AM I 'BOVERRED'? VOICE STRUCTURES AND RELATED EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES IN CALL CENTRES [i]

Anthony McDonnell, Zeenobiyah Hannif, Julia Connell & John Burgess

Anthony McDonnell♣
Centre for Institutional and Organisational Studies,
Faculty of Business and Law,
University of Newcastle,
Callaghan,
NSW 2308,
Australia.
+61 2 4921 5495
anthony.mcdonnell@newcastle.edu.au

Zeenobiyah Hannif
Faculty of Commerce,
University of Wollongong,
Wollongong,
NSW 2522,
Australia.

Julia Connell
Centre for Management and Organisation Studies,
University of Technology Sydney,
NSW 2007,
Australia.

John Burgess
Newcastle Business School,
University of Newcastle,
Callaghan
NSW 2308,
Australia.

Paper accepted for the refereed stream of the 24th Annual Association of Industrial Relations Academics of Australia and New Zealand (AIRAANZ) Conference, 2010.

♣ Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Call centres now represent an emerging business activity across the developed and developing world. This paper explores the forms of employee voice being utilised in Australian call centres and the issues on which employees have a voice over. The paper also examines employee attitudes towards these mechanisms and the level of involvement or consultation they possess. Utilising questionnaires and focus groups from ten call centres, we find that direct employee voice channels are the most common form but that these do not tend to be formalised structures. Employees tend to be content with the status quo in this regard with hostility rather than engagement being expressed towards being represented by trade unions.

INTRODUCTION

Call centres provide one of the best examples of the shift towards technology-based services work and represent a critical element of the restructuring of many organisations across the developing and developed world. As expected with a new and increasingly important organisational form, call centres have become a fruitful area for research (see Russell, 2008a for a review of research to date). Some of the primary areas of focus to date include the nature of work organisation and labour process in call centre work (cf. Batt, 1999; Taylor & Bain, 1999), HRM systems used (cf. Hutchinson, Purcell & Kinnie, 2000; Kinnie, Hutchinson & Purcell, 2000; Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006), work-life balance and job satisfaction (cf. Deery, Iverson & Walsh, 2002; Hannif, Burgess & Connell, 2008; Holman, 2002), and employee representation and consultation (cf. Gollan, 2003; Rose, 2002). More recently, the first output from the Global Call Centre (GCC) Project has been published with a special issue of *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* that explores "the relative importance of different institutional rules and employer strategies in shaping the new employment systems of new service activities" (Batt, Holman & Holtgrewe, 2009: 454).

While offering significant employment opportunities, call centres represent an industry often depicted as engaged in low-profit value activities with poor wages and jobs consisting of monotonous work involving little or no autonomy (Taylor & Bain, 2001). Employee voice is believed to benefit employees through acting as a mechanism to air grievances and communicate with management surrounding workplace issues and conditions (Batt, Colvin & Keefe, 2002). Additionally, the provision of a voice to employees is believed to potentially offer organisational benefits through improved productivity, efficiency and communication. Of note is that researchers are posing the question whether employees have lost their voice (Millward, Bryson & Forth, 2000)? Overall, the area of employee voice can be classified as quite a neglected area, particularly in call centres (Gollan, 2003; Russell, 2008a). Another under researched area is the use of non-union voice channels (Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers, 2005; Dundon & Gollan, 2007).

This paper explores the forms of employee voice utilised in call centres and the issues over which employees have a voice. In addition, we examine employee attitudes towards these mechanisms and the level of involvement or consultation they possess. In so doing, we draw on data from 10 call centres in Australia involving focus groups and survey data from 357 employees. Australia represents a noteworthy context in which to conduct call centre research because of its status as one of the most advanced segments of the Asia-Pacific region (Hannif et al., 2008; Todd & Burgess, 2007). For instance, Wallace (2003) estimates the Australian call centre industry is worth $9.7 billion per annum with approximately 3850 call centres employing about 220,000 people. This represents the second largest percentage of a country's workforce (1.4 per cent) behind the United States at 1.7 per cent (Budde, 2002).

