Individual voice in employment relationships: a comparison under different forms of workplace representation[1]

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David Marsden,
London School of Economics
d.marsden@lse.ac.uk

Abstract: This article considers the role of individual employee voice in regulating the 'zone of acceptance' within the employment relationship, and examines the extent to which different models of collective voice inhibit or foster the operation of individual voice. It focuses especially on the role of representatives who deal with job-level grievances who operate within contrasted frameworks of collective voice. In one, representation is negotiated with the employer, and in the other, it is based on rights established in employment law. The former is commonly associated with shop stewards and unions, and the latter with employee delegates and works councils. It is argued that whereas in the negotiated model individual and collective voice are substitutes, in the rights-based one they are complements. The article also considers how this may alter under dual-channel representation based on both unions and councils, which is very common in European workplaces. Britain provides an example of the negotiated model, and France of both the rights-based and dual-channel models. These ideas are tested using data from the 2004 British and French workplace employment relations surveys, and confirmed using data from the 1998 surveys.

Keywords: J53 - Labor-Management Relations; Industrial Jurisprudence; individual and collective voice, works councils.

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1. Introduction

Employee voice plays a key part in the governance of the employment relationship. This relationship is built upon a deal agreed at the time of hiring, and which is continuously adapted thereafter. In exchange for a salary, employees agree to let management direct their labor between duties included within their 'zone of acceptance', that is, the set of tasks over which they accept the employer's right to manage. This zone is rarely codified in great detail, as recognized by economic, legal and psychological theories of the employment contract. It relies on goodwill, with both parties free to terminate it should the terms no longer benefit them. Use of voice can assist both parties by facilitating changes to the zone of acceptance as their needs evolve, and helping to avoid breaches that might otherwise lead to quits or dismissals. *Individual* level voice, that is to say raising issues directly with management, contributes to this process because the decision whether to stay or quit is an individual one. Yet it does not exist in a vacuum. In many workplaces, it functions alongside *collective* voice institutions, at the job level, with shop stewards and employee delegates, and at the establishment and enterprise levels, with unions, and works councils. This article explores the relationship between individual and collective employee voice in the workplace concentrating especially on the relationship with forms of *job-level* collective voice because they, more than higher-level representatives, deal closely with the detailed problems related to the zone of acceptance. It considers two models of collective voice, referred to as 'negotiation-based' and 'rights-based'. The first is based on voluntary negotiation, and typically comprises shop stewards and analogous union-based representatives, and the second, elected personnel delegates who often work closely with works councils. It argues that in the negotiation-based model, individual and collective voice will generally function as alternatives, as substitutes, whereas in the rights-based model, they support, or complement each other's action. It also examines how this relationship is affected by dual-channel representation, such as is common in Europe. It also considers the influence of management-led forms of employee voice, such as teams, quality circles, goal-setting and performance appraisal whose use has spread in recent decades. Some authors have argued that these have been used as substitutes for other forms of employee voice, as a basis for a 'sophisticated non-union model' (e.g. Kochan, et al., 1986, Guest, 1987), whereas others have argued that they can complement them (Benson, 2000, Amossé and Wolff, 2008).

This article examines these questions taking the collective voice institutions of Britain and France as examples of these different systems of collective voice. At the time of observation, Britain provided an example of negotiated voice, whereas French workplaces provided examples of both the rights-based and dual-channel models. The article uses both countries' 2004 workplace employment relations surveys, focusing on private establishments with 20 or more employees, the population covered by the French survey. The paper examines first the underlying theory on the relationship between individual and collective voice in employment relationships. Next it presents the data and descriptive differences between the two systems as they appear in Britain and France before outlining the statistical method and explaining the key variables used. Presentation of the regression results is then followed by a conclusion.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1 Voice and the zone of acceptance

The role of voice in regulating the zone of acceptance occupies a central place in the modern employment relationship (Willman et al, 2006, 2009). The early theories of Coase (1937), Barnard (1938: Ch 7), and Simon (1951) emphasized the contractual flexibility provided by the zone of acceptance, but did not explore how its limits could be policed to the satisfaction of both parties, although it was widely recognized that the freedom to quit and effects on employee morale discourage extensive abuse. More recently, psychological contract theories have likewise emphasized the zone of acceptance and how its breach may be deterred by these means, as well as by individual voice between employees and their line-managers (see, Rousseau 1995, Conway and Briner, 2005). Such individual voice also plays a key role when incumbent employees negotiate idiosyncratic deals, 'i-deals', with their managers (Rousseau et al. 2006).

It is easy to understand the contribution of individual voice to regulating the zone of acceptance. As Williamson (1975) argued, detailed codification of work assignments would undermine the very flexibility that appeals to employers. This is also recognized by employment law. Under English law, a legally enforceable contract underpins the relationship, but as Collins observes, its purpose is to 'stabilize expectations' (Collins, 2006: 139). Likewise, French employment law distinguishes between minor changes to the zone of acceptance, which are deemed to be part of the initial deal, and substantial ones that require renegotiation. The line between the two is determined in relation to the initial agreement, and hence to the intentions of the two parties when contracting (Lyon-Caen and Pélissier, 1988, pp. 306ff). Given this open-endedness, the exercise of voice enables both parties to clarify whether particular duties fall within the zone of acceptance, and to agree mutually satisfactory adjustments without the need to treat each change as a potential breach.

When Freeman and Medoff (1984) first introduced Hirschman's (1970) theory of exit and voice, they focused on individual voice and its collective alternative exercised through unions. Other representative forms of collective voice, such as works councils, have also been analyzed (e.g. Sadowski et al, 1995). These studies emphasized the benefits of sharing information for labor utilization and productivity. Since then, the range of voice channels considered has greatly expanded, to include 'management-led' channels. For example, Batt et al. (2002) examine teams, and non-union dispute resolution. Dundon et al. (2004) examine forms of voice ranging from the articulation of individual dissatisfaction, through expressions of collective action, to involvement in management decision-making, and they identify different channels associated with each: from complaints channels and grievances through to quality circles and consultation. There has also been growing interest in individual employee voice within goal-setting and performance appraisal, broadening their functions from the traditional emphasis on monitoring (Levy and Williams, 2004). Their growth means that their potential influence on the operation of individual and collective channels needs also to be addressed. The next sections explore the theoretical relationship between individual and collective channels, and consider how management-led voice may affect them.

a) *Individual voice and its relationship with the other forms*

The effectiveness with which individual employees can exercise voice in their dealings with managers depends on the resources at their disposal. In a free labor market, the ultimate

sanction for employees, as for their employers, is to terminate the relationship if voice fails to bring about mutually satisfactory arrangements. Thus, within individual voice relationships, there is always an implicit threat of termination: to quit or to dismiss. For employees, the main focus of this paper, its credibility depends upon the ease of finding an alternative job. This is influenced by the buoyancy of labor demand, and especially whether employees have skills that are easily marketable. Likewise, employees with above average ability for their occupation will generally be harder to replace, and so are likely to have a more potent quit threat than their peers.

Opportunities for informal discussion with management provide an important channel for individual employee voice. To manage their zones of acceptance effectively, employees need access to managers who are empowered make decisions. This is generally easier in small firms where managerial hierarchies are shorter, and procedures tend to be simpler than in large firms. Conversely, long hierarchies, and reliance on formal grievance procedures can deprive employees of individual voice. Thus managers' willingness to deal informally and directly is likely to enhance individual voice. It is also generally easier for managerial and professional employees to raise issues with those who have decision-making power than for employees with only basic skills and educational attainments.

For many workers in different circumstances, individual voice is a risky business. They may be penalized as troublemakers, and thus discouraged from speaking out (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). In such cases, individual voice fails. For them, the alternatives include withdrawal, such as absence or quits, and silence, albeit at the price of growing dissatisfaction because they lack influence to contest the divergence between the employer's changing job demands and their own zones of acceptance (Van Dyne et al. 2003). They may also seek to exercise voice collectively.

In summary, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Employees' individual voice will be enhanced by the strength of their outside option, the marketability of their skills;

H2: Management's willingness to deal directly and informally with employees about work grievances will enhance individual voice;

H3: Employees who lack voice are more likely to be dissatisfied with their conditions, and to withdraw through absence or quits.

b) *Two models of collective voice*

When analyzing the position of the zone of acceptance in the negotiated and rights-based models, it is helpful to distinguish two levels of collective or representative voice: at job and work group level, for example by shop or union stewards and elected employee delegates; and at workplace and higher levels, by unions and works councils. As the zone of acceptance relates to the jobs of individual employees, and their understanding of the deal underpinning the sale of their labor services, the key representatives will quite logically be the stewards and employee delegates. The contents of individual jobs are often quite idiosyncratic, and so give rise to particularistic grievances, whereas deliberations at the workplace level tend to deal

with whole classes of problems. When they deal with individual cases it is usually because they raise important general issues.

Freeman and Medoff's theory was initially framed with the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of union bargaining in mind, whereby unions seek collective bargaining rights with individual employers on behalf of certain categories of employees. Their theory does not distinguish strongly between job and enterprise level representatives because they are interdependent. The stewards' status and protection from intimidation are underwritten by the union's agreement with management, usually backed up by the possibility of pressure tactics. Likewise, the union's effectiveness in the eyes of its members is bolstered by the activities of its shop stewards who can more easily deal with issues closest to the jobs of individual employees.

