

Communication

Journalism

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New Media

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Online Communities

A Union Divided: Polarization in the Screen Actors Guild

Nina O'Brien

**University of Southern California
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Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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- **Secession of Change to Win from AFL-CIO**
- **Film Industry: Contentious round of collective bargaining (2007)**
- **Infighting**

- **How do conflicts get worked out within collective groups?**
- **What predicts how people will side in a polarizing conflict?**

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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- **2007 Bargaining Cycle**
- **Writers Guild Strike**
- **Screen Actors Guild (SAG)**
- **American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA)**
- **60% joint membership**
- **Membership First (pro-leadership)**
- **Unite for Strength (anti-leadership)**

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

- **Recruitment**

- Diani, 2003; McAdam, 1990

- **Mobilization**

- Tilly, 1978; Snow, Zurcher, Eckland-Olson, 1980

- **Social Influence**

- General: Kim & Bearman, 1997; Gould, 1993
- Strikes: Siciliano, 2009
- Norms and Sanctions: Heckathorn, 1992; 1993

Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

H1: Collaboration

Actors who have worked together on one or more film projects are more likely to share a position in support or opposition to the SAG leadership.

H2: Homophily & Group Compliance

H2a: Actors who have served on the SAG Board of Directors are more likely to share a position in support of the SAG leadership.

H2b: Actors who are represented by the same talent management firm are more likely to share a position in support or opposition to the SAG leadership

Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

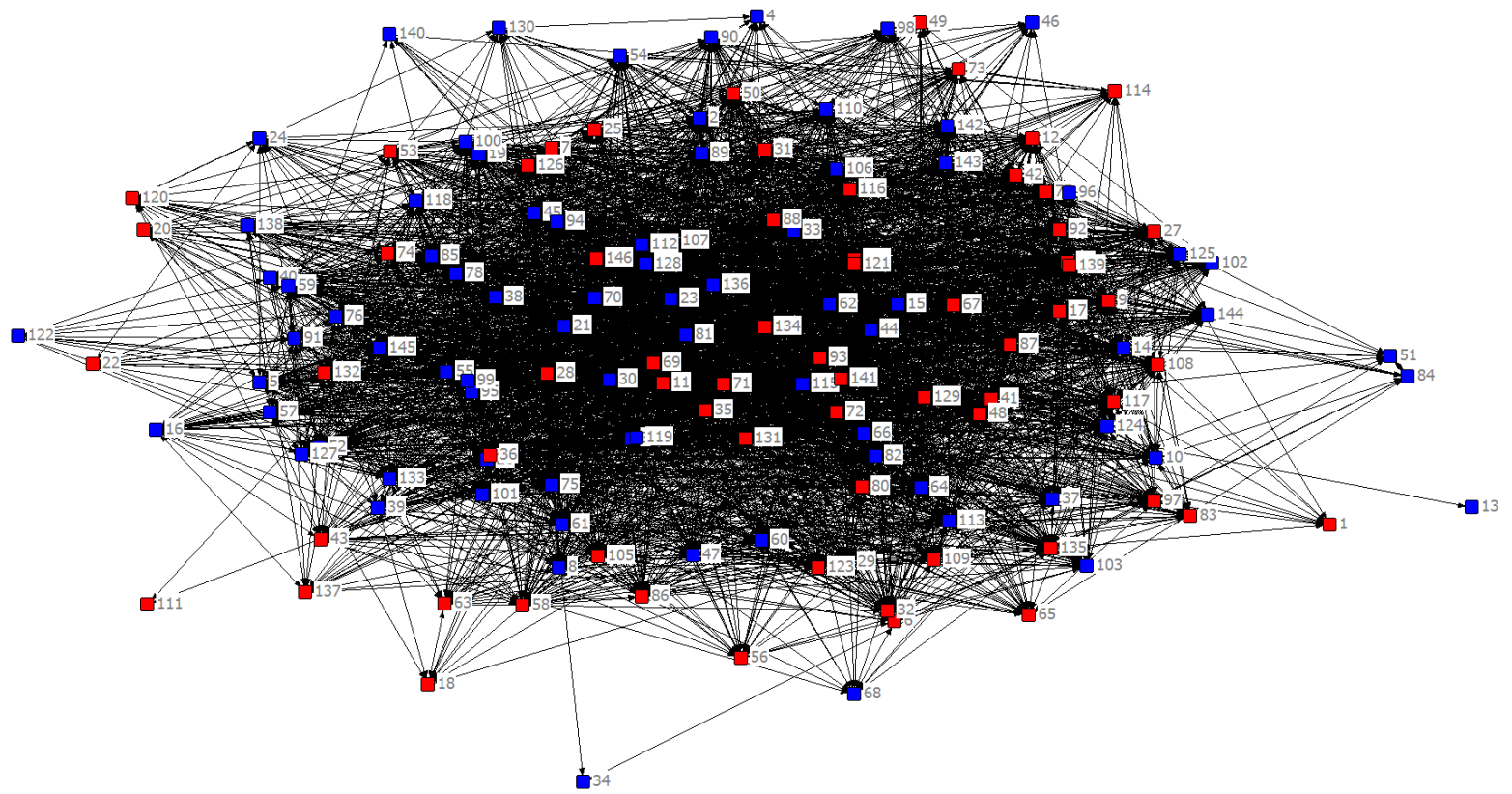
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- **Nodes: Two petitions open for signatures by SAG members (n=146)**
 - Membership First: (79 signatories)
 - Unite For Strength: (67 signatories)
- **Relations**
 - Collaboration:
 - IMDB Credits for Film, Movies of the Week and Episodic Television (only multiple appearances)
- **Attributes**
 - Position viz. Leadership (support/oppose)
 - Agency Representation (any of 17 agencies or none)
 - Membership to SAG Board (served/did not serve 2003-2007)

