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Received: 11 July 2023 | Accepted: 14 May 2024

DOI: 10.1111/bjir.12822

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Union officers' turnaway: Push, pull, and values in Canada, Italy, and the United States

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Funding information
Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Grant/Award Number: 435-2021-1138

Abstract

We compare union officer occupational turnaway in Canada, Italy and the United States. We identify three forces that, in addition to industrial relations institutional settings, shape union officers' individual decisions on turnaway: push, pull and values. We analysed 101 semi-structured interviews with ex-union officers. To shed light on the diversity of their turnaway, we propose a typology composed of six types, each of which is based on one force or the interplay of two or three. Our findings suggest occupational values misfit is central. Former officers experienced a gap between their values and the union's external mission and/or internal functioning, or even developed a root occupational values difference. In addition, contextual characteristics seem to shape turnaway, including industrial relations institutions and societal values. Implications for trade union organizational policies are discussed.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Industrial relations scholars have studied why workers support unions (e.g. Frangi et al., 2017), why some become union members (e.g. Haberfeld, 1995), and why a few become activists (e.g. Gall & Fiorito, 2012) and even take over union offices (Fiorito et al., 2010). Studies have also examined union officers' tasks and actions (Clark et al., 2021; Clegg et al., 1961). However, what may drive them to voluntarily leave the union officer occupation has remained underexplored.

Many organization studies scholars have examined the mechanisms explaining why workers quit an organization, that is turnover (Bolt et al., 2022). Extending these mechanisms to the occu-

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pational level, a limited number of studies have focused on turnaway as a specific, demanding career turning point when an individual quits both an organization and an occupation (Blau et al., 2003; Joseph et al., 2015). Turnaway has largely been conceived as a demanding and complex move insofar as it requires individuals to reposition their skills and knowledge or acquire new ones to enter a new occupation (Feldman & Ng, 2007). A few studies have suggested that turnaway can disrupt self-identity (Carson et al., 1996), changing the perspective of workers about who they are and what they work and stand for (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021).

The industrial relations debate about union officers and the organization studies about turnaway present several limitations in accounting for union officer turnaway. Empirical work on union officers is mainly based on data collected in the 1990s. Moreover, industrial relations scholars rarely analysed union officer career change. They found cases of turnover (union officers change the union they work for), involuntary turnaway in case of a union merger and reorganization, or a transition to the management side, the only form of voluntary turnaway highlighted (Callus, 1986; Kelly & Heery, 2009). Organization studies on turnaway only partially contribute to accounting for union officer turnaway. Similar to studies on turnover (e.g. Hom et al., 2017), studies of occupational change have largely focused on the intention rather than the actual occurrence of occupational change (Zimmerman et al., 2020), including a recent work on union officers (Brander-Peetz et al., 2022). Although the joint effect of several forces embeds individuals in an occupation (Feldman & Ng, 2007), turnaway has been explained by focusing on the effect of one force at a time, such as wages or the depletion of individual resources in a specific national context (Blau, 2007; Joseph et al., 2015). Turnaway might be the outcome of a larger set of complexed, interdependent forces that could vary across national contexts (Furnari et al., 2021; Signoretti et al., 2022). This may be critical in the case of union officers (Clark et al., 2021). Furthermore, research on turnaway has concentrated on skilled, technical professions (Joseph et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2018), casting doubt on the generalizability of its findings to values-driven occupations like union officers, where motivations extend beyond skill sets and career achievements to encompass core societal values (Patton, 2000; Watson, 1988). Research on union commitment underscored a core relation between assuming union offices and a set of ideological and altruistic values (Fiorito et al., 2010; Redman & Snape, 2004), such as a dedication to the greater good and social justice (Barling et al., 1992; Fiorito et al., 2014), rather than self-centred material gains (Kelly & Heery, 2009). Thus, it is crucial to centre on values when accounting for turnaway of union officers.

Given the gaps in the literature, we explored the case of voluntary turnaway among former union officers in three countries: Canada, Italy and the United States. We focused on the nature of turnaway, as experienced by union officers. We contribute to the union officer debate in several ways. First, we revive the debate about union officers by offering an underexplored perspective. We bring the individual back into the union, too frequently studied as an institution (Watson, 1988), and we analyse the individual union officer not just as the institutional face of union but also as a human being, a worker subject to multiple tensions. Second, we propose an innovative typology to account for union officer turnaway based on the relevance of the joint effect of key forces influencing the decision to quit the occupation. We empirically demonstrate the ability of the proposed typology to distinguish among different types of union officer turnaway, not lumping them together, as is often the case in organization studies (Feldman & Ng, 2007), and we go beyond the simple 'transition to the employer side' type previously proposed in industrial relations (Callus, 1986; Kelly & Heery, 2009). More generally, our innovative typology offers a fundamental interpretative tool to perceive gaps, propel knowledge and enhance theoretical reasoning around turnaway, providing stimuli to cognate disciplines beyond industrial relations (Bosley et al., 2009; Burns, 2015). Third, the prevalence of different types of union

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officer turnaway in the three national contexts yields some comparative insights and suggests possible institutional effects. Finally, our results offer new insights into union policies to strategically select and retain union officers.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

The occupation of union officers emerged in the late 19th century when unions became bigger and institutionalized (Callus, 1986). Some workers embrace a more active form of union commitment through their 'administrative participation' (McShane, 1986). This highest form of activism is considered a vocation. It consumes considerable time and energy and constitutes a fundamental source of self-identity, one of the strongest forms of psychological involvement with a union (Kelloway et al., 2000). Union officers are labour movement professionals, a class apart from rank-and-file members (Clegg et al., 1961). If shop floor activists are considered the muscle of unions (Fiorito et al., 2014), union officers can be considered the backbone and neuro system of unionism. They represent the interests of millions of workers and can shape a country's employment and labour market conditions (Kelly & Heery, 1989). They perform numerous tasks, including organizing new members, conducting workplace meetings, advising workers about the collective agreement and legislation, representing members vis-à-vis the employer or other institutions, resolving disputes, bargaining collective agreements and leading larger societal campaigns (Callus, 1986). While union officers are accountable to members and superiors, the occupation is characterized by relatively little supervision and a considerable degree of independence (Heery, 2006). Many union officers tend to remain in the occupation until retirement, but turnaway is not uncommon (Clegg et al., 1961; Kelly & Heery, 2009).

Studying union officer turnaway centrally entails focusing on the severance of the relationship, the disconnect between an individual officer and the union officer occupation; that is quitting an occupation (see Singh et al., 2018). March and Simon's (1958) cornerstone contribution on turnover paved the way to study quitting as the outcome of the net effect of two opposite forces: *push* and *pull*.

Push forces are internal to an organization and to an individual. Studies in this perspective centre on the person-to-organization (mis)fit (e.g. Schneider et al., 1995). Several psychological frameworks have been leveraged and much empirical evidence has been collected (see Bolt et al., 2022 for a summary). For instance, studies argue the quitting intention emerges when an employee perceives that the organization has failed to meet reciprocal expectations about what the employee has to give to the organization and vice-versa, that is the psychological contract breach (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Push forces lead to employee emotional exhaustion (Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003), reduced job satisfaction (e.g. Dupré & Day, 2007) and loss of commitment (Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003), that is the force binding an individual to an organization (Gordon et al., 1980). Under these circumstances, intentions to quit an organization become common (Chen & Wu, 2017; Robinson, 1996; Salin & Notelaers, 2017). In contrast, pull forces are external to an organization and to an individual. They represent the existence of valuable external alternatives and ease of exiting, fulfilling the intentions to quit (Kim & Park, 2014).

