

Legitimizing Worker Disentitlement: Depictions of Postal Workers' Wage Struggles in Globe and Mail Editorials, 1970–2015

Ellen Russell
Wilfrid Laurier University

Brittainy Ruth Bonnis
Queen's University

ABSTRACT

Background *Since the late 1970s, inflation-adjusted wages have stagnated as workers' bargaining power has diminished. The discursive environment in which workers' wage entitlements is contested is an important—yet often neglected—influence on worker bargaining power.*

Analysis *The authors examine editorials published in the Globe and Mail between 1970 and 2015 related to postal workers' wage bargaining to examine the criteria advanced to evaluate the legitimacy of workers' wage demands.*

Conclusions and implications *The discourses examined contribute to normalizing and legitimizing postal worker disenfranchisement by emphasizing harm as the evaluatory criterion by which workers' demands are judged. This framing of postal workers and their wage struggles contributes to an environment in which the legitimacy of wage demands is undermined, contributing to the overall economic and political climate in which wages have stagnated.*

Keywords *Critical discourse studies (CDS); Media/mass media; Postal workers; Wage Stagnation; Neoliberalism*

RÉSUMÉ

Contexte *Depuis la fin des années 1970, les salaires ajustés en fonction de l'inflation stagnent à mesure que le pouvoir de négociation des travailleurs diminue. L'environnement du discours dans lequel les droits salariaux des travailleurs sont contestés est une influence importante—mais souvent négligée—sur le pouvoir de négociation des travailleurs*

Analyse *Les auteurs examinent les éditoriaux publiés dans le Globe and Mail entre 1970 et 2015 concernant la négociation salariale des travailleurs des postes afin d'examiner les critères avancés pour évaluer la légitimité des revendications salariales des travailleurs.*

Ellen Russell is Associate Professor in the Digital Media & Journalism and Social & Environmental Justice programs at Wilfrid Laurier University. Email: erussell@wlu.ca . **Brittainy Ruth Bonnis** is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at Queen's University. Email: brittainy.bonnis@queensu.ca .

Conclusions et implications *Les discours examinés contribuent à normaliser et à légitimer l'inadmissibilité des travailleurs des postes en mettant l'accent sur le préjudice comme critère d'évaluation par lequel les demandes des travailleurs sont jugées. Ce cadrage des postiers et de leurs luttes salariales contribue à un environnement dans lequel la légitimité des revendications salariales est minée, contribuant au climat économique et politique global dans lequel les salaires ont stagné.*

Mots clés *études critiques du discours (CD); médias/mass media; travailleurs des postes; stagnation des salaires; néolibéralisme*

Introduction

The consolidation of neoliberal capitalism since the 1970s has promoted a confluence of factors that depress wages and fuel rising inequality.¹ This article addresses one often neglected dimension of wage stagnation: the discursive environment in which the legitimacy of wage entitlements are contested. The perceived legitimacy of wage demands have material impacts on wage struggles, since wage demands that are regarded as legitimate may embolden workers in their wage demands, increase solidarity for workers in their communities, and dissuade employers and governments from punitive responses to worker demands. Beliefs concerning what workers deserve are socially constituted and contested, and are shaped by all manner of discursive influences, including societal concepts of justice, morality, solidarity, and merit.

This article investigates depictions of wage entitlements during the neoliberal era by examining the framing of wage demands in newspaper editorials. Considerable scholarship exists documenting the generally unfavourable treatment of unions and unionized workers in the media (see, for example, Martin, 2004; Mort, 1992; Puette, 1992), particularly in newspapers (Bruno, 2009; Carreiro, 2005). These negative portrayals of unions in the media are influential in public debate. As Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts (2000) argue: “[T]he media define for the majority of the population *what* significant events are taking place” and also “offer powerful interpretations of *how* to understand these events” (p. 648). van Dijk (1993) has asserted that the media holds a “nearly exclusive role” in the production and communication of public discourse largely because the other elites are reliant on the media to “inform both the public at large and each other, to exercise their power, to seek legitimation and to manufacture consensus and consent” (p. 253).²

Entman (2007) further articulates the influence of news media as partially achieved in the processes of “priming,” whereby “frames introduce or raise the salience or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way” (p. 164). Editorials are an important venue within news production because editorials are written in response to newsworthy and often contentious events, thus they appear when public interpretation of these events is potentially unstable. The editorial voice seeks to interpret these events by “claim[ing] the authority to explain an argument and to persuade the reader of its correctness” (Fowler, 1991, p. 211). This is partially accomplished through editorialists positioning themselves in “solidarity” with the reader by “invoking consensus” (p. 212), that is, editorialists position themselves as making arguments that *are* widely shared or that *should* be widely shared. Freed from the journalistic construct of impartiality,

editorials are explicitly persuasive texts that make apparent the criteria they advance to adjudicate the legitimacy of wage entitlements, thereby making explicit both the conclusions and evaluative standards they deem appropriate and relevant. Further, editorials importantly “illustrate a discourse of institutional power in the sense that it emanates from, and in turn helps construct, the newspaper’s claimed authority” (p. 221).³

Despite the emergence of new digital mediums and other profound changes to the media landscape during the time frame examined, newspapers still “very much reflect the social mainstream” and remain “dominant discourses” whose impact through their access to large audiences “enhances the constitutive effect of discourse—its power, that is, to shape widely shared construction of reality” (Mautner, 2008, p. 32). Examination of traditional media discourses is crucial in that “newspapers and TV newsrooms are still the main producers of news. ... [V]irtually 95 per cent of what appears in blogs or is discussed on social media sites such as Twitter is produced by the traditional media. The vast majority of news workers are employed by newspapers” (Taras, 2015, p. 198). Thus newspapers continue to represent institutional, political, and economic power, and although their print readership is declining, they remain significant and influential within the media landscape.

The corpus for this study is drawn from *Globe and Mail* editorials published between 1970 and 2015. The *Globe and Mail* remains Canada’s second-largest English-language daily by circulation (behind the *Toronto Star*), with average distributions of 337,000. Established in Toronto in 1844, the *Globe and Mail* has long declared itself a national newspaper and was Canada’s only national newspaper until the launch of the more conservative *National Post* in 1998. The *Globe and Mail* is particularly influential in the Canadian media context, but its influence extends to the political sphere as it is “the paper most read by members of the Canadian business and political elite” and, despite the arguably lessening influence of traditional media, the *Globe* “still has the capacity to launch a national conversation and to set the political agenda as well” (Taras, 2015, p. 98). Finally, the *Globe and Mail* was chosen, in part, because it is the only Canadian daily with a digital archive for the entire period of our study, 1970 to 2015.

