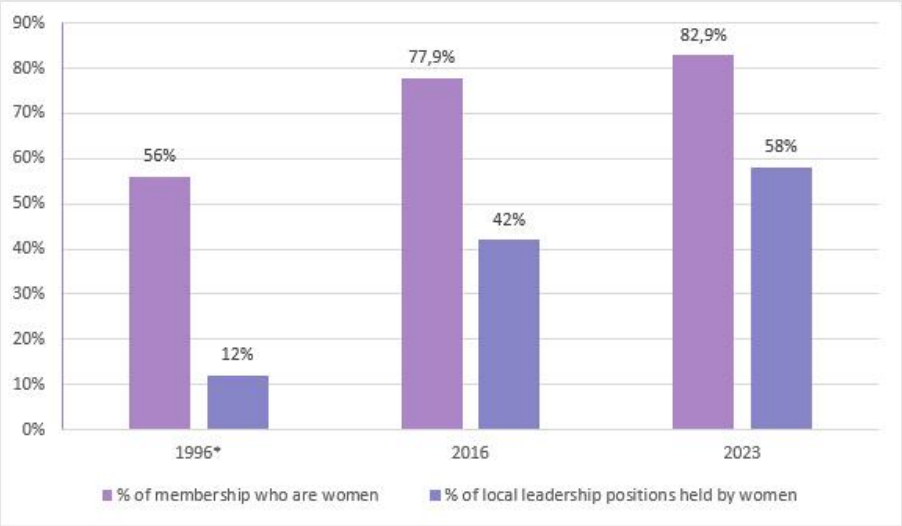
5. Breaking into the boys' club: the rise of women in local union positions

5.1 Daring to take their place in a traditionally male world

The progression of women's presence in the membership and local decision-making bodies of the union organization studied reveals a change from the tradition where the typical president of a union was a man (Graph1).

Graph 1

Progression of women's presence in the membership and local decision-making bodies of the union organization studied



* First year for which data are available.

There has been a marked increase in the number of women in the organization's various bodies in recent years:

> *I look at the changes even at the Federal Council level . . . At the beginning, when I went, it was more of a men's world and now, when I look around the room, it has really shifted towards a world of women . . . I get the impression that as older men leave, they're being replaced by women.*
>
> L02 President [f.]

This was emphasized by several of the elected representatives interviewed: "*They're present, they participate . . . there's a strong female presence*" (L25 President [m.]). One president also mentioned that in her local union, there are now "*. . . more women getting involved than men*" (L26 President [f.]).

Some respondents were the first women to be elected president in their local union's history—the first to break into this "boys' club."

> *When I arrived, I was the first woman to take on the role of union president. They'd been around for 30 years, and it had always been predominantly male, with only male presidents.*
>
> L22 President [f.]

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

Others, before becoming president, were the first women to sit as union delegates on the local executive.

> *When I arrived on the board, I remember perfectly, because I was the only woman, they were all men . . . It's true that now . . . it's the opposite: it's almost all women, and just one man.*
>
> L02 President [f.]

Over the years, more and more women have held elected office at the local level. The considerable gains made by women at this level of the hierarchy are significant, since it forms *"the pool"* (exploratory interview) for moving up the ladder.

We note, however, that individual initiatives to rise to elected office are rare among women. These are usually one-offs, isolated or based on *"a question of timing"* (L26 President [f.]). Local presidents emphasized: *"Women won't immediately go for that"* (L27 President [f.]). Women who campaigned on their own to be elected president of their local union were extremely rare in our study. Women's progress is therefore not the result of individual strategies, but rather collective ones.

5.2 When collective efforts bear fruit

It took years of effort and demands to include women in the union structure. Two union initiatives —equal opportunity programs known as PAES (*Programmes d'accès à l'égalité syndicale*) and women's status committees and networks—have helped to ensure a greater presence of women in union life and, more generally, in democratic bodies.

The union's equal opportunity programs

"If the PAES didn't exist, there would be more men in power." (Exploratory interview)

A union's equal opportunity program is a tool voluntarily put in place to enable and facilitate women's participation in the political life of unions.

Although at the time of these interviews, a PAES existed within the central labour body to which the union organization under study is affiliated, this was not always the case. Therefore, in the 1990s, the union organization decided to set up its own PAES in order to play an active role in gender equality and encourage women's participation, lacking at the time, in its bodies. Its implementation was the culmination of years of work by feminist activists and multiple recommendations by the status of women committee. Local unions affiliated with the organization had full autonomy in deciding whether to implement a PAES locally, or to apply (or not) a PAES existing at the higher levels (regional or provincial).