Studies targeted at occupational change have reinforced and expanded this line of reasoning, drawing on the conservation of resources theory (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), occupational embeddedness (Feldman & Ng, 2007) and the synergy between them (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2022). Findings indicate occupational dissatisfaction and the transition towards another occupation begin when workers perceive their occupation, even if exercised in other organizations,

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makes them lose valued resources, and there are limited opportunities to gain similarly appraised resources that other occupations can provide (Blau, 2007; Singh et al., 2018).

2.1 | Push forces

In turnover studies, push forces are related to work and/or role experience (Barling et al., 1992). The first centrally entails job dissatisfaction, such as with salary, benefits and opportunities for career development (Hofhuis et al., 2014). Findings on push forces have been reinforced by turnaway studies. Workers who perceive they lack opportunities to improve wages and benefits, to be promoted, and to develop further knowledge and expertise might perceive roadblocks in the present occupation (Joseph et al., 2015; Zimmerman et al., 2020). Union officer pay is generally not market- but administrative-based, higher than that of the members they represent but much lower than their managerial counterparts (Kelly & Heery, 2009). Moreover, overtime is often not paid, and opportunities for promotions and related task and knowledge advancements are not always merit-based (Callus, 1986).

Other studies of push forces centre on experience-related stressors (Barling et al., 1992). In the union officer role, stress is generated by three sets of forces. The first is the conflictual nature of industrial relations. Tensions surrounding bargaining dynamics, contentious work issues and critical workers' situations are common, creating an emotional-laden role experience for union officers (Bluen & Barling, 1987). The second is the high level of union psychological involvement (Kelloway et al., 2000). Union officers' role experience is characterized by high work intensity to constantly serve union membership, swiftly address demands and concerns, and become the firefighters of labour disputes (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Kelly & Heery, 2009). The third role-related stressor is the work-family/personal life balance (Kelloway et al., 2000). Union officers' working schedules are unpredictable, and they work long hours (Callus 1986; Watson, 1988). The depletion of mental and emotional resources can compromise mental health (Clegg et al., 1961), and burnout is very common (Fiorito et al., 2015).

Push forces can push an individual to quit an occupation because there is low compatibility between occupation requirements and outcomes and the worker's career goals, competence or other aspects of the worker's life (Feldman & Ng, 2007). These push forces deplete workers and hamper them from achieving valued resources (Singh et al., 2018; Zimmerman et al., 2020).

2.2 | Pull forces

Push forces are often not enough to make an individual quit. External forces that pull an individual away are part of the equation (e.g. Maertz & Campion, 2004; Semmer et al., 2014). Pull forces are solicited or unsolicited alternatives (Rhodes & Doering, 1983). These forces might turn the desire to quit into a relevant intention and then into an action (Semmer et al., 2014).

Employees who disconnect from one occupation through turnaway might consider the level of 'sacrifice' involved in this transition in terms of possible loss of valued resources, such as professional identity, status, and specific skills and knowledge acquired in an occupation (Feldman & Ng, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2020). For instance, Callus (1986) found some union officers would consider offers from the management side, especially in labour-management relations, because of the high transferability of specific employment relations knowledge and skills. Moreover, employees who consider a new occupation will allow them to rebalance or restock their resources, even

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accounting for some possible transition-related sacrifices, are more willing to opt for turnaway (Zimmerman et al., 2020).

Pull forces are stronger when there are push forces in play (Kirschenbaum & Mano-Negrin, 1999: Makarius et al., 2017), but pull forces can act independently. Motivated by a desire for 'progressive satisfaction', some employees search for better opportunities elsewhere even if they are not dissatisfied with their current working conditions (Bruggemann, 1974; Kangas et al., 2018; Semmer et al., 2014). This makes employee satisfaction with the current occupation a weak predictor of quitting (Hom & Kinicki, 2001).

2.3 | Values forces

The role of values in decisions to quit has mostly been subsumed under push forces in previous studies of turnover and turnaway (e.g. Van Saane et al., 2003), but we argue that in the case of union officers, values should be at the forefront of the analysis. Indeed, ideology and values are fundamental aspects of becoming a union officer (Fiorito et al., 2010).

Correspondence between personal values and those of an occupation is central for adapting, adjusting and performing in an occupation (Zimmerman et al., 2020). Individuals are intrinsically motivated to commit to a union when there is a 'political congruence' between their own values and union goals and outcomes (Barling et al., 1992). But certain intrinsic union characteristics may threaten this congruence (Fiorito et al., 2014). First, some union officers might perceive a disconnect between the union's espoused values, such as the improvement of fairness in society, and the enacted values, which might counter the desire for a fairer society (Howell et al., 2012). Second, the values-based disconnect can relate to tensions around how to achieve union goals (Kelly & Heery, 1989). Union officers can be caught in the tension between the extent to which industrial conflict should be favoured versus cooperation with employers and whether members' interests should prevail over those of unrepresented, oppressed workers (Kreiner et al., 2006). Third, a values-based disconnect can emerge when union officers perceive a growing misfit between voice and democracy, core pillars of unions' espoused values and the union's internal functioning (Kelly & Heery, 2009). Values-based coalitions can emerge and have a considerable impact in the dispute for control over union decision-making processes and positions (Kelly & Heery, 2009). Officers belonging to minoritarian factions can easily be cornered (Kochan et al., 2008). In these circumstances, personal links and networks may hinder individuals from acquiring, protecting and retaining valued resources (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Co-optation, pro-forma ballots and spoiler dynamics driven by interest groups can influence the promotion of union officers (Kelly & Heery, 2009). Union officers' sense of self-efficacy in 'making a real difference' in union functioning and course of actions can thus be deeply affected (Barling et al., 1992), and their psychological involvement with and commitment to unions might be at stake (Kelloway et al., 2000).

2.4 | Institutional forces

Despite the fact that specific social and legal environments are deemed relevant in shaping an occupation and promoting occupational embeddedness or mobility (Chudzikowski et al., 2009; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021), organization studies overlook macro-national forces in their empirical analyses of career change (Cullinane & Dundon, 2006). In contrast, industrial relations studies tend to emphasize institutional forces in their empirical analyses. For example, research on

union commitment argues that assuming a union office is affected by countries' institutional and cultural differences (Barling et al., 1992; Sverke & Kuruvilla, 1995). Moreover, union officers' behaviour varies across industrial relations regimes (Clark et al., 2021). For example, the United States and Canada follow a business unionism model, and Italy follows an industrial-societal one (Hyman, 2001). Union officers in the United States and Canada negotiate and submit grievances mostly for a specific unit of certification, and their main goal is to represent members' interests (Bamber et al., 2021). In contrast, employment relations are centralized in Italy, and union interest representation by union officers is based on sector and societal issues of a wide array of workers (Pulignano et al., 2018). At the societal level, trade unions in the United States have been viewed as weak institutions undergoing a strong recession, and anti-unionism is strong among employers and in the larger society (Kane & Newman, 2019; Logan, 2006). Unions in Canada and Italy are stronger; union density has been stable for almost 30 years, at around a third of the workforce, and labour institutions are more accepted by employers and society (Frangi et al., 2014).