This study is focused on editorials addressing postal workers’ wage demands because postal workers attract frequent editorial attention, perhaps due to their reputation for “militancy” and “left wing politics” (Camfield, 2011), and for considerations related to the postal service’s national scope and importance.⁴ The Canadian Union of Postal Workers/Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses des postes (CUPW/STTP) is prominent in the Canadian labour movement, thanks to its important accomplishments such as the lengthy 1981 strike that fuelled momentum for national maternity leave policies. Postal workers are also notable for having secured wage increases in the early years of the study, and for mounting a vigorous defence of their wages even as general wage stagnation became widespread.⁵

Theoretical highlights—Critical discourse studies

Critical discourse studies (CDS) has a complex history reflecting diverse theoretical and methodological influences (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).⁶ CDS is characterized by the deconstruction of ideology and power through the systematic and transparent investigation of semiotic data (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). CDS crucially understands language

as social practice implying “dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) further elaborate discourse as

socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned—it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects—that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people. (p. 258)

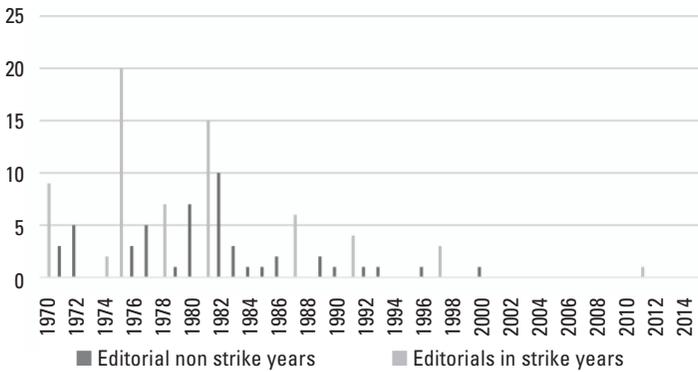
CDS assumes that “[n]o interaction exists in which power relations do not prevail and in which values and norms do not have a relevant role” (Wodak, 1999, p. 187), and so CDS is “critical” as it is alert to hidden or latent expressions of ideology (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8) and aims “to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimized, and so on, by language use” (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 12). CDS is thus particularly useful as it facilitates the examination of dominant ideologies in their appearance as neutral, as they are internalized by the majority of the population and are manipulated for hegemonic effect (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

This article relies on CDS as it is understood and developed in the works of Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk but particularly on the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) developed and practised by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl. DHA defines discourse as “a cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action; socially constituted and socially constitutive; related to macro-topic; linked to argumentation about validity claims, such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors with different points of view” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 30). DHA is a three-dimensional approach in which specific content within specific discourse(s) is identified, discursive strategies are investigated, and linguistic realizations are examined (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). The discourse(s) examined in this article relate to the macro topic of workers’ wage entitlements.

Corpus

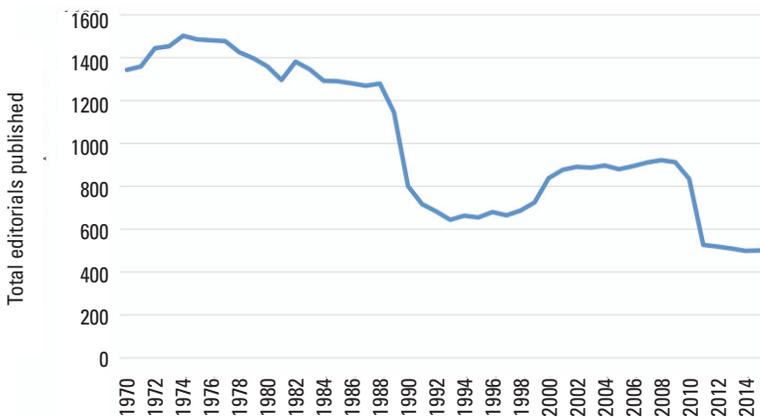
The original corpus used to examine the discursive landscape in which *Globe and Mail* editorials addressed wage entitlements between 1970 and 2015 was assembled using the databases Canadian Major Dailies and ProQuest Historical Newspapers. These databases were searched for the *Globe and Mail* and the search terms *salar** OR *wage** OR *compensation* OR *pay** OR *income** OR *earn** and the restriction “editorial.”⁷ This initial sample comprised 14,112 texts. After eliminating texts unrelated to the topic, the final text count totalled 1,923 editorials.⁸ We derived the final sample of 115 texts related to postal workers by adding the search terms *postal* OR *post office* OR *Canada Post* OR *letter carrier** OR *CUPW* to the original search terms.⁹

Figure 1: Postal workers editorials, 1970–2015



One notable characteristic of the sample is the precipitous decline in editorials over time: 41 percent of the editorials concerning postal workers were published in the 1970s, while only two editorials were published between 2000 and 2015 (see Figure 1). This partially reflects the decline in *Globe and Mail* editorials published (see Figure 2).¹⁰ The precipitous drop in editorials concerning postal workers also reflects the downward trend in labour reporting (Serrin, 1992) as well as the declining frequency of strikes in general and postal strikes particularly over these decades. It is also possible that by the 2000s, the negative portrayals of worker wage demands were sufficiently established in previous editorials that it became unnecessary to devote further space to reiterating them. To the extent that the topos of threat associated with workers analyzed below reflected a dominant ideology that became increasingly anti-worker, study findings anticipate that editorialists would devote less energy to establishing negative claims about workers that were becoming accepted as neutral or unremarkable (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

Figure 2: Decline in *Globe and Mail* editorials published, 1970–2015



The majority of editorials concerning postal workers were published in the year of a strike, or the year preceding or following a strike. Figure 1 depicts the years in

which postal strikes occurred. Some work stoppages occurred in addition to strikes, but these were not systematic across the postal service, and some debate exists about the dates of these events.

Methodology

Within the iterative process of reading, coding, and analyzing editorials, the first step was to identify the problematic situation presented in each editorial, for problem definition implicitly establishes the discursive terrain on which issues of legitimacy are contested. The “problem” addressed in the editorials concerned current strikes, potential strikes, or conclusions drawn from past strikes. This is unsurprising, since newspaper coverage of unions is closely associated with strikes (Erikson & Mitchell, 1996) and “usually fixated on conflict” (Bruno, 2009, p. 385). Within the sample, editorialists addressed wage entitlements *only* as a component of strike issues, thus the legitimacy of wage entitlements is intertwined with the legitimacy of strikes per se. This conflation of strikes and wage demands did not deter our analysis, since strikes are a critical mechanism through which workers pursue better wages.