In several continental European countries, alongside the negotiated form, a different set of institutions provides collective voice, notably statutory workplace representation by specially elected job level representatives and works councils. The former fulfill many of the voice functions of shop stewards, taking up individual employees' grievances with management, either on their behalf or jointly with them. In contrast to the voluntary institutions, their status is protected by employment law rather than by collective strength, and the employer is legally obliged to provide for elections, and to deal with those elected. To distinguish the statutory-based job-level representatives from their union-based counterparts, this article uses the French term 'personnel delegates' (délégués du personnel). At the workplace level, collective representation, on key issues except pay, is provided through works councils, to which employees also have a statutory right, and their powers are established by law. A common feature of such models is the presence of an employment size threshold set by law. Thus in small plants, personnel delegates will provide the sole statutory representative channel, whereas in larger plants there will be both delegates and works councils.

When the state accords such legal rights usually, and quite consistently, it imposes two key obligations: a peace obligation and universal coverage of all employees. In their dealings with management, both parties should abstain from industrial pressure tactics, and representatives should make their services available to all groups in the workplace. As these principles have become embedded, new responsibilities have been attributed, notably in the areas of employment security and training. Taken together, these features impose very different organizational imperatives on these two types of collective voice channels giving rise to radically different relationships with individual voice: as a substitute for individual voice in the negotiation-based model, and a complement for it in the rights-based model. Key influences on the relationship with individual voice concern mobilization, the peace obligation, and coverage.

When collective voice depends upon a voluntary agreement, the employer retains the right to withdraw. As a result, the union and its stewards have to sustain the employer's interest by a mix of carrot and stick: productivity gains from improved information flows, and the threat of collective sanctions. The latter depend upon the union's ability to mobilize its members to maintain recognition and bargaining rights (Crouch, 1982). These organizational imperatives include its ability to build coalitions of workers around issues of general concern; to sustain itself by recruiting new members; and to manage these coalitions as an effective bargaining force (Traxler, 1995). In other words, this form of collective voice has to represent individual employees' problems by a process of 'interest aggregation', translating them into issues of

more general concern around which it can mobilize, and maintain an effective bargaining coalition. This may not suit all individuals and groups, especially if they already have effective individual voice on account of their marketable skills. However, to maximize its collective strength, the union needs to bind such groups into the collective channel because otherwise their search for individual solutions will diminish its power, enabling the employer to 'divide and rule' (Crouch, 1982 Olson, 1971). One manifestation of the tension between what Crouch called 'the drive to combine' and individual group interest is the smaller wage differential in union than in non-union environments (Freeman, 1980, Card et al., 2004). Such factors could cause some with marketable skills not only to opt out of collective voice, but also to move to non-union firms.

The peace obligation is also critical to the relationship between individual and collective voice. This can be seen by considering the zone of acceptance in relation to integrative (problem-solving) and distributive discussions[2]. Many of the adjustments to jobs handled by management authority take place through an integrative approach. The purpose of the zone of acceptance is that changes in task assignments should be handled by simple communications between employees and their managers in an integrative way because they do not affect the initial deal over pay and work. There are of course many other, larger, changes that affect distributive outcomes and so require renegotiation. Statutory-based delegates and councils are well-suited to the integrative questions because they are bound by a peace obligation, whereas unions and shop stewards have a comparative advantage for the second, being free of such restrictions, although dependent on bargaining power and mobilization. In between, there is a large overlapping zone comprising issues that could be resolved by either method. They could be treated as distributive questions, or, with a bit of imagination, in a broadly 'cost neutral' way, that is having only a small or no net effect on distribution (Figure 1).

Take in Figure 1.

In this zone, workers who are well-endowed with individual bargaining power would find their own individual voice in competition with collective voice. They can more easily negotiate their own special arrangements with management, such as Rousseau's 'i-deals', if they can be handled on a one-off, individual, basis. It is often easier to resolve a single issue in isolation, and the impact on costs is much smaller than if the concession is extended to all other employees, as a union would be inclined to seek. Thus, for employees with sufficient market power, individual negotiation would appear the more attractive option, and individual and shop steward voice would be in competition. Because personnel delegates are bound by a peace obligation, they are under pressure to work with management to find cost neutral solutions that do not require pressure tactics, and this will often favor individual adjustments and so accommodate individual voice more easily. Their additional attributions on employment security and training also promote a mutually supportive relationship with individual voice.[3] The first restricts managers' ability to use the dismissal threat to impose changes, and the second can assist provision of additional skills required for new duties.

Although stewards and delegates each operate within a framework that protects them, and comprises multiple levels of collective voice, it is their action at workgroup level that provides employees with help for individual job-related issues. Thus the relationships of substitution and complementarity with individual voice should be most intense at that level:

H4a Shop stewards will be negatively related to individual voice;

H4b Personnel delegates will be associated with greater individual voice.

The influence of unions and councils on individual voice is mediated through their respective job level representatives, and this is shaped by the nature of the ties between them. Stewards and unions are strongly interdependent as the former depend upon the union's ability to mobilize pressure for their protection. Both are bound by a shared dependence on negotiated recognition, so both can be expected to discourage individual voice. Although councils are part of a framework that favors individual voice, their part in the division of labor may cause them to have a weak or even negative relationship. They get the conflictual cases that could not be resolved at job level, and they tend to work by applying general principles to individual cases, both of which imply a strained relationship with individual voice. In this respect, they experience some of the same tensions as workplace level union bodies. Thus employees' overall impression could be that delegates are supportive of individual voice, whereas councils are less interested. However, unlike unions that provide essential back-up to their stewards, delegates have their own independent legal protections. Indeed, in France, in small firms below the legal threshold for councils, and even in some medium-sized ones, delegates mostly function in the absence of councils. Even when councils are present, it is usually the delegates who are in the front-line for individual employee grievances. Thus many employees could quite easily associate delegates but not councils with effective support for their individual dealings with management. Thus:

H5a Union voice will be negatively related to individual voice;
H5b Councils may have an indeterminate relationship with individual voice.

The relationship between works councils and individual voice is further strained when they operate as a dual channel of collective voice alongside a strong union presence in the same workplace. With the dual channel, it would normally be in the employer's interest to opt for grievance channels covered by the peace obligation: to keep distributive and integrative issues separate for reasons discussed earlier. In contrast, it is likely to be in the union's interest to emphasize the distributive aspect of employees' grievances and demands. This would boost its prestige in relation to the works council. If the union is strong enough to negotiate a local agreement with the employer, it would likely seek to consolidate its position by encouraging councils to seek general, solidarity-oriented, solutions to grievances, and so discourage individual voice. Thus a sixth hypothesis reinforces H5b: in dual channel workplaces, strong union presence will cause councils to inhibit individual voice.

H6: In workplaces where unions and councils provide dual channels, a strong union presence will cause councils to have a negative relationship with individual voice.

Dependence on employer agreement compared with universality of representation rights accorded by law can affect the coverage of collective voice, and hence the attractiveness of individual employee voice. When coverage is uneven, those with marketable skills have good reason to maintain their capacity for individual negotiation: their next job may be in a non-union workplace or in a non-union grade. As a result, they will often be reluctant to pool their resources with others for collective voice. Thus, individual voice will tend to be more polarized in the voluntary, union, model, being concentrated among those who have the necessary individual bargaining power.

H7: Individual marketability will have a stronger effect on individual voice in the negotiated than in the rights-based model because of the differences in coverage between the two systems.

c) *Management-led forms of voice*

The spread of management-led forms of employee voice means that one has to take their presence into account when exploring the relationship between individual and representative voice. As will be seen, they bear no simple relationship with employee voice: much depends upon the circumstances. Four main factors are commonly believed to shape the employer's 'demand for voice', including improved information flows, possible biases in existing channels, improved motivation, and high exit costs (Willman et al., 2006). These give a clue as to the likely impact on the other forms of voice. Management may suspect that the quantity and quality of information flows are subject to different biases under the two regimes. It often believes that unions distort information for bargaining advantage and for internal organizational reasons, whereas statutory channels can be legalistic. Thus management-led channels can often appear better focused on the key issues for the business. Managers may also seek to develop voice because they believe it enhances motivation, for example, by raising workplace trust. This may be increased by greater management-led communication, or it may require management to go further and 'tie its hands'. In strongly unionized workplaces, an agreement with the union would normally provide the necessary commitment, but in weakly organized ones, it is possible that employers would prefer to engage with statutory-based representatives because of their legal status. Finally, where organization-specific skills make exit costs high, management may seek to develop its own voice channels in order to prevent disagreements from sliding into quits or dismissals. It may do this either because it believes existing employee voice is not very effective, or because it fears a hold-up by the union, for example, it fears that its investments in training will put it in a weak bargaining position. In this context, it is likely that management would consider a works council bound by a peace obligation to pose less of a threat than a trade union, which is free to use pressure tactics.

Management-led channels are likely to pose the greatest challenge to other voice channels when they are relatively independent from direct management control. All four types mentioned earlier display this characteristic. In the case of team working, Batt et al (2002) observe that it can provide employee voice by increasing involvement and enabling dissatisfied employees to voice their concerns, thus provide an alternative to quitting. However, its effect depends upon whether teams are 'consultative' or 'substantive': the first including problem-solving groups and quality circles, and the second, practices such as semi-autonomous groups. They argue that although both forms provide scope for employee voice, substantive teams will provide more effective voice because of their greater autonomy.