In Italy, the occupation of union officers is strictly linked to labour activism, and union officers are almost exclusively selected from more militant rank-and-file workers (Biagioni et al., 1980). In the United States and Canada, the prevailing business unionism means a considerable number of professional officers are dedicated to serving only the union members (Clark et al., 2021), and some union officers are members of a different union than the one they work for (Clark, 1989). In comparison, in Italy, union officers are not unionized and do not have a collective agreement; they are rarely employees of a union, and most are on a union leave from their original job (to which they can return at any time in an arrangement termed *distacco sindacale*) (Biagioni et al., 1980). Such institutional differences may affect union officers' turnaway decisions differently.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Sample and data collection

Our target population was union officers who experienced a voluntary turnaway in Canada, the United States and Italy. We did not include union employees who covered non-officer tasks (e.g. clerical staff, janitorial workers, etc.) or officers who left one union to join another union, stopped their union career because of major unplanned events (e.g. a disabling accident), retired or started a political career (generally perceived as a natural transition by union officers) (Brown, 1995). To avoid capturing an occupational interruption rather than turnaway, we made sure prospective participants were not actively searching for an officer position.

We overcame the challenge of recruiting the target population by devising several complementary strategies. First, we leveraged social media platforms, especially LinkedIn, to identify and reach out to eligible participants. Second, we relied on the collaboration of current union officers to identify suitable participants. Third, we used snowball sampling; we asked interviewees to connect us to other turned-away ex-union officers. We selectively included ex-union officers, aiming at qualitative representativeness (Smith & Noble, 2014) of union officialdom in the three countries based on the following key characteristics: the union(s) worked for (e.g. size, sector, members' characteristics, ideological stance), union tenure, age at turnaway, geographical region of union activities, occupation of destination and socio-demographic characteristics (see Supplementary Table A1).

The sample size was also defined by coding saturation in terms of reasons for turnaway (ordered cording) and types (as possible combinations of relevant forces; see the data analysis section)

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(Hennink et al., 2017). In the first round, we conducted between 15 and 20 interviews per country and performed a preliminary analysis. We found new reasons kept appearing. They were possibly related to the same forces, but typology saturation was not evident. We added around 8–10 interviews per country and again performed a preliminary analysis. A few new reasons emerged but no new types. We finally added 5–10 interviews in each country to make sure we had reached saturation (Saunders et al., 2018).

Given the limited knowledge about union officer turnaway, we relied on the explorative advantage of semi-structured interviews insofar as they ensure flexibility in questioning, prodding and delving deeper when new explanations appear, together with a degree of consistency that allows the comparison of data across institutional settings (Bader et al., 2019). We conducted 108 interviews via online platforms, in the spoken language of the interviewees (English, French or Italian). The interviews lasted between 26 and 103 min, with an average of 59 min.

We stimulated a dialogue with interviewees around the following points: their general background; their path to the union officer occupation; core positive aspects of their former occupation. We then moved to our core questions on turnaway. We asked a general, ice-breaking question about why they left the occupation. Next, we focused their attention on a set of reasons based on the turnaway and union officer literatures, using vocabulary as close as possible to that of officers in each country. We showed them this list and asked them to point to the relevant reasons and rank them. We explicitly told them they could add any other reasons. We double-checked that non-discussed points were actually irrelevant. In the few cases when interviewees did not rank the core reasons, they were asked to confirm the relevance of reasons emerging from the interview.[1]

3.2 | Data analysis

All interviews were fully transcribed and independently analysed in the original language by two scholars to avoid misunderstandings after translation (Geary et al., 2017). One hundred and one interviews were retained based on sample selection criteria. We performed thematic analysis guided by the interplay between the turnaway and union officer literatures and emerging evidence (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We identified the most meaningful passages in each interview that were related to reasons for the individual turnaway decision. Then, we performed a three-step coding procedure. The first-order coding clustered reasons for union turnaway. We performed a second- and sometimes third-order coding on the set of emerging reasons; this confirmed the centrality of three main forces (push, pull and values), as well as a fourth force (single-issue driven) (see Table 1). Next, we revisited each interview and determined if an identified force was at play and its relevance in the individual decision on turnaway. Based on the interviewees' selection of relevant reasons (ranking), on the intensity of the narration around reasons (emphasis) and/or on the outcome of prompting interviewees to pinpoint and confirm the most relevant reasons (prompting), we coded the relevance of each force as limited (not mentioned or minimally relevant), medium (mentioned but not a key determinant) or high (a key determinant).[2] We created the turnaway typology based on the highly relevant forces (see Supplementary Table A2). We then analysed the incidence of identified types by country to explore possible institutional effects.

At each stage of the three-step coding process (reasons, forces, relevance), we compared the coding outcomes of the two researchers to strengthen the reliability of the results (Krippendorff, 2004). We worked towards intercoder agreement; differing evaluations were addressed and reconciled by discussing and re-reading interviews until reaching consensus (Campbell et al., 2013). We included 'power quotes' (Pratt, 2008), the more compelling interview extracts that

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TABLE 1 Summary of thematic coding structure.

First Order Coding	Second Order coding	Third Order coding	Forces
Low Salary, benefits	Economic issues	Economic and competence gap	**Push**
Unpaid over-time			
Undervalued competences	Competence-promotion issues		
Lack of training			
Lack of competence			
Promotion roadblocks			
Long working hours	Work intensity	Stress and its consequences	
Working during weekends/holidays			
Not able to disconnect from the work			
Constant travelling (car/airplane)			
High emotional intensity			
Work-personal life balance	Balance/health issues		
Work-family balance			
Health issues			
High performance pressure			
New challenge	Personal challenge	Growth	**Pull**
New competence development	Competence growth		
Higher autonomy			
Better upward mobility			
Better salary and benefits	Economic growth		
Better working hours	Better quality of life	Quality of life	
Better work/personal life balance			
Better work/family balance			
Transferability of skills, knowledge	Transferability	Transferability	
Different social identity	New occupational identity	Identity	**Values**
Union beyond bureaucratic institution	Beyond Ivory tower	Occupational ultimate mission	
Not just entitled members but also precarious workers	Broader horizons		
Union targeting just profitable potential members/sectors			
Shallow organizing/just having due payers	Broader actions		
Non innovative union strategies			
Limits in grassroots empowerment			
Limits in promoting societal actions			
Officers' labor rights issues	Occupational hypocrisy	Difference between espoused and internally enacted occupational values	

(Continues)

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

First Order Coding	Second Order coding	Third Order coding	Forces
Lack of internal voice			
Personalisms	Union internal function issues		
Nepotism			
Greediness for higher positions, union careerism			
Factionism			
Internal bullying			
Sexism			
Agism			
Racism			
Inter-union rivalries			
Disillusionment with union role in the labor market	Occupational role in the labor market	Root occupational value differences	
Issue of constant adversarial positions			
Teleworking arrangement	Specific issue		**Single issue driven**
External conflicts			
Naïve actions			

succinctly and effectively illustrate the point being made, in the Results section (ID after a quotation identifies its source; ID after a semi-colon identifies former officers who referred to the same idea). Supplementary Table A3 presents examples of interview excerpts for the first-order coding process.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | One-force driven

Turnaway for some ex-union officers we interviewed was driven by one force; either they were pulled out (*simply pulled*), or their turnaway decision was values-driven (*betrayed*).