> *There's one at the [central labour body, then we have one at [the union organization studied], then the local unions are free to have one or not.*
>
> L03 President [f.]

This program mainly contained provisions for reserving seats for women on the various advisory committees (youth committee, socio-political action committee, health and safety committee, etc.) in order to increase their participation in these permanent working groups which are mandated to make recommendations to the union organization's decision-making bodies. This adjustment measure, temporarily granting a preferential advantage, resulted in at least one woman participating in each of the advisory committees.

> *I gave my name for a committee . . . they said . . . ah, it's a women's position! Well, I said, I'll give my name (laughs), maybe I have a chance.*
>
> L27 President [f.]

Female representation in the organization's advisory committees has increased significantly. For example, in the youth committee, it has risen from 33% in 2006 to 67% in recent years.

However, some presidents view this measure as inconsistent with the notion of competency and *"frustrating for men . . . who want to get involved"* (L22 President [f.]). Our data also suggest the PAES have become obsolete, since they have *". . . not been reviewed since 1990... for 20 years"* (exploratory interview). What's more, we found that local presidents were unfamiliar with the PAES and the range of different measures on offer: *"It's the first time I've heard of it (laughing)."* (L27 President [f.])

While the advisory committees are not a place where strategic orientations are discussed and decided, they represent places of militancy and are an important *"source of succession and recruitment"* (President L03 [f.]). Although voluntary and little-known, the PAES are seen as a helping hand for women wishing to get involved in their union.

Women's status committees and networks

"Training and information, for greater involvement" (exploratory interview)

At the time of the interviews, the union organization had its own women's status committee and network, which operated independently from those of the central labour body. The union organization's status of women committee was composed of four women elected by the Federal Council to represent the collective voice of female union members. The women's network included one representative appointed by each of the local unions, as well as all the committee members. These individuals are "carriers" of the status of women file, with the aim of communicating and identifying feminist issues at the local level. For many, this committee and network represent a *"gateway"* (L16 President [f.]) to women's involvement in the democratic bodies.

> *There are many, many people who start out with the women's file . . . they become interested in getting to know their collective agreement, then in becoming pillars in their community; the women's file isn't too intimidating.*
>
> L03 President [f.]

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

For several female presidents, the committee and its network, open only to women, were the starting point for their union involvement: *"I took on the women's file, and that's basically how it all began"* (L03 President [f.]).

Despite recognizing the enriching and formative aspect of the women's status committee and network, other presidents say these have little impact on the lines of action, demands or practices of local unions. *"Are we still seeing concrete benefits, apart from . . . things like March 8? I'd say no, not enough"* (L22 President [f.]). Some presidents go so far as to assert that *"there's no longer any reason for it to exist"* (L23 President [m.]), given the feminization of the membership.

Despite these reservations, women-specific structures enable women to be *"mobilized"* (L01 President [m.]) and keep the *"doors open"* (L30 President [m.]) to ensure their accessibility to the organization's executive bodies.

6. Persistent obstacles to gender equality

Despite a marked improvement in the presence of women in the local union bodies in the case studied, several obstacles still make their inclusion selective and incomplete. Although women are increasingly able to break through the glass ceiling, the union does not have a rate of feminization of local leadership that reflects the number of women in the union organization. This is illustrated by the scant data available: although women made up 82.9% of union membership in 2023, only 58% of local presidents were women (Graph 1). From our data, we have identified four main reasons for this disparity.

6.1 Complexity of managing a "triple burden"

Serving as a union president means juggling union, professional and personal responsibilities. Men and women alike find themselves constantly torn between their union and professional responsibilities. The local union presidents interviewed all testified to a strong sense of belonging to their profession in the education sector. These elected representatives are not systematically replaced when they have to take time off work to perform union duties, so they accumulate work which they have to catch up with later. Because they take their professional mission to heart, they also fear that students will be penalized by their absence.

Moreover, carrying out union tasks encroaches on personal time. While men are not insensitive to the difficulty of reconciling union duties with their private lives, this aspect is much more apparent among women. *"We treat them as if they were men: make yourself available, figure it out"* (L15 President [m.]). It is largely women who suffer, as they are still the main ones in charge of the family:

> *My son has a problem, my daughter needs something else... I have to leave because I have to bring her to such and such a place... Not many men tell me this, but women, on the other hand, they're the backbone of the family.*
>
> L15 President [m.]