Grievance procedures provide another form of employee voice which is often management-led, particularly in the large number of non-union workplaces. As Batt and her co-authors observe, these too vary in the degree to which management controls the process. They distinguish four kinds: management review, peer review, non-union arbitration and union-based procedures. Fear of reprisals by management may often discourage use of grievance procedures, which Boroff and Lewin (1997) found to be significant even in unionized workplaces. Thus, Batt et al. argue that greater independence from management will facilitate more effective employee voice, which they measure by reduced quits. Whereas dealing with

grievances informally often enhances individual voice, insisting on formal procedures is likely to have the opposite effect.

Employee consultative committees (ECCs) are also widely regarded as management-led. Although present in both union and non-union workplaces, their use had stalled during the period before 2004 (Willman et al., 2009). The same study, which used the British Workplace Employment Relations Surveys between 1990 and 2004, also highlights the growth of management communication through team briefings and workplace meetings. Like Batt's study, this one used reduced quit rates as an indicator of effective voice, finding lower rates associated with more independent forms of voice.[4]

In recent years appraisal and goal-setting have attracted growing attention as forms of employee voice, although one should distinguish their two faces: monitoring and involvement. The first deprives employees of voice, whereas the second can enhance it. Emphasis on the monitoring function remains strong in the principal-agent literature (see for example, Brown and Heywood, 2005, Addison and Belfield, 2008). In contrast, in the HRM literature, Cawley et al (1998: 628) concluded their meta-study observing that the monitoring approach is no longer consistent with organizations that are moving towards involvement-oriented climates. There has been a growing emphasis on appraisal for involvement, and on the importance of the 'trial' or 'due process' model in which the effectiveness of goal-setting and its motivational functions depend upon employee voice and influence (Folger and Cropanzano, 2001, Levy and Williams, 2004).

Thus, the effect of management-led channels on other forms of voice is likely to depend on how far management allows them to function independently, and on the circumstances in which they operate. From the earlier discussion, it seems likely that management-led channels will complement works councils, and compete with the unions, and probably also with individual voice. However, empirical research is not conclusive on this. Rivalry, especially under the union system appeared to be endorsed by the early empirical research on new forms of human resource management. This argued that management-led voice was in competition with union-led forms of collective voice, and often sought to undermine them (for example, Kochan et al., 1986). However, later work, often drawing on workplace survey data, appears to show that management-led and union-based voice channels coexist in the same workplaces, possibly for prolonged periods, which casts some doubt on the degree to which they compete (Sisson 1993, Benson, 2000). Evidence from the three French workplace employment relations surveys for 1990/92, 1998 and 2004, indicates widespread coexistence of representative and management-led channels, without any tendency for one to substitute for the others (Amossé and Wolff, 2008).

This theory and evidence indicates an eighth hypothesis:

H8: Management-led channels will have most influence on employee voice when they function independently from management, in which case they are more likely to compete with the negotiated than the rights model.

3. Britain and France as illustrations of the two collective voice systems

Examples of these two collective voice systems can be found in Britain and France where they are embodied in their respective employment laws. In Britain, the main form of

collective voice in the workplace depends upon the employer's decision to recognize a trade union for collective bargaining purposes. Continued recognition also depends upon the employer's decision. The 1999 Employment Relations Act bolstered employee rights for union representation, and recognition procedures were strengthened. However, the bar required to force an unwilling employer was set high: 50% of the employees in the proposed bargaining group should be union members, or 40% and a majority of those voting in a ballot. The strong presumption was that voluntary arrangements were to be preferred. Employers have long been free to set up employee consultation committees (ECCs) to discuss non-bargaining issues, and this is quite widely practiced. Consultation rights were strengthened by the *European Works Council Directive* (94/45/EC) enacted in 1999, and the *Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations Act 2004*. The former affects a relatively small number of workplaces, in multinational companies, and the latter was not yet in force at the time of the survey.

In contrast, in France, both systems operate widely, but not always in the same workplaces. Under French employment law, employers of establishments with more than ten employees are obliged to organize the election of personnel delegates (*délégué du personnel*), and those with at least 50 employees are similarly obliged to organize elections for a works council (*comité d'entreprise*). The burden of proof is on the employer to show that its employees do not want either institution. The delegates' main function is to represent employee grievances to the employer, and they benefit from legal protection against victimization. Although the primary function of French works councils is consultation - unions deal with pay negotiations - legislation has enabled them to build up considerable powers over a range of workplace issues including training and lay-offs.[5] Employees also have the right to raise grievances directly with management, and delegates often represent those who fail to get a satisfactory answer. Such grievances may also relate to pay, for example, if the employee believes the wrong pay rate has been applied, or she has been denied an increase. These delegates provide the main channel for grievances that in Britain would go though shop stewards or grievance procedures. In both countries, many grievances are resolved informally, directly with management.

In common with most countries that have works councils, in France, in many workplaces, councils and unions coexist. In France, independent unions on paper appear more secure than in Britain, They are empowered to negotiate agreements with employers. However, inter-union competition means that they have to strike a difficult balance between a militant line in order to mobilize support, and moderation to avoid being undercut should a more moderate union sign the agreement that will bind the employer. There are also legally prescribed, if time-consuming, procedures by which employers may terminate collective agreements. Thus, despite more extensive rights to negotiate in France than in Britain, unions face a similar need to mobilize in order to sustain relations with employers. French unions also have the right to appoint shop stewards (*délégué syndical*) in workplaces, although these will tend to be in larger establishments. These stewards are the unions' local workplace agents, and are closer to ordinary employees, but unlike the personnel delegates, they depend on the union's strength for their effectiveness. Unlike delegates, they may also negotiate agreements.

French unions gain a good deal of influence owing to the coexistence of the negotiated and statutory voice channels in many workplaces, especially large ones. For example, in large workplaces their stewards are ex officio members of the council. This explains why, in 2004, 46% of French employees worked in establishments with a union presence, yet just 6% were

union members. Indeed, whereas membership had remained static over the previous ten years, union workplace presence had increased from 37% to 46% (Amossé and Wolff, 2009). Thus it would seem that, especially in the private sector, the unions' low membership and political fragmentation make mobilization difficult. As a result, they have to accept the division of functions between themselves and delegates and councils. Evidence for the relative prestige of the delegates and councils can be seen in the 75% of employees who vote in their elections, compared with the 6% of union members. In other words, although unions draw strength from working within these institutions, they have to accept the rules governing their operation, especially in firms where they are weak. Thus, workplace representation will tend to be dominated by the statutory representative institutions in smaller establishments where unions are weak, but in large firms where unions have a stronger following they will be able to influence how the rights-based channels operate.

Based on the 2004 workplace employment relations surveys of the two countries, Table 1 summarizes information on their key workplace representative institutions in private establishments with 20 or more employees. It shows substantial differences. Voluntary institutions in Britain cover a much smaller percentage of establishments compared with either statutory or voluntary institutions in France. The percentage of workplaces with a shop steward is 10% in Britain compared with France where 72% have a delegate and 37% a shop steward. In France, personnel delegates are much more widespread than shop stewards except in large workplaces. In Britain, just 18% of establishments had employee consultation, compared with 33% in France with statutory works councils (50% for those above the legal threshold of 50 employees). These figures are higher if we include medium-sized plants where the functions of delegate and council may be merged, 46% and 81% respectively[6]. A similar difference emerges for coverage by plant or company pay agreements, 21% in Britain against 64% in France.

TAKE IN TABLE 1 Table 1. Voice institutions in Britain and France in 2004

Turning to individual voice (Table 2), the two countries' workplace surveys do not provide a refined survey instrument to measure different aspects of individual voice. Both use a single question in the employee questionnaires. In Britain, employees were asked 'Ideally, who do you think would best represent you in dealing with managers [in this workplace] about the following?', and were offered a menu of replies which included a number of possible representatives, from unions to other employees, together with the option: 'I would be best represented by myself'. In France, employees were asked whether they agreed or not with a series of statements about representation in their workplace, including 'Employees can defend their own interests directly'.

In both countries, substantial percentages believe that employees can look after their own interests in their workplaces. In Britain, about 50% thought they could best represent themselves for getting a pay increase and over discipline, and over 60% thought they could do so for training and making complaints. In France, just under 40% agreed that employees can look after their own interests themselves. In France, the same question was put to the employee representative and management respondents. Respectively, 51% and 86% replied that employees in their establishments were capable of representing themselves directly. In Table 2 it is also possible to see how perceptions of individual voice vary with the presence of collective voice. Thus for pay, 34% of employees in British establishments with a recognized union reported individual voice, but nearly 60% did so in non-union plants. Likewise in

France, 37% of those in plants with representative institutions reported individual voice compared with 44% in those without. At first sight, it seems that in both countries they are to some degree substitutes.