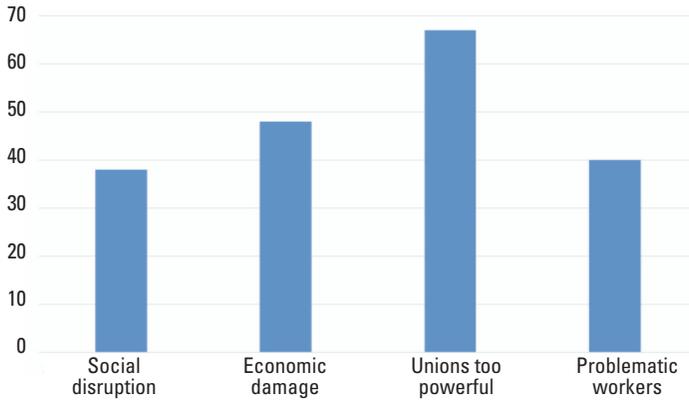
Analysis of the editorials focused on a series of questions developed by Reisigl and Wodak (2016) in the study of political discourses, from which they elaborate five types of discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification or mitigation. Being interested in the justificatory criteria editorials furnished to adjudicate the legitimacy of wage demands, we focused on the argumentation used to support editorial prescriptions while noting the other strategies as they were integrated within argumentation. Our analysis of argumentation employs the concept of “topoi,” or “conclusion rules” that “justify ... the transition from argument to conclusion” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 74). We focus on the topoi of threat based in the following conditionals: if an action has dangerous or threatening consequences, it should be avoided, or if a danger or threat is determined, something should be done to address it (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

Findings

The argumentative strategy common across the 45 years of editorials examined is the identification of the “threat” (strikes, typically strikes seeking pay increases), the attribution of harm caused by the threat, and a prescriptive conclusion deemed to mitigate the harm.¹¹ While the threat (strikes) is made more salient in the use of a number of discursive strategies (including nomination, predication, perspectivization, and intensification), we focus on argumentation. We have broken down our analysis into four interrelated and interdependent arguments. The first argument, “social disruption,” identifies harm inflicted on society or particular stakeholders by strikes, and the second, “economic damage,” focuses on economic harms such as unemployment and adverse business conditions. The third argument, “postal unions as too powerful” identifies an imbalance of power as a root cause of harms inflicted on the public, government, or taxpayers. It infers unionization as generally problematic while pointing directly at postal workers’ unions. Finally, the argument “problematic workers” intertwines with all previous arguments to emphasize the questionable motivations or behaviours of workers as harmful and thus relevant to questions of legitimacy raised in

the other claims. These arguments are used throughout the texts examined, often in combination (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percent of editorials containing each argument



Throughout the corpus, social actors are named and constructed. The reader is presumed to be a stakeholder adversely impacted by strikes; readers are identified as families, the public, taxpayers et cetera. Nomination and predication strategies construct the reader (in their various identities) as victimized by demands of postal workers, while postal workers and their unions are correspondingly excluded from these group identities and constructed as problematic in their characterization as ignorant, greedy, lazy, et cetera. Perspectivization strategies situate the editorialists as either a member of the public and thus victimized or nominally distance them as rational experts well positioned to note realities of the problems they identify. Intensification strategies, hyperbole particularly, are also employed throughout the editorials. Militaristic and violent language, ridicule, and mockery are used to delegitimize workers and their wage demands in support of argumentation strategies that further delineate the problem as an us/them dichotomy.

Finally, the prescriptive conclusions of the editorials are consistent with the attack on worker bargaining power. In light of the harms argued by editorialists, they advise that the government should intervene by eliminating postal unions' right to strike (e.g., "Left at the Post," 1981); diluting the right to strike by compelling postal unions to engage in other processes (such as compulsory arbitration, e.g., "A Defective System," 1975; "The Postal Workers," 1986); privatizing postal service (e.g., "Back to the Pigeons," 1981; "Canada Post Is Not Canada," 1996; "We Need a Post Office," 1977); or advocating the dismantling of the "postal monopoly" (e.g., "...On Monopoly Mail," 1975; "Questioning the Canada Post Monopoly," 1991; "Two Strikes Against Post Office Monopoly," 1997), thus subjecting postal workers to private-sector discipline. These recommendations are framed as being in the public interest, in that they reduce the social and economic harms caused by postal strikes, restrain the excessive power of postal unions, and check the problematic worker. But they are also (often explicitly) offered as a means of moderating postal workers' wages. The following section details examples of the four arguments identified.

Social disruption

The “social disruption” argumentation strategy presents postal strikes as inflicting harm on society. Social harms are made salient by referencing the suffering of specific stakeholders, who are often depicted as vulnerable and unjustly victimized. These are “the innocent victims of the strike, the Canadian people who are being deprived of postal service, the invalids and isolated who have lost their main line of communication with family and friends” (“Compassion for Whom,” 1975). Ruptured communication is a prominent form of harm invoked in the earlier years of the sample, when strikes are said to “produce unmeasurable heartbreak by breaking communication between people” (“... And the Weaklings,” 1981). Disrupted communication is often said to impose harm on vulnerable persons via heightened isolation and financial and psychological hardship from the unpredictability of receiving cheques in the mail: “Old people, eligible for the guaranteed income supplement, guessing about the arrival of the modest monthly cheque from private pensions; handicapped people, guessing about how they will scrape by until their disability insurance payment ...” (“The Public Held Hostage,” 1975).

This claim also addresses harm to the public interest in general, as when the country, the public, Canadians, or citizens are depicted as suffering the deleterious consequences of postal strikes. For example, “And no dollar losses can include the human frustration, disruption and tragedy caused to many Canadians by postal strikes ...” (“We Need,” 1977) as well as “Postal strikes inflict gross personal injury and hundreds of millions of dollars of loss on the Canadian community ...” (“Remedy for a Strike,” 1978). Evocations of victimization are also prevalent where strikes are presented as “national traumas” (“Questioning,” 1991) through which “Canada has been victimized” (“... And the Weaklings,” 1981). Vocabulary sometimes evokes more violent imagery, as when postal workers are said to hold the country to “ransom” (“... On Monopoly Mail,” 1975) or “hostage” (“Canada Is Sold Out,” 1981).

Social disruption is premised on the lack of contextualization supporting any justificatory reading of postal workers’ actions. For example, editorial commentary following CUPW’s 1981 strike that won paid maternity leave acknowledges no positive entailments flowing from its fight. On the contrary, the maternity leave struggle championed by CUPW is presented as detrimental to women’s employment interests and likely to reduce jobs in general:

When the Canadian Union of Postal Workers had finished (for the time being) thumping the country with yet another strike last August, the gain they carried most proudly from the bargaining table was the one that dealt with paid maternity leave. ... The siren call is loud and strong for all who are not required to count the costs of its universal application (including making Canadian industry more uncompetitive than much of it already is, thus reducing jobs), or to consider that it will increase an employer’s reluctance to hire someone who might subsequently require him to support her venture into motherhood. ... [H]ow can practical women, who want equal admission to jobs, approve such a roadblock thrown in their way. (“Message Received,” 1981)

Sometimes the unjustifiability of postal workers' actions is asserted directly: "We have suffered at the hands of postal workers ... with the anguish of knowing that it is quite unfair to punish innocent third parties" ("The Law as Lever," 1987) and "This summer 23 million Canadians have paid with vast amounts of pain and fear and money to serve the unjustifiable demands of 23,000 postal workers ("A Question of Control," 1981). Postal workers are not credited for their efforts to mitigate the harm imposed on third parties. In response to criticism that disrupted delivery of government cheques such as old age security was inflicting hardship, the postal union has offered to deliver these cheques (sometimes on a volunteer basis). Editorial responses dismiss this as CUPW's "silly offer" ("Victims Left Unprotected," 1975), characterizing such offers as "Putting on a big show" that "barely scratches the surface of the hardship inflicted on Canadians ..." ("Public," 1975) and concluding, "Whatever guarantees of mercy the union may make about delivering compassionate cheques ... rotating strikes still produce total disruption" ("Remedy," 1978).