The over-investment of time and extensive travel required to attend meetings limits the participation of people with young children, especially single parents. *". . . I'm lucky not to have small children anymore, because I think that would make it impossible"* (L26 President [f.]).

Local female presidents are mainly women with fewer family and domestic responsibilities. At the time of the interviews, they were all middle-aged, mostly without children or with grown-up children, and more than half of them were in a couple but living separately. As for the male presidents, their age varied more than that of the female presidents, and almost half of them had dependent children under the age of 18. The majority were married or in a couple. Most of the men had no difficulty reconciling their union duties with their private lives (Table 1).

Table 1

Profile of local presidents

	Women (N = 6)	Men (N = 10)
Age		
35 or younger	-	-
36-45	-	30% (3)
46-55	50% (3)	20% (2)
56 or older	50% (3)	5 % (5)
Children (<18)		
Yes	17% (1)	40% (4)
No	83% (5)	60% (6)
Family status		
Single	17% (1)	20% (2)
Married	-	50% (5)
In a couple	66% (4)	30% (3)
Did not say	17% (1)	-

Even if they devote a lot of their personal time to performing union duties, such as evenings or weekends, many men can count on the acceptance and understanding of the person who shares their life so that they can be more involved in the union. *". . . It's going better now. My wife understands now (laughing)"* (L13 President [m.].

In addition to caring for young children, the role of caregiver, particularly for aging parents, also complicates the balance between union life and personal life. According to the interviews conducted, this still invisible phenomenon is a new obstacle that women will have to deal with more and more in the future. Due to social expectations linked to gendered roles, they are designated to take care of others.

> *I see my mother getting older, and she's also very dependent on me to travel . . . so if she has to be taken to the hospital or if . . . she wants to go and visit her sisters, well, it's up to me.*
>
> L03 President [f.]

6.2 Ubiquity of gender stereotypes

Women's and men's perceptions and attitudes to leadership are very different. The men interviewed asserted a natural predisposition for taking on a local leadership role. This was clearly demonstrated by the vocabulary used: *"the order of things"* (L30 President [m.]), *"it was obvious"*

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

(L29 President [m.]), a *"natural leadership"* (L15 President [m.]), a *"vocation"* (L15 President [m.]) and a union ascension that was *"destiny"* (L25 President [m.]).

It was an entirely different story among the women: *"I considered myself more of a follower than a leader"* (L03 President [f.]). And the ubiquitousness of gender stereotypes hinders their ascension: *"What's my voice going to be worth next to his?"* (L27 President [f.]). Plagued by impostor syndrome and a lack of confidence, they do not see themselves as leaders:

> *Women often say, "I can't do that" or "I don't know anything about that stuff." They see it as a taller challenge. Guys don't say that . . . they don't question their ability to do things.*
>
> L29 President [m.]

Women are less likely to run for local presidency than men, due to a lower recognition of their abilities, combined with fear of failure and a greater difficulty with public speaking. *"When people are expressing their views, it's the guys who speak up"* (L13 President [m.]). Once elected, they redouble their efforts to prove their competency and carve out a place for themselves in a world of men: *"I have to prove to them that I'm not just a woman, but that I'm good too"* (L27 President [f.]).

6.3 The pervasiveness of a male union culture

The confidence and "natural" leadership identified by the men feeds a union culture with a single way of doing things, traditionally associated with the male breadwinner. *"There's a boys' club way of dealing with things sometimes. It was just guys in my department, they found another guy, then it was like a way of operating"* (L07 President [m.]).

Many of the men interviewed evoked a combative vision of trade unionism, based on a balance of power with the employer. They see themselves as *"guardians"* (L23 President [m.]) and *"watchdogs"* (L08 President [m.]) of the collective agreement, or even as *"bulldogs"* (L15 President [m.]). Conversely, members of the status of women committee said that women tend to advocate values of collaboration and consensus-building. Being less confrontational, they are more afraid of misunderstandings, changes in attitude and employer reprisals.

6.4 The "organizational factory" of local presidents

The presidents we met did not receive any training before taking up their posts. Being resourceful and learning "on the job" are the preferred means of getting by: *"We're not actually trained to do this, we learn it as we go"* (L03 President [f.]), although some presidents rely on the experience and training they received as delegates at the start of their union involvement. Unlike men, women also draw on union committees and networks as sources of learning.