TAKE IN Table 2. Employees perceived individual voice

Insight into the way the more visible aspects of individual voice work in practice can be gleaned from both surveys, although the questions are not directly comparable. Employees' direct access to management to resolve individual grievances is important in both countries. In Britain, WERS data show that the great majority of pay, grading and working conditions grievances is resolved informally with management outside the formal grievance procedure, and without involvement of employee representatives[7]. Indeed, WERS indicates that the influence of employee representatives comes into play mostly within formal grievance procedures. Further insight is possible for France because its survey shows both the first and second ports of call for certain individual grievances, which illustrates the complementarity between individual and representative voice. Table 3 shows management respondent accounts for individual grievances relating to working conditions, including work schedules, work pace and safety. As in Britain, in the great majority of establishments, employees go first to management. In about a fifth they go to delegates or councils, and less than 5% to shop stewards. Direct access to management, especially senior management, provides an opportunity for individual voice. The frequency with which delegates or councils serve as the second port of call illustrates how these channels support individual voice when an immediate solution is not forthcoming. Although the question does not distinguish between grievances going to the delegates and those to works councils, other information from the survey shows that the delegates are the key actors. Considering grievances on working conditions and pay, it is two to three times more common for them to go through the elected institutions when there are delegates in the workplace than when there is only a council. The key role of the delegates is confirmed by information from the employee representatives' questionnaire which shows that it is twice a common for such grievances to be handled by delegates as by the council, and they are more likely to obtain a solution, although in the latter case councils may well have to deal with cases that eluded both individual voice and representation by the delegates.[8]

Take in Table 3 First and second ports of call for individual grievances relating to working conditions: France

4. Statistical method and of key variables

Because this paper analyses voice models using international comparison, a great deal of care has been taken to match variables across the two countries' surveys (see Appendix Tables 1 and 2). In practice, the major institutional differences between the two systems mean that many similar functions have to be explored with differently phrased questions. As explained below, the key measures of individual voice comprise employee perceptions of its effectiveness. That said, a key merit of the two surveys is that they combine employer and employee questionnaires making it possible to link the employee measures of individual voice and marketability to the institutional characteristics of their workplaces. To avoid problems of common method variance, the regressions use just the one attitudinal variable from the employee survey, all others being of a descriptive nature. Details of the survey questions and the variable means are given in appendix.

Employee perceptions of individual voice, and of the fairness of their pay are captured from the employee questionnaire shown in Table 2 above. Both sets of questions have been used in a number of studies looking at employee attitudes towards union voice (for example Belfield and Heywood 2004, Bender and Sloane, 1998, and Bryson et al 2004), and on the effects of various policies on employee satisfaction (for example, Harley, 2001, Peccei and Lee, 2005) and more generally on employee reports about their working conditions (Green, 2008). Similar questions were used in 1998 and in 2004. The significance of the results obtained by these authors lends confidence to the general validity of the questions.

Nevertheless, employee perceptions of the efficacy of individual voice in their workplaces could be upwardly biased. They may overstate its effectiveness to compensate for feelings of powerlessness. The variables used in this paper compare individual employees within each country so that a generalized upwards bias, and one that differed between the countries, should not affect the results. The individual voice questions were also compared with other employee influence questions which could not be matched between the two surveys, and they were found to be consistent.[9] Additional tests of the validity of this measure are discussed after the regression results (Table 5).

The marketability of skills strengthens employees' individual bargaining power so they may express individual voice more securely. This can be assessed by a number of indicators. More highly educated and professional workers generally have more transferable skills because of their high level of analytical and problem-solving knowledge compared with those who learn their skills on the job. High ability workers also usually have more outside options. A rough indicator can be found in whether someone is paid above the average for their occupation, and so earns more than those with similar human capital investments. Recently hired workers, measured by short service, generally have more marketable skills, and conversely for those with long service.

Ease of access to management may facilitate individual voice. Thus in small firms with short managerial hierarchies, more frequent interactions with managers open up opportunities to raise issues that would be more difficult in larger workplaces. This effect is captured in part by establishment size, although size may reflect other influences as well, such as greater formalization. Access also depends upon management's willingness to deal directly and informally, and hence on the design of grievance processes. Their influence can be gauged by the frequency of resolving issues outside formal procedures.

The presence of collective voice institutions is based on the management questionnaires concerning workplace employee representatives, union stewards and personnel delegates, consultation committees, works councils, and coverage by a workplace or enterprise collective agreement. Local union organization is measured by presence of a local pay agreement. The effect of dual channel representation is captured by identifying workplaces with both councils and local agreements.

Management-led voice is measured by the presence of teams, quality circles, workplace meetings and performance appraisals. Employee consultation and grievance procedures are also often management-led, notably in non-union workplaces, but often involve unions when they are present in the workplace. As noted earlier, the effect of management-led on individual voice could be positive or negative depending on its independence from

management control. This is measured by interactions with representative institutions on the assumption that their presence will enhance independence.

Some control variables are needed to capture the effects of different types of work situation and industries. More autonomous and more technically demanding work will often involve greater delegation and hence more employee discretion over task assignments, and hence greater scope for individual voice. These effects are partially captured by job autonomy and use of computers, based on the management questionnaire. Other variables exist in the two surveys, but could not be matched. Large investments in training raise the cost of exit. These are captured by employer training expenditures, and payment of 'efficiency wages' (paying above the average for the sector). On the other hand, high turnover and absence rates signal low exit costs as high costs would induce management to adopt policies to cut absence and turnover. The British survey provides direct measures of these, whereas the French one provides indirect measures only, asking employers whether they experienced problems of recruitment and absence for different occupational groups. Employment size is represented by categorical variables chosen to reflect the various legal thresholds: 50 employees for a council, and 50-199 for combining delegates and councils into a single channel (délégation unique). Nine sectoral groups were matched, and sectoral dummies were used taking manufacturing as the benchmark.

5. Regression results

The regression results show that the marketability of employees' skills is associated with stronger individual voice in both countries (Tables 4a and 4b). The result is much sharper in Britain than in France, for reasons that will be examined shortly. In Britain, higher levels of education, being paid above the average for one's occupation, and holding professional or technician qualifications all boost perceived voice. Possessing organization specific skills, as indicated by long service diminishes perceived individual voice. These indicators of individual marketability hold their strength and significance as representative and management-led voice measures are added, as they do when establishment characteristics and sector are included. In France, being a managerial or professional employee is associated with greater individual voice when size and sector are included, but the other measures are not significant. These results provide strong support for hypotheses H1 in Britain, but somewhat less so in France.

TAKE IN Table 4. Determinants of perceived employee individual voice in Britain and France 2004

Strong support for the influence of job-level representation on individual voice emerges from both countries' data. Union-based shop stewards are *negatively* associated with individual voice, supporting hypothesis H4a. Personnel delegates are *positively* associated with individual voice, confirming hypothesis H4b. Because multiple representation channels increase with establishment size, the analysis for France was repeated in small, medium and large workplaces (Appendix Table 3). In small workplaces, stewards and delegates maintain their respective influences on individual voice, and delegates continue to do so in medium-sized ones. It is difficult to estimate separate effects in large establishments because all collective channels coexist in the great majority of them, as shown in the right-hand columns of the table). Including establishment size interactions for delegates and stewards in France

considerably strengthens both coefficients, while maintaining their respective signs. Such interactions were not statistically significant in Britain. The interactions show that both types of job level representatives have less influence on individual voice in larger plants, the reasons for which become apparent in the next paragraph.

Turning to workplace level, in Britain, coverage by a union agreement is associated with lesser individual voice, supporting H5a. In France, the widespread use of dual channels is likely to affect the impact of both councils and unions on individual voice. For this reason the results are shown separately for establishments with the dual channel, and for those with either councils or union agreements only. The reference category is establishments without workplace level channels. As anticipated, councils in plants without agreements have no statistically significant effect on individual voice, consistent with H5b that employees would look to the delegates rather than the more remote councils for support on individual issues. Union agreements in plants without a council also have no statistically significant effect on individual voice, whereas a negative effect was anticipated (H5a). Lack of significance may be due in part to the small numbers of such establishments, and that those covered by a union agreement, but lacking either a council or delegates, are mostly small, so that union resources would be greatly stretched. In contrast, the strongly negative and significant coefficient on councils with local union agreements is consistent with hypothesis H6 that strong unions exert a solidaristic influence over councils' dealings with individual voice. Thus, in dual channel establishments, the unions' anticipated negative influence on individual voice seems to be transmitted mainly through their joint action with councils. Without councils (and delegates), unions are mostly too weak for employees to consider renouncing their individual voice, hence the non-significant coefficient.

As an experiment, a similar analysis was undertaken distinguishing delegates in workplaces with and without local agreements. In both cases, their association with individual voice remained strongly positive. Compared with councils, they appear to enjoy greater independence from union pressures. Thus, there appears to be good support for the arguments about the roles of the four collective channels in relation to individual voice. Nevertheless, some caution is needed for the workplace level institutions, because dual channel representation is the norm in large establishments. This means that the statistical tests often hinge on the minority of large workplaces with weaker representation. This problem does not arise for delegates and stewards because they are separately present in many small workplaces, hence the robustness of the estimates relating to them.