Social harms are presented as given or true, demonstrating the argumentation strategy of threat and moving the argument (and the audience) toward embracing the editorialist's conclusions. Other strategies—including nomination, predication, and intensification—are integrated into the argumentation strategy to serve the persuasive aims of the editorialists. Consider, for example, the nomination/predication of "victims" as not just vulnerable persons (i.e., the "innocent," "invalids," "old people," and "handicapped people") but the nation as a whole, "23 million Canadians." This use of hyperbole is used to depict high stakes—all Canadians are harmed. Social disruption claims typically refrain from addressing wage entitlements directly. Instead, these claims establish grounds to assess the legitimacy of wage demands that are removed from the wage relationship itself. Inflicted harm is portrayed as superseding the possible validity of workers' agendas, thus dissuades consideration of the merits of wage claims *per se*.

It is worth noting that while social disruption is argued throughout the texts examined, by the late 1980s editorialists have begun to argue Canada Post's decreasing social relevance. For instance, Canada Post has "lost its central role in the economic and social life of the country. Often, technology makes it irrelevant" ("A Fading Post Office," 1989). Also, "[T]he number and type of communications that are most efficiently done by mail is dwindling rapidly in the face of a proliferation of fast, cheap electronic alternatives" ("Canada Post," 1996). In the final text of the corpus the editorialist, while noting the "suffering" caused to "businesses and charities" by the current rotating strikes, goes so far as to argue, "Many find mail in paper form to be quaint; it no longer plays a central role in society. The strike will only accelerate that trend by making online converts of those who have hitherto been reluctant. More of the public will discover the faster, less costly alternatives." The editorial concludes, "An increasing number of Canadians will find the mail service is one they can live without. And with that, postal workers may be signing, sealing and delivering their own fate" ("Self-Inflicted Injury," 2011; see also "Two Strikes," 1997).

Economic damage

Within the argument we identified as "economic damage," editorialists present postal

workers' wage demands as inflicting economic harms. Although editorial claims invoke some economic logic to substantiate claims of economic damage and identify stakeholders harmed, this economic logic is rarely argued explicitly. Rather, hegemonic understandings of the economy are endorsed by the unproblematized assertion of economic truth-claims frequently circulated within business, journalistic, and public policy discourses. For example, the proposition that "strikes are bad for the economy" is not depicted as a contingent or debatable premise, but as unassailable fact. Yet on both empirical and theoretical levels, predicting economic outcomes and assessing who will be impacted by them is controversial. While government, business, union, and academic sources routinely produce divergent and contradictory estimates of a strike's economic impacts, in no instance did an editorial cite any union-generated research or quote experts supportive of postal workers' actions in presenting economic evidence or analysis. This obscures the possibility that alternative economic interpretations exist that may contest economic damage claims and/or support different understandings. The evidentiary standard required to establish claims of economic harm was typically quite low. In most cases the unsubstantiated assertions sufficed to support the editorial's economic claims, although sometimes business experts were cited.

The "economic damage" claim so overwhelmingly focused on harms incurred by business that "business as victim" was its predominant theme: "Thousands of businesses rely on the mail to distribute catalogues, advertising and many products. Postal stoppages disrupt cash flows, render post-based businesses risky, and stop millions of dollars of potential transactions from taking place, especially in this pre-Christmas period" ("Canada Post a Dead Letter," 1997; see also "A Big Bill," 1970; "Pain of a Strike," 1981; "Public," 1975; "Self-Inflicted," 2011). Moreover, this "business as victim" theme explicitly or implicitly portrayed harms to business as virtually indistinguishable from harm to society. The most frequent argument linking harm to business with social harm more generally was the assertion of large-scale job loss or layoffs resulting from the harm imposed on businesses by postal strikes:

These strikes ... have cost 24 million Canadians billions of dollars. One of their immediate effects is to throw a lot of other people out of work. Businesses which do much of their work through the mails have been driven to bankruptcy, others have had to go heavily into debt—debt they have difficulty sustaining—to avoid having to shut their doors. Almost every business, big or small, is put to enormous cost in a multiplicity of ways. Every Canadian suffers something, unless he is a recluse in the wilderness. ("Back to," 1981; see also "... And the Weaklings," 1981; "Canada," 1981)

This argumentation linking postal strikes to job loss invites the reader to view postal workers as adversaries insofar as postal strikes are understood as threatening the job security of the reader *qua* worker. This provocation to regard postal worker actions as a threat to other workers is occasionally quite overt, as in "Canadians do not like Mr. Parrot's union. It has put them through innumerable postal strikes, killing jobs ..." ("Beware the Postal Gift," 1983).

Another aspect of the threat posed to business by postal strikes concerns the proposition that wage demands of postal workers will encourage a trend toward higher

wages. This “pace setter” argument (“Defective,” 1975) contends that settlements secured by postal workers will be “setting destructive goals for other unions to attempt” (“Left,” 1981). As the editorial “A Costly Free Lunch” argues:

Mr. Mercier pointed out that the paid half-hour lunch would come “at a cost of over \$20-million to the Canadian taxpayer. ... This provision is non-existent in labor contracts in the public sector and virtually non-existent in the private sector ... a most unfortunate precedent for the public service and for industry.” It is a precedent, moreover, that will undoubtedly be pursued throughout the civil service, where it could add hundreds of millions to the taxpayers’ costs. (“Costly,” 1980)¹²

The pace setter argument extends beyond wages to other forms of compensation or workplace arrangements that may inspire other workers to seek comparable provisions. For example, the 1981 fight to secure maternity leave provisions was said to have “established a bridgehead on maternity leave,” encouraging other workers to emulate this precedent:

It was not expected that we would have long to wait before the chickens came home to roost. Sure enough, there they were the other day—members of the Communications Workers of Canada, demanding that Bell Canada build paid maternity leave into the next contract. ... This is the first time that the issue has been raised in major private sector negotiations since the CUPW settlement, but we don’t expect that it will stand alone for very long. (“Message Received,” 1981)

The pace setter argument speaks to the concern that postal workers’ successes may encourage more generalized pressure to increase wages and other forms of compensation, which in turn is said to impose negative pressure on business generally. This fear is not typically stated explicitly, but enveloped in concerns about “declining competitiveness,” as in a 1981 editorial quoting a Canadian Manufacturers Association spokesperson who warns: “An excessive postal settlement could generate pressures that would erode Canada’s competitive position and threaten jobs” (“Pain,” 1981).