> *I also go to the socio-political action network and the health and safety network because I consider them strongly linked to practical application.*
>
> President L26 [f.]

Beyond the lack of training, women, contrary to men, mentioned the importance of mentoring or sponsorship to support them: *"When I officially became president, I asked . . . can I get a sponsor?"* (L22 President [f.]). Women seek assistance: *"I need someone who I can always count on"* (L27

President [f.]). Yet no formal mentoring or sponsorship program exists within the union organization studied.

According to a large majority of presidents, elections for local leadership are rare, due to a general lack of interest: *"It's rare for people to flock to the gate"* (L16 President [f.]); *"People aren't exactly tripping over each other to get to the bread bar (laughing)"* (L15 President [m.]); *"If anyone dares to raise their hand and say 'I might be interested,' they're elected by acclamation (laughing)"* (L15 President [m.]). Candidates are therefore selected by personal invitation. Everything is decided before the election: "*I target people and meet with them personally"* (L23 President [m.]). In other words, outgoing presidents directly solicit the future president they wish to see elected, which unconsciously encourages the perpetuation of similar leadership profiles, i.e. white, French-speaking people of a certain age, even among women. According to the information gathered, the union organization's members form a much more heterogeneous group in terms of, for example, demographic variables (age, race, language, LGBTQ2SA+ community) and family situation (marital status, number of dependent children) than the presidents in our study. The union organization also has local unions representing English-speaking members and members working in Indigenous communities. In addition, the youth committee supports the inclusion of young people aged 35 and under in the membership, and the following quote even indicates an increase in the number of young members: *"A lot of people under the age of 30 have joined in the last few years"* (L25 President [m.]). These discrepancies between the socio-demographic profiles of members and of local presidents reveal a lack of diversity in decision-making positions.

7. Discussion

This study is in line with work on the development of knowledge in industrial relations on the theme of gender equality in union organizations and, more specifically, on the need to channel activist energies around the issue of the gender democracy deficit in union renewal strategies. Four main findings emerge from our research.

Firstly, our study highlights the importance of taking gender equality into account in union renewal. It corroborates the findings of previous research demonstrating the contemporary phenomenon of the substantial proportion of female union members (Gavin et al., 2022; Kirton and Greene, 2021). This change in workforce composition is forcing unions to address gender equality issues such as work-life balance and, more broadly, those surrounding identity diversity. It is therefore astonishing to note, despite the unprecedented affirmation of the feminization of the base's members, and more globally of its identity diversity, the scarcity of statistics recorded with regard to the identity characteristics of the people represented. The literature suggests that unions are struggling to understand the real profile of their members (Guillaume, 2018). This lack of compiled data makes it more difficult to align the profile of members to that of local presidents, since the exclusively binary collection of data (women/men) does not provide information on the other markers of diversity (race, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) that shape female members. This underscores the unions' lack of recognition of the internal diversity of the "women" category, which is integral to achieving gender equality (Serrano and Viajar, 2022).

Secondly, our findings testify to an increase in the number of female local presidents, reinforcing the rare studies that show how much women have invested in their local unions compared to the higher hierarchical levels (Briskin, 2011). The rise of women at the local level of the organization studied is largely attributable to two union mechanisms, namely the PAES and women's status committees and networks.

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

The PAES, identified in the literature as a union strategy for achieving gender equality (Kirton and Healy, 2013c), have led to considerable gains in the pursuit of gender equality. However, issues have been raised regarding members' reluctance, a lack of awareness, and the programs' obsolescence, calling into question their benefits in the longer term. Our study, like others (Briskin, 2002), shows that strong local autonomy makes it difficult to implement equity policies developed at higher union levels. The lack of awareness of the PAES among several local presidents clearly demonstrates the limits of this voluntary union strategy. Our results also suggest that the reserved women's seats—one of the remedial measures contained in the PAES—generate little controversy when applied to advisory bodies such as committees, but that their use is contested in democratic bodies. This measure is seen as being at odds with the principle of meritocracy (Briskin, 2012; Kirton and Healy, 2013c). Moreover, the obsolescence of the union organization's PAES also reduces its appeal. The lack of regular assessments, the scarcity of reviews and the absence of updates are all pitfalls in the implementation of this strategy to achieve gender equality (Dean, 2006). By eliminating these shortcomings, the PAES could make a greater contribution to gender equality in union organizations.