4.1.1 | Simply pulled

The nature of this type of turnaway was centrally related to pull forces. The decision about turnaway was not made 'out of frustration or out of spite' (C1) for this group of ex-union officers. They generally showed positive feelings about their former occupation: 'I liked the environment I was in [. . .], I felt very compatible with [..], comfortable with their ideas' (C8); 'I loved what I did there. I was very happy [with what] I did' (U2). They tended to minimize the relevance of push

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and values forces: 'No problem with working time. I had no problem with salary and benefits. I had no problems with the values fit. […] Everybody was on the same wavelength for the most part' (C8). The opportunity to begin a new occupation was perceived as a way to improve their resources and develop; this pulled them away from the union officer occupation. They mentioned the desire to embrace 'a new challenge' (C27; C8, U26), 'the opportunity of development' (C1; C13) and 'professional growth' (U33). One said, 'And I told myself if I don't do it now, I won't do it again in my life' (C6). These former union officers did not always proactively search for the opportunity; it could be the other way around: 'The opportunity that came to me when I was in a place where I could grab it. It happened at the right time' (U33). They were attracted by intellectual stimulation and professional freedom: 'In my new position I have more freedom' (C27); 'For the first time in my career, really, I had to develop [my own] position on every issue' (C8; C9); 'I'm doing not just [sector specific union] cases but [I deal with] a variety of cases' (C19). They sometimes highlighted how they were pulled by the social reputation of the new occupational identity: 'I had the opportunity to have a different label' (C9).

Leveraging their tertiary education (some had a Master's or doctorate) together with union skills and knowledge that increased transferability to the new occupation, this set of ex-union officers started a new career mostly around mid-life and assumed the occupational identity of a non-union, non-management, employment relations professional (e.g. labour judge, arbitrator, university professor). We found this type in Canada and to a lesser extent in the United States but not in Italy.

4.1.2 | Betrayed

The nature of this type of turnaway was centrally related to values forces, more specifically values related to union mission. In the opinion of these interviewees, the union's core mission to promote the greater good had been betrayed. They saw unions as self-centred, bureaucratic ivory towers, and their occupation as serving union members while ignoring the needs of oppressed, unrepresented workers. They embraced an 'innovative' (I30), non-bureaucratic, 'more expansive view of the unions' (C20) and called for 'big projects' (I16), such as 'teaching [workers] how to actually organize themselves to fight for themselves' (U7), to change workers' lives and society (I14, I16). They thought union officers should not shut themselves in an ivory tower and simply represent 'the people who are elected into official offices, […] the staff […], official leaders interactions' (C20). Some suggested the occupation should be a fixed-term experience: 'Otherwise it becomes a routine', thus making union officers 'the gears of a bureaucratic machine' (I29) and sometimes making them more interested in 'becoming politicians than […] in improving the work in winning more cases and negotiating better deals' (U19; U7).

This group thought the occupation of union officers is marked by conservative, bureaucratic and narrow visions, pushing 'unions to perpetuate themselves by doing the same things they did 20 years ago' (I30), downplaying progressive strategies that have been successful, such as those inspired by campaigns targeted to unrepresented workers: 'When I look at [our union strategic] plan now, I just see it's a watered down version of that plan and it breaks my heart' (U29); 'They really did not [do] organizing. They used the old service model' (U7). They thought the occupation of union officers is mostly 'concerned about branding and marketing', and individual union officers are more interested in their titles than labour rights (U19). They cannot propose innovative employment relations strategies that could support the actual growth of workers – members and non-members alike – in their workplaces (I30) or through broader societal campaigns (U29). They

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serve members in full-time, middle-to-higher income, less volatile sectors, where their 'privileges become entitled rights', and they do not concern themselves with precarious workers (I28). The interviewees said union officers organize workers mostly based on the 'scoring of members' (C31, U19), targeting sectors 'where the money is' (C31). They mentioned 'hav[ing] an organizing drive every month, regardless if the workers want it or not' (C31), and said they were unable to 'build the base and help change minds at the grassroots level' (C20). One pointed to a disjunct between 'making someone a member and then having them [. . .] take an action' and simply recruiting 'someone to give them a T-shirt' (U19). Another took action against this narrow-mindedness; when she was an officer, she said, 'I opened up a childcare centre. I was running English classes, and it wasn't just for our members. It was for anyone' (C31). She also said it was a strategy to promote 'anti-racism' but the experiment did not last due to the lack of union support (C20; C31).

In addition to pointing out the short-sightedness of union officers in not seeking broader impact, this group of former union officers said the occupation is characterized by internal differences, parochialism, nepotism, and personalism and thus cannot support a broad-based coalition for improving the rights of all workers (I14, I16, C20, C31, U29). One reported the mindset as: "This is what I'm gonna do for my little kingdom. And that's it. So if it does not matter to me, screw you, even though we're part of the same union.' I don't understand that. It's mind-boggling to me' (U29). In Italy, some were deeply disappointed by the end of Italian 'unitary unionism' in the mid-1980s, saying this led union confederations to become self-centred, entrenched and more bureaucratic (I14, I16). In Canada, personalisms infiltrated the relationships between officers from local unions and confederations to the point where the support for broader, societal-focused projects was undercut (C20). In the United States, personalism was tainted with racism, sexism and agism (U27, U29).

For this type of ex-officer, there was a clear disconnect between the union ivory tower and the workers, especially those in lower levels of society, whereby officers just 'illude themselves of represent[ing]' the proletariat and trying to change society (I21). One said, 'We really don't have a mission' (U19). Their awareness led to a 'sense of profound hardship' (I14), 'the disappearance of a big project' (I16) and the performance of actions they deeply disagreed with (C20, U7, U29). For many, this seemed to be the point of no return. Thistype of ex-union officers was present in both the North American business unionism model and the Italian industrial-societal model.

4.2 | Two-force driven

Most union officers left a union career because of the synergic effect of two forces, either pull and values (*disenchanted*), push and values (*depleted*) or push and pull (*rebalanced*).

4.2.1 | Disenchanted

This set of ex-union officers opted for turnaway because of their perception of a deep distance between their values and the prevailing occupational values and role in society, and also because of the presence of compelling pull forces. This was the most common type in Canada. The 'profound gap' (C21) and 'disillusionment with union values' (C21; C4) commented on by those ex-union officers related to a 'different vision about how things should be done' (C24) in employment relations first, and in internal union functioning second. They no longer believed in the occupational adversarial stance assumed by union officers in employment relations. They were at odds with

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the fact that union officers do not promote justice per se but foster a one-sided vision in which 'employees are all saints', while 'independently of what the employer side does, [the employer] is gonna always be terrible' (C21; C4). They said they became the actors and perpetrators of 'self-referential' unions, with default adversarial positions (I24, I31) in an 'us versus them culture' (C16; C4), uncritically deploying slogans rather than critically reflecting on what 'is right or wrong' (C16). They mentioned 'a culture of union arrogance' towards the employer (C3), where union officers 'take everything the corporation gives them and then turn around and slap them in the face again' (C4). There seemed to be no real space for officers to participate in employment relations decision-making through open dialogue and collaboration with employers to pragmatically address workers' issues and opportunities. Because of an overarching adversarial stance, these ex-officers could not promote '[their own] way of thinking, [their] way of doing' employment relations' (I9; I15). Some thought union officers are deliberately underprepared by unions on more technical managerial aspects that would allow them to have a more constructive dialogue with stakeholders (I20; I24). Overall, they no longer perceived unions as a positive and effective force in the labour market and were disenchanted with the union officer's role in employment relations. Under these conditions, being a union officer, as one said, was going 'against my beliefs, my ethics' (C26).