The next section briefly engages with the extant literature on employee voice. We then set out the research methodology employed to inform our research objectives. Following this, we set

out our empirical findings before finishing with our discussion and conclusions emanating from the results.

EMPLOYEE VOICE

Employee voice has been defined as any type of mechanism, structure or practice, which provides an employee with an opportunity to express an opinion or participate in decision making within their organisation (Lavelle, Gunnigle & McDonnell, 2010). It can refer to both direct (e.g. meetings between managers and workers, formally designated teams) and indirect forms (e.g. trade unions, joint consultative committees. Traditionally, research on employee voice has focused on the presence and role of trade unions. However non-union mechanisms are believed to be increasing in popularity across a wide range of organisations and industries (Batt et al., 2002). It has been suggested that collective voice is the only real means to provide employees with an effective voice:

> Collective voice achieves what the lone voice could never do: it humanises and civilises the workplace, arguing that collective representation is the foundation of a partnership relationship that brings positive results for business
>
> Prosser, 2001 cited by Dundon, Wilkinson, Marchington & Ackers, 2004: 1151.

The union voice mechanism is believed to offer employees higher compensation than they would receive in similar non-union roles as well as providing workers with a voice in respect to working conditions and grievance and disciplinary procedures (Batt et al., 2002). However, unions have struggled to organise call centre workers due in no small part to their footloose operational nature, greenfield locations and their location outside of traditional craft and industry structures linked to union organisation (Holtgrewe, Kerst & Shire, 2002). The GCC project found just under half of all centres in their international database had some form of collective representation (i.e. trade unions and/or works councils) with operations in coordinated market economies significantly more likely to have these forms of representation (Batt et al., 2009). However, although there was as Australian partner in the GCC project, no data was provided in this special issue. Available evidence suggests that unionisation in the Australian call centre industry to be about 15-20 per cent (Van Den Broek, 2004). The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) have sought to address low union membership by recruiting call centre workers which seems to have some had some success suggesting that call centre employees are open to being represented by unions (Van Den Broke, 2004). This is supported by an in-depth case study of the non-union Eurotunnel call centre by Gollan (2003) who found strong support towards union recognition believing it would improve pay and working conditions.

For some time now, it has been argued that management may be motivated to establish alternative voice mechanisms (e.g. team working) particularly where union organisation is weak or missing (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). Management may, for example, establish such mechanisms in order to reduce the likelihood of employees wanting union recognition (Gollan, 2003). Evidence on the use of alternative collective employee voice mechanisms varies. For example, the Workplace Employee Relations Survey 1998 (WERS98) indicates that the use of workplace level joint consultative committees remained at 29 per cent during the 1990 to 1998 period (Gollan, 2003). However, team working seems to have become a popular device in call centres (Townsend, 2004) although the role of these structures in providing employees with a voice is somewhat unknown. For instance, Gollan (2003) found that two thirds of employees in the Eurotunnel call centre viewed the non-union company council as being particularly ineffective with a strong belief expressed that a union would be a much better mechanism. Additionally, the direct voice channel does not also equate to a

consultative structure but individual mechanisms such as suggestions schemes and attitude surveys may be used.

Russell's (2008a) review of the extant call centre literature advocates the need for more research on the issue of employee voice noting that the means by which employees are represented (or not) "has implications for how call centre-management is practised and how work is experienced" (p. 206). A study which explores the prevalence of different employee voice mechanisms, the issues that employees have a voice over and employee attitudes towards this is of considerable merit as it helps offset the imbalance of existing work on union-only channels (Dundon & Gollan, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on findings derived from a cross-industry study on work and social cohesion in Australia. Comparative studies are taking place in the healthcare and financial services industry but we only consider the call centre node here. Table 1 below provides a brief profile of each of the participating call centres.