– Our study supports the findings of previous research showing that women's status committees and networks are gateways to union life (Le Capitaine and Bernard Pelletier, 2022). Furthermore, the literature confirms that having more female members does not necessarily lead to a feminization of the union hierarchy (Guillaume, 2018 ; Kirton, 2021), which justifies the need to consolidate these women-specific spaces (Le Capitaine and Bernard Pelletier, 2022). Contrary to other studies (Briskin, 2002), our results nevertheless call for caution regarding the local impacts of this union strategy. Although the organization studied has a women's status committee and a women's network, the pursuit of gender equality requires better integration of women's groups into the union structure (Briskin, 2008). Affiliated unions should therefore be obligated to set up local women's committees to support grassroots activists and to enable politicization of female members in workplaces, which constitute the heart of labour relations in Québec.

Thirdly, despite these advances, our study bears witness to the persistence of obstacles that feed the gender democracy deficit. The male union culture, marked by combativeness and gender stereotypes such as women's lack of confidence in their abilities, is already well documented (Serrano and Viajar, 2022). Consequently, the lack of training and mentoring—tools that could help women gain greater confidence in their ability to take on union responsibilities (Kirton and Healy, 2013c)—contributes to limiting women's access to local union leadership. Similarly, even today, women are constantly juggling their professional, family and domestic responsibilities, leaving them little time to add union duties to their already busy schedules. This finding corroborates Guillaume's work (2018) on the complex interplay of a "triple burden." Geographical mobility and the countless hours of work required to carry out union tasks are incompatible with the schedules of women devoted to caring for others, as Gavin et al. have already pointed out (2022). This greater investment in the private sphere on the part of women explains why there are fewer women with young children among local presidents compared to men (Serrano and Viajar, 2022). Our study also contributes to research by highlighting the constraint of caregiving, which is still under-represented in trade union literature (Bernard Pelletier, 2022), but which will, we believe, become a growing issue for union organizations in the years to come, given the aging population and the transfer of responsibility for public health services to families.

Finally, the increase in the number of female presidents in local unions demonstrates that it is possible, despite the obstacles, for women to take their place in traditionally male labour institutions. The union organization studied can congratulate itself on how far it has come, but the fact remains that the leadership still lacks diversity in terms of age, family situation, race, etc. Solicitation as the main recruitment method for those elected to the presidency of affiliated unions

has its limitations, even though it has favoured the numerical increase of women. Solicitation is an informal means of recruitment that unconsciously builds an organizational structure for local presidents and locks the door to a diversity of identity groups. This finding corroborates the observations of Guillaume (2007), who notes the intangibility of solicitation and the fostering of a kind of self-segregation, in the sense that potential candidates are identified by a union hierarchy that is still male-dominated. The general lack of interest in local leadership positions encourages those elected to ensure a smooth handover by scouting and recruiting within their network. Informal solicitation brings with it discrimination, since those elected may tend to favour candidates who resemble themselves and with whom they identify, thus perpetuating male representation in local unions.

The issue of diversity is still insufficiently addressed by unions (Bilge et al., 2006; Kirton and Greene, 2021). The growing emergence of expectations surrounding EDI is also influencing the challenges that union organizations must embrace (Kirton and Greene, 2021). These new social challenges are not only forcing unions to promote these issues, but also to question themselves and review the place given to women and different identity groups in their local decision-making bodies. Kirton and Greene (2021) state that members of the various identity groups are in the best position to determine and represent the needs of their own group. The rise of women in local union positions therefore paves the way for groups with diverse social identities (Serrano and Viajar, 2022) who must also have access to local union positions.

8. Conclusion

By presenting the experience of local union presidents in terms of gender equality, this article contributes to reflections on the democratic deficit in female representation in unions. Our study highlights the unprecedented progress made by women in local democratic bodies, thanks to two union levers: equal opportunity programs (PAES) and women's status committees and networks. Nevertheless, the difficulty of juggling a "triple burden," the persistence of gender stereotypes and a male union culture, the lack of training and mentoring, and the reliance on solicitation are all detrimental to achieving gender equality. Moreover, our research shows that there is little representation of the diversity of identity groups at the local decision-making level.