The group also pointed to the difference between the values of democracy and voice that should animate union officers and those enacted within union officialdom. For example, 'It doesn't matter what you have to say. It's not gonna go anywhere. You know, your voice is very, uh, it's not heard in the unions' (C23; C24, C26, C28). Even when voice is expressed, 'There is always someone out there [to] knife you in the back' (C4). The façade of internal democracy hides a logic of power (I20, I24), loyalty to factions (I15, I19, I31), 'personal interests for career and careerism' (I18; C28) and nepotism that turns 'unions into a family store' (C18). More generally, factions – sometimes even when based on party affiliations as in Italy – become personalistic, nepotistic, 'doggy dog' (C4) networks to assure continuity for people in directive positions, and loyal officers are placed in key roles: 'You are there because of you have the hat…a jacket of certain type' (I24; I31, C16, C23, C26). Some officers are entitled by their position and exert power over others; they 'do not try to build anything [from below] but bully people [officers] doing what they want to do' (C26; C12, I24, I31). A feeling of oppression was especially noted by female officers (C22). This logic of arrogance could push senior officers to hide information to maintain their position in the union (C16, I24, I31).

When union officers perceived a deep misfit between their values and the union officer's role in employment relations and were also disappointed by internal functioning, pull forces became salient. Interestingly, most had moved into management in their new occupation and in some cases, into employment relations. They had leveraged their union skills and competences to transition to a new career; their previous experience 'benefitted' them (C18). They noted a general 'common ground' of employment relations knowledge between the two careers (C21, C23, C24, I9, I15, I20, I24), but also mentioned a set of specific skills, ranging from negotiating, understanding firm economic performance and management strategies (C21, C23, C26, I9, I15, I20), to more pointed skills, such as knowledge of employment legislation and policies (C3, C4, C23, C28), how to negotiate a collective agreement (C21, C23, C26), how to prepare and defend a grievance (C21, C28), and even how to understand 'the rationale, the way of thinking [of unions]' (C26; C12, C23), so that 'unions cannot play games with' the management (C3).

In addition to the pull of transferability, these former officers were attracted by the possibility of trying new paths (I15) and expanding their competences: 'learn new things, to be able to grow, to be successful, moving forward' (C26); 'become an expert about something that would allow

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me to grow over the years' (I31; C16, C22, C24). In most cases, opportunities for better salary and the use of merit recognition in career advancement (as opposed to union personalism and group loyalty) were pull forces (C4, C16, C24, C26, I24). For most interviewees of this type, it was a matter of identity turnaway – from union officer to management. Some thought by embracing this new identity, they could better promote workers' participation and support their rights and growth (I15, I24). Some chose to embrace a management identity in firms known to not be deliberately anti-union or in cooperatives of workers 'where the relationship among capital, labour and managers has been less tense' (I9; C18, C24, I20). Of note, this type was not present in the United States.

4.2.2 | Depleted

Turnaway for this group was mainly motivated by values, especially in terms of internal union functioning, and push forces that depleted their emotional and physical resources. The two forces seemed to have a joint effect, but the greater relevance of push forces seemed to emerge once the values forces were in play. Across the three countries, this was the most populated type; it was the most common one in Italy and the United States.

Most of these ex-union officers were physically worn out by their previous occupation. Their turnaway was essentially a matter of working schedule and intensity: 'There is no working time, always on, and it does not make any sense' (C11); '[Unions need] services 100%. [...] evening, nights, from life to death' (C5; U15). They said being a union officer became an 'all-encompassing experience' (C10, I8, I35), that created an impossible lifestyle (U1, U5, U11, U21). Ex-officers said: 'I worked 60 hours per week [...], it is a toxic culture' (C2; U12); '[I] go out at 6.30 a.m. and to come back at 8.30, 9 p.m. [every day]' (I19; C14, C30, U12). In some cases, they worked many weeks straight with no break (U8, U32): 'There were three months where I only had three days off. I worked through Christmas, I worked through New Year, I worked through Thanksgiving' (U23). There was an emotional component to the onerous scheduling: 'You receive calls at any time [...], 24/7 on call' (C30; C15, U11); '[You] hear from people who are struggling, you hear from people's personal stories, the amount of pain and suffering that they're going through' (U21; U20); 'You're mentally never getting a break' (U11).

Moreover, 'the workload is massive [...], often times you have to act swiftly to [solve] delays over delays' (C5). Beyond the sheer quantity, work is not easy: 'It's really gruelling' (U1). And training is often inadequate (C7; U15): 'People are just dumping all this stuff on you and it's very stressful. And in a lot of cases, you don't have the training, don't have the background' (U11; U12, U17, U21). Not surprisingly, this is all 'very taxing' (U20; U12). Officers must travel to different workplaces in all weather conditions (I35). In the United States, geographical mobility was mentioned especially by those involved in organizing: 'Some weeks I was in a city in State A (City C), some weeks I was in County B, some weeks I was in northern State A. Some weeks I was in City D, some weeks I was in City A' (U21; U4, U5, U8, U11, U20, U34); 'My home base was in [CITY] [...]. I ended up leaving the address because I was never there' (U8).

These working conditions made the occupation 'just unbearable', 'a calvary' (C15), a situation in which 'you are always scared' (U5); it was a constant stress that made 'family relationships crumble' (I10; I5, U15). A former union officer asked, 'How could one be a full time unionist and do the other things in one's life that they want to do? Find a lifetime partner, get married, have a dog, even having a cat would be difficult' (U1; U4, U30). The stress affected the ex-officers' health (C14, I23, U1, U30). Most experienced burn-out (C2, C5, C14, C15, I23, US, U8, U11, U25, U34) 'when the rubber band [was] too stretched' (C5), up to the point where they 'got angry over the littlest thing'

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(I8) or would 'vomit before going to work every morning' (I23). In the United States, alcoholism, overweight and mental health issues were reported as common by union officers facing this stress (U4, U8, U11).

The misfit in occupational values for this group emerged primarily between the union mission to promote better working conditions and how unions treat their own workers in Canada and the United States, but not in Italy. North American interviewees highlighted union 'hypocrisy' (U4; U15): 'If it was a member who told you [about these working conditions], you would have been on his side, you would have encouraged him to enter a grievance procedure [...], but in our case... nothing is done' (C15; C5, C29); 'You would expect unions honour their [officers'] rights. Uh! I found it was not the case. [Unions] did not like to have employees challenging them' (C29; C7). Unions, they said, are focusing more on servicing members individually rather than collectively (C14), to the detriment of bearable working conditions for their own officers (C5, C15, C29, C30). An ex-union officer commented: 'I wasn't gonna work for a union that was depriving [its own] workers of their due process and their democratic rights to run their own union' (U23). In the United States, they reported constant oppression and control – even intrusive of personal life (U5) – by union managers seeking to achieve high standards of performance (U4, U8, U25), to 'produce the results that they're looking for' (U21), 'like what a big corporation would do, like car sales or something. You aren't hitting your quota' (U5; U21).