Name	Sector	Industry	Years operating	Call types	Employees	Response rate
Call centre 1	Private	Private equity	22	In/Outbound	50	48%
Call centre 2	Private	Insurance	15	In/Outbound	148	46%
Call centre 3	Private	Outsourcer: Answering service	12	Inbound	22	100%
Call centre 4	Public	Local council	60	In/Outbound	4	100%
Call centre 5	Private	Insurance	24	In/Outbound	271	31%
Call centre 6	Private	Medical Services	4	Inbound	50	44%
Call centre 7	Private	Insurance & Finance	7	In/Outbound	25	72%
Call centre 8	Private	Finance	2	In/Outbound	400	21%
Call centre 9	Private	Outsourcer: Answering service	9	Inbound	40	50%
Call centre 10	Private	Outsourcer: Answering service/ Telemarketing	13.5	In/Outbound	36	33%

Table (1) Participating Call Centres Characteristics

Ten call centres of varying size and sectors participated in this study with the empirical work taking place between December 2008 and August 2009. The size of the case study organisations is noteworthy as it somewhat resembles the Australian call centre industry where the average number of employees is 35 full-time and 27 part-time or casual (ACA, 2004). The identity of each is kept confidential due to respondent organisation and individual wishes. Employees from each of these organisations completed questionnaires, either through a hard copy which was dropped to the premises by a member of the research team or an online version, and took part in focus groups. The survey involved a number of dichotomous and rating style questions and consists of 357 usable questionnaires. Response rates for each call centre are set out in Table 1. Focus groups were also used involving employees of varying levels in the organisation. The numbers in each focus group varied between 4 and 12

employees. The aim of these focus groups was to extricate more in-depth data on the aforementioned themes and the quotes that are used in the results section stem from these. Focus groups are particularly useful where participants share certain characteristics related to the topic under investigation in that they allow discussion without any pressure to reach consensus of views (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups took place in each of the case study firms and in the larger call centres, two focus groups were held.

RESULTS

Background Characteristics

The survey results show the call centre age profile to be quite young with only 18 per cent of participants being 45 years or older. The majority (51.5 per cent) were in the 25 – 44 years category while 31 per were aged 24 years or less. Consistent with the extant literature, call centres emerge as a female dominated industry which is consistent with 71 per cent of respondents being female. Eight in ten participants were less than 5 years in their current job, Full-time permanent staff made up 67 per cent of respondents with 28 per cent part-time permanent and the remaining 5 per cent were casual staff. Educational attainment was overall quite low with less than one quarter holding a degree or diploma (3 year full-time) or postgraduate qualification. Some 14 per cent reported that they had not completed Year 12, 29 per cent finished Year 12 with the remainder holding some type of vocational qualification or diploma/advanced certificate.

Indirect Employee Voice

We asked respondents about the presence of joint employee-management committees which sought to establish if there were collective representation structures in place. The findings were not overly positive with one quarter of respondents reporting that such a committee existed in their workplace, a further 23 per cent stated there was none and interestingly the remaining 53 per cent replied that they did not know if there was such a structure. This leads us to conclude that there is no committee in place and even if there is one, employees are clearly unaware of its existence. In exploring the composition of these joint employee-management committees, 43 per cent stated they were solely made up of non-union employees, 13 per cent reported they consist of union delegates or unionised employees only and 10 per cent noted that they included both union and non-union staff. Of concern, with regard to the availability or presence of a true employee voice was that some 34 per cent who reported there was a joint management-employee committee answered that they were unaware of its composition. Unionised employees were also asked whether their union discussed or negotiated issues surrounding work and management systems and negative findings were again found regarding employee voice. A mere 12 per cent of unionised staff reported that their union is involved in such discussion/negotiation on their behalf. Employees in some focus groups did however question the point of having consultation structures because they felt there weren't any issues that required one.

> *I'm not sure what they'd [workplace awareness committee] be talking about half the time because I mean there's not that much going on here to tell you the truth*
>
> Call Centre No. 7.

However, there were also comments from the other side within the same focus group where employees view these committees as valuable structure for employees.