Grievance processes provide insight into the channels for individual employee voice. In both countries, handling grievances informally, outside formal procedures, appears to strengthen individual voice. For Britain informality was interacted with size to factor out the effects of greater formalization in large workplaces. In France, informal grievance handling is captured by whether employees have direct access to senior managers in order to sort out work problems. These results support H2 that greater access to management boosts individual voice. In contrast, taking grievances through formal channels often deprives employees of direct access to senior management, hence the negative coefficient on formal procedures in Britain.[10]

Turning to the management-led forms of voice (H8), the most striking result under both systems is their generally small effect on individual voice: mostly not statistically significant. This may be due partly to difficulty of identifying their independence from management using

the data available. Interactions with collective voice channels were computed, in the expectation that management-led channels operate with greater independence in the presence of collective voice (available from the author). In Britain, mostly these proved non-significant. The exception was appraisal, where a positive and significant interaction suggests that it may enhance individual voice if local union influence reduces management control. The negative coefficient on employee consultation in Britain seems also to reflect the degree of management control, even in unionized workplaces, as indicated by a non-significant interaction with local agreements.

Among the workplace characteristics, high rates of absence were associated with low individual voice in Britain. Absence is often interpreted as a form of silent protest (Edwards, 1979) hence indicating a lack of voice. Turnover was negative but not significant. In France, there was no significant effect of either variable, but this may be due to reliance on indirect measures. A high cost of turnover, signaled by employer provided training, was positive and significant for Britain, and positive, but not significant for France. In neither country did the somewhat crude indicators of work organization, job autonomy and use of computers, appear to show much effect on employee individual voice. In both countries, individual voice was strongest in small establishments, and declined steadily as size increased.

Several robustness checks were carried out. The first concerns whether the results can be replicated for other years. In neither country has workplace representation been static, and it could be that the 2004 data simply reflect unusual conditions in that year (Amossé and Wolff, 2008). For this reason, the regression analysis was repeated using the results of the 1998 surveys for the two countries. Most of the variables could be matched owing to considerable stability in the design of the two surveys. The key results were confirmed: in Britain, union stewards and local union agreements maintained their negative relationship with individual voice, and in France, union stewards were again found to bear a negative relationship with individual voice, and personnel delegates, a positive one. In all cases, the relationships were statistically significant (Appendix Table 4). The one exception concerns the solidaristic influence of unions that prevailed over works councils leading to lesser individual voice in dual-channel establishments. In 1998, this was not statistically significant. This may be because the influence of unions over councils in large establishments has grown in recent years (Amossé and Wolff, 2009), and that 1998 was at an earlier stage in this trajectory.

The second check concerns the effect of employment size. In France, workplace size is the deciding criterion on the right to representation by personnel delegates and works councils. In addition, much of the variation in representational patterns is related to size. This raises the possibility that the apparent impact of the statutory model on individual voice is spurious: individual voice is strongest in small units, and it just happens that this is where personnel delegates are most strongly implanted. However, the analysis by size (Appendix Table 3) shows that the difference between stewards and delegates is to be found also in small establishments, and the negative and significant coefficient on councils with local union agreements was sustained in medium-sized workplaces. Non-significance in small and large establishments could be anticipated: councils and local agreements are the exception in small establishments below the legal threshold, and in large ones, multiple channels make separate estimation difficult.

Thirdly, one has to ask why the effects of the selected variables should be generally much stronger and more significant in Britain than in France, and explain so much more of the

overall variance individual voice, 15% as compared with 3% (Table 4, pseudo r^2). The main reason is that the number of employee respondents in each workplace was much smaller in France than in Britain, averaging respectively 3 and 15, leading to larger standard errors in the dependent variable. Note that the unit of observation in Table 4 is the employee. As a check, the same equation was run, this time with the establishment as unit of observation, using establishment means of individual voice for workplaces at least five employee respondents and substituting the establishment's occupational composition for employee occupation (details available from the author). This cuts the sample establishments by 10% in Britain, but by 85% in France, although the size ranges remain fairly evenly represented. Now the full equations of Table 4 for Britain and France explain respectively 37% and 25% of the variation in perceived employee voice. The analysis confirms the negative coefficients on stewards and union agreements for Britain, although in France, the effect of job level representation proves more robust than that of workplace level.[11] Similarly, for 1998, when the regressions are run on establishment means instead of individual employee data, the analysis confirms the direction of the key relationships with individual voice, and as in 2004, the variance explained increases to 38% and 27% respectively in Britain and France (Appendix Table 4).

The lesser effect of individual marketability upon individual voice (H7) in France may partly reflect measurement differences, but it is also consistent with the underlying argument of this paper. First, the more extensive coverage of the statutory voice institutions in France than in Britain means that when workers change jobs, there is a much higher probability (70% as against 33%, Table 1) that they will enter another workplace that provides collective voice. As a result, they are less dependent on maintaining their personal capacity for individual negotiation. Secondly, as a result of the employment protection powers of works councils, lesser use can be made of dismissal threats in order to police the zone of acceptance. This is consistent with the OECD's employment protection index (EPL) which situates France at one extreme and Britain at the other.[12] It is also consistent with a lower proportion of short tenure employees in France compared with Britain, as shown by mean job tenures in Appendix Table 1, and confirmed by the OECD's labor force survey based estimates. In 2004 in Britain, 35% of employees had less than three years service compared with 24% in France (OECD.stat). In other words, greater employment stability in France is associated with lesser use of quit and dismissal threats to sustain individual voice, and a lesser premium on individual marketability than in Britain. This situation would be acceptable for French employees owing to the effectiveness of personnel delegates in supporting their individual dealings with management. Their action can also explain why the levels of perceived individual voice should be roughly similar in both countries despite different constraints on the use of dismissal and quit threats (Table 2).

Finally, a number of tests of the validity of the individual voice measure were carried out. First, might greater scope for individual voice make employees more satisfied with the pay for their work and less likely to quit (H3)? Table 5 regresses pay satisfaction on the actual and predicted values of effective individual voice. For each country, the top two rows show the effect of perceived individual voice on feeling fairly paid, without and with controls. Because of possible halo effects between feeling fairly paid and perceived voice, the analysis was repeated using the predicted values of voice from the full variable equations in Table 4. Second, it is possible to compute quit rates from the British but not the French survey, and the middle section of Table 5 shows the regression of establishment quit rates on mean individual voice for establishments with at least ten employee respondents. The results show that higher

levels of individual voice are indeed associated with lower quit rates. The third test uses the idea that employees can obtain a greater return on individual voice in workplaces with greater internal pay inequality and where firms can derive rents from their dominant product market position[13]. The reward policies provide scope for such negotiation, and the market power signals the employer's ability to pay. For France, where suitable earnings data are available, it is possible to use the ratio of the 90th to the 10th percentile hourly earnings, and whether the firm holds more than 50% of its product market. Both variables are positive and significant, adding further confidence to the interpretation of the individual voice measure.

TAKE IN Table 5. Satisfaction with pay and individual voice

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, what can be said about the determinants of individual employee voice, and its relationship with representative voice? In both the negotiated and the statutory systems of collective voice, two key factors are having a viable outside option and informal access to managers who can make decisions, at least as judged by the employees who would exercise voice. In both models, the job-level representatives play a key role in helping employees manage their zone of acceptance, although they appear to do so in contrasted ways. The negotiated model inhibits individual voice because stewards have to translate individual concerns into collective ones, whereas the statutory one enhances it because delegates are more at liberty to deal with each case on its individual merits. Moving to the workplace level, in the negotiated system, union organization, as reflected by having a collective agreement, tends to inhibit individual voice. It was argued that this stems from the need to mobilize in order to sustain collective strength vis-à-vis the employer. In the rights-based system, one would expect councils to have a less pronounced effect than the job level delegates because the latter play the key front-line role, and they are not dependent on councils in the way that stewards depend upon their unions. Employment law rather than mobilization sustains their action. Examples of workplaces with councils with and without union agreements can be found in France, and it could be argued these approximate to the ideal-type rights-based and the dual-channel systems. In the council-only workplaces, the effect on individual voice is non-significant, whereas in the dual-channel workplaces it appears that the unions' solidaristic orientation prevails over the councils, at least in relation to individual voice. Nevertheless, some caution is needed because of the relatively small numbers of council-only workplaces, and the possibility that they are in some other sense not typical.

Management-led forms of voice, on the evidence of the two countries in this paper, do not appear to have much effect on individual voice either to enhance it or to diminish it. The main exception relates to grievance procedures, and how they affect individual access to senior managers. The negative coefficient on formal grievance procedures in Britain, it was suggested, reflects how they can restrict the informal access and so restrict individual voice. The lack of association between individual voice and management-led forms does not preclude other benefits that management may derive from them, such as information and motivation observed in other studies.

Before concluding that the logics of mobilization and representation rights explain the different effects of the voluntary and statutory models on individual voice a number of possible counter arguments should be considered. The first is that the difference between the countries may reflect the influence of variables omitted from the surveys, such as national

differences in the economic environment. This would not explain why the job level stewards and delegates in France have their contrasted effects, this being one of the most robust findings in the regressions. The second is that the difference between the British and French results may simply reflect the predominance of non-union workplaces in the British private sector. However, while this could explain the greater influence of marketability in Britain, it would not explain why shop stewards have a negative association with individual voice in both countries.