Our study has a number of limitations that could be addressed by future research. Firstly, the data collected is based on the perceptions of locally elected presidents. There may therefore be a discrepancy between the experiences of the people we interviewed and the reality in terms of gender equality. In this sense, our data probably do not shed light on the full mosaic of obstacles encountered by women who fail to gain access to elected office. A focus on female union members would provide a better understanding of the democratic deficit in female representation within union organizations. Secondly, because this was an in-depth study of one union organization in Québec's education sector, the results of our research cannot be generalized. Broadening the research to contrasting sectors would provide a more panoramic view of the issue, in order to identify common and specific elements relating to gender equality. Finally, the materialist feminist approach adopted by our study has revealed the singular experience of local female presidents, which is shaped, among other things, by gender-related social representations and their assignment to family and domestic responsibilities. Nevertheless, further research employing an intersectional analytical lens is required in order to understand the absence of diversity within local union bodies and the reasons behind it. Better intersectional representation of union members in key local positions is essential in a context of increasing diversity in the labour market (Beaudry and Gagnon, 2022; Lechaume et al., 2022). Whether union organizations will seize on the increased fragmentation of their members' identities to document it, adapt to it, and energize and renew themselves remains an open question.

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

Note

[1] Translator note : Formal committee could also be a valid translation of the term “Comité statutataires ou ad-hoc/ponctuels”

Bibliography

Bardin, Laurence. (2007). *L’analyse de contenu*. Presses Universitaires de France.

Beaudry, Catherine & Mélanie Gagnon. (2022). *Diversité en milieu de travail : de l’exclusion à l’inclusion*. Éditions JFD.

Bernard Pelletier, Marie-Pier. (2022). *Rapports de genre et leadership syndical : une étude de cas multiniveau auprès d’une fédération syndicale de la Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)*. Université Laval.

Bilge, Sirma, Mona-Josée Gagnon & Joëlle Quérin. (2006). Des syndicats, du travail et des femmes. Questions pour les féministes. *Recherches féministes*, *19*(1), 1-23. doi : https://doi.org/10.7202/014061ar

Blaschke, Sabine. (2011). Determinants of female representation in the decision-making structures of trade unions. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *32*(3), 421–438. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X10387171

Blaschke, Sabine. (2015). Female representation in the decision-making structures of trade unions: The influences of sector, status and qualification. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *0*(0), 1–22. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185615590904

Briskin, Linda. (2002). The Equity Project in Canadian Unions: Confronting the Challenge of Restructuring and Globalisation. In F. Colgan, & S. Ledwith (Eds.), *Gender, Diversity, and Trade Unions: International Perspectives* (pp. 28–47). Routledge.

Briskin, Linda. (2006). Victimisation and Agency: The Social Construction of Union Women’s Leadership. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *37*(4), 359–378. (https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2006.00409.x) doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2006.00409.x

Briskin, Linda. (2008). Cross-constituency Organizing in Canadian Unions. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *46*(2), 221–247. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8543.2008.00674.x

Briskin, Linda. (2011). Union Renewal, Postheroic Leadership, and Women's Organizing: Crossing Discourses, Reframing Debates. *Labor Studies Journal*, *36*(4), 508. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0160449X11422608

Briskin, Linda. (2012). Merit, Individualism and Solidarity: Revisiting the Democratic Deficit in Union Women’s Leadership. In L. Lotte Hansen, & S. Ledwith (Eds.), *Gendering and Diversifying Trade Union Leadership* (pp. 138–161). Routledge.

Colgan, Fiona & Sue Ledwith. (2002). *Gender, Diversity and Trade Unions: International perspectives*. Routledge. doi : https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203165751

Cuneo, Carl J. (1993). Trade Union Leadership: Sexism and Affirmative Action. In L. Briskin, & P. McDermott (Eds.), *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy and Militancy* (pp. 109–136). University of Toronto Press. doi : https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442683563-008

Danieli, Ardha. (2006). Gender: The Missing Link in Industrial Relations Research. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *37*(4), 329–343. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2006.00407.x

Dean, Homa. (2006). *Women in Trade Unions: Methods and Good Practices for Gender Mainstreaming*. European Trade Union Institute.

Delphy, Christine. (1998). *L'ennemi principal 1 : Économie politique du patriarcat*. Syllepse.