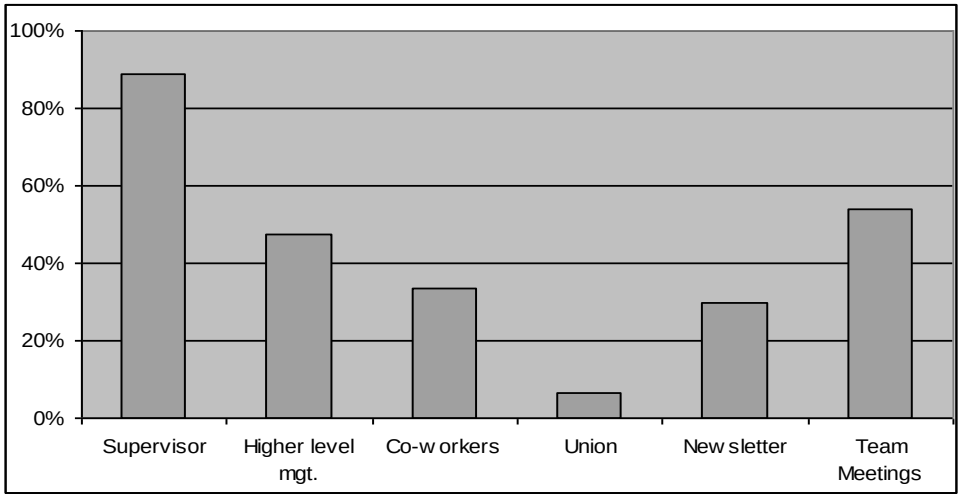
> *I like that they come to you, and you don't necessarily have to go to them. It's good because it makes you feel like what you have to say means something. And well, the managers too, they always talk to us about what's going on. This committee thing is*

more like a formality because that stuff happens here daily anyway; they always ask if we are ok, if they can help us in any way

Call Centre No. 7.

Direct Employee Voice

It became clear that management tend to adopt a more direct style with regards to employee communication or involvement. Some 88 per cent of employees stated being part of a team with 41 per cent noting that it was self-directed. In addition the results showed a strong identification towards the team and team objectives. We also asked all respondents whether they had been consulted about workplace changes in the previous 12 months. Almost eight in ten (78 per cent) reported they had been. Our conclusion is that direct channels are favoured are supported by the results where 89 per cent of employees who noted having been consulted on workplace change reported that it was their supervisor who had discussed these changes (see Figure 1). Team meetings were also a popular mechanism (54 per cent) as were higher level managers discussing changes (47 per cent). The low level of union involvement once again emerges with only 6 per cent of unionised employees reporting that their union had discussed changes with them.



(N=279 other than with regard to union mechanism where N = 61).

Figure (1) The mechanisms used for discussing workplace change with employees

A voice over what?

With respect to the issues that the employee-management consultative committees have authority over we find that a broad range of issues are discussed but there are question marks over the extent to which there is real authority and consultation. This conclusion is based on the relatively low numbers reporting authority over various issues. For instance, 12 per cent stated the employee-management committee has authority over financial and investment decisions, 59 per cent report authority over pay and conditions, 56.5 per cent over work organisation, 55 per cent over new product/service lines.

Turning to the focus group data, it is clear that employees often have opportunity to give feedback to management over a broad range of issues.

As it stands we do have some say in products and what we say to customers. Say if we aren't happy with some part of the script we can always offer suggestions and in the most part they are willing to hear about it and listen and take it into future decisions that they make. We can make suggestions for sure

Call Centre No. 7.

We do have regular conversations between management and the staff; and when I say staff that includes the team leaders, IT support. L1. We have our committees which meet once a month to talk about staff issues, anything from issues with break times, through to any considerations about pay, workstations, social activities

Call Centre No. 10.

I remember a while back they were considering dividing us into smaller teams working on a smaller number of specific clients per team, and that was something they discussed with us and got our opinions about. I mean the negotiations or discussion should I say went on for a while

Call Centre No. 9.

Not so much [consultation on major issues] regarding clients and hours. I mean sure they listen when we complain about certain processes and they make changes where they can. Sometimes they can't because of certain product's being heavily regulated and having to stick to the processes handed down, but we have been involved in redesigning and changing processes too, not on a major scale, but like with one of our campaigns we found there was a lot of repetition of content and stuff and we did actually work with the client to get through that

Call Centre No. 3.

Quite often consultation or voice involved informal direct channels with many individual employees believing they can go directly to their supervisor or higher level managers to discuss issues they may have.