Unions promote stable jobs, but many union officers did not have job security; 'I was at will, basically' (U4); 'They still made you feel like you could get fired any day' (U30; U11, U12, U17); 'It was very, very, very fear based [...]. The most exploitative job I've ever had in my life was with the labour union [...]. It's the Walmart of labour' (U8). Ironically, union managers were against the unionization of union officers: 'You are privileged because you get to help others. And how dare you ask for anything more?' (U25; U15). If officers were unionized, 'The ones who are on the bargaining team, oftentimes at work, [managers] come down harder on them. Then they'll get burned down' (U21).

Across the three countries, and similar to the disenchanted former officers' criticism of the internal functioning, the misfit in occupational values was broadened by the perception of a lack of internal democracy and voice in the occupational decision-making processes: '[Unions] advocate for justice, but when it was time to take decisions, we were not reasoning accordingly' (C11; C7, C10, I2, I3, I5, I19, U8, U11, U25). The ostensible union democracy and voice principles clashed with decision-making and career advancement based on: personalisms (C31); nepotism (U8) – 'There's a local president [who is] the third, fourth person in his family to lead the local. And how is that a democratic organisation?' (U1); cronyism and favouritism (U1, U8, U11) – 'If you weren't kissing up to [your boss], basically, you weren't gonna get anything' (U15; U25); and in the United States, toxic greediness for higher salaries, closer to corporation management levels (U8).

Rather than valuing voice, the prevailing occupational culture experienced by these ex-union officers included: 'Be careful about the people you talk with' (I23); 'Don't trust anybody here!' (U23); 'When I try to voice my opinion, that's when the supervisor wanted to shut me down' (U17). Rather than a 'valorisation of officers' for their competence, the occupation was characterized by 'tyrannies of groups' (C2; I1, I8, I23), racism and sexism (U8, U11, U25, U32), obedience to an often-conservative membership point of view, or traditional, ineffective, and at times dubious ways of proceeding (C2, C15, C10, C11, I2), leading to convoluted, short-sighted, or 'too soft' decisions (C2, C11, C15, I10, U9). This union internal functioning translated into career roadblocks that halted or slowed opportunities for occupational growth (I1, I2, C29, U1, U15) or on-the-job training (C30). When 'all this sacrifice' (I19) rather than recognition and career advancement was

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experienced together with stringent internal career constraints, a feeling of deep occupational frustration emerged (C29, C30, I3, I8, U1, U8, U11, U23, U25).

A relevant difference between Italy, on the one hand, and Canada and the United States, on the other hand, was that Italian former officers perceived depletion as an intrinsic feature of this occupation. However, they became frustrated when the depletion went hand-in-hand with career roadblocks due to internal power dynamics. In the business unionism of North America, ex-officers pointed to their employer —their union— as the cause of depletion, citing union management hypocrisy and constantly referring to them as 'my boss, my manager'.

4.2.3 | Rebalanced

Turnaway decisions for this group were mainly the result of push — in terms of work and, especially, role stressors — and pull forces. Strong push forces triggered union officers to look beyond their present occupation and to consider the pull forces of a new one. Like the depleted union officers, for rebalanced officers, push forces mostly related to the stress of a demanding and intense work schedule and workload: 'The first three months, I got to go home one weekend [...]. And then it was another, maybe three months where I got to go home [...] one weekend a month. And then after that, my normal schedule was I went home every other weekend' (U3); 'It was heavy. Every day only problems to address' (I6); 'Workers really called at any time' (I36). They spent many hours in the car travelling from one workplace to another, with no time for a personal life (I34, U13). These stressful conditions deeply affected the work-life/family balance. Some said 'tensions started emerging' about childcare duties' (I25), and 'the relationship with children was interrupted' (I22). The working schedule made it impossible to take care of elderly parents (I37). To these stressful working conditions, some added other push forces, such as low wages, saying they 'could hardly make ends meet' (I6). For some, the union wage was significantly lower than the one in their previous occupation; 'pay for performance bonuses, special top-ups [were] lost', as union officers were paid a wage equal to their previous occupation base salary (I36). Some said the wage was not enough for family needs (I12), especially new (I11) or single parents (I22). A couple of former officers reported stress generated by occupational competence mismatch issues; they either felt unprepared or overqualified (I6, I11, I22). Loneliness while in the union occupation was also mentioned (U3).

For this group, the pull forces mirrored the push forces. The new occupations were compelling because they provided a much less stressful schedule, a better work-life balance, and higher compensation and development opportunities. They were less intense: 'It really seems to me that I am not working anymore compared with my previous [union] workload' (I34). Ex-officers appreciated the free time they gained (I6, I25, I37, U13) and dedicated it to the family: 'I can manage to spend some afternoons with my children' (I22; I37). Some appreciated the salary: 'I earn more because overtime is completely paid' (I22; I12); 'With regards to wage it is like having discovered America' (I6). Others mentioned opportunities for growth and the development of new competencies not offered by the union officer occupation (I6, I11, I36, U13). In many cases, the union officer background provided highly transferable knowledge and skills (I11, I12, I25, I34, U13), but some ex-officers reported only partial transferability, and a gap had to be filled. Interestingly, we did not find this typology in Canada, and there were only two cases in the United States. It was much more common in Italy.

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4.3 | Three-force driven: All split apart

Turnaway for this group was the result of the concurrent effect of high push, pull and values forces. In effect, these union officers had been 'all split apart'. Their turnaway mostly conflated characteristics of the disenchanted and depleted types.

As in the depleted group, the push force was a matter of stress caused by work scheduling and the intensity of work tasks. These ex-union officers were 'drained [. . .], working nine hours a day, and calls coming in night, day, weekends, and holidays' (C17; U24, U31). One commented, 'I love the members, and I love the work, and I remain dedicated to that. Unfortunately, I think I did that to my own detriment [. . .]. All of us were overworked' (U6). The '24/7 with no break' lifestyle had severe health consequences (U16). The occupation became so demanding that 'there were no other interests [in life]; the [only] interest was the union. . . and that's it!' (I13). The working conditions were impossible to bear, especially for young parents: 'When my first child was born, I said: if we keep going on like that [. . .] I could not allow myself to come home [everyday] at 8:30 pm' (I32; U9, U16). Some were 'drained' by the high volume and variety of knowledge required (C17; I4), mentioning a 'wild', constant, 'steep learning curve' with limited training opportunities to fill the knowledge gap (C32; C25, U22). More importantly, they felt 'roped' (C32) in their opportunities for career growth; 'Union was not an environment where I could *grow*' (I13; C25, C17, U31). In some cases, their competences were not valued (I27, I4, U31).