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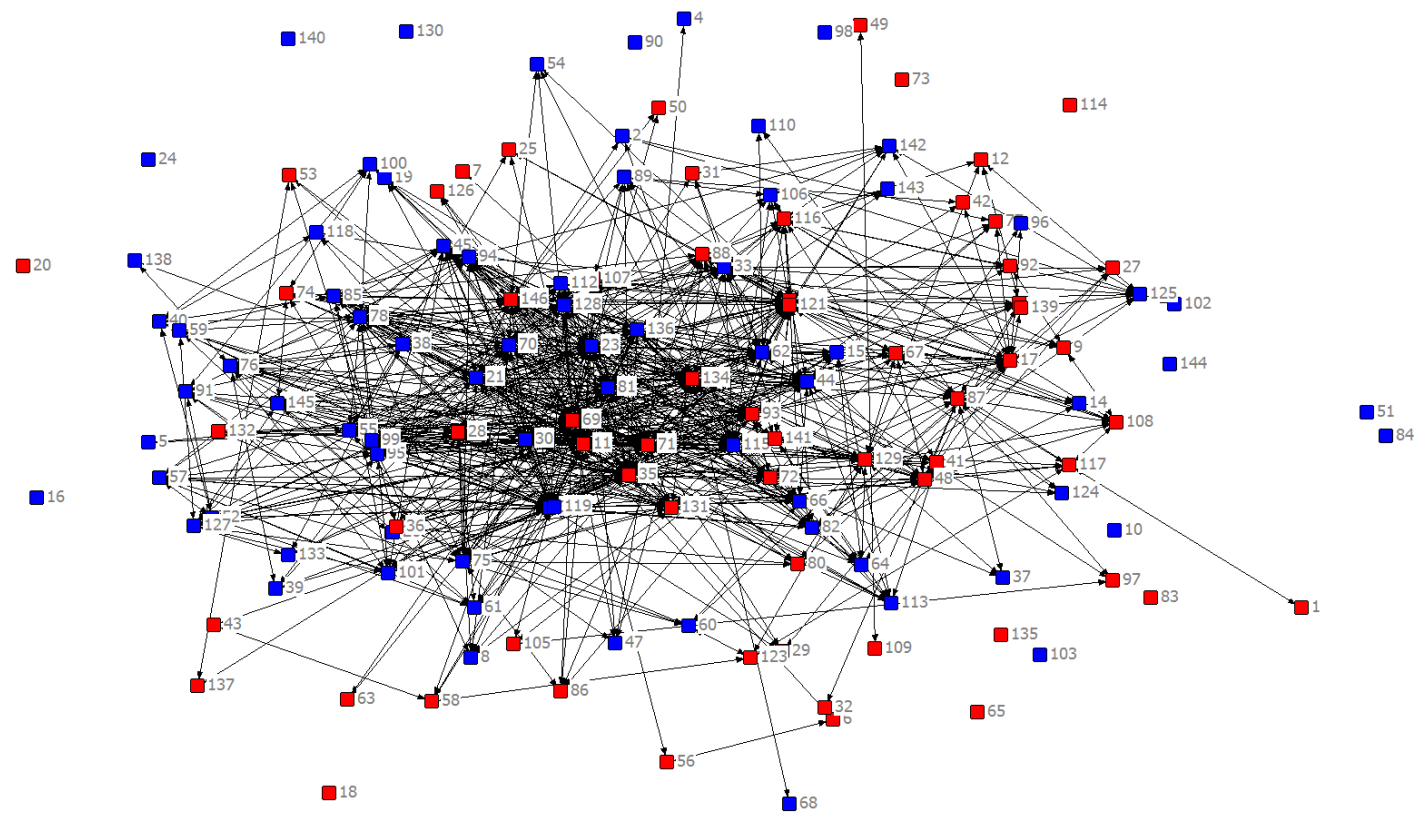