The findings revealed by the employee questionnaires for Britain and France shed new light on individual voice within employment relationships and show that it is much more extensive than is often supposed, even within environments where collective voice is fairly developed. They suggest also that the dichotomy between no voice and collective voice needs to be reviewed, and that management-led voice has not been very effective at fostering greater individual voice. Beyond their intellectual interest, these findings also raise questions about employee well-being. Does it matter that employees in the voluntary regime should be so much more dependent on individual voice than their counterparts in the statutory one? The evidence of this paper suggests that those who lack marketable skills and are in workplaces without representation may well be faced with the stark choice between languishing in silence and the greater risks entailed by absence and quits.

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8. Endnotes

[1] An earlier version of this paper was published in *Industrial Relations: a journal of economy and society*, 52: S1, Jan. pp. 221-258.

[2] I am grateful to one of the referees for suggesting this line of analysis.

[3] In France, in smaller establishments without works councils, personnel delegates assume many of the functions relating to employment security and training.

[4] The authors found that establishments with union and dual voice channels had consistently lower quit rates than those with either exclusively non-union channels or no formal channels at all (Willman et al. 2009: 110-112).

[5] In France, the employer chairs the works council, thus making it unsuitable for industrial action, and so provides a functional equivalent of the peace obligation.

[6] Under French employment law, establishments with 50-150 employees may merge the delegate and councils into a single body encompassing both sets of rights, the 'délégation unique'.

[7] Grievances dealt with 'informally' refer to establishments that report a grievance of a particular kind has been raised during the past 12 months, but which did not deal with any grievances through their formal procedure. By implication, these were dealt with outside the procedure, that is, informally. Thus, 24% of establishments reported grievances relating to pay, but of these, only 6% reported use of the formal grievance procedure, implying that 18 percent dealt with them informally. For working conditions, the figures were 16% and 10% respectively for informal and formal channels. The WERS variables used were htype and hprocedu.

[8] This can be done by examining employee representative replies relating to the volumes of grievances and the rates of resolution respectively for delegates and councils. Individual grievances on working conditions and absence of a promotion or pay increase were roughly twice as frequent for delegates as for councils, whereas for dismissals which involve application of established procedures, the rates were about the same. The attractiveness of the delegate channel is also evident in the higher rates of resolution compared with councils: 51% compared with 41%, although the latter may reflect that councils get the more difficult cases.

[9] In Britain, the questions from the employee questionnaire related to their overall satisfaction with involvement in decision-making in their workplace (QB9), and how good were their managers at allowing employees or their representatives to influence decisions (QB8c). In France, employees were asked whether their fear of losing their job motivated them and whether job insecurity held them back in their work (Q12, Q13). In both cases, the questions were included in a version of the equation used in Table 3, and obtained the expected sign and were significant.

[10] There is a positive interaction with union presence, not included in the Table 4a analysis, which signals increased likelihood that such procedures are joint, which is consistent with Batt's findings.

[11] Despite the greatly reduced sample, stewards maintained their negative, and delegates, their positive relationships with individual voice, although only that for stewards is significant. The presence of a council with a union agreement had a negative but non-significant relationship. The major difference compared with Table 4 was a positive, significant, coefficient for local agreements. This was caused by the restricted sample, as was shown by running the corresponding employee regressions on the same reduced sample of establishments.

[12] For 2004, the OECD's employment protection legislation index (EPL version 2) stood at 1.1 for the UK and 2.85 for France, placing the two countries at either pole: France fifth from the top and the UK fourth from the bottom out of 33 industrial countries.

[13] This test was suggested by Barbara Petrongolo.and Joern-Steffen Pischke. Suitable data on within workplace pay inequality were not available for Britain, and the market power measures were positive but not significant.

9. Tables and Charts

Table 1. Voice institutions in Britain and France in 2004
(% of all establishments (private with >=20 employees)

Britain		France	
	%		%
Shop steward: *Employment size* >=20 20-99 >=100	 10.1 5.6 34.1	Delegate: *Employment size* >=20 20-99 >=100 Steward: >=20 20-99 >=100 Delegate or steward >=20	 72.0 67.9 93.4 37.2 29.1 80.1 73.8
Employee consultation committee >=20 20-49 50-99 >=100 >=50 Consultation + - Local agreement - No local agreement	 18.4 8.7 24.8 51.0 36.4 7.0 11.4	Works council Council + - Local agreement - No local agreement	 33.1 (45.7) 19.1 (25.4) 44.4 (72.5) 74.1 (92.3) 51.0 (81.2) 26.2 (35.7) 6.8 (10.1)
Coverage by a collective agreement on pay (at least some employees) >=20 20-99 >=100 Agreement + No consultation committee	 21.1 17.6 40.0 14.1	Establishment pay agreement negotiated in past 3 years Agreement + No works council	 64.0 60.4 83.0 37.8
Collective representation (ECC, steward or coll agt) *Employment size:* Estabs>=20 Estabs>=50	 32.7 49.2	Representative institutions: (Works council or delegate)	 75.2 91.6

Source: WERS and REPONSE 2004, Management questionnaires, private establishments with >=20 employees, using establishment weights. France: figures in parentheses for councils include 'délégation unique' in which the functions of delegates and councils are merged, which the law allows for establishments with 50-199 employees. These represent 13% of private establishments with >=20 employees. Figures for delegates include délégation unique.

Table 2 Employees' perceived individual voice

(a) Great Britain (employee respondents)

	All estabs	Estabs with a recognised TU	Estabs with no recognised TU
% of employees replying 'I would be best represented by myself' on the following issues:	%	%	%
Getting increases in my pay	49.9	33.9	59.8
Getting training	68.9	67.3	69.9
If I wanted to make a complaint about working here	60.9	51.1	67.0
If a manager wanted to discipline me	47.4	32.9	56.5

(b) France: (employee, employee representative, and management respondents)

	Employee respondents			Employee representative	Management respondent
Employees (in this workplace) can defend their own interests directly.	Estabs with no employee rep institutions	Estabs with elected employee rep institutions	All estabs		
	%	%	%	%	%
Disagree strongly	17.2	26.9	26.0	19.5	2.3
Disagree	19.2	24.8	24.2	28.3	10.3
Neutral	19.2	11.1	12.0	0.7	1.7
Agree	22.9	26.1	25.8	30.5	46.8
Agree strongly	21.5	11.0	12.0	21.0	38.9
Total agree	*44.4*	*37.1*	*37.8*	*51.5*	*85.7*
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Private establishments with ≥20 employees. Percentages based on employee weights. Employee respondents: Great Britain N=12,942; France, N=7132. For details of voice questions, see Appendix Table A2. France: 'Elected representative institutions' (col 3 heading) comprise delegates and works councils.

Table 3 First and second ports of call for individual grievances relating to working conditions: France

	First port of call	% of estabs	Second port of call	Of which %
			No further discussion	42
	Senior Management	25	Mid-Mgt	34
			Delegate/Council	16
			Colleague	6
			Senior Mgt	52
	Middle Management	48	No further discussion	9
			Delegate/Council	26
			Health & safety cttee	4
Individual grievance on working conditions				
			Senior Mgt	26
	Delegate/Council	18	Mid-Mgt	51
			Health & safety cttee	11
			Shop steward	5
			Senior Mgt	16
	Shop steward	3	Mid-Mgt	29
			Delegate/Council	41
			Health & safety cttee	8

Q 8.6a: in this establishment, to whom do employees go first for individual problems relating to working conditions (safety, work pace, working time)? (Management respondents).

Table 4a. Determinants of perceived employee individual voice in Britain 2004

Perceived individual voice	Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef.	
Employee individual voice supports										
Years of education	0.020	****			0.026	****	0.028	****	0.032	****
Pay> average for my occupation	0.284	****			0.359	****	0.298	****	0.299	****
Mgr/Professional	0.825	****			0.811	****	0.877	****	0.883	****
Technician	0.455	****			0.446	****	0.518	****	0.494	****
Admin/sales	0.182	****			0.175	****	0.249	****	0.232	****
Semi/unskilled manual	-0.271	****			-0.290	****	-0.188	****	-0.176	****
Length of service (log)	-0.106	****			-0.064	****	-0.072	****	-0.062	****
Representative voice										
Union steward			-0.473	****	-0.366	****	-0.366	****	-0.359	****
Estab level pay agreement			-0.262	****	-1.535	****	-1.432	****	-1.476	****
Grievance handling										
Formal procedure					-0.418	****	-0.254	**	-0.343	****
- and coll agt					1.301	****	1.194	****	1.188	****
Grievances handled informally					0.463	****	0.378	**	0.309	*
- informality * size					-0.076	****	-0.059	*	-0.047	-
Management-led voice										
Teams					-0.082	-	-0.077	-		
Quality circles					0.017	-	0.000	-		
Workplace meetings					0.012	-	0.043	-		
Appraisal scheme					-0.035	-	0.051	-		
Consultative committee					-0.337	****	-0.300	****		
Job characteristics										
Job autonomy							0.142	-		
Use of computers							-0.053	-		
Establishment characteristics										
Training intensity							-0.104	-		
Plant pay > industry average							0.076	*		
Turnover rate/problems							-0.164	-		
Absence rate/problems							-0.871	****	-0.977	****
Constant	-0.489	-	0.244	-	0.166	-	0.168	-	0.138	-
Size dummies	no		no		no		yes		yes	
Sector dummies	no		no		no		yes		Yes	
Pseudo r2	0.0869		0.0486		0.1460		0.1610		0.1491	
No of observations	12881		12942		12238		11862		12881	
Clusters	882		882		836		807		882	