The threat posed by postal workers’ wages setting the pace for others’ wages is reinforced by depicting postal workers’ wage demands as excessive, as in “Canada’s 22,000 postal workers and clerks stand ready to fling themselves into the breach with demands to strain credulity” (“... And the Strikers’ Queue,” 1975) and “They want more money in wages alone than the rest of the country is being required or asked to accept” (“Needed: A Bold Start,” 1975) and “In spite of pay and benefit packages that exceed those of other national postal services and of comparable private sector workers, they are demanding an 8.6 per cent pay increase over 16 months, well in excess of inflation and the general pace of wage settlements” (“Canada Post,” 1997). Postal workers are said to make demands that are “not justified nor enjoyed by the majority of the work force in both the public and private sectors” (“Costly,” 1980) or to be “striking for benefits that none of the rest of the public service has, that few unions in private industry have, and that nobody desperately needs” (“Back to,” 1981). Postal workers are said to have been offered “the sort of deal other unskilled workers might, and un-

doubtedly will, pine for” (“Peace at a Price,” 1981). By depicting postal workers’ wage demands as excessive, editorialists advance the conclusion that workers’ demands are illegitimate by prevailing economic standards.

As with other claims, “economic damage” frames postal workers’ strike actions and wage demands as unambiguously harmful and neglects any evidence supportive of alternative economic understandings, thereby encouraging the perception of illegitimacy. Arguments based in “economic damage” claim also impact worker solidarity. The reader *qua* worker is called to resent postal workers insofar as they are deemed responsible for job insecurity and/or viewed as overpaid. This cultivation of antipathy among workers encourages the possibility that groups of workers can be mobilized to oppose each other. From this perspective, editorial delegitimization of postal worker wage entitlements contributes to a downward momentum in overall worker bargaining power that is consistent with overall wage stagnation.

Postal unions as too powerful

The previous arguments provide little explanation as to how postal workers have been able to impose these economic and social harms. The “postal unions as too powerful” claim supplies a rationale for viewing postal unions (and public-sector unions more generally) as having inherently problematic qualities that encourage harmful consequences. While this argument is predicated on a larger media environment unfavourable to unions, it highlights the particular consequences that follow when postal unions enjoy the right to strike and thereby disrupt an important public service, thus providing postal workers the opportunity to “convert a simple workplace dispute into a matter for recalling Parliament” (“The Right Way to Get the Mails Moving Again,” 1991). Editorialists argued that the postal service’s virtual monopolization¹³ of postal delivery and the public’s lack of alternatives to it (particularly in the early years of the sample) confer excessive power on postal unions allowing them to inflict economic and social harms:

Ottawa is seemingly unaware of the real extent of damage to industry caused by a postal strike from coast to coast—of the growing seriousness of individual hardship older people and families dependent on the mails for various allowances and pension payments are forced to bear due to the fact that postal unions have both the right to strike and a monopoly on the nation’s postal service that enables them to hold the country ransom. (“... On Monopoly Mail,” 1975)

and

The right to strike in the vast monopolies of Government is not a right at all. It is a weapon, an awesome weapon, that must be replaced by sane and just processes that will serve management and workers and, above all, rescue the country and the vast majority of its citizens from the denial of essential services. (“Everybody Lost,” 1978)

This argumentation strategy links the purportedly excessive power of postal unions with the distinctive attributes of the government as employer: “There is something rotten in the mixture of the state and Canada Post that goes well beyond the immediate

issues of this most recent postal disruption. To bring even a modicum of stability and peace to the postal service, we need to remove the deep structural causes of the corporation's conflicts" ("Post, Politics Don't Mix," 1997).

Editorials argue that the government is unlike private-sector employers in that 1) it cannot declare bankruptcy¹⁴ and 2) it can finance wage increases by raising taxes and/or costs to consumers, thus "ordinary Canadians would foot the bill" ("Franchise and CUPW," 1987). This supports the claim that public-sector workers are not subject to the fiscal discipline constraining private-sector wages, while postal unions have taken advantage of these structural conditions to secure excessive job security that "guarantee[s] their jobs for life" ("Three Strikes, and the Public Is Put Out," 1991). In these circumstances, postal workers are able to use the "strike weapon" ("End This Deception," 1970; "The Law? A Dead Letter," 1981; "More Chiefs Might Help," 1981; "No Market Place Restraint," 1976) to secure "outlandish settlement[s]" ("Giveaway," 1980). Editorials frequently quote the former prime minister (see also "Back to Six-Day Sense," 1981; "Defective," 1975; "The Guilty Party," 1970; "Settling," 1982) supporting this point:

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau indulges in one of his academic dissertations. The subject: bargaining and strikes in the public sector of the economy. Unions in the public sector, he said, in effect bargain with the public, especially the "poor, unprotected and unorganized part of the public", which gets it in the neck. The unions say of the Government, "let's squeeze as much as we can from the lemon. The juice doesn't come from my pocket," said Mr. Trudeau, "but from the public." The public, including unions, he said should be made to realize the differences between strikes in government service and those in the private sector. ... Those who bargain with the Government "are really asking the Government to transfer resources by way of taxes and other means from the mass of the consumer to a particular group." ("Restore the Balance," 1970)

The stakeholder ultimately harmed by postal workers' purported power to demand excessive wages is the taxpayer:

The rotating strikes, the unions' running guerrilla campaign, have caused tremendous disruptions, with the painful consequence that taxpayers are paying for a service which they are not receiving. The costs of the disruption could push the Post Office's projected deficit another \$40-million higher than the already staggering \$79-million to \$80-million. The taxpayers, who are not and have never been considered by bargainers on either side of the table, will of course pay for that too. ("A Joke Gone Very Bad," 1970)

By establishing that these perverse circumstances enable "greedy" ("Unprotected Lifeline," 1975) postal workers to exploit their power to secure exorbitant wages to the detriment of the public interest, the "postal unions as too powerful" claim further undermines worker solidarity, since its argumentative strategy implies that postal workers are overprivileged in that they are able to secure wages unavailable to others. Moreover, other workers are harmed since they lack postal workers' high wages while they bear

the cost of postal worker wages in their tax bill. This double burden not only discourages solidarity with postal workers, it invites the reader to regard postal workers more as employers might regard a payroll expense. This argument also sets the stage for the following claim, in that it creates an explanatory context in which excessively powerful postal unions encourage problematic qualities in postal workers.