Note: Red Nodes = Unite for Strength (opposition to leadership)
Blue Nodes = Membership First (supportive of leadership)

The Network (worked on more than 2 projects)

- Communication
- Journalism
- Speech
- Entertainment
- Print, Broadcast & Online News
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- 13
- 34
- 46
- 111
- 120



Note: Red Nodes = Unite for Strength (opposition to leadership)
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Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

Table 1: SAG Network MRQAP

Matrix	Std. Regression Coefficient
<i>Affiliation</i>	
<i>Work</i>	0.027**
<i>Agency</i>	0.048**

** Indicates significance at $p < .01$;

R-squared = 0.003

Table 2: Blockmodels

Support/Oppose by Position on the SAG Board of Directors

	Non-Board	Board
Non-Board	0.502	0.446
Board	0.446	1.000

Support/Oppose by Talent Agency Representation

	With Agent	No Agent
With Agent	0.569	0.492
No Agent	0.492	0.496

Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

Table 3: Blockmodels (overall density = 0.5)

Support/Oppose by Position on the SAG Board of Directors

	Non-Board	Board
Non-Board	1	0
Board	0	1

Support/Oppose by Talent Agency Representation

	With Agent	No Agent
With Agent	1	0
No Agent	0	0

Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

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Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

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Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

Online Communities

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Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

Print, Broadcast &
Online News

Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

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Public Relations

Debate

Radio

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- **70% of people with no agency representation → Leadership First**
- **75% of people represented by the big name, top 5-ranked agencies → Unite For Strength**
- **RQ: Can the role (and influence) of a talent agent or representative supersede that of their union?**

Communication

Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

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Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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- **Presumed Value of Ties**
- **Full set of actors who took a position (a small subset of the network of SAG members)**
- **The Role of Agency**

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Journalism

Speech

Entertainment

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Public Relations

Debate

Radio

Telecommunications

New Media

Public Diplomacy

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Please direct feedback, questions, comments, to:

nobrien@usc.edu

Thank you!