Table 4b. Determinants of perceived employee individual voice in France 2004

Perceived individual voice	Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef		Coef	
Individual voice supports												
Years of education	-0.022	****			-0.015	*	-0.012	-	-0.012	-	-0.015	*
Pay> average for occ	-0.118	****			-0.061	-	-0.024	-	-0.028	-	-0.036	-
Mgr/Professional	0.052	-			0.104	-	0.208	****	0.217	****	0.181	****
Technician	-0.051	-			-0.019	-	0.041	-	0.044	-	0.020	-
Admin/sales	-0.039	-			-0.068	-	0.004	-	0.007	-	-0.003	-
Semi/unskilled manual	0.018	-			0.024	-	0.029	-	0.030	-	0.035	-
Other occupations	0.090	-			0.064	-	0.133	-	0.143	*	0.140	*
Length of service (log)	-0.022	-			0.001	-	-0.003	-	-0.003	-	-0.003	-
Representative voice												
Union steward			-0.202	****	-0.195	****	-0.131	****	-0.958	****	-1.016	****
Personnel delegate			0.196	****	0.195	****	0.197	****	0.932	****	0.704	****
Merged PD & CE			0.038	-	0.027	-	0.083	-	0.067	-	0.065	-
Council & no local agt			-0.103	-	-0.108	-	-0.038	-	-0.126	-	0.004	-
Council & local agt			-0.244	****	-0.223	****	-0.144	*	-0.527	(11%)	-0.141	*
Local agt/ no council			0.023	-	0.045	-	0.041	-	-0.052	-	0.033	-
Grievances												
Grievances handled informally			0.118	****	0.119	****	0.110	****	0.103	****	0.103	****
Management-led voice												
Teams					-0.060	-	-0.050	-	-0.053	-		
Quality circles					0.040	-	0.024	-	0.020	-		
Workplace meetings					-0.064	-	-0.057	-	-0.049	-		
Appraisal scheme					-0.108	***	-0.029	-	-0.027	-		
Job characteristics												
Job autonomy							-0.069	-	-0.072	-		
Use of computers							-0.109	-	-0.125	*		
Establishment characteristics												
Training intensity							0.127	-	0.129	-		
Plant pay > industry aver							-0.035	-	-0.030	-		
Turnover rate/problems							-0.029	-	-0.030	-		
Absence rate/problems							-0.034	-	-0.029	-		

Perceived individual voice	Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef		Coef	
Interactions: Delegate*size									-0.179	****	-0.123	**
Steward*size									0.185	****	0.199	****
Council/Agt status *size	No		No		No		No		Yes		No	
Size dummies	No		No		No		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Sector dummies	No		No		No		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Pseudo r2	0.0045		0.0153		0.0202		0.0277		0.0303		0.0282	
No of observations	7132		7616		7094		7073		7073		7123	
Clusters	2522		2568		2507		2498		2498		2519	

Unit of observation: employees. Probit estimates, based on clustered robust standard errors allowing standard errors to vary between sampling units. Size categories: 20-49, 50-99, 100-199, 200-499, 500-999, >=1000. Omitted categories: skilled manual, size 20-49 and manufacturing. Interactions between log size and representative coverage in Britain were not significant, and so not included. They were included for France because of the more complex relationships between representative institutions and size.

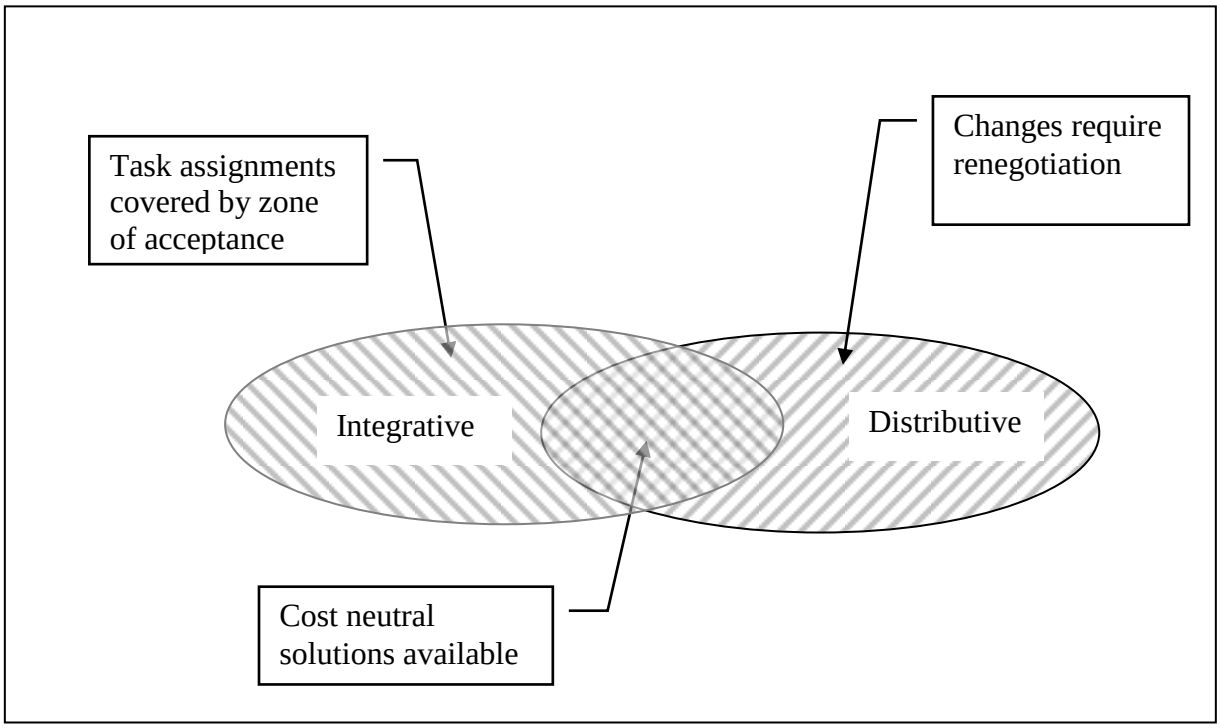
Significance: **** 1%; *** 2%; ** 5%; * 10*. Private sector establishments with 20 or more employees.

Table 5. Individual voice: pay satisfaction, quits, and pay inequality within establishments

Perceived individual voice	Regression Coefficients	Sig	R2	n	clusters
GB: pay satisfaction				Employees	
Actual values (no controls)	0.264	****	0.0081	12,942	882
Actual values (controls)	0.181	****	0.0432	11,816	807
Predicted values	0.634	****	0.0094	11,816	807
France: pay satisfaction					
Actual values (no controls)	0.415	****	0.0187	7,625	2,571
Actual values (controls)	0.449	****	0.0613	7,123	2,519
Predicted values	4.304	-	0.0411	7,123	2,519
GB: Voluntary quits				Establish-ments	
No controls	-0.0956	***	0.0202	688	Na
Controls included	-0.0908	**	0.2685	688	na
France				Employees	
Establishment hourly pay dispersion p90/p10 all employees in estab	0.0015	*	0.0317	5843	2069
Degree of competition (supplies >50% of product market)	0.1115	**	Same regression	5843	2069

Notes: *Pay satisfaction*: probit coefficients, using a binary pay satisfaction variable, with and without the full set of Table 3 variables. The predicted values were derived from the Table 4 equations, excluding interactions. Robust standard errors were allowed to vary between establishments (clusters).
Quits: OLS regression of the per cent of resignations on establishment mean values of perceived individual voice; limited to establishments with at least ten employee respondents. Controls included occupational composition, log seniority and employment size, and sector. Data on resignations are not available in Réponse. Robust standard errors.
Hourly earnings: for France provided for 80% of sample establishments by the DARES from the DADS earnings series. Probit coefficients were computed by including them in the same regressions as in Table 4, including sector controls.
Significance: **** 1%; *** 2%; ** 5%; * 10%.

Figure 1. Integrative and distributive approaches to adapting the zone of acceptance.



10. Appendices

11. Appendix: The two surveys

WERS (Workplace Employment Relations Survey) and REPONSE (Relations Professionnelles et Négociations d'Entreprise) are surveys are based on representative samples of establishments in Great Britain and France. The surveys were carried for the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) in Britain, and the DARES of the Ministry of Labor in France.

The two surveys share the same general design, comprising information collected by questionnaire from the establishment's management, usually the top manager or the human resources manager, from employee representatives and from a sample of individual employees within each establishment. For the sample used in this paper, that is private establishments with 20 or more employees, in Britain and France, the samples included about 1,200 and 2,800 establishments respectively. In both countries, the employee questionnaire obtained about 12,000 replies, however, in France, only two thirds could be linked to establishments.

The analysis in this paper uses the establishment and employee weights provided to adjust for sample stratification and a measure of non-response. More information about the surveys can be found in Kersley et al (2006) for WERS 2004 and in Amossé et al (2008) for REPONSE.