Edwards, Paul. (2010). Developing Labour Process Analysis: Themes from Industrial Sociology and Future Directions. In *Working Life: Renewing Labour Process Analysis* (pp. 29–46). Palgrave MacMillan. doi : https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-11817-2_3

Flick, Uwe. (2006). Focus Groups. In *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (pp. 189–203). Sage.

Forrest, Anne. (1993). Women and Industrial Relations Theory: No Room in the Discourse. *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*, *48*(3), 409–440. doi : https://doi.org/10.7202/050871ar

Fortin-Bergeron, Chloé, Olivier Doucet & Marc-Antonin Hennebert. (2013). Le leadership transformationnel comme source d'engagement syndical : le rôle de modérateur de la justice. *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*, *68*(3), 409–430. doi : https://doi.org/10.7202/1018434ar

Gagnon, Mélanie & Catherine Beaudry. (2019). Délégués syndicaux et prise en compte des besoins particuliers des employés : un rendez-vous manqué? *Recherches sociographiques*, *60*(1), 87-106. doi : https://doi.org/10.7202/1066155ar

Gaudet, Stéphanie & Dominique Robert. (2018). *L'aventure de la recherche qualitative : Du questionnement à la rédaction scientifique*. Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa. doi : https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv19x4dr

Gavin, Mihajla, Susan McGrath-Champ, Meghan Stacey & Rachel Wilson. (2022). Women's participation in teacher unions: Implications of a 'triple burden' for union gender equality strategies. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *43*(2), 830–852. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X20958481

Gray, Lois S. (1993). The route to the top: Female union leaders and union policy. In D. S. Cobble (Éd.), *Women and unions: Forging a partnership* (pp. 378–393). ILR Press.

Greene, Anne-Marie. (2003). Industrial Relations and Women. In P. Ackers, & A. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Understanding Work and Employment: Industrial Relations in Transition* (pp. 305–315). Oxford University Press. doi : https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199240661.003.0015

Guillaume, Cécile. (2007). Le syndicalisme à l'épreuve de la féminisation. La permanence « paradoxale » du plafond de verre à la CFDT. *Politix*, *2*(78), 39–63. doi : https://doi.org/10.3917/pox.078.0039

Guillaume, Cécile. (2018). *Syndiquées : défendre les intérêts des femmes au travail.* Presses de Science Po. doi : https://doi.org/10.3917/scpo.guill.2017.01

Guillaume, Cécile & Sophie Pochic. (2021). Chapter 16: Understanding the underrepresentation of women in union leadership roles: the contribution of a career methodology. In V. Stead, C. Elliott, & S. Mavin (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods on Gender and Management* (pp. 249–264). doi : https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788977937.00026

Hansen, Lise L. (2002). Rethinking the industrial relations tradition from a gender perspective: An invitation to integration. *Employee Relations*, *24*(2), 190–210. doi : https://doi.org/10.1108/01425450210420910

Harvey, Rowan & Chloe Safier. (2021). Transformative Change for Gender Equality: Learning from Feminist Strategies. *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*.

Hege, Adhelheid, Christian Levesque, Gregor Murray & Christian Dufour. (2011). Les délégués, acteurs stratégiques du renouveau syndical? *La revue de l'IRES*, *1*(68), 3–8. doi : https://doi.org/10.3917/rdli.068.0003

Holgate, Jane, Gail Hebson & Anne McBride. (2006). Why Gender and 'Difference' Matters: a Critical Appraisal of Industrial Relations Research. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *37*(4), 310–328. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2006.00406.x

SQ. (2022). *Taux de présence syndicale, résultats selon le sexe pour diverses caractéristiques de la main-d'oeuvre et de l'emploi, 2006-2022, Québec, Ontario et Canada.* (https://statistique.quebec.ca)

Kergoat, Danièle. (2000). Division sexuelle du travail et rapports sociaux de sexe. In H. Hirata, F. Laborie, H. Le Doaré, & D. Senotier (Eds.), *Dictionnaire critique du féminisme* (pp. 35-44). Presses universitaires de France. doi : https://doi.org/10.4000/books.iheid.5419

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar

Kirsch, Anja & Sabine Blaschke. (2015). Women's quotas and their effects: A comparison of Austrian and German trade unions. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, *20*(3), 201–217. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680113518231

Kirton, Gill. (2020). Diversity and inclusion in a changing world of work. In A. Wilkinson, & M. Barry (Eds.), *The Future of Work and Employment* (pp. 49–64). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. doi : https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786438256.00011