Problematic workers

The “problematic workers” argument describes the character or behaviour of workers in ways that invoke assessments of deservingness. This claim may operate independently, and as such be identified as a predication strategy, insofar as condemnatory and emotionally evocative characterizations of workers can directly speak to perceptions of entitlement. However, the “problematic workers” claim is not simply *ad hominem* commentary on postal workers;⁴⁵ it interacts with the preceding claims to reinforce the perception that problematic workers are encouraged by (and encourage) problematic unions, which in turn incline both workers and their unions to act in ways that impose economic and social harms.

Worker militancy is frequently emphasized as a problematic attribute of postal workers. They are described as reflecting “the inability to strike any posture but one of complete militancy and as far as CUPW is concerned readiness to walk off the job at all times” (“Postal Chaos As Usual,” 1977). The use of violent or militaristic language underlines this militancy, as postal workers are characterized as “running guerilla campaigns” (“Joke,” 1970), “drum-banging for the next round” (“In the Wake of a Strike That Hurt Everybody,” 1975), using “aggressive tactics” (“Giveaway,” 1980), “waging a new war” (“Franchise,” 1987), and getting into a “shoving match” with management (“Two Strikes,” 1997).

Where aggressive and even bellicose militancy is emphasized, it is often presented in ways suggesting that it is unfounded: “They were seen, not as angry workers fighting for their rights, but as power brokers willing to ignore Parliament and urge anarchy rather than accept mediation and arbitration of their demands” (“Everybody,” 1978). Given the lack of any context justifying worker actions, this militancy often appears as frivolous: “[W]hen you are dealing with the strategists of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (who could make a labor dispute out of practically anything) you should be ready for anything” (“Postal Chaos,” 1977). One editorial claims that “foolish, futile advocacy is being pressed by a group whose capacity for constructive, practical thinking had already been proved to be weak” (“Postal Union Witch-Hunt,” 1976).

Militancy is also suggested by emphasizing the frequency of strikes and other disruptions, as in “Since they were granted the power to strike in the Sixties they have seldom not been striking in one part of the country or another” (“Left,” 1981). Editorials often refer to “another postal disruption” (“Restore,” 1970), “yet another strike” (“Message Received,” 1981), “another round of rotating strikes” (“Needed,” 1975; “The Post Office Record,” 1975), “yet another walkout” (“No Mail Again,” 1980), or “A snarling bitterness, punctuated by strikes is normal” (“Post Hate,” 1990). Ridicule is also used to characterize workers as unreasonable:

Everything reminds the postal workers of strikes. A strike is the only way they are prepared to solve anything—short of total surrender to all their

demands by the Government. Ever since the Government foolishly handed them the power to strike they have been striking—unnumbered stoppages in this part of the country, unnumbered wildcats in that part of the country, finally nationwide shutdowns—as though strikes were their hobby. (“Back to,” 1981)

Postal workers are depicted as having other objectionable qualities such as laziness (and its various forms, such as complacency, lacking motivation to enhance job performance, malingering, and so on). Postal workers are described as taking too many sick days: “They take twice as much sickness and injury leave as their U.S. counterparts ... and more than twice as much as workers in operations like steelmaking and mining. ... Productivity suffers accordingly” (“Postal Workers,” 1986). Laziness is often not asserted overtly, but in hyperbole, as in:

The Post Office employees are back at their fun and games. When they are not having a strike, they are having a rotating strike; when they are not having a rotating strike, they are having a study session. When no other excuse for deserting work is at hand, somebody triggers the fire alarms so that all may rush into the streets. And when the bodies are actually on the job, one of their main ambitions seems to be to slow up the works. (“The Deepening Postal Mess,” 1972)

Depictions of insufficient work performance (and the implication that their wage demands lack merit) are often attributed to postal unions’ excessive power, as demonstrated in earlier argumentation strategies. For example, CUPW is described by conciliator Claude Foisy as a “program to create jobs through increasing paid time during which no work is performed.” The editorialist elaborates, “The union argues that Canada Post has an obligation to create high-paying, full-time jobs, backed by taxpayers, even if the work is not there to keep people fully occupied, and even if the revenue they generate is less than what they cost” (“Franchise,” 1987). Further, the problematic nature of postal workers is presented as predictable:

Management wanted something closer to a full day’s work for a full day’s pay. Management got almost nowhere. No one should expect to reduce featherbedding in a collective agreement without conflict. Workers do not give up work-saving privileges without a fight—why should they? When Canada Post indicated some months ago that it was seeking ‘fundamental’ improvements in work rules to increase productivity, it surely expected stiff resistance. In fact, management prepared for just such an eventuality by preparing replacement workers to take over mail delivery in the event of a strike. (“Canada Post Crumbles,” 1987)

Workers’ purportedly insufficient work ethic combined with union protections is depicted as generating inefficiency and resistance to technological progress in the postal service. Current collective agreements with the postal union “constitute what is arguably the most uncompetitive and inefficient labour agreement currently in place in ... North America” (“Canada Post,” 1997). Postal workers are characterized as having “leverage[d] their right to strike” to secure a “singularly cushy and protective deal”

while lacking “flexibility in increasing the post office’s productivity” (“Postal Workers,” 1986), and one editorial opines: “Postmaster-General, Mr. Cote ... authorized the installation of new high-speed sorting equipment. ... Inevitably, the postal unions reacted adversely” (“Reaction to Reform,” 1972). Postal workers impede technological efficiencies even where it is at no cost to them. “They are also trying to throw roadblocks in the way of machines which would automate and speed up much of the handling of mail, although the Government has said no jobs will be lost ...” (“Deepening,” 1972). In 1977, an editorialist describing “the sorry history of relations between the Post Office and CUPW” characterizes the Post Office as having the “heart breaking task of dragging the Post Office into the Twentieth Century against the restrictive, uncooperative attitudes of men like retiring CUPW leader Joe Davidson ...” (“Postal Chaos,” 1977).

Problematic workers and unions interact to undermine the quality of the postal service, making it “unreliable” (“Big Bill,” 1970), “deplorable” (“Guilty,” 1970), “lousy” (“So Much for So Little,” 1971), and “poor” (“Canada’s Post’s Curious Takeover,” 1993; “Questioning,” 1991). Canada Post is said to have created the courier industry through its “poor service and endless strikes” (“Canada Post’s,” 1993) and to be “more often associated with frustration than service” (“Canada Post,” 1996). The postal service is not only exceptionally inefficient (“Back,” 1972; “The Delivery Costs,” 1987), it is also portrayed as unjustifiably costly, as would be expected given the implication of the excessive wages argued in earlier claims: “Considering the quality of the postal service they have received, most Canadians would consider that overpayment” (“Left,” 1981). Thus, the postal service customer is burdened both with poor *and* expensive service:

People who use the mail and who pay for it will get no refunds for the loss of more than a week’s service. With a little luck the resulting logjam should be cleared up, not too many thousands of letters and parcels will be lost in the confusion, and service will not be much worse than it was before the walkout (mail service is never better after a strike). (“Everybody,” 1978; see also “Canada Post,” 1996; “Delivery,” 1987)

By emphasizing the questionable motivations and behaviours of postal workers and their unions, the “problematic workers” argument alienates the sympathies of readers for workers while marshalling support for editorialists’ prescriptive conclusions. Entwining the negative social and economic consequences attributed to dysfunctional postal unions with blameworthy characterizations of workers encourages the reader to conclude that postal workers are inherently unsuited to engage in reasonable negotiations, thus justifying the imposition of the editorialists’ preferred responses upon postal workers.