These ex-union officers were pulled away by the possibility of a more balanced lifestyle (C17, C25, C32, I13, I32), better salaries and benefits (C17, C25, I27, U22, U24, U31), and opportunities for merit-based career advancements (C25, C32, I4, U31). Knowledge and skill transferability was generally medium-to-high; the union officer experience was an added value for transitioning, as 'acquired competences during your union job can be useful' in the new occupation (I7). These ranged from soft skills, such as leadership, ability to work with people, 'navigating challenging relationships and politics' in organizations, and mobilizing individuals (C32, I4, I32, U24, U31), to more technical aspects of employment relations (C25, I27).

For the occupational values misfit, we found aspects related to occupational role, as well as union internal functioning. With respect to the former, this group was similar to the disenchanted group; although 'unions have also to work with management', they said, if union officers try to do so or defend this perspective, they are considered to 'kiss their [management] butt' (C17). Moreover, no matter what is at stake, 'unions are always right. Corporation is always wrong' (C17). Union officers are 'stuck in the mindset of the sixties, argue, argue, fight, fight' (C17; U6, U24). Ex-officers said there was no sensitivity to management's position, and union officers were not given managerial training so they could understand the 'managerial position, human resources, human rights' (C25).

With respect to aspects of internal functioning, similar to the depleted type, these former union officers raised the issue of rivalries based on political stance and personalism to maintain power: 'It was all about building gangs, clients, friends' (I13; C32, U9). To nurture support, they said, people are hired 'all the time based on who knew who, and relationships' (U6; U9), not on merit (U22). This undermines internal collaborations among officers, and 'futile arguments' prevail over efficiency (I7; C25, C32, U22). These dynamics translate into mediocre, 'dysfunctional' (U9) union strategies, non-'trustworthy' internal relationships (C25; U6), and compromises with politicians and employers (I4, I27, U6). Leaders 'run the show' (C25) leaving no room for officers' voice (C17, C25, C32, I27, I32). Indeed, leaders are often 'abusive' (U31; U6), make unilateral decisions and do not listen to officers (U22). Comments included the following: 'We're fighting for people to have voices in their workplace, and you're not giving us a voice in our own

workplace like that was enough to make me leave' (U24; U31). Union officers, as our interviewees said, form an 'old boys club, very misogynistic' (C25). Consequently, it 'is not easy for women' (I32) or racial minorities (U22, U31).

The consequence of the three forces working together is that the occupation becomes a 'bubble': 'You don't realize that this is not normal, because it's all you're used to. It's what you're surrounded by, and you don't see anybody else getting treated any better' (U31). If the officer moves to another union, 'eventually it starts over' (U31). This type of turnaway was present across countries.

4.4 | Single-issue driven and no key forces (residual category)

Our typology based on the high relevance of push, pull or values forces did not account for a few cases of turnaway (I17, I26, I33, U10, U14). In four of these, turnaway did not seem motivated by a set of forces that had simmered for some time; rather, a single issue triggered an instantaneous (or almost so) departure. In one case (I17), an officer's decision was sidelined by a political organization; immediately thereafter, he abandoned the occupation. In another (I26), the officer, without consulting his union, accepted a company invitation, at the company's expense. Right after the trip, he realized he had been naïve in accepting the invitation, and he left the occupation. In the other two cases (U10, U14), the union decided to reinstate return-to-office policies and not to allow any form of remote work; the decision caused these officers to abandon the occupation. In one case (I33), the former union officer did not point to any force as highly relevant, even when prompted.

5 | DISCUSSION

We situated our investigation at the crossroads of the industrial relations debate about union officers and the organization studies debate about turnaway and analysed the nature of union officer turnaway based on the relevance of push, pull and values forces in Canada, Italy and the United States. Based on our analysis, we proposed a typology composed of six types (plus a residual one) (shown in Table 2). This investigatory tool enriches the reasoning around turnaway among union officers and beyond, in several ways.

First, our analysis shows that different types of turnaway among former union officers are the result of the interplay of different forces. This reinforces Feldman and Ng's (2007) claim of the need to avoid lumping different types of turnaway together, as often happens when only one force is analysed, a common approach in organization studies. Importantly, 'transitioning to the employer side', highlighted in previous union officer studies (Kelly & Heery, 2009), is simply one type of turnaway, and as our analysis suggests, it is not the most common one. Our other five types much enhance our understanding of union officer turnaway and, more generally, the complexity of turnaway dynamics.

Second, most of the organization studies on quitting an occupation take a psychological approach and discuss push forces, searching for mechanisms internal to an occupation and an individual to explain quitting because of dissatisfaction (Blau, 2007; Singh et al., 2018). This approach cannot explain what we define as simply pulled former officers. Those union officers were content with their occupation, but another opportunity attracted them. Our findings suggest the idea of 'progressive satisfaction' (Bruggemann, 1974), as a pull force that stimulates turnover, can be extended at an occupational level to include turnaway, at least for some ex-union officers

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TABLE 2 Summary of typology.

Type	Push	Pull	Values	Institutional
Simply pulled		Embrace a new challenge		CA, USA
Betrayed			Different vision of union mission	CA, ITA, USA
Disenchanted		Very high transferability of skills (cross the fence)	1. Do not believe in the role of unions in labour market	CA, ITA
			2. No internal voice and democracy	CA, ITA
Depleted	Stress, work-life balance		1. No internal voice and democracy	CA, ITA, USA
			2. Union hypocrisy	CA, USA
Rebalanced	Stress, work-life balance, salary	Restocking depleted resources		ITA (few) USA
All-split apart	Stress, work-life balance, salary	Development opportunities	1. Do not believe in union role	CA, ITA, USA
		Restocking depleted resources	2. No internal voice and democracy	CA, ITA, USA
			3. Union hypocrisy	CA, USA

in our sample. More generally, psychological approaches alone seem to fall short in interpreting turnaway among union officers. Push forces were neither necessary (simply pulled) nor sufficient (push forces were never at play alone in any of our types) to explain turnaway in our cases.

Third, our attention to the effect of values on turnaway yields particularly insightful results. Organization studies about career change, primarily on turnover, tend to analyse values as a generic individual fit with work-related values, mostly operationalized through a few items (e.g. Boon & Biron, 2016; Valentine et al., 2011). Industrial relations studies centralize individual pro-social ideology and the sharing of union goals in taking over union offices (Darlington, 2018; Gall & Fiorito, 2012). Our typology advances both debates by introducing three distinct types of occupational values: mission (external), functioning (internal) and societal role (belief in the occupation). The betrayed group of ex-union officers felt betrayed with respect to the occupation's external mission; rather than working for the greater good and social justice (espoused values), they became part of a bureaucratic, self-centred, conservative ivory tower (enacted values). The depleted group mentioned the gap between the occupation's espoused values and those animating the occupation's internal functioning. They experienced faction-based tensions, personalism, a lack of participation in union decision-making, and a lack of democracy and voice. Rather than promoting labour rights, their work experience was characterized by the abuse of these rights. For the disenchanted group, the misfit in values did not emerge because of a gap between the union's espoused and enacted values, either externally or internally. Rather, they no longer found any value in unions and their societal role. They reached a point where they questioned the very existence and necessity of the union officer profession. Such a root occupational values differ-

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ence explained their turnaway. Overall, our analytical refinement of values could enhance both turnaway and union officer studies.