It [employee consultation] does happen here, if we have a change in like clients or if we have new training put in place, if we have an issue with it we can talk to managers about it. And I don't really think any of us would hesitate about doing it. I mean I've had issues with the ventilation, and it's no problem to approach them

Call Centre No. 9.

I don't really have much of an issue talking to people here about stuff. I mean there's only really one person here that people would be really kind of worried to talk to but I mean he's not the only person we can approach if we need to talk about things

Call Centre No. 9.

In focus groups in two call centres (Call Centres 6 & 7), there was the suggestion that no formal consultation channels were required because it was a small organisation making communication easy and straightforward.

We have a [workplace awareness] committee, which I personally found quite strange for a company of this size, but it's a good idea. I mean, it lets them have a platform to share information about what's going on, and we have a say to an extent also

Call Centre No. 7.

Employee attitudes towards employee voice

First, we utilise the survey data to explore union members' attitudes on the effectiveness of their respective union. The results are not particularly positive although overall they could be classified as more neutral rather than deep levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Utilising a

five point scale where 1 = disagree strongly and 5 = agree strongly, we find the mean value of five statements we ask surrounding satisfaction with their union to vary from 3.11 to 3.24 (the higher the value the higher the satisfaction level. Table 2 highlights the statement and the reported mean values.

Statement	**Mean**
To what extent do you agree that unions here do a good job in improving members' pay and conditions	3.11
To what extent do you agree that unions here have taken notice of members' problems and complains	3.24
To what extent do you agree that unions here give members a say in how the union operates	3.15
To what extent do you agree that unions here do a good job in representing members when dealing with management	3.16
To what extent do you agree that having a union here gives me confidence to raise problems and complaints	3.23

Table (2) Union member attitudes towards their union

The focus group data, which involved union and non-union employees, painted a negative attitude towards unions and the potential need for them. In the focus group at Call Centre No. 8, one respondent when asked on their opinion towards the use of unions in their organisation answered, "*It's a waste of 20 bucks a fortnight I think"*. While in Call Centre No. 6, when the focus group was asked whether there was union membership the researcher was grated with: *"[General murmur] No, thank goodness"*.

> *...having them [unions] here could maybe change how well everyone really gets along. I've known unions to be quite troublesome in some workplaces, but they can also be very good for workers, so it's hard to say really*
>
> Call Centre No. 9.

> *With the size what it is, there isn't any capacity for it or need. How we do it works, having a union I think would stress the situation a bit. I mean I know of some very tough and bullying unions and they don't get as much good as they do damage, so I feel they wouldn't really have a place here*
>
> Call Centre No. 7.

> *I personally would like to have the Choice, not saying it would do us any good or bad, but being able to choose would be nice. Sometimes numbers are what you need to get things done, but I do agree with you, it can turn nasty and that's something that's best avoided. Here it wouldn't do a lot of good, but the choice would be nice*
>
> Call Centre No. 7.

The size of the call centre also emerged quite often regarding why employees believed there was little requirement for a union.

> *We don't have a union here because it just wouldn't be useful I don't think. We are such a small intimate group here anyway*
>
> Call Centre No. 3.

> *Yeah I always see unions as being more for bigger places where you might not see your manager or supervisor but here you are sitting right next to them*

Call Centre No. 3.

We are only small so I don't think a union would work here. We have good relations with the supervisors and the manager. They are open and listen to what we have to say. It's pretty good here when I think about it. The last call centre I worked in had a union and seriously I don't think it did much good. They would always get stuck into a couple of things and leave out things that were important to other people. And it also made us more divided. I don't really see them as being too helpful based on my experience. It wouldn't work here, or would have to work very differently to how they do normally

Call Centre No. 7.

Management trust

Attitudes towards management emerged as particularly positive in both the survey and focus group data with negative feedback almost non-existent. The positive relationship and feelings between employees and management in the call centre seemed to emerge in the focus groups as a strong determining factor behind the negative views regarding the need for unions or indeed more formal, consultative structures.

I have acted as a staff rep. on the committee and, well from my perspective, it's quite a valuable structure to have. Having been to meetings and things management here should be congratulated for the way they try to involve staff in matters. It's not something they have to do, but I guess its something that's a big part of our culture

Call Centre No. 7.

