Re-Conceptualising Employee Silence:

How and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Dublin City University

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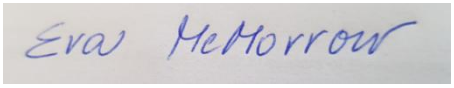
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: 

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Abstract

Re-Conceptualising Employee Silence: *How and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?*

Eva McMorrow (Nechanska)

The principal aim of this research is to develop a greater understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the context of the effort-reward exchange relationship between employers and employees. This thesis fills the gap in the knowledge about employee silence from a broader and deeper labour process understanding. The labour process perspective acknowledges there could be a genuine conflict of interest within the effort-reward exchange relationship between employees and managers (Edwards, 1986; Donaghey et al, 2011; Nechanska et al, 2020). Hence, the thesis offers a unique perspective that employees may remain silent to advance (and/or defend) their own interests while managers may structure silence over a range of issues to advance their interests. The research identifies and examines the workplace context of employee silence, and conceptualises the various forms of employee silence processes and outcomes with references to the Frontier of Control (Goodrich, 1920; Donaghey et al, 2011; Nechanska et al, 2020).

A qualitative research design was undertaken in the form of semi-structured interviews with employees in the Republic of Ireland from across section of companies in both size and sectors. The data collected represents many variations of workplace contexts with regards to unionisation, management structures, nature of work, and social relations among actors of the employment relationship.

The main theoretical contribution of this thesis is the development of a sensitising framework for employee silence within the employment relationship. The findings of this thesis contribute to an explanation of how workplace context influence employees decisions to remain silent or prevent them from having a say over various topics in their workplace. The analysis subsequently identified and conceptualised six distinct form of silent processes and three distinct outcomes of employee silence. In addition, the thesis identified links between various contexts, processes and outcomes of silence. As a result, this thesis contributes to a greater appreciation of how silence functions within the employment relationship (Nechanska et al, 2020, Donaghey et al, 2011, Barry and Wilkinson, 2015).

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

A key gap identified in emerging literature on employee silence involves understanding how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship (Edwards, 1986; Nechanska et al, 2020; Donaghey et al, 2011, Barry and Wilkinson, 2015). This study employs the Labour Process (LP) lens to examine employee silence. The research considers the workplace context that gives rise to silence or prevents employees from voicing their concerns over the range of issues, possible forms of the process that silence may take and possible outcomes of silence. This chapter aims to detail the background for and focus of the study which has subsequently provided the rationale for the development of the main research questions. Also, the sensitising framework that has been developed through the literature review and provided guidance for the empirical investigation is presented in this chapter. Finally, the structure of the preceding chapters in the thesis is outlined.

1.2. Background and Rationale for the Research

The existing research on employee silence undertaken by academics from an Organisational Behaviour (OB) perspective generally seeks to support a positive or mutual gains outcome for both employees and managers (Milliken and Morrison, 2003; Van Dyne et al., 2003; Nechanska et al, 2020). Such analysis predominantly includes an individual or micro-level focus, resulting in a view that silence may be an organisational problem as employees who do not share their suggestions on improvements can hinder future organisational development. Here, the OB literature suggests various solutions to the problem of silence by embedding the culture of engagement and involvement with the underlying premise to improve organisational performance and managerial effectiveness (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Morrison et al., 2011).

The recent literature on employee silence from Employee Relations (ER) academics suggests that organisational behaviour, heavily dominated by the unitarist frame of reference (Fox, 1966, Fox, 1974), omits in its analysis of employment relationship and consequently in its analysis of employee silence the issues of power, authority and the use of the managerial prerogative which can impact on the embeddedness of voice initiatives (Nechanska et al,

2020, Donaghey et al 2011, Barry and Wilkinson, 2015; Hickland et al, 2020; MacMahon et al, 2018). In other words, managers may be able to structure silence over the range of issues by limiting opportunities for voice. Specifically, Donaghey et al (2011) suggest in their paper that that silence may be a form of antagonism within the employment relationship. This argument is further developed by Chapter 2 of this thesis (published in Nechanska et al, 2020) which argue that the nature of an employment relationship characterised by what Edwards (1986:77) termed 'structured antagonism', may be a foundational principle for the analysis of silence. In such a relationship, employees and managers advance their interests within the workplace through various forms of informal behaviour and formal organisational processes.

Here the Labour Process (LP) perspective has been recently suggested by Nechanska et al (2020) for its ability to explain informal social relations in the workplace characterised by the structure antagonism between employees and managers and advance the understanding of employee silence in organisations. In particular, there is a gap of knowledge of how silence informs the processes of actor interests and the indeterminacy to the employment relationship (Nechanska et al, 2020). Baldamus (1962) explains that the employment relationship between employee and managers is an effort-reward exchange where the economic goals of an organisation may differ from those of its employees. Consequently, both parties may develop opposing interests, employers seeking higher output while employees seeking either higher rewards or, through various covert informal activities, balancing the perceived unfair effort-reward exchange. With this regard, the LP literature further suggests that employees have the capacity to counterbalance the power imposed on them by managers through various forms of overt and covert, organised and unorganised forms of misbehaviour (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Karlsson, 2012).

Drawing inspiration from these discussions, this research aims to answer calls for a more nuanced understanding of employee silence as a power source for employees and for managers to balance the effort-reward exchange in their favour. In particular, the research aims to identify the workplace context that influences employees' decisions to remain silent, the process of such silence and the outcome. In addition, the research, inspired by Donaghey et al (2011), aims to investigate how managers may structure silence over a range of issues, the form of the process such silence may take and the perceived outcomes for employees.

1.3. Research aims and theoretical framework

The overall research aim is to present a critical understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship. Three research questions were developed to address several important gaps in the employee silence literature.

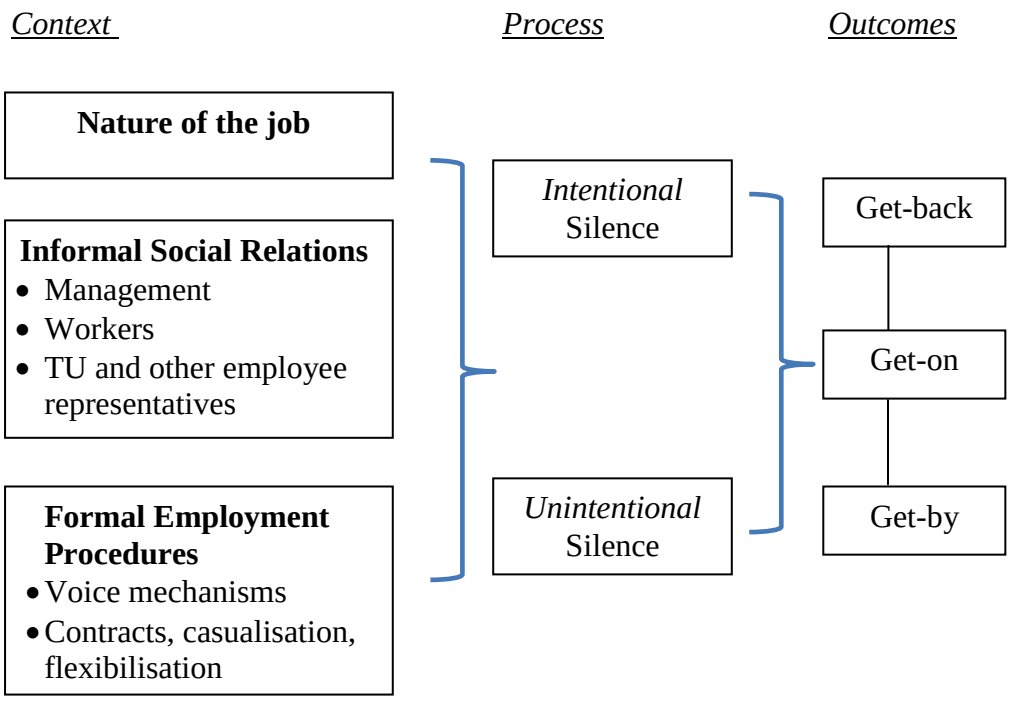
1. How do employees' perceptions of the workplace context influence the process and outcomes of silence?

2. How do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?

3. Why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?

The literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 assisted with the structuring of the sensitising framework of employee silence (Fig. 1.2 below) that informs on the empirical investigation of the above research questions. The possible contextual influences of silence that literature identified are the nature of the job, informal social relations with managers, co-workers and employee representatives, and formal workplace procedures such as voice mechanisms and the nature of contracts. With regards to the second research question, the literature identified the possibility of an intentional and unintentional silence process. In addition, there were three possible outcomes of silence suggested by the literature review.

Figure 1.2: Sensitising Framework of Employee Silence



1.4. Originality and Contribution of the Research

Overall the research generates original insight and adds to empirical work on employee silence by exploring in detail, the significance of workplace context as a decision making factor for employees to remain silent, and the various processes and outcomes of silence. Following a discussion in Chapter 8 where the empirical findings are discussed in the light of the existing literature, a sensitising framework of employee silence is developed. The framework is considered as the main theoretical contribution of the study as it highlights the relationships between the particular contexts, processes and outcomes of employee silence.

The originality of this thesis lies in how it applies the LP perspective of the nature of the employment relationship to develop a greater understanding of employee silence as a source of power for employees and managers. In doing so, the study has developed a more nuanced conceptualisation of employee silence.

Key contributions of this study are the detailed analysis of various workplace contexts that may lead to employees' decision to remain silent or prevent them from having a say, the categorisation and conceptualisation of six distinct forms of silent process, and conceptualisation of three distinct outcomes of silence with regards to silence operating on the Frontier of Control (Goodrich, 1920; Donaghey et al, 2011). These answers call for a more nuanced understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the employment relationship (Nechanska et al, 2020; Donaghey et al, 2011). Following is the summary of the key contributions. The detailed contributions of this research are presented in Chapter 8.

Important indicators of employee silence processes:

- **Nature of the job** (tenure, effort-reward, exchange, autonomy and repetitiveness/ tediousness/ intensity of work)
- **Formal workplace procedures** (embeddedness of voice mechanisms, nature of contracts)
- **Informal social relations** (with line managers, co-workers and/or trade union representatives).

Six distinct processes of employee silence:

- **Intentional silence:** '*a voice that has not been and may not be expressed within a particular context*'.
- **Shallow voice:** '*intentional silence arising from a shallow voice'.*
- **Dismissed voice:** *'intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice'.*
- **Intentional institutional silence**: *'intentional silence towards employees' indirect voice mechanisms and institutions'.*
- **Unintentional silence:** *unintentional silence arising from a lack of direct voice mechanisms'.*
- **Unintentional institutional silence:** *a silence arising from the lack of opportunities for workplace representation'.*

Three possible outcomes of silence operating on the Frontier of Control:

- Silence as a way to **get back** at management
- Silence as a way to **get on** with a job
- Silence as a way to **get by** in the workplace

Besides the study's main aim to generate a greater understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship, the study also contributes to an explanation of relationships between particular contexts, processes and outcomes. Therefore, a secondary key contribution is an explanation of which contextual factors lead to particular forms of silence processes and specific outcome by extending the understanding of employee silence as a whole process (Nechanska et al 2020, Donaghey et al, 2011). The relationships are presented in greater detail in Table 8.2 and Figure 8.2 in Chapter 8.

1.5. Thesis organisation

The thesis comprises eight chapters. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of competing perspectives on employee silence research. Firstly, it explains the unitarist, pluralist and radical frames of reference and how they influence the Organisational Behaviour, Employee Relations and Labour Process perspectives. Secondly, it evaluates their inherent advantages and limitations in explaining the nature of the employment relationship and consequently the nature of employee silence. The chapter concludes with an argument that the Labour Process perspective is most suitable to inform the current research as it can

help with the explanation of silence created by employees over a range of issues to challenge managerial authority and power together with silence created by managers to extract more labour-power from employees.

Chapter Three informs the research on how workplace context (including nature of the job, formal employment procedures and informal social relations among workplace actors) may influence employees to remain silent or to limit their voice opportunities. Also, the chapter suggests the possibility of intentional and unintentional forms of silence process and three possible outcomes of the silence. Finally, the chapter presents a sensitising framework of employee silence that informs on the empirical investigation.

Chapter Four focuses on the research methodology of the study. Research philosophies are introduced to assist with the rationale for the chosen methodological considerations that are employed by the researcher to answer the research questions. Semi-structured interviews are examined as the main focus of analysis for the study. Besides, the data collection and participants in the study are introduced before concluding the chapter with the presentation of analysis methods that were undertaken to analyse the empirical findings.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the empirical findings. Firstly, Chapter 5 identifies the context reported by participants as an important decision making factor for their silence and context that they perceived limits their voice opportunities. Secondly, Chapter 6 identifies and conceptualises distinct forms of silent processes reported by participants. Chapter 7 then conceptualises possible outcomes of silence.

The final chapter presents the discussion and conclusions. It synthesises the findings and the sensitising framework of silence devised by the literature review which allows for an effective answer to the research questions. The chapter then presents a summary of the main theoretical contributions of this thesis. To conclude, the chapter outlines the limitation of the research and recommend the direction for future research.

2. Competing perspectives on employee silence research

2.1. Introduction

The idea of employees withdrawing information from management or not given the opportunity to express voice by management is not new in the literature; however, there is a lack of research that depicts the concept of silence. Employee silence can be explained by several theoretical and methodological paradigms. The aim of this chapter is to first explain what constitutes the employment relationship between employees and their managers and the possible role of employee silence within this relationship. Consequently, varying perspectives demonstrate complementary or competing approaches and insights in their attempts to describe and explain the phenomena of silence. A number of different perspectives that portray the employment relationship have their own inherent advantages and limitations in explaining the nature of this relationship and consequently their explanation and conceptualising of silence differ within them.

The second chapter, therefore, explains that the organisational behaviour (OB) perspective sees employee silence as an outcome of psychological antecedents. The employee relations (ER) perspective explains the phenomenon of silence as a lack of institutional arrangements for employee voice. The labour process (LP) perspective can explain employee silence as a dynamic process within the employment relationship influenced by social relations among actors. Given the review and evaluation of these perspectives, the chapter argues that there is a need to re-conceptualise employee silence through the lens of the LP perspective (with some elements of ER). This sets the agenda for the main research focus of the study which is to examine how and why employees may remain silent at work; and how their perceptions of workplace context influence their decision to remain silent.

2.2. Employment relationship re-visited

The employment relationship exists when a person works under certain conditions in return for remuneration (ILO, 2016). According to Kaufman (2014:18), it is a form of production coordinated by a top-down authority structure. This is due to the indeterminacy of the labour effort to be extracted from employees that cannot be 'fixed before the engagement of workers, machinery and products for purposeful action in the labour process' (Smith, 2006:390). According to Thompson and Smith (2009:924), the indeterminacy of labour-power requires management attention when designing systems of controls of the labour input, the process of production and the product or service output. The nature of the employment relationship can be hence influenced by conditions and context (external and internal) in which employment takes place, by various processes and structures management constructs in order to extract labour-power from employees and by social relations among actors of the employment relationship including authority and power.

However, the existence of the different levels of analysis and frames of reference contribute to varying perspectives on what constitutes an employment relationship. Alan Fox (1966) described and defined the concept of unitarism as a frame of reference that views the relationship between an organisation and its employees as a singular entity unified by shared interests and objectives. The nature of the employment relationship based on such a frame of reference seeks to stress harmony and the legitimacy of managerial control and demands for employee loyalty (Budd and Bhave, 2008). The role of managers in the unitarist view is then to influence individual employee behaviour and shape his/her attitudes for future organisational gains. Practices employed by management to achieve this are usually 'targeting the improvement of social skills of supervision and creating better working conditions' (Thompson, 1983:16). The unitarist frame of reference further suggests that the role of employees within the employment relationship would be to exploit the opportunities for personal development, they would express loyalty to the organisation and co-operate in achieving organisational goals set by management (Budd and Bhave, 2008)

In contrast, the pluralist frame of reference (Fox, 1966) defines the relationship between an organisation and its employees as one where employees have their own interests and beliefs, and these can differ from those of their organisation. Pluralism suggests that employers and managers utilise institutions of job regulations to inform decision-making including employees, representatives or trade unions (Clegg, 1975; Flanders and Clegg, 1954; Edwards,

2003). In addition, the employment relationship is to a large extent regulated through varying external processes such as government regulations, economic conditions and the development of employee legislation. These external organisational processes influence how extracted labour-power is compensated through payment of wages, salaries and other rewards and benefits.

The pluralist frame of reference acknowledges that the economic interest of employees and employers may differ as while organisational goals aim to maximise efficiency and profit, employees may desire to increase their rewards (Baldamus, 1961) and/or leisure (Budd and Bhave, 2008). Consequently, conflict and disorganisation within the employment relationship may arise and become central to the organisation of control over employees' effort (Edwards, 1986). While occupational costs of employees are strictly determined by the monetary rewards, the effort employees exchange for these rewards is, as mentioned earlier indeterminate, 'unbalanced and variable' (Baldamus, 1961:10). Employee effort does not include only physical and mental exertion but also tedium, fatigue and any other disagreeable aspects of work. Therefore, earned income can be perceived differently by individual workers when comparing it to their invested effort.

According to Baldamus (1961:35), the amount of effort invested in the employment relationship on behalf of employees must be kept in equilibrium level with the perceived rewards and benefits provided by the employer in order to limit the occurrence of workplace conflicts. The methods organisation can use to increase employee effort range from increased supervision, incentives, profit-sharing, machine paced production, methods of training, employee selection, merit pay, the system of promotion and so on (Baldamus, 1961:34). In contrast, employees can be limited in their opportunities to increase their rewards. Therefore, they can develop strategies that may help them limit their effort and consequently balance the effort-reward exchange in their favour.

Besides the differing economic goals of employees and managers within the employment relationship, the social relations among actors, particularly the relationship between employee and his/her manager, is another important aspect of the exchange (Smith, 2016). For example, employees may have different opinions of those of management or they may feel they are not treated with dignity (Hodson, 2001). Foucault (1972) explained that relations between different individuals are exercised on the basis of structured interactions through power. However, power can be dismissed by management theories based on unitarism, as these

assume that employees have both autonomy and an ability to voice their concerns in ways that ensure their needs are being met. Power is then usually studied within leadership in order to determine how managers can influence employees to achieve organisational goals (Thompson and McHugh, 2009).

The pluralist frame of reference acknowledges the imbalance of power within an employment relationship where employers and managers are usually more powerful than their subordinates. While employees, in order to sell their labour-power, need to find an employer willing to employ them so they would not become dependent on social welfare, employers have the potential to replace any particular worker with any number of alternative employees. Hence employers have significant control over the dynamic of the employment relationship. For example, employers set the various parameters of the working relationship that according to Braverman (1974) include the time, place and duration of the work; the nature of the work and the methods by which it should be achieved; and the intensity of the effort expended.

The third frame of reference is labelled the radical (Fox, 1966) and is most closely associated with radical scholarship in economics, sociology and industrial relations (Thompson and Newsome, 2004). The radical frame of reference suggests that the employment relationship is embedded in the socio-political context resulting in an imbalance of power and broad-based conflicts between owners of capital and labour (Kelly, 1998). Therefore the nature of the employment relationship is influenced by a struggle for control and power between capital and labour (Gall, 2003; Hyman, 2006) which results in a rather contested exchange than voluntary or bargained exchange (Budd and Bhave, 2008). The radical frame of reference suggests that an employer's ability to control means of production and extraction of labour's surplus-value contributes to their further empowerment in the economic and socio-political arena while employees' lack of power over the control of their work increase their alienation.

According to D'Art and Turner (2006), the employment relationship between employees and managers has been understood as a 'dynamic equilibrium between the contending forces of conflict and cooperation between both parties' and its roots remain in labour being bought and sold (p. 523). Therefore, there is little support for the assumption that the unitarist view of management control based on working agreements such as increased job autonomy, and involvement in decision making, 'are eradicating the pluralist and radical conflictual attitudes associated with the control over alienated labour within the traditional employment relationship and psychological contract'(p. 523). Dohse et al (1985) takes this argument even

further and claim that the new ways of managing employees based on unitarist assumption, especially in lean production, is in fact 'nothing more than an extension of Fordism' which only differ in methods of achieving organisational goals. Hamper (1986) explains that management impinges dramatically upon the social aspects of the employment relationship by integrating technical control with cultural controls in order to harness worker's total physical and mental attitude. This may create a highly controlled atmosphere aimed at preventing workers from expressing their inherent resentment of authority and domination. The pluralist and radical frames of reference then explain the potential arising of concentrated action on behalf of employees that could foster their independence from company domination.

There are varying perspectives influenced by unitarism, pluralism, radicalism or by a combination of these frames of reference that differ in their views of the nature of the employment relationship (Fig. 2.2). The study of employee silence and its role in the context of the employment relationship has been so far in the literature underdeveloped. Hence, the following sections explain the basic ideologies of three varying perspectives that are influenced by unitarist, pluralist and radical frames of reference. These perspectives are Organisational Behaviour (OB), Employee Relations (ER) and Labour Process (LP). How employee silence is viewed and understood by these perspectives is considered.

Figure 2.2: Competing Perspectives

2.3. Organisational Behaviour Perspective

Moorhead and Griffin (1995) defined OB as 'a study of human behaviour in organisational settings, the interface between human behaviour and the organisation, and the organisation itself' (p. 4). Psychology has influenced the existing research of employee silence within the OB perspective. Hence the number of conceptualisations of silence arises from research by organisational psychologists (Bruneau, 1973; Rosen and Tesser, 1970; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). According to Kaufman (2014), 'the ongoing trend toward academic specialisation towards psychology results in such conceptualisation being narrow and partial' (p.1). Therefore this section focuses mainly on addressing the OB research in regards to the explanation of dynamics of the employment relationship between employees and managers and its contribution to understanding silence.

The OB research distinguishes five different types of silence: acquiescent, defensive (quiescent), pro-social, protective and organisational silence. Acquiescencent silence has its roots in the resignation of employees who intentionally chose not to express their ideas and opinions as they feel that speaking up would not enact any change in their working situation (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). In contrast, quiescent silence serves as a conscious defence for employees who are afraid to speak up and being silent is the best alternative for them after evaluating other possible courses of actions (VanDyne et al, 2003). Van Dyne et al (2003) however argue that silence can have its roots in 'altruism or co-operative motives' when work-related ideas, information, or opinions may be withheld to benefit other people or an organisation (p. 1368). Such intentional silence is pro-social because the employees may seek to benefit others from it, or at least not seek to gain themselves from the act of silence. In contrast, the motivation for the fourth type of silence, protective, is rooted in attempts to keep good relations with the organisation and management (Morrison and Milliken, 2003). Organisational silence is then intentional and seen as having implication for the organisation or the individual employee. Employees in such instance may believe that there are punitive consequences for articulating organisational issues and faults (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Organisational silence can cause stress, cynicism, dissatisfaction and lack of communication between coworkers (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005).

The OB research on silence focuses mainly on the individual construct to explain how individuals in an organisation decide to remain silent and the types of issues they are most likely to be silent about. The focus of the OB perspective remains on communicative choice

which employees may decide to adopt. This focus on silence as a communicative choice seems to limit understanding of psychological antecedents, such as the feeling of frustration and futility (Barry and Wilkinson 2015:15); fear of isolation (Neill, 2009); despair and lack of self-esteem (Nafei, 2016); fear of being punished for speaking up; the desire not to hurt someone else; a desire to manage one's image with superiors; or fear that speaking up would result in negative outcomes (Milliken and Morrison, 2003:1565).

With the assumption that employees are motivated to remain silent by psychological antecedents, it can be suggested the OB research neglects the influence of external environment contingencies or internal power structures of authority. Kaufman (2014) argues that 'the type and intensity of workplace problems and the manner workers choose to speak about them to management may depend on the state of the economy (p. 7). Therefore, employees may be more inclined to remain silent about their grievances if the economy is in recession and they have limited options to leave the organisation. (Rusbult et al, 1988; Withey and Cooper, 1989). In addition, in a situation where law related to the termination of employment or switching from permanent to temporary workers contains loopholes that could be easily exploited by employers, may result in employees remaining more likely silent. Ignoring these external organisational circumstances and focusing on the explanation of silence strictly as individual-level employee behaviour can result in narrow conceptualisation and partial understanding of the phenomenon.

The OB explanation of silence comes from potentially culture-specific motivation, attitudes, norms and psychological frames (Donaghey et al, 2011). Arguably, the psychological determinants of silence are assumed to have universal fit across regions of the world regardless of differences in each country-specific legislative, political, cultural and economic context (Kaufman, 2014). In addition, the level of silence can largely differ in organisations operating within varying industries. The research of employee voice shows variations of employee voice levels, depths and frequency in different sectors in Ireland (O'Connel et al, 2010). According to NCPP (2008) employee survey, employees in the hospitality industry have the lowest opportunity to express their voice. The assumption then can be made that employee silence levels vary across industry sectors, however, OB research omits these contextual variations within its research framework.

The OB perspective may, therefore, have limited utility when it comes to explaining the nature of silence within the employment relationship. It is typically unitarist in tone and

premised on the one-sided assumption of mutual gains. For example, the OB literature on employee engagement suggests that employee voice may be beneficial for the organisation as 'employees who have opportunities to express their views may more likely expand their discretionary effort in achieving organisational goals' (Strauss, 2006:778). In contrast, recent OB literature on silence shows that the silence is more likely to be linked with employee burnout while the voice is linked to psychological safety (Sherf et al, 2021). Also, the literature argues that silence is one of the biggest barriers to organisational engagement of employees (Nafei, 2016) as employees may withdraw their suggestions and ideas for organisational improvements which can negatively affect the future development of their organisation (Milliken and Morrison, 2003). Such a strong emphasis on organisational gains within OB research results in a lack of explanation of why employees decide to remain silent.

Barry and Wilkinson (2015) argue that the OB view is limited because it fails to acknowledge that there can be genuine differences of interests between workers, management and organisational goals and that those actors involved have varying levels of power when asserting their interests. Kaufman (2014) further argues that there is a need to evaluate 'organisational design and management systems such as size, division and coordination of tasks, the structure of the organisation, whether management style is directive or participative, and the level of standardisation or formalisation of organisational processes' (p.8). There is a possibility that these internal organisational factors can influence the nature of the employment relationship which in turn influences employee decision to remain silent. However, according to Barry and Wilkinson (2015), OB conception of voice and silence is premised on attitudinal antecedents and on the neglect of other institutional mechanisms that may shape employee behaviour.

While OB literature acknowledges that silence can be influenced by top management (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), in situations when speaking up is perceived to be futile or dangerous, the research of silence within OB perspective further neglects aspects that can influence the dynamics of the employment relationship such as the role of workplace programs, policies and strategies created by the human resource department in order to enhance employee involvement and participation. For example, Kaufman (2014) argues that '*level of employee voice can be low in simple structures and high in commitment organisations'* (p. 9). Consequently, in an organisation where is a lack of formal individual or collective mechanisms to express employee voice, employees may be more inclined to remain silent. While OB research concentrates on silence as an intentional individual

construct, there is a possibility that employees may want to use their voice but do not have the opportunity due to the ineffectiveness or lack of voice structures, most of which are designed by management exclusively. Donaghey et al. (2011) present the argument that 'employee representation has been formed through institutional arrangements such as trade unions in order to enhance employees' opportunities for a voice (p. 57). However, management behaviour significantly influences these institutional arrangements and can, in fact, create non-employee representation arrangements to reduce the like hood of employee involvement in organisational decision-making. This shows that managers can limit voice opportunities and therefore may create a climate/culture of silence.

The OB perspective only recently acknowledged the possibility of silence arising from potential conflict between employees and their line managers. Specifically, Stouten et al (2019) show that silence can have a functional value for employees when resisting destructive leadership. However, other possible employee disatisfaction as a source of silence has not been so far considered by OB literature. For example, an ethnographical study by Delbridge (1998) shows evidence that employees may consciously and actively withdraw themselves from the voice processes in their organisation to increase control over the production outputs and organisation of work. Employees in this study did not share relevant information that could lead to improvements in production and increase outputs with their managers. Hence, while OB perspective acknowledges the materialist motivation of employees to remain silent to resist destructive leadership, it ommits other materialist motivation such as exercising control, exercising of power, or maintaining justice.

Table 2.3: OB view of silence and the key limitations

OB view of silence	Key limitations
Focus on an individual and small-group level	Omitting of the possibility of other dimensions of silence (exercising of control, exercising of power, maintaining justice)
Silence is seen as a purposeful withholding of communication	Role of managers in structuring silence underdeveloped
Heavy micro orientation (personality traits, satisfaction-commitment-loyalty based employee-organisation relationship	Extrinsic motivation and wage effort bargaining has been neglected
Culture-specific motivations, relational values, attitudes, norms influence silence	The influence of the external environment (State of Economy, Industry, etc.) neglected
Unitarist assumption of shared organisation goals explains silence as dysfunctional organisational problem for managers	Role of the internal context (workplace programs, policies, management structures, social relations among actors of the employment relationship) neglected

2.4. Employee Relations Perspective

Industrial (or Employee) Relations draws on several academic disciplines such as history, economics, the law, politics, sociology and psychology. Its focus has been broadly aimed at all actors, government, employers, workers, unions and other labour market institutions (Kaufman, 2014). In contrast to OB, the ER perspective takes the wider approach by analysing of influences of the external environment, markets, institutions, legislation and policy. ER is defined as the formal and informal rule-making interactions and processes between the organisation and its employees (Dundon and Rollinson, 2011). It recognises, unlike OB, that workers and managers have some objectives in common, there also have interests that can be diametrically opposed (Edwards, 2003). Hence, the ER perspective acknowledges that there is a potential for conflict between organisations and employees which means that the employment relationship is one in which antagonism and cooperation can co-exist (Edwards, 1986; Edwards, 2003).

Before progressing to a more detailed analysis of ER perspective, it is important to acknowledge the Human Resource Management field of study due to its link to the ER perspective and its research of employee voice. HRM emerged as a distinct disciplinary field in the 1980s as according to Dundon and Rollinson (2011:14), many researchers in that era concluded that successful organisations in rapidly changing business environment would be those that could compete through innovation, quality and adaptation to change. A major impetus behind the development of the modern practice of management was to discover ways to reunite employers and employees to promote harmony and co-operation and to raise firm performance (Kaufman, 2014:21). Organisations would therefore require a particular type of relationship between employers and employees which will provide a more strategic view of employment and where managers seek to gain employee commitment.

A recent development within HRM literature suggests, a close alignment with the OB research especially with the psychological strand of OB (Godard, 2014). The nature of the effort-reward exchange within the HRM perspective arises from the focus on managing employees in ways that would increase the productivity of an organisation. Therefore its core principles are according to Dundon and Rollinson (2011:14) mostly unitarist and its purpose is to create policies and practices that are driven by the needs of the organisation. The role of employees is within HRM to exploit the opportunities for personal development, to express

loyalty to the organisation and willingness to go the extra mile in achieving organisational goals set by management.

The HRM perspective suggests that allowing employees to contribute to decision making within their firm is beneficial for both employees and managers as it will result in better decision making and improve clarity in communication between both parties (Boxall and Purcell, 2010). Hence, the value of employee voice has been primarily defined in terms of the value it can add to the firm and the organisational performance (Barry and Wilkinson, 2015:5). However, due to its recent shift towards psychology, HRM literature engages less and less with the traditional employee voice concepts based on participation, involvement and representation. Instead, the literature engages with the notion of acquiescent, defensive and pro-social voice (Van Dyne et al, 2003) and its consequences for an organisation.

HRM develops mission statements and corporate values that place, according to Bacon and Storey (1996), great importance on the common interests of workers, managers and owners. The result is re-defining of employee collective identity through direct voice mechanisms such as management-led meetings, and diminishing of independent collective forms of voice. However, the HRM perspective doesn't acknowledge that silence could be caused by the lack of voice mechanisms as its research aims to show that direct voice mechanisms are more efficient than indirect voice mechanisms by linking its outcomes to employee satisfaction (Holland et al, 2001:95) or employee engagement (Rees et al, 2013). This would suggest that silence within the HRM perspective would be seen as negative for all actors within the effort-reward exchange relationship: employees, managers and the organisation.

The HRM perspective aims to create a harmonious system of collaboration and cooperation between management and employees by promoting employee voice and their input into organisational improvements. However, the voice 'allowed' may be 'shallow' (Dundon and Rollinson, 2004) as the progressive personnel policies are not necessarily implemented due to the genuine humanism of the management. Instead, the voice and the scope of employee's influence may be only accepted at the discretion of management and within the limits circumscribed by management which creates a fragile effort-reward exchange relationship between employees and managers. In addition, Adler and Cole (1993:91) argue that HRM in the US that do afford workers 'real' voice are usual non-unionised and often appear to do so as part of the union-avoidance strategy.

The HRM perspective could help with an explanation of how the workplace programs, policies and strategies created by the human resource department to enhance employee involvement and participation influence the dynamics of the effort-reward exchange relationship. The limitations of the HRM perspective are similar to those of the OB approach and arise from the unitarist premises of common goals of interest among actors, hence the silence arising from dissatisfaction and/or potential conflict of interest between employees and managers is not within this perspective considered. Also, the HRM perspective shows limitation when it comes to assessing the influence of the external and internal institutions such as trade unions and 'shallow' non-union voice structures; and evaluating differences in each country-specific legislative, political and economic frameworks.

In contrast, ER research has had a 'public policy orientation' (Ackers, 2010:52). Hence, it is concerned with a wider focus on political economy, law and institutions which regulate employment relationship (e.g. wages, hours, employee voice). There is a focus on structures and mechanisms for employee voice that is traditionally oriented towards collectivism and favours the growth of trade union representation. However, due to the decline of trade union density and collective bargaining, ER recognises workplace systems of regulations, including direct voice mechanisms such as involvement and participation schemes, many of which have been traditionally linked with Human Resource Management. In addition, there is a growing interest in the research of partnerships between trade unions and organisations which may in some instances serve as a substitute for collective bargaining (Ackers, 2010; Donaghey et al, 2012). It is debatable whether such partnerships are designed by management to suppress and deny workplace conflict in workplaces where their implementation may have resulted in work intensification and job insecurities (Ackers, 2010; Donaghey et al, 2011). However, the possibility of it suggests that management behaviour can significantly influence such institutional arrangements and 'managers can, in fact, create non-union representation arrangements to reduce the likelihood of employee involvement in organisational decision-making' (Donaghey et al, 2011:58).

To further develop on the role of managers in designing avenues for employees' participation, Ackers (2010) argues that organisations may design participation schemes and promote joint decision making for the purpose of transparency and perceived corporate social responsibility by 'outside world' (i.e. external stakeholders such as customers and shareholders) while the reality of workers' input into decision-making may be minimal (Wilkinson et al, 2013). Such a view may help to inform research on silence as it suggests the

possibility of silence being engineered by management. For example, employees may wish to express their views, but there may be a lack of opportunities for them to do so or managers may ignore employees' views and/or limit their input into decision making which can consequently result in 'shallow voice'. The evidence of this can be found in Rinehart et al (1997) where managers announced that some topics such as pay and overtime hours are not for discussion which consequently forced employees into remaining silent.

In addition, the argument may be presented that while the ER literature had generally paid more attention to mechanisms in organisations that help employees to express their views and where such mechanisms are not present silence may prevail due to the lack of opportunities for voice. According to Cullinane and Donaghey (2014:402) silence has been within ER literature treated as synonymous for 'no voice.' Hence organisations, where 'no voice' prevails, are those lacking union-initiated or employer-initiated voice mechanisms. This views may seem over-simplistic as it suggests that employees from an organisation with the lack of institutional arrangements for voice are more likely to be silent due to the lack of voice opportunities which may not always be the case. For example, the literature on employee voice in SME's shows growing the importance of unstructured and informal direct voice channels such as informal chats with line managers on the production floor, as SME workers have historically been largely deprived of union representation (Sameer and Ozbilgin, 2014:414). Hence, it is the opportunity for voice rather than the presence of voice mechanisms that may determine whether employees remain silent or speak up.

In addition, ER view of silence may be limited as it suggests that silence may not be present in organisations with structured and formal voice channels as by acknowledging the role of managers in structuring silence; it neglects the role of employees. For example, employees may, instead of remaining silent about grievances and 'hoping that things will get better soon' (Hirschamn, 1970:38), try to initiate the change through remaining silent rather than through voice. Also, they could remain silent to redress an inherent power imbalance in order to achieve prerogatives that are separate from, and sometimes in conflict with, those of management.

The nature of the employment relationship within ER perspective is influenced by the structural and formal forms of individual and collective bargaining. Consequently, the structural design of external and internal institutions such as trade unions and employee representation reinforces the behaviour and attitudes of all parties within the employment

relationship. However, in contrast to the OB perspective, employees' individual and collective interests may differ from those of organisations hence their behaviour and actions may not result in organisational benefits. Therefore, the ER perspective can assist with a better understanding of the dynamic of the employment relationship and motivation behind employee behaviour in the workplace context than the OB perspective.

With regards to employee silence, ER can inform research that employee may remain silent due to materialistic motivation rather than due to their psychological antecedents. For example, employees can exploit opportunities to increase their rewards or decrease their working effort through collective bargaining hence the ER perspective helps to explain the capacity and ability of employees to balance the effort-reward ratio in their favour by remaining silent. However, in general, ER holds a view that employee voice is beneficial for employees as it gives them empowerment and legitimacy (Pfeffer and Veiga, 1999; Budd, 2004) which would suggest that employee silence would have negative outcomes for employees. Hence the ER perspective does not allow for the possibility of silence benefiting employees and therefore cannot inform the research on the silence that is intentionally created by employees.

While there are some limitations outlined when it comes to ER ability to explain the silence, it could be argued that the ER has much to offer in explaining employers' behaviour when structuring silence. The ER perspective may help to understand what features of the employment relationship in varying contexts may give rise to silence. What it shows in general, is that silence is likely to be more expansive where it is employer initiated and where it is not backed by statutory protections that mandate a role for employee voice in organisational decision making. For example, according to Barry and Wilkinson (2015:14), 'management-initiated voice schemes are likely to provide employees with a voice on terms dictated by management, which is often limited to opening lines of communication, and potentially extending voice into the provision of consultation in matters of decision making'. Also, managers can opt to structure silence over a range of issues to limit workers' involvement in decision making as 'greater level of involvement could increase employee power' (Freeman and Lazear, 1995:48) which may be undesirable on behalf of management.

While OB perspective focuses on specific employee behaviours at an individual level, the ER research does not aim to analyse, measure or observe individual behaviours or actions of employees or managers. Instead, the ER helps with the understanding of the context in which

those behaviours and actions take place and what makes them more likely to take place' (Barry and Wilkinson, 2015:15). Also, while OB research focuses on the individual characteristics of management such as the level of their perception when it comes to communication with employees, the ER lens would inform on how contextual conditions such as unionisation or NER voice influence the management style. By concentrating on the role of managers in potentially structuring a climate of silence, ER perspective shows some limitations such as silence being perceived as an outcome of lack of voice opportunities rather than process employees can employ in order to achieve their prerogatives. However, the theoretical framework of silence operating on the frontier of control presented by Donaghey et al (2011:61) suggests that silence can, in fact, act for employees and result in positive outcomes for employees. In addition, the ER perspective does not help to explain the social relations within the workplace, therefore, it offers limited opportunities to inform this research.

Table 2.4: ER view of silence and the key limitations

ER view of silence	Key limitations
Managers may influence institutional arrangements for voice	Silence is seen as an outcome rather than a process through which employees can instigate a change
Silence 'shallow voice' is an outcome of the lack of voice opportunities	ER does not help to explain social relations within an employment relationship
External and internal contextual conditions may influence voice and silence	

2.5. Labour Process Perspective

The following section explains the LP perspective. It examines how silence may be embodied within the contestation of the employment relationship between employees and managers. Especially, LP helps to understand the process of silence resulting from tensions over the management's attempts to extract surplus value from indeterminant labour-power possessed by employees which are central to the LP debates.

The LP debate started in the 19th century by the work of Karl Marx on the contradictions of capitalism and the exploitative nature of the employment relationship between employees and managers. The focus was largely on the analysis of how a workforce power is directed towards the production of commodities which can be sold at a profit. Marx (2000) provided an explanation of worker's exploitation by appointing to the various processes such as a managerial control that lead to greater extraction of surplus value from them. Within the exploitative nature of employment relationship, Marx (1981:257) suggested that employers and employees have opposed interests which result in 'a struggle and consequent contested bargaining over terms and conditions of employment. His writings further focus upon a wider political system of capitalism which he suggested to be replaced by new societal order based on new societal values. Marx in his work engaged with economic analysis and argued that due to the 'law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall' (1981:350) the economic crises and consequent recession of labour market are inevitable within capitalist economies. Therefore workers should never consent to capital as it would weaken their negotiating power relative to the power of the capital. While Marx (2000) argued that 'LP seeks to study societal relations in work situations and to develop an understanding of the links between industrial systems and wider society' (p. 286), his attempts had been seen by some academics as attempts to develop rather 'theory of society than a theory of organisation' (Donaldson, 1985:127).

Braverman (1974) began to turn the focus of labour process debate towards the workplace as a reaction to intensified managerial controls over labour, influenced by scientific management thoughts, that consequently led to the division of labour and deskilling. The main reason for deskilling the workforce was, according to Martinez-Lucio (2010), 'to capture the knowledge of workers for the ends of capitalist development' (p.111). However, Braverman's (1974) view that antecedent to managerial control was deskilling and vice-versa was limited as it omitted the possibility of other management motives such as power. A

further contribution to the development of LP was the work of Friedman (1977) on the control strategies used by management to extract surplus value from employees. Friedman (1977) argued that workers could be subjected to control in the form of responsible autonomy when employees are given leeway and encouragement to adapt to the situation in the workplace in a manner beneficial to the organisation. Also, Richard Edwards (1979) explained that management could use the control capabilities of machinery and technological innovation such as assembly lines to the bureaucratic control based on policies and rules of large corporations.

Burawoy (1979) employed a different approach to the analysis of control strategies with the focus on employee consent and their contribution to their own exploitation. Managers organise activities which 'deflect workers attention away from the expropriation of surplus value and employees, therefore, perceive themselves as having a choice' (Burawoy, 1979:27). Employees then willingly choose to participate in these activities which generate their consent. However, Burawoy's research has been restricted as he aimed to replace existing research on control instead of incorporating and developing further on previous research and acknowledging that control may be multidimensional construct with various strategies.

While it seems that the LP debate was at this stage concerned only with the exploitative employment relationship, issues of control, division of labour, deskilling and broader political and economic context; there were attempts to analyse other issues within the workplace such as workers participation and the further elements of the nature of work and the employment relationship. Ramsey (1977) described the relationship between managers and employees as one of contradiction and antagonism as managers' goal is both, control over greater extraction of surplus value from workers and their knowledge of working processes. However, these two goals require different management strategies. In contrast, employees are needed to produce the surplus value, but they do not decide on how their labour power translates into it. This view of the antagonistic nature of employment relationship and conflicting goals of employees and managers can inform the research on the motivation behind employee silence. Employees who are subjected to exploitation may have limited means to achieve their prerogatives within the workplace, and any intentional act on their behalf can hence aim towards protection from such exploitation. Silence may be the way they can do so as, for example, by withdrawing their knowledge on improving organisational processes they may limit managers' ability to extract employee labour-power further.

Ramsay (1977) further started LP discussion on workers participation with his argument being mainly that 'it has not evolved out of humanisation of capitalism, but it appears cyclically based on tightening conditions within the labour market' (p. 481). Particularly direct forms of employee participation have been explained by Ramsay (1977) as a managerial strategy used in attempts to secure labour compliance in times when management authority is facing challenges due to the tight labour market. The subject of employee representation and voice is hence contested as the motives of management to establish voice systems are unclear and often challenged. The question is whether direct employee voice is 'allowed' to improve employee voice at work or whether it is a way to extract knowledge from workers for further commercial and efficient success of the organisation.

While the discussion on employee silence has not been started within the participation thesis, some suggestions for the research can be derived from it. Management' motives to design participation schemes may be aimed at the accumulation of the knowledge of employees which can be further translated into organisational processes and greater efficiency of the organisation. In contrast, employees can protect their knowledge and further self-exploitation by remaining silent. Donaghey et al (2011) argue with their framework of employee silence that employee silence can operate on the frontier of control where it can act 'for' and 'against' management and/or 'for' and 'against' employees. Their argument together with LP view of participation can hence inform the research that employees may remain silent intentionally to perhaps counterbalancing the power in the employment relationship by limiting managements' ability to extract surplus value and knowledge of the working processes from them.

From the 1980s it seemed that LP theory had reached its dead-end '*labour-process bandwagon has run into the sand'* (Storey, 1985:194) until the academic world renewed its interest in LP by developing and adopting a materialist wave of LP research and theorisation. While, according to Thompson (1989:96), the core of the LP has always been associated with the issue of deskilling and managerial control, there was a neglect of worker subjectivity and resistance arising from loss of skills and managerial controls together with 'neglect of basis and extent of workforce compromise and cooperation' (Dundon and Dobbins, 2015:916). However, by taking these elements of employment relationship into account, the materialist LP differed from orthodox politicised Marxism by its lack of expectation that shared the class situation of labour can result in shared subjective interests and that the class conflict can lead to social transformation. Therefore the materialist wave of LP views the employment

relationship in the workplace as relatively self-contained (Dundon and Dobbins, 2015:917). According to Thompson and McHugh (1990), the Marxist approach to its sole focus on dynamics and contradictions of capitalism as a whole and issue concerning the distribution of the surplus product, 'neglect changes in production processes, organisational forms and occupational structures' (p. 372). Also, the early Marxist research has been mostly conducted in the manufacturing context (Burawoy, 1979; Burawoy, 1983; Braverman, 1974).

Besides the focus on various forms of workers resistance and subjectivity, the further suggestions for the development of the LP have been presented by Thompson (1989:98) as: 'the need to acknowledge the mediating role played by product and/or labour markets; to incorporate the wider external context of an organisation including history and economics; to analyse influences created by institutions such as trade unions and by various structures and strategies, and finally to acknowledge the importance of the social construction of reality perceived by agents'. This would result in more practical and operational theorisation on control and resistance based on the dynamic contestation of social forces within the persistent antagonistic effort-reward exchange relationship. The 'core LP theory' described by Thompson (1989) and paraphrased by Thompson and Smith (2001) then comprises of four elements:

1. The purpose of labour is to generate a surplus for the capital within exploitative social relations between both parties. However, labour has the ability and capacity to challenge the process of labour-power extraction due to its insight and knowledge of the labour process.

2. Constant changes and developments of skills and knowledge of labour are necessary for an organisation to profit and to defend competitive forces within the market.

3. Control is essential in the process of labour-power being purchased and translated into the surplus product, and it can be manifested in different ways (e.g. technical, cultural, power, etc.)

4. The nature of the effort-reward exchange is of 'structured antagonism'. While the manager's prerogative is to exploit and control, they must ensure a certain level of creativity and cooperation from workers. Hence, workers responses range from resistance to accommodation, compliance or consent.

Managers' role in the employment relationship, within the LP perspective, is to seek control over the way work is organised, the pace of work, and the duration of work while extracting

surplus value from workers (Teulings, 1986; Watson, 1994). The LP perspective acknowledges that 'managers may have discretion independent from surplus-value extraction imperatives to determine the nature of work' (Jaros, 2005:8). Hence, management has the potential ability and freedom to act in their best personal interest which do not necessarily need to meet those of owners of the capital (Jaros, 2010). While managers may have more control over job design, work procedures and outputs of employees, employees may remain silent due to the individual managerial practices or social relations within the employment relationship driven by management who may wish to act in their self-interests. Hence, this research needs to consider how managements' actions and behaviour contribute to employees' decision making to remain silent intentionally; and how actions and behaviours of managers can limit employees' opportunity to voice their concerns or to contribute to decision making within their organisation and remain silent unintentionally.

In contrast, management may limit employees' opportunities to raise their grievances to save organisational time and resources that would be needed in order o resolve these. According to Kaufman (2014), while employees may deliberately withdraw their effort or use voice to advance their economic position, managers may actively discourage voice whenever it may be due to their perception that 'it is an undesirable obstruction of effective work process' (p.19), their 'ignorance, or lack of specific people management skills' (Dundon et al, 2005:315). In such an instance, silence could be seen as a process within an employment relationship through which employees may be subjected to further exploitation by management who limit their chances to raise their concerns and grievances.

As stated earlier, the LP perspective incorporates the view of labour having the capacity and ability to challenge the conditions and process of labour-power extraction. Employees, who are exposed to the exploitative employment relationship, can react in several ways in an attempt to improve their working lives and working conditions within their workplace. The motivation behind their actions and interests is then materialist as they may try to achieve some form of agenda or prerogative. The LP perspective could, therefore, help in explaining silence that may have roots in materialistic motivations and employees may remain silent to advance their interests at momentum in time. In addition, the possibility of employees remaining silent to control effort or employment relationship dynamics needs to be considered within this research. For example, silence may be a process within an antagonistic relationship that employees undertake as a creative way to challenge managerial authority and their ability to maintain control within the workplace.

It could be argued that the LP perspective tends to analyse the collective employee interests and behaviour within the employment relationship. Hence behaviours such as resistance are underdeveloped within the academic space about silence specifically. The employer is in a position of power with authority limited only by the minimal compliance with the employment legislation. Here employees may be treated as commodities that are by management subjected to disciplinary procedures and termination of employment. Consequently, the rise of employee resistance is embedded in ongoing relationship dynamics which may ameliorate management power. While the LP framework helps to develop a better understanding of the formal forms of workers resistance and how these form a negotiation around the effort for reward, the informal forms of worker voice and silence are also important.

Edwards and Scullion (1982) show that patterns of quitting and absenteeism are reflected in the intensity of managerial control, and consequently, employee actions are the response to their individual needs, instead of an expression of discontent with the system of control in the organisation. Employees can, therefore, remain silent as an informal method of discontent, and this silence should be considered as an informal process. For example, according to Rinehart (1997:78), employees are not always working their best and in fact, they sometimes 'limit their effort to increase their effort/reward ratio or to create idle time for themselves'. Further, Graham (1993) shows that employees deliberately did not share information related to improving their work processes with management by remaining silent in meetings. Their concern was that management would raise the speed of the production line if they knew that employees can perform their tasks faster. This suggests that employees may be able to limit their working effort or resist working conditions and 'get back' at management through silence. Similarly, employees may seek to 'get by' in degrading and boring job and silence may provide them with the space to do so.

Development in LP theory points to the role of employee 'identity' as an important dynamic in the employment relationship. Particularly, 'the design of jobs, workplace relations and the exercising of power in work may impact identity' (Leidner, 2006:433). The identity of employees may have roots in the nature of the job itself, personal pride, relationships with other actors which can help explain that employees may 'get on' with their employment experience and/or be opposed or 'resist' management. Thompson (2003) argues that core LP there incorporates how employees may circumvent management authority by exercising minimal compliance, as well as overtly resisting management. Hence, the LP perspective can

help understand that employees may remain silent to display compliance depending on the nature of relations with management, while at the same time they may secretly pursue their own interests which may align or differ from those of the organisation or its management. For example, employees may be given wrong instructions on how to perform their tasks by management, and instead of voicing their concerns they may perform the task as mistakenly directed, or in their own way. While employees' motivation to remain silent can range from 'concerns about the quality of the product or service' to 'challenging supervisory authority', the silence can be the result of managerial hegemony which engenders a climate of silence. In such a case, the silence can actually act 'for' employees, especially when viewing silence in relation to the 'frontier of control' advanced by Donaghey et al (2011).

The LP perspective, therefore, has potential utility to inform the proposed research on employee silence given its foci of the social relations within a workplace. This view then informs research that silence could be a process through which employees may mediate the effort-reward exchange and inherent tensions in the employment relationship. The OB perspective does not consider that conflicting interests of employees, managers and organisations could play a role in the dynamic of the employment relationship. In addition, OB tends to view silence as an outcome of psychological antecedents with negative consequences for the management or the organisation. In contrast, the LP perspective can inform that silence influences range from positive to negative for all actors, and are more socially embedded in the context of work relationships.

In contrast with ER perspective, the LP has not advanced a systematic understanding of 'how external institutions such as trade unions structure and affect workplace dynamics and the nature of the employment relationship' (Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014:18), therefore the LP literature would not fully assist with explanation of how these institutions can influence employee silence in organisations. In addition, similarly to OB, the LP literature has not developed an appreciation for varying national contexts within its research (Vidal and Hauptmeier, 2014:18). Therefore it cannot assist with cross-national comparison in employee silence research. However, the LP literature explains how changes related to the nature of the work and varying processes such as formal employment procedures within the workplace may influence the dynamics of the employment relationship (Thompson, 1989, Thompson and McHugh, 2009). For example, the LP literature analyses the impact of non-standard, flexible working conditions adopting during times of recession where work practices have become casualised through outsourcing, subcontracting and temporary contracts (Pembroke

et al, 2017). Such rules and regulations of the employment relationship may influence employees to remain silent about their grievances in fear of losing their job.

Table 2.5: The LP view of silence and key limitations

LP view of silence	Key Limitations
The nature of the job may influence employees decision to remain silent or prevent them from having a voice	The explanation of various forms of formal voice mechanisms and their influences on the embeddedness of voice across an organisation is limited
Formal organisational procedures may influence employees decision to remain silent or prevent them from having a voice	Limited explanation of how external institutions such as trade unions structure and affect workplace dynamics and the nature of the employment relationship
Informal context and social relations among actors may influence employees to remain silent or prevent them from having a voice	Lack of appreciation for varying national contexts within LP research resulting in limited cross-national comparison in employee silence research
The silence process may be intentional or unintentional	
Silence as a process may have varying outcomes ('get back', 'get on', 'get by')	

2.6. Conclusion

The chapter explains that unitarist, pluralist and radical frames of reference influence the view of the employment relationship. According to D'Art and Turner (2006), the employment relationship between employees and employers had been understood as a 'dynamic equilibrium between the contending forces of conflict and cooperation between both parties' (p. 523). As the rewards received can be perceived by workers as unfair when comparing it to the effort invested by them, there is a potentiality for conflict and disorganisation within the employment relationship. Employees may then remain silent in order to balance the effort-reward relationship in their favour. Similarly, managers may wish to enhance their power or as a tactic to extract more labour-power by sustaining a climate of silence by regulating/minimising voice opportunities.

Competing perspectives that portray the employment relationship were reviewed together with their inherent advantages and limitations in explaining the nature of silence or the nature of this relationship. The chapter argues that the OB perspective is limited in advancing the research aims. Its assumption of typically unitarist and based on mutual gains employment relationship is seriously flawed (Table 2.3).

The ER and LP perspectives acknowledge the possibility that employees could have conflicting interests to those of management and that employee's individual and collective interests are important social process dynamic within the employment relationship. Hence the ER and LP perspectives may better understand the dynamics of employee silence and voice. However, the limitation of the ER approach lays in its explicit focus on the institutional form of voice mechanisms and omitting their influences on employee behaviour and organisational and employee outcomes (Table 2.4.).

The LP perspective is one potential framework, always with elements of ER, to inform about employee silence. The LP perspective can help with the explanation of silence created by employees over a range of issues to challenge managerial authority and power together with silence created by managers to extract more labour-power from employees. Such motivation on both employees and employers informs the research question on 'how' employees remain silent in workplaces as it suggests that silence may be both an intentional and unintentional process. In addition, the LP framework helps to address the research question on 'why' employees remain silent. Firstly it suggests that the nature of the job, informal relations among actors of employment relationship together with contextual conditions and formal

procedures may influence employees to remain silent or prevent their opportunities for voice. Secondly, the LP perspective suggests there may be different outcomes of the process of silence (‘get back’, ‘get on’, ‘get by’).

3. Reconceptualising the process of employee silence

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter concluded that LP (and some elements of ER) might be better suited than OB research on phenomena of silence. In addition, the LP perspective can help with understanding that the nature of voice and silence in the employment relationship may be formed not only by structural conditions but also by social dynamics within the workplace. These can give rise to intentional and/or unintentional silence process and attempts of employees to either 'get back' at management, 'get on' with their job' and/or 'get by' in their workplace.

The aim of this chapter is to firstly, inform the research on how workplace context (including nature of the job, formal employment procedures and informal social relations among actors) may influence employees to remain silent or to limit their voice opportunities. The aim here is to inform the research question *'how do employees' perceptions of the workplace context influence the process and forms of silence?'*. Secondly, the chapter explains intentional and unintentional forms of silence process which informs the research question '*how do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'*. Thirdly, the chapter explains possible forms of outcomes of the silent process informing the research question '*why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'*. Finally, the chapter presents a sensitising framework of employee silence that informs on the empirical investigation of the phenomena of silence.

3.2. Employees' perceptions of the workplace context

The nature of the employment relationship between employees and managers is organic and always evolving. The LP (and some elements of ER) perspective informs this research that the nature of the job together with various formal and informal processes of this relationship may play an important role in actual practice (Marchington and Suter, 2013). The aim of this section is hence to explain how the nature of the job (e.g. low and/or high-skilled occupations), formal employment procedures (e.g. presence of voice mechanism and contractual conditions), and informal social relations (e.g. line managers, co-workers, and employee representatives) may influence employees' decision to remain silent or prevent them from having an opportunity for voice.

3.2.1. Nature of the Job

The LP perspective helps to understand the emerging new forms of organisations which result in a restructuring of the content of work (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Due to the dynamic nature of the markets and economic change in the last decade, management emphasis turned towards flexibility which brought significant changes in the ways how work is carried out and what are its attributes. The flexibility results in the growth of non-standard forms of employment and erosion of collective regulatory mechanisms representing the interest of employees. The post Taylorist era and subsequent development of LP analysis aimed to explain the degradation of work under capitalism with a focus on deskilling and division of tasks (Braverman, 1974). However, with the decline of traditional manufacturing organisations and the rise of the service and financial sector, the LP perspective focuses on occupational shifts and new forms of employment and how these may influence employees' behaviour and actions (Thompson and McHugh, 2009).

Therefore, employees' decision to remain silent may be influenced by the character of their work tasks such as their perception of how they use their skills, the complexity of work (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990), and the extent of the autonomy and discretion employees can exercise while performing their jobs (Hodson, 1995), as these may be a source of intrinsic rewards for employees (Burawoy, 1983; R. Edwards, 1979). Similarly, the tenure with the company may indicate employees' position in the organisation with regards to their social bonds with co-workers and line managers, and with regards to the experience and employees' perception of their skills and complexity of the task.

Some jobs are more complex and difficult than others hence employees who perform them may perceive differently how their skills are put to use. For example, jobs on production lines may not be perceived by employees as intrinsically rewarding as these may consist of the simple repetitive tasks that do not fully reflect the potential skills of employees. In addition, organisations that implement assembly line in their production usually aim to achieve greater efficiency through cost-cutting measures. Hence these jobs may be perceived by employees as intense and physically demanding, with no opportunity for discretion while the extrinsic rewards may not fulfil employees' expectations (Rinehart et al 1997; Walker and Guest, 1952; Delbridge, 1998). However, with the rise of the services sectors, low skilled and low paid jobs that offer little autonomy are not phenomena used only by manufacturing organisations. For example, operators in call centres and employees in the hospitality sector are often subjected to standardised jobs and experience intensification of their work tasks (Dundon and Rolinson, 2004; Taylor and Bain, 1999, Doellgast, 2012; Royle, 2000).

Notwithstanding, this doesn't mean that blue collar and white collar workers would not be subjected to work standardisation and intensification. The impact of technology and further developments and the introduction of standard operating procedures also contribute to the commoditisation of the white collar work (Holmes, 2009; Andresky Fraser, 2001). For example, recent research from health care industry by Hoff (2011) shows that physicians may experience deskilling in their jobs by the adaptation to the new technology and innovative practices such as electronic medical record and clinical guidelines.

Employees who perform jobs in which they cannot fully use their potential, or they experience limited autonomy and discretion may often feel alienated towards their jobs, or they may show resistant behaviour in attempts to balance their effort-reward ratio (Hodson, 1995). Silence may be a process that offers employees space to do so. For example, employees may withdraw information on improvements from management that could result in a further intensification of their working process. Similarly, employees may remain silent about the misbehaviour of their peers in situations when it results for example in work stoppage as they may welcome break from their jobs. However, not all jobs are subjected to standardisation and intensification with a low level of employee autonomy. Employees may not feel alienated and retaliate if they perceive their jobs as intrinsically and extrinsically rewarding. In such situations they may wish to 'get on' with their jobs and silence may be a process that allows them to do so. For example, they may be given wrong instructions on

their work process by management and they may prevent disagreement by remaining silent while not following the instructions provided to them.

3.2.2. Formal employment procedures

3.2.2.1 Voice channels

The LP perspective informs this research of the persistent underlying exploitation of employees within the employment relationship. Hence the managements' understanding of the purpose of employee voice differs from those of employees. While voice serves employees either as a channel to raise grievances or a channel through which they can contribute to decision making in their organisations (McCabe and Lewin, 1992), managers can use voice as a tool for further extraction of the labour power from employees (Ramsey, 1977; Thompson and Harley, 2007; Barry et al, 2017). Managers are usually a more dominant party of the exchange hence they play a role in determining whether to allow or restrict employee voice channels (Dundon et al, 2005; Allen and Tuselmann, 2009).

Dundon et al (2004) distinguished between direct voice mechanisms (e.g. meetings with line managers, electronic media, newsletters, bullet boards, focus groups, staff briefings, suggestion schemes, individual appraisals, attitude surveys, self-managed team working and workforce meetings); and indirect voice mechanisms (e.g. JCC's, negotiation/collective bargaining, Unions, EWC's, 3rd party intervention and formalised forums). While these may be designed formally by the organisation including formal policies and procedures for dealing with employee grievances, participation and involvement, there may also be structures influenced by the culture of the organisation and by the values and beliefs of owners and managers. Lack of presence of voice mechanisms may influence employees in their decision-making process to remain silent, or it may prevent them from having an opportunity for voice hence remain silent unintentionally.

Argenti (1976) argues that organisational strategy is influenced by 'moral, political and personal considerations of owners or the director of the organisation rather than by lower management' (p. 63). The business strategy then sets formal and informal guiding principles for management action on how to treat employees and how to handle particular events in organisations (Purcell, 1987:536). These principles however also set parameters and guidelines on how to structure employee voice practices in organisations. Purcell (1987)

distinguished between individualist and collectivist styles when describing the employment relationship between employees and management with regards to management's attitudes and behaviours towards various employee voice arrangements. The former refers to 'the extent to which personnel policies are focused on the rights and capabilities of individual workers' (Purcell, 1987:535). The latter is concerned with 'the extent to which the organisation recognises the right of employees to have a say in those aspects of management decision-making that concerns them' (Purcell, 1987:538). Boxall and Purcell (2016) develop this further into six distinctive management styles with regards to the organisational approach to employee voice (Table 3.2.2.1)

Table 3.2.2 1: Voice systems and management styles (Boxall and Purcell, 2016:150)

Relationship with employees	**Commitment – Involvement**	Individual-based, high-commitment mgt. Extensive direct voice systems	Emphasis on high-commitment and direct voice Hands-off relationship with representatives Low trust of external unions	High-commitment mgt. Partnership with unions and/or non-union representatives Extensive direct and indirect voice systems High trust
	Command - Control	Low trust No voice	Low trust Restricted voice Conflict	Emasculated representatives No real voice Sweetheart unionism
		Avoidance	**Adversarial**	**Cooperative**
	Relationship with trade union and elected works councils / JCCs			

The table shows how the relationship with employees influence the structure and availability of employee voice channels. For example, organisations adopting command and control approach towards their employees may choose to avoid employee collective representation which may result in the lack of voice channels. Such an approach suggests that employees in these organisation may remain silent as a result of limited opportunities for voice. Similarly, organisations that adopt cooperative relations with collective employee representatives while their management remains commanding and controlling may restrict employees' opportunities for voice and structure silence over certain issues. For example, a case study by Dundon et al (2015) shows how even in unionised organisations the presence of a union and its formal recognition may not be an indicator of effective indirect voice channel as the union has been subjected to downward communication rather than involved in the consultation. This suggests that the presence of indirect voice channels may not guarantee a genuine collective voice for employees and employees may be forced into unintentional silence due to the lack of voice opportunities.

In contrast, organisations may base their relationship with employees on commitment and involvement as a strategy to avoid collective representation by structuring extensive direct voice systems or promote a cooperative relationship with employees; representatives, simultaneously with excessive direct voice mechanisms (Gollan and Wilkinson, 2007; Millward et al, 2000). The presence of voice channels, however, may not guarantee that employees would always use their voice. There may be further underlying problems related to the social relations in the workplace such as perceived inequality or abusive behaviour of line managers, and/or employees may find issues with the nature of their jobs as discussed in the previous section.

Due to the decline of trade union density, the literature on employee voice is giving the growing importance of non-union modes of employee representations (NER's); and whether direct voice channels, emerging as an alternative to traditional collective bargaining, result in employees' reduced capacity to articulate issues and grievances in their workplaces (Donaghey et al, 2012; Gollan and Lewin, 2012). For example, Donaghey et al (2012) show that while NER's may serve to disrupt union organising attempts, they can help establish some form of employee voice, albeit voice on management terms.

Similarly, Butler (2005) highlighted the shortcomings of NERs as conduits for collective voice provision even when employee councils present in the organisation had formal negotiating remit. In reality, the council had limited power due to the inability to engage the workforce to mobilisation which reflected into failed negotiating over wage increases. In addition, the study shows that the work council was very much a 'forum for the communication of management's interpretation of events, ideology and values' (Butler, 2005:284) rather than a vehicle for employees to raise their issue and concerns. Hence, employee silence may arise in an organisation where channels for voice exists but are perceived by employees as incapable to challenge the managerial authority.

However, it cannot be assumed that organisations that do not allow for indirect voice mechanisms always implement direct voice mechanisms. While it has been argued earlier that in the absence of indirect voice channels, management may structure direct voice mechanisms in the organisation to allow employees for voice opportunities; there may also be a possibility that direct voice mechanisms are ineffective or not present altogether. Since direct voice channels usually involve direct face-to-face communication with management

(Budd et al, 2010), employees may not have an opportunity to meet with their managers hence they are forced to remain silent by the inefficient management structures.

3.2.2.2 Contracts, casualisation, flexibilisation

Employee relationship contracts can regulate voice and silence, covering a range of issues such as pay, hours, overtime, pension and other benefits. With the increased level of globalisation and restructuring markets, the employment contracts shift from traditional permanent full-time to non-standards forms such as part-time, casual, zero hours, temporary contracts and agency work (Thompson and McHugh, 2009).

The flexibilisation of work contracts affects the dynamics of work relations, potentially resulting in silence and precariousness (Rubery, 2015). While some evidence shows that part-time work may increase obsolete labour market participation rates; there is also an increasing share of lower quality jobs offering lower intellectual stimulation (Sandor, 2011), lower earnings (Kalleberg, 2000; ILO, 2014), lack of equal treatment (ILO, 2014) and downgrading of skills especially for women (Gregory and Connoly, 2008; Broughton et al, 2016). In addition, employees on fixed-term contracts may experience lower individual protection by employment legislation as for example in Ireland the right to claim under unfair dismissal is available only to employees who work with the employer for longer than 52 weeks (Broughton et al, 2010). Casual work may also result in lower levels of job satisfaction (Bardasi and Francesconi, 2003).

With regards to employee voice and silence, research shows that non-standard forms of employment can result in a lack of trade union organisation. For example, employing employees on non-standard contracts may not necessarily mean a strategy to cut costs, the management prerogative may be union avoidance (Bernhardt, 2014). Hence, employees may remain silent as they have limited opportunities to express their views through indirect voice mechanisms.

Since the non-standard employment contract usually brings uncertainty about the future employment prospects, employees may remain silent intentionally about their grievances as they may not wish to be perceived by management as trouble makers. The research shows that around 25 per cent of employees work involuntarily on a part-time basis and the majority of them would like to