Fourth, our findings indicate the salience of the identity dimension of turnaway: the change in who an individual is, works and stands for (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). They point to the need to move studies of turnaway beyond discussions of the knowledge gap evident in the transition to a new occupation, a common approach in organization studies (Feldman & Ng, 2007). As our findings suggest, different levels of change along the two dimensions may be inherent to turnaway. For instance, the disenchanted ex-officers had a very low knowledge gap to be filled, but they completely changed their identity; after leaving the union because of a root occupational values difference, they embraced the opposite identity, that of the employer and management. The simply pulled ex-officers leveraged most of their union knowledge in their new occupation, but at the same time, a medium gap in knowledge had to be filled. In terms of identity, they abandoned the union identity to adopt a new professional identity, differing from but not opposite to (as in the case of the disenchanted) that of a union officer. We argue that analyzing skills and knowledge together with identity may generate fruitful insights into the nature of turnaway, going beyond the case of union officers to include other mission-driven occupations (Hunt, 2014; Vandenberghe, 1999).

Our analysis suggests that turnaway should not be studied without considering contextual differences. In our case, turnaway is affected by societal values related to unions, and by both general and occupation-specific industrial relations characteristics, and these seem to interact. The North American business unionism relies on a large set of highly educated and skilled professional workers to provide high-level services to members. These workers may find it relatively easy to make the transition to another more attractive professional occupation. In contrast, in the Italian industrial-societal unionism, union officers generally come from the rank-and-file membership. These generally blue-collar workers may find transitioning to alternative professional occupations much more difficult. This difference shapes the strength of pull forces to which officers are exposed, shedding light on why we found the simply pulled type of turnaway in North America but not in Italy. Moreover, the Italian ex-union officers appeared mostly animated by the societal mission of their occupation, while the North American union officers saw themselves as in a business relationship with the union ('My union is my boss!'). Thus, when push stressors are high, Italians seem more likely to transition to a more resourceful occupation (rebalanced was common in Italy, uncommon in the United States and absent in Canada), while Canadians and Americans seem more likely to blame the union for their working conditions (depleted was the most common type in the United States and the second most common type in Canada).

This might be the result of the interplay of two contextual forces. The first is institution- and occupation-specific. For Italian union officers, the pull force is shaped by *distacco sindacale*. It provides officers with a constantly available way out, and it does not imply costs to search for alternatives or to fill a gap in knowledge and skills (officers return to their original occupation). North American officers do not have a similar institutional arrangement. For them, the cost of transitioning to another occupation is higher. This overly stresses the relations between dissatisfied union officers and their occupation in Canada, and even more so in the United States. In the United States, possible pull forces are also negatively affected by societal values, namely class-based anti-union sentiments, and this might undercut the number of valuable occupational alternatives. At the same time, the stronger anti-union values that make occupational transition more difficult in the United States may make the union officer occupation attractive only to highly ideologically driven individuals, more so than in the other two countries. This would partially explain why we found a root occupational difference (disenchanted) in Italy and Canada, but not in the

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United States. Overall, our findings highlight the need to consider how quitting an occupation is also intrinsically contextually shaped by the forces that attract certain individuals with specific characteristics to an occupation; this is underexplored in both union officer and organizational turnaway studies.

Our findings have practical implications for union organizational policies. While pull forces are mostly beyond the organization's control (Kirschenbaum & Mano-Negrin, 1999), the relevance of push and values forces may be mitigated by organizational policies, and this, in turn, may limit the relevance of some pull forces (Makarius et al., 2017). As our findings on push forces suggest, the perception of the union officer occupation as a vocational one means unions cannot disregard stress and work-life balance issues. Tailored human resource management, communication and training practices should seek to promote occupational wellbeing. Unions could establish third-party, independent watchdog mechanisms to monitor, address and reduce the effects of push forces. Indeed, many former union officers said they had endured stress for a long time, but they perceived it as a natural sacrifice for the 'greater good'.

Our findings on values have three main implications for organizational policy. First, the ex-union officers pointed to the difference between a union's espoused (and publicized) and enacted values. On the one hand, union ideology seemed to fuel officers' (over)commitment to unions. On the other hand, it undermined their occupational embeddedness because they saw a gap between union goals and union actions. Officers were caught in the tension between ideology and pragmatic organizational stances. Initial officer training might stimulate a more realistic and balanced vision. Moreover, unions should clearly define where they stand and communicate this to their officers, especially at the beginning of their career. This might limit some of the feelings of betrayal expressed around union mission. Second, unions should address issues of organizational internal functioning in terms of democracy, voice and merit. This could be coupled with the promotion of officer development, competence- and merit-based career opportunities. Creating and administering standardized, objective tests of competence is another possibility. Third, unions should try to detect officers who are more likely to develop a root occupational values difference. For example, they might develop tools to screen for a mismatch in the selection process, monitor a possible mismatch through time and offer meaningful 'exit' options if necessary. While the institutional environment is strongly path-dependent and hard to change, North American unions can push for union leave for officers as a relevant point in their bargaining agendas; like the Italian *distacco*, this might reduce stress for both the individual and the union.

6 | CONCLUSION

Our research had some limitations. First, while we privilege the diversity of officers' characteristics and aimed at achieving qualitative representativeness, our research is explorative. Limits of internal and external generalizations thus ensue. Second, a qualitative typology is constituted of 'fuzzy categories', making it difficult to define boundaries (Burns, 2015). Our method of data analysis partially limited this issue. In any case, a typology implies simplification (Burns, 2015). 'Fuzziness' cannot be completely overcome, and not all turnaway realities might be perfectly reflected in our typology. Third, we focused on the nature of turnaway as shaped by three forces behind the decision to quit an occupation. How the turnaway decision is affected by specific officer characteristics (e.g. socio-demographics and values) and union characteristics (organizational culture, human resource policies and outcomes) remains to be explored. Those aspects were previously found relevant in a study on union commitment (Barling et al., 1992),

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and their consideration might enrich or challenge our typology. Fourth, almost all former union officers we interviewed quit their occupation based on their experience in just one union. It is important to expand the analysis to understand the mechanisms that cause individuals to generalize their experience in just one organization to the entire occupation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the editor, anonymous reviewers, and seminar participants at the University of Sheffield (Centre for Decent Work), University of Warwick (IRRU), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (LER), the 2022 EGOS Sub-Theme "Work and Employment at Multiple Crossroads: Building Better Futures from the Present" in Vienna, Austria, and the 2024 Academy of Management Annual Conference in Chicago for their insightful feedback. We are grateful to David Dubé, Rachel Faust, Léa Goldman, and Alex Bolong Ma for their outstanding research assistance. We also gratefully acknowledge the funding support from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (435-2021-1138).

ETHICS STATEMENT

The research project received Institutional Review Boards approval at the University of Quebec in Montreal (No. 2015–656 for data collected in Canada and Italy) and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (No. 22687 for the US data). All procedures performed in the current study involving human participants followed the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee. Participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants. The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The authors decided not to share the research data due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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ENDNOTES

[1] In the United States, the first round of interviews suggested proposing a list of reasons was not as well received by interviewees as in Italy and Canada. We, therefore, used prompting and prodding techniques.

[2] The relevance of a force is not the mathematical sum of the relevance of each reason but the relative weight of a force vis-à-vis other forces for each individual.

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How to cite this article: Frangi, L., Signoretti, A. & Zhang, T. (2024) Union officers' turnaway: Push, pull, and values in Canada, Italy, and the United States. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12822

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