The way I look at it, it's in their own best interests to make the right decisions if you know what I mean. They aren't going to deliberately do the wrong thing. They are employees too at some level

Call Centre No. 10.

I think it would be good if we didn't have managers who listened to us. It's not like they go behind our backs, or do things that we really don't agree with. If they were like little Hitler's I mean, yeah we would definitely have a need for it, but I think it's quite good at the moment what we have. Its very office type work so, you know, the conditions are very good as it is

Call Centre No. 9.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

These ten case studies afforded the opportunity to explore the extent to which employees have a 'voice' in call centres from the perspective of employees rather than management stating the structures in place. The results suggest there are structures in place which 'technically' provide employees with authority over workplace decision-making. The use of collective channels (i.e. indirect employee voice) tends to be unusual with a strong emphasis on direct mechanisms (e.g. team working and individual communications). The findings give support to the view that employee voice in Australia has changed dramatically since the mid-1990s (cf. Pyman, Cooper, Teicher & Holland, 2006). They ascribe the movement to individualist employee voice to legislative changes, the decline of unionism and a stronger focus on managerial prerogative. These are issues that arose here with only 22 per cent reporting that they are members of a trade union.

Furthermore, attitudes towards unions overall were quite negative and suggests a need for unions to look at strategies at changing this opinion to boost their membership (Rainnie & Drummond, 2006). Linked to this negativity, were high levels of perceived trust in

management by employees in terms of looking after their interests and being open and transparent in decisions that are taken which affect them. A number of participants also noted the harmonious and family-like atmosphere that existed in their call centre. They consequently suggested that unions were not required and could actually disrupt such good relations. These attitudes are at odds with what Gollan (2003) found in his case study of the non-union call centre in *Eurotunnel.* In that context, he found 71 per cent of employees indicated they would like management to recognise a trade union believing it would improve pay and conditions, employee grievances and health and safety issues. This differs to our findings and points towards the key role of the management team in placating employees. This supports the contention of Russell (2008b: 286) that "organic leadership from within, plus a widely shared sense that management had betrayed its 'psychological contract' with the workforce were necessary to a successful organizing campaign" for unions. Most employees were quite strong in their views that management largely took their opinions into account in making decisions which lends itself to the idea that efficacy of voice is correlated to the nature of interactions between management and labour rather than whether there is a union or not (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). In addition, it suggests that union organisation will be difficult because the work of Taylor and Bain (2003) suggests that discontent amongst employees is necessary for collective identification and hence an interest in union recognition.

There are also a number of other factors which require further investigation in terms of explaining our findings. For instance, employee attitudes may be related to the size of the organisations studied. The ten case studies tended to be quite small in employee terms and were considerably so compared to the *Eurotunnel* case studied by Gollan (2003). Previous research (cf. Matlay, 2004) has found smaller firms tend to be to be less formalised in their management approaches and practices than their larger counterparts. Further, the high concentration of female employees and atypical employment forms (i.e. part-timers and casuals) is also likely to be a key explanatory variable (Taylor & Bain, 2001; Belt, 2002).

While our study provides some interesting insights into voice structures in call centres there are limitations. It is important to note that we draw on data from a relatively small number of call centres. Consequently, our findings may not be indicative of all call centres and thus caution is urged in generalising our results. Future research may seek to analyse a greater number of call centres.

REFERENCES

ACA (2004). *The 2004 Australia Call Centre Industry Benchmark Study*, Sydney, ACA.

Batt, R. (1999). Work organization, technology and performance in customer service and sales, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 52, 539-564.

Batt, R., Colvin, A. J. S., & Keefe, J. (2002). Employee Voice, Human Resource Practices, and Quit Rates: Evidence from the Telecommunications Industry, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 55, 573-594.

Batt, R., Holman, D., & Holtgrewe, U. (2009). The Globalization of Service Work: Comparative Institutional Perspectives on Call Centers. Introduction to a Special Issue of the Industrial and Labor Relations Review, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 61, 453-488.

Belt, V. (2002). A female ghetto? Women's careers in call centres, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 12, 51-66.

Budde, P. (2002). *Global-VAS-Call Centres and CIT*, Sydney, Paul Budde Communications.