Conclusions

While all arguments examined emphasize some form of harm in assessing the legitimacy of wage entitlements, harm is a problematic evaluatory criterion in the context of editorials about strikes. A selection bias exists in which the criterion for condemnation (the imposition of harm) is the same criterion that provokes the publication of nearly all editorials about postal workers. Editorial readers are never alerted to the

mundane or co-operative aspects of wage determination or conflict resolution, which might encourage differing assessments of legitimacy. Moreover, exclusive emphasis on the imposition of harm predisposes the reader to conclude that strikes (and thus wage demands pursued via strikes) are illegitimate. Strikes necessarily imply harm, insofar as workers resort to strikes to impose negative consequences to counter employers' various powers to inflict harm on workers (the power to hire, fire, discipline, etc.). But the focus on harms imposed should not overlook motivations of the strike. Workers resort to strikes and thereby impose harm in order to pursue some agenda that workers/unions view as justified. The assessment of harm has a comparative dimension: any harm attributed to a strike should be evaluated alongside any potentially countervailing benefits of the strike (such as the pursuit of gender pay equity).

Assessing harm alongside any compensatory factors that may cast a favourable light on worker actions requires an awareness of any pertinent motivations or consequences of a strike. Contextual information concerning the striking union's agenda, worker grievances, et cetera might enable the reader to weigh various costs and benefits. Yet editorialists routinely omit any considerations that suggest that postal workers' rationales or actions may have any redeeming value. In no case were union or worker agendas portrayed as having merit (or even explained other than via condemnatory parody). Nor were any possible positive outcomes of a strike deemed relevant. By foregrounding harm imposed by strikes while eclipsing any justifications or benefits of strikes, postal worker actions are more likely to be understood as illegitimate, if not entirely irrational. The pejorative portrayals of postal workers and their unions are not countered with any laudatory (or even indifferent) portrayals. Whatever contributions to the public good postal workers and their unions make in the time between strikes are invisible to editorial readers. Postal workers' wage entitlements are never situated in the larger context of overall wage stagnation. Despite the increasingly evident alarm in recent years over growing inequality and the wage stagnation that helps to propel it, the comparative success of postal workers in defending their wages is never presented as having any positive entitlements. Nor are workers in general ever encouraged to consider postal workers' successes as indicative of the possibility or desirability of reimagining wage entitlements.

Finally, throughout the sample, assertions of harm are presented emotively. This imbricates claims of harm with an affective provocation likely to encourage a more condemnatory impression of strikes. Discourses of victimization are prevalent among the editorials, and their depictions of trauma and aggression encourage an adversarial understanding of innocent wronged parties (the reader/victim) deserving sympathy versus victimizers (postal workers) deserving opprobrium. Often militaristic or violent language or imagery is used. Ridicule is also frequent, which tends to delegitimize by using mockery to impugn postal workers, while also contributing to emotive responses such as outrage and resentment.

Wage stagnation in the neoliberal era is the product of many simultaneous factors, including the discursive landscape that frames social understandings of what workers deserve. Between 1970 and 2015, this sample of *Globe and Mail* editorials negatively depicts postal worker wage demands and entitlements, thereby contributing to a dis-

cursive environment that delegitimizes their demands in wage negotiations. This editorial coverage of postal worker struggles has wider implications: CUPW in particular has been a prominent and assertive union in the Canadian labour movement, thus discrediting its wage agenda undermines the wage claims of organized labour more generally. Elites interested in restraining wages need not demonize the most powerless workers; their aim is to disempower the workers most likely to succeed (and inspire others to succeed) in thwarting neoliberal pressures to depress wages.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Our thanks to Geoff Bickerton, Mathieu Dufour, Derek Hrynyshyn, and Audrey Laurin-Lamothe for their insights.

Notes

1. Dufour & Russell (2015) and Russell & Dufour (2016) situate these economic, political, and social/cultural attributes of neoliberalism within a bargaining power analysis of stagnating wages in which perceptions of legitimacy may impact adversarial negotiations between workers and their employers.
2. van Dijk identifies the other elite producers of discourse as political, corporate, educational, and academic.
3. It is worth noting that within the time frame examined, editorials in the *Globe and Mail* are consistently anonymous and thus claim the authority of the medium itself. They speak for the paper in a way that authored opinions, expert or not, cannot.
4. Postal workers were the second most frequently discussed group of workers in the study's original sample (second to teachers). Postal workers were selected for analysis because they have a single employer, are represented by national unions, and perform comparable jobs across the country, thus reducing complicating regional and other variations that were not germane to our analysis. Canada Post Corporation (CPC) was created as a Crown corporation in 1981, as the successor to the federally run Post Office Department (est. 1868). In 2015, Canada Post Group of Companies, which includes Canada Post and its subsidiaries—Purolator Holdings Ltd., SCI Group Inc., and Innovapost Inc.—was one of the largest employers in Canada, with close to 64,000 employees, operating the largest retail network in Canada.
5. Until 1989, CUPW represented only “inside workers.” CUPW has represented the majority of postal workers since its 1989 merger with the Letter Carriers Union of Canada (representing “outside workers”). Other, smaller unions representing postal workers include the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA), the Association of Postal Officials of Canada (APOC), and the Union of Postal Communications Employees (UPCE). Postal workers have arguably fared better than many workers (particularly non-professional or “low skill” workers) in resisting downward pressure on wages. These wage accomplishments are remarkable because postal workers are not required to have specific educational or trade certifications, thus their relative success in defending their wages cannot be attributed to claims that their remuneration is justified by such qualifications.
6. For a comprehensive accounting of the development of the school of critical discourse studies, see Wodak and Meyer (2016).
7. Search terms were determined by examining all editorials written during three separate years (1985, 1995, and 2005) to ascertain that all texts included the terms salary/salaries, wage/wages, compensation, pay/pays/paying, income, and/or earns/earned/earnings.
8. For example, the search term “pay*” returned a great number of unrelated editorials that were eliminated, as were editorials about foreign countries.
9. This search returned 286 editorials before the elimination of unrelated texts (i.e., the search term “pay*”).