Appendix Table 1. Means and standard deviations of key variables (employee sample 2004)

	n				France			
	mean	sd	min	Max	mean	sd	min	max
Employee individual voice supports	0.50	0.50	0	1	0.38	0.49	0	1
Years of education	13.59	2.54	11	18	13.52	2.76	8	19
Pay> average for my occupation	0.50	0.50	0	1	0.36	0.48	0	1
Mgr/Professional	0.21	0.41	0	1	0.18	0.38	0	1
Technician	0.13	0.34	0	1	0.18	0.38	0	1
Admin/sales	0.27	0.44	0	1	0.18	0.39	0	1
Semi/unskilled manual	0.29	0.45	0	1	0.17	0.38	0	1
Other occupations	-	-	-	-	0.06	0.24	0	1
Length of service (log)	1.29	1.17	-0.69	2.71	2.03	1.04	0	3.81
Representative voice								
Union steward	0.32	0.46	0	1	0.65	0.48	0	1
Estab level pay agreement	0.37	0.48	0	1	0.78	0.41	0	1
Personnel delegate	-	-	-	-	0.74	0.44	0	1
Combined PD/WC	-	-	-	-	0.13	0.34	0	1
Employee consultation	0.43	0.49	0	1	-	-	-	-
Works council no agt	-	-	-	-	0.07	0.25	0	1
Works council & local agt	-	-	-	-	0.55	0.50	0	1
Local agt no works council	-	-	-	-	0.23	0.42	0	1
Ma-gement-led voice								
Teams	0.85	0.36	0	1	0.25	0.43	0	1
Quality circles	0.41	0.49	0	1	0.58	0.49	0	1
Workplace meetings	0.87	0.33	0	1	0.86	0.35	0	1
Appraisal scheme	0.76	0.38	0	1	0.70	0.40	0	1
Grievance procedure	0.98	0.15	0	1	-	-	-	-
Grievances handled informally	0.26	0.44	0	1	0.62	0.49	0	1
Job characteristics								
Job autonomy	0.55	0.24	0	1	0.37	0.29	0	1
Use of computers	0.53	0.28	0.025	0.75	0.43	0.30	0	0.75
Establishment characteristics								
Training intensity	0.59	0.28	0	1	0.50	0.24	0.17	1
Plant pay > industry average	0.49	0.50	0	1	0.40	0.49	0	1
Turnover rate/problems	0.14	0.15	0	1	0.62	0.48	0	1
Absence rate/problems	0.04	0.05	0	0.77	0.52	0.50	0	1

Means based on employee sample in Table 4, and use employee weights.

Appendix Table 2 Definitions of key variables

	Questionn-aire	Britain	France
Individual voice	EQ	'Ideally, who do you think would best represent you in dealing with managers here about getting increases in your pay?' Response: Myself, Trade Union, Employee representative (non-union), Another employee, Somebody else	Employees are able to defend their own interests directly; (Les salariés sont en mesure de défendre directement leurs intérêts) (Likert scale: disagree to agree strongly (Q 20).
Satisfaction with pay	EQ	How satisfied are you with the amount of pay you receive? Response: Likert scale very dissatisfied to very satisfied.	Overall, taking into account the effort you put in, do you consider that the firm recognizes your work at its true value? (Au final, compte tenu des efforts que vous faites, estimez-vous que l'entreprise reconnaît votre travail à sa juste valeur ?) Responses : yes entirely, yes, no, not at all. (Q14)
Years of education	EQ	Based on highest diploma	Based on highest diploma
Pay> average for my occupation	EQ	Weekly pay for individual compared with average for reported occupation	Hourly pay for individual compared with average for reported occupation
Occupation	EQ	Matched GB/F from one-digit responses	Matched GB/F from one-digit responses
Length of service (log)	EQ	Derived from ranges	Derived from year of joining
Personnel delegate	MQ	n/a	Personnel delegate (délégué du personnel)
Combined PD and WC	MQ	n/a	Combined DP/WC representation (délégation unique)
Works council	MQ	n/a	Works council
Consultation	MQ	Consultative committee	n/a
Union steward	MQ	Shop steward	Union steward (délégué syndical)
Estab level pay agreement	MQ	Existence of a local pay agreement	Local pay agreement (redressé) negotiated in the last three years

	Quest-ionn-aire	Britain	France
Appraisal scheme	MQ	Appraisal for some or all non-managerial employees	Appraisal for some or all non-managerial employees
Quality circles	MQ	Use of quality circles	Use of quality circles
Workplace meetings	MQ	Use of workplace meetings	Use of workplace meetings
Grievance procedure	MQ	Formal grievance procedure	n/a
Grievances handled informally	MQ	Derived from whether grievances on conditions were reported & whether grievances had been taken through the formal procedure.	Employees take problems first to senior management
Teams	MQ	Teams for majority of largest occupational group	Teams for majority of largest occupational group
Job autonomy	MQ	Index based on problem-solving, job discretion & control	Index based on problem-solving, job discretion & control
Use of computers	MQ	Share of employees using computers	Share of employees using computers
Training intensity	MQ	Days of training in last year relative to mean	Annual expenditure relative to mean
Plant pay > industry average	MQ	Plant average pay > average for establishments in the same sector	Plant average pay > average for establishments in the same sector
Turnover rate/problems	MQ	Labor turnover rate	Recruitment difficulties reported for 2004 DIFRECR
Absence rate/problems	MQ	Absence rate (provided by respondent)	Was absence a problem in 2004 for specified categories of employees? ABSCAD-ABSOUV
Employment size (log)	MQ	Number of employees	Number of employees
Economic sector	MQ	Sector of establishment, 9 categories matched GB/F	Sector of establishment, 9 categories matched GB/F

Key: EQ, MQ, employee or management questionnaire. LOG: largest occupational group.

Appendix Table 3. France: representative voice effects on individual voice in different sized workplaces

	<50		50-149		150-		<50	50-149	>=150
	Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		mean	mean	mean
Perceived individual voice							0.48	0.38	0.33
Employee individual voice factors									
Years of education	-0.005	-	0.006	-	-0.027	**	13.30	13.26	13.80
Pay> average for my occupation	0.023	-	-0.030	-	-0.082	-	0.23	0.29	0.46
Mgr/Professional	0.275	**	0.350	****	0.042	-	0.13	0.14	0.23
Technician	-0.094	-	0.153	-	-0.008	-	0.16	0.15	0.21
Admin/sales	0.201	*	0.001	-	-0.155	-	0.23	0.20	0.15
Semi/unskilled manual	-0.108	-	0.104	-	0.067	-	0.16	0.20	0.16
Other occupation	0.192	-	0.409	****	-0.099	-	0.08	0.07	0.05
Length of service (log)	-0.004	-	0.033	-	-0.032	-	1.84	1.98	2.17
Representative voice channels									
Union steward	-0.360	****	-0.123	-	0.132	-	0.23	0.60	0.90
Personnel delegate	0.237	****	0.361	***	-0.185	-	0.59	0.55	0.93
Combined PD/WC	-0.060	-	0.189	-	0.047	-	0.09	0.34	0.03
Council & no agt	-0.005	-	-0.064	-	0.139	-	0.05	0.08	0.08
Council with agt	-0.117	-	-0.216	-	-0.033	-	0.14	0.41	0.85
Agreement & no council	0.031	-	0.059	-	-0.031	-	0.45	0.32	0.05
Grievance handling									
Grievances handled informally	0.155	-	0.092	-	0.068	-	0.79	0.69	0.48
Size dummies	No		Yes		Yes				
Sector dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes				
Pseudo r2	0.0328		0.0286		0.0188				
N	1622		2002		3499		1622	2002	3499
Clusters	582		714		1223				

Probit estimates. Dependent variable: perceived individual voice. Robust standard errors, using establishments as clusters. Unit of observation: employees. With the exception of years of education and log service, for all variables, a mean of one is equivalent to 100% of employees covered.
Significance: **** 1%; *** 2%; ** 5%; * 10%.

Appendix Table 4. Determinants of perceived employee individual voice: Comparative results for 1998

Perceived individual voice	Great Britain				France			
	Employ-ees		Establish-ments		Employ-ees		Establish-ments	
	Coef.		Coef.		Coef.		Coef.	
Representative voice channels								
Job-level channels								
Union steward	-0.336	****	-0.953	****	-0.704	**	-3.792	****
Personnel delegate					0.633	*	3.589	****
Union steward * size					0.116	*	0.744	****
Personnel delegate * size					-0.149	*	-0.927	****
Workplace level channels								
Local / Estab pay agreement	-0.335	****	-1.019	****				
Council & no agt					0.783	-	-2.859	-
Council with agt					0.451	-	0.706	-
Agreement & no council					0.703	-	-0.273	-
Interactions: size with Council/Agt status	No		No		Yes	ns	Yes	ns
Size dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Sector dummies	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Pseudo R2	0.1783		0.3769		0.0367		0.272	
N	16329		966		5512		568	
Clusters	1015		Na		960		Na	

Notes: Dependent variable: perceived individual voice. Explanatory variables and probit estimation methods: as in the full regressions of Tables 4. Interactions between log size and agreement coverage in Britain were not significant, and so not included. They were included for France because of the more complex relationships between representative institutions and size. The first set of estimates for each country is based on individual employees, and the second set, on establishment means. To compute establishment means for perceived individual voice analysis was restricted to establishments with at least 5 employee respondents to the employee questionnaire. Significance: **** 1%; *** 2%; ** 5%; * 10%

Source: WERS and Reponse 1998, private sector establishments with 20 or more employees.