Budhwar, P., Varma, A., Singh, V., & Dhar, R. (2006). HRM systems of Indian call centres: an exploratory study, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17, 881-897.

Deery, S. Iverson, R., & Walsh, J. (2002). Work relationships in telephone call centres: understanding emotional exhaustion and employee withdrawal, *Journal of Management Studies*, 39, 471-496.

Dundon, T., & Gollan, P.J. (2007). Re-conceptualizing voice in the non-union workplace, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18, 1182-1198.

Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M., & Ackers, P. (2005). The management of voice in non-union organisations: managers' perspectives, *Employee Relations*, 27, 307-319.

Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M., & Ackers, P. (2004). The meanings and purposes of employee voice, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15, 1149-1170.

Freeman, R., & Medoff, J. (1984). *What Do Unions Do?*, New York: Basic Books.

Gollan, P. (2003) All Talk But No Voice: Employee Voice at the Eurotunnel Call Centre, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 24, 509-541.

Hannif, Z., Burgess, J., & Connell, J. (2008). Call Centres and the Quality of Work Life: Towards a Research Agenda, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 50, 271-284.

Holman, D., (2002). Employee wellbeing in call centres, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 12, 35-50.

Holtgrewe, U., Kerst, C. & Shire, K., (2002). *Re-Organising Service Work: Call Centers in Germany and Britain.* Aldershot, Ashgate.

Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J., & Kinnie, N. (2000). Evolving high commitment management and the experience of the RAC call centre, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 10, 63-78.

Lavelle, J., Gunnigle, P., & McDonnell, A. (2010). Patterning employee voice in multinational companies, *Human Relations*, in press.

Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S., & Purcell, J. (2000). Fun and surveillance: the paradox of high commitment management in call centres, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11, 967-985.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, 3rd edition, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Matlay, H. (2004). Employee relations in small firms, *Employee Relations*, 21, 285-295.

Millward, N., Bryson, A., & Forth, J. (2000). *All Change at Work: British Employment Relations 1980 – 1998 as Portrayed by the Workplace Industrial Relations Survey Series*, London, Routledge.

Pyman, A., Cooper, B., Teicher, J., & Holland, P. (2006). A comparison of employee voice arrangements in Australia, *Industrial Relations Journal*, 37, 543-559.

Rainnie, A., & Drummond, G. (2006). Community unionism in a regional call centre: the organiser's perspective. In J. Burgess & J. Connell (Eds.), *Developments in the Call Centre Industry*, Abingdon & New York, Routledge.

Rose, E. (2002). The labour process and union commitment within a banking services call centre, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 44, 40-61.

Russell, B. (2008a). Call centres: A decade of research, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 10, 195-219.

Russell, B. (2008b). Unions in the Information Economy: Info-service Work and Organizing in Australian Call Centres, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 50, 285-303.

Taylor, P., & Bain, P. (2003) Call Centre Organising in Adversity. In G. Gall (Ed.), *Union Organising*, London, Routledge.

Taylor, P., & Bain, P. (2001). Trade unions, workers' rights and the frontier of control in UK call centres, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 22, 39-66.

Taylor, P., & Bain, P. (1999). An assembly line in the head: work and employee relations in the call centre, *Industrial Relations Journal*, 30, 101-117.

Todd, P., & Burgess, J. (2006). Call Centres. In P. Waring, M. Bray & M. Barry (Eds.), *Evolving employment relations: industry studies from Australia*, Macquarie Park, McGraw Hill.

Townsend, K. (2004). When LOST Found Teams: A Consideration of Teams within the Individualised Call Centre Environment, *Labour & Industry*, 14, 3, 111-126.

Van Den Broek, D. (2004). We have the values: customers, control and corporate ideology in call centre operations, *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 19, 2-13.

Wallace, C. (2003). *More than a phone call*, Retrieved [12 October 2009] from: http://zip.agsm.edu.au/agsm/web.nsf/Content/AGSMMagazine-phonecall/$FILE/03_Iss3_Feat_PhoneCall_p19.pdf

[i] *This paper has been peer reviewed by two anonymous referees*.