10. The decline in editorial numbers continues in the years following this study—2016: 515, 2017: 420, 2018: 379, and 2019: 271.
11. Argument strategies related to the topos of threat were identified in 102 of the 115 editorials from the sample. The 13 remaining editorials addressed topics not germane to the present analysis: reports concerning postal service (4), salaries of senior postal officers (3), Public Service Alliance of Canada strikes interrupting mail service (2), wage controls and the Prices and Incomes Commission (1), announcement of new postal facility (1), freeze on letter carrier hiring (1), and Manitoba government uses Interpost for out-of-country mail (1).
12. Pierre Mercier is identified in this editorial as “the employer’s representative on the conciliation board.”
13. The problematic nature of the mail monopoly is a prominent theme in the texts examined, as noted in the prescriptive solutions offered by editorialists.
14. For example, Prime Minister Trudeau is quoted: “[T]he public sector salaries have grown by something like 22 per cent as against private sector because in the private sector there’s a limit. It’s called bankruptcy. In the public sector there’s not. So we obviously have to change that” (“No Market Place Restraint,” 1976).
15. Notably, in one of the two editorials published in the 2000s, postal workers are used as a warning that an Air Canada monopoly potentially allows pilots the ability to adopt the attitude of the “pre-Internet years.” “Public-be-damned posties” are used as the standard of problematic workers (“Settling for More and Less,” 2000).

Editorials cited

- ... And the strikers’ queue. (1975, March 25). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- ... And the weaklings. (1981, August 11). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Back to six-day sense. (1972, April 19). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Back to the pigeons. (1981, July 1). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Beware the postal gift. (1983, November 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A big bill. (1970, July 11). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Canada is sold out. (1981, August 1). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Canada Post a dead letter. (1997, November 15). *The Globe and Mail*, p. D7.
- Canada Post crumbles. (1987, July 7). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Canada Post is not Canada. (1996, October 19). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Canada’s Post’s curious takeover. (1993, June 8). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A20.
- Compassion for whom. (1975, November 6). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A costly free lunch. (1980, May 28). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The deepening postal mess. (1972, November 16). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A defective system (I). (1975, May 28). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The delivery costs. (1987, June 17). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- End this deception. (1970, July 24). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Everybody lost. (1978, October 26). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A fading post office. (1989, June 17). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Franchise and CUPW. (1987, September 24). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Giveaway. (1980, December 31). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The guilty party. (1970, September 5). *Globe and Mail*, A6.
- In the wake of a strike that hurt everybody. (1975, December 3). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A joke gone very bad. (1970, July 9). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The law? A dead letter. (1981, July 8). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The law as lever. (1987, February 19). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Left at the post. (1981, June 25). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Message received. (1981, September 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- More chiefs might help. (1981, January 19). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.

- Needed: A bold start. (1975, October 22). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- No mail again. (1980, October 2). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- No market place restraint. (1976, January 5). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- ... On monopoly mail. (1975, November 20). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Pain of a strike. (1981, July 3). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Peace at a price. (1981, March 4). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Post, politics don't mix. (1997, December 5). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Post hate. (1990, January 8). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The post office record. (1975, April 23). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Postal chaos as usual. (1977, July 27). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Postal union witch-hunt. (1976, January 21). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The postal workers. (1986, August 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The public held hostage. (1975, March 5). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- A question of control. (1981, August 13). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Questioning the Canada Post monopoly. (1991, August 27). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A14.
- Reaction to reform. (1972, August 28). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Remedy for a strike. (1978, September 21). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Restore the balance. (1970, May 30). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- The right way to get the mails moving again. (1991, September 4). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Self-inflicted injury. (2011, June 4). *The Globe and Mail*, p. F8.
- Settling for more. (1982, January 14). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Settling for more and less. (2000, August 29). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- So much for so little. (1971, June 3). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Three strikes, and the public is put out. (1991, September 13). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Two strikes against Post Office monopoly. (1997, November 21). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Unprotected lifeline. (1975, October 9). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- Victims left unprotected. (1975, November 19). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.
- We need a post office. (1977, December 2). *The Globe and Mail*, p. A6.

References

- Bruno, Robert. (2009). Evidence of bias in the *Chicago Tribune* coverage of organized labor: A quantitative study from 1991 to 2001. *Labor Studies Journal*, 34(3), 385–407.
- Camfield, David. (2011). *Canadian labour in crisis: Reinventing the workers' movement*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
- Carreiro, Joshua. (2005). Newspaper coverage of the U.S. labor movement: The case of anti-union firings 1. *Labor Studies Journal*, 30(3), 1–20.
- Dufour, Mathieu, & Russell, Ellen. (2015, Spring). Why isn't productivity more popular? A bargaining power approach to the pay/productivity linkage in Canada. *International Productivity Monitor*, no. 28, 47–62.
- Entman, Robert M. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 163–173.
- Erickson, C.L., & Mitchell, Daniel J.B.. (1996). Information on strikes and union settlements: Patterns of coverage in a "newspaper of record." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49(3), 395–407.
- Fairclough, Norman, & Wodak, Ruth. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 258–284). London: Sage.
- Fowler, Roger. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hall, Stuart, Critcher, Chas, Jefferson, Tony, Clarke, John, & Roberts, Brian. (2000). The social production of news. In Paul Marris & Sue Thornham (Eds.), *Media studies: A reader* (2nd ed., pp. 645–652). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Martin, C.R. (2004). *Framed: labor and the corporate media*. London: ILR Press.
- Mautner, Gerlinde. (2008). Analyzing newspaper, magazines and other print media. In Ruth Wodak & Michal Dryzanowski (Eds.), *Qualitative discourse analysis in the social sciences*, (pp. 30–53). Basingstoke: Palgrave Media.

- Mort, Jo-Ann. (1992). *How the media "cover" labor: The story that's not being told*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Puette, W.J. (1992). *Through jaundiced eyes: How the media view organized labor*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.
- Reisigl, Martin, & Wodak, Ruth. (2001). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 62–86). London: Sage.
- Reisigl, Martin, & Wodak, Ruth. (2016). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed., pp. 23–61). London: Sage.
- Russell, Ellen, & Dufour, Mathieu. (2016). Why the rising tide doesn't lift all boats: Wages and bargaining power in neoliberal Canada. *Studies in Political Economy*, 97(1), 37–55.
- Serrin, William. (1992). Labor and the mainstream press: The vanishing labor beat. In Sam Pizzigati & Fred Solowey (Eds.), *The new labor press: Journalism for a changing union movement* (pp. 9–20). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Taras, David. (2015). *Digital mosaic: Media, power, and identity in Canada*. North York, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage series on race and ethnic relations: Vol. 6. London: Sage.
- Wodak, Ruth. (1999). Critical discourse analysis at the end of the 20th century. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 32(1&2), 185–193.
- Wodak, Ruth, & Meyer, Michael. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology. In Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 1–33). London: Sage.
- Wodak, Ruth, & Meyer, Michael. (2016). Critical discourse studies: History, agenda, theory and methodology. In Ruth Wodak & Michael Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed., pp. 1–22). London: Sage.