Kirton, Gill. (2021). Union framing of gender equality and the elusive potential of equality bargaining in a difficult climate. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *63*(4), 1–23. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/00221856211003604

Kirton, Gill & Anne-Marie Greene. (2002). The dynamics of positive action in UK trade unions: the case of women and black members. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *33*(2), 157–172. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2338.00226

Kirton, Gill & Anne-Marie Greene. (2021). Trade unions and equality, diversity, and inclusion. In *The Dynamics of Managing Diversity and Inclusion. 5th Edition*. Routlege. doi : https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003186397

Kirton, Gill & Geraldine Healy. (2013a). *Gender and Leadership in Unions*. Routledge. doi : https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203078402

Kirton, Gill & Geraldine Healy. (2013b). Gender, Union Democracy and Leadership. In G. Kirton, & G. Healy (Eds.), *Gender and Leadership in Unions* (pp. 47-72). Routledge. doi : https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203078402

Kirton, Gill & Geraldine Healy. (2013c). Stratégies en faveur de la démocratie de genre dans les syndicats. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, *30*, 73-92. doi : https://doi.org/10.3917/tgs.030.0073

Le Capitaine, Catherine & Marie-Pier Bernard Pelletier. (2022). Les comités et les réseaux de la condition des femmes des syndicats sont-ils dépassés? In M. Gagnon, & C. Beaudry (Eds.), *Diversité en milieu de travail : de l'exclusion à l'inclusion* (pp. 17-40).

Le Capitaine, Catherine, Gregor Murray & Christian Lévesque. (2013). Empowerment and union workplace delegates: a gendered analysis. *Industrial Relations Journal*, *44*(4), 389–408. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12025

Lechaume, Aline, Charles Fleury & Claudia Prévost. (2022). *Les diversités en emploi. Perspectives et enjeux au Québec et au Canada*. Presses de l'Université Laval. doi : https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2j6xpzq

Ledwith, Sue & Fiona Colgan. (2002). Tackling gender, diversity and trade union democracy: A worldwide project? In F. Colgan, & S. Ledwith (Eds.), *Gender, Diversity and Trade Unions: International perspectives* (pp. 1–27). Routledge.

Lee, Tamara & Maite Tapia. (2021). Confronting race and other social identity erasures: the case for critical industrial relations theory. *ILR Review*, *74*(3), 1–26. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793921992080

McBride, Anne, Gail Hebson & Jane Holgate. (2014). Intersectionnality: Are We Taking Enough Notice in the Field of Work and Employment Relations? *Work, Employment & Society*, (1–11). doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017014538337

Miles, Matthew B. & Michael A. Huberman. (2003). *Analyse de données qualitatives*. De BOECDk.

OECD (2023) *Trade Union Dataset*. (https://stats.oecd.org/viewhtml.aspx?lang=en&SubSessionId=e31f09b3-34fc-4667-855f-5fefc70afc02)

Paillé, Pierre & Alex Mucchielli. (2016). *L'analyse qualitative en sciences humaines et sociales* (Quatrième édition). Armand Colin. doi : https://doi.org/10.3917/arco.paill.2016.01

Pocock, Barbara. (1995). Gender and Activism in Australian Unions. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *37*(3), 377–400. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/002218569503700303

SC. (2022). *Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2021, adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec*. (https://statistique.quebec.ca)

Serrano, Melisa R. & Verna Dinah Q. Viajar. (2022). Transformative strategies towards gender equality in trade unions. *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*.

Torre, Margarita. (2023). Women in the New Labor Activism: Gender Trends in Attitudes Toward Unions. *Work and Occupations*, 1–8. doi : https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/qf48r

Wajcman, Judy. (2000). Feminism Facing Industrial Relations in Britain. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *38*(2), 183–201. doi : https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8543.00158

White, Julie. (2007). Looking Back: A Brief History of Everything. In G. De Hunt, & D. Rayside (Eds.), *Equity, Diversity and Canadian Labour* (pp. 25–48). doi : https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442684300-004

Wright, Tessa, Sian Moore & Phil Taylor. (2022). Union Equality Structures and the Challenge of Democratic Legitimacy: The Case of the Fire Brigades Union. *Work, Employment & Society*, 1–20. doi : https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170211072796

Yin, Robert K. (2009). *Case Study Research, Design and Methods. 4e édition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

http://doi.org/10.7202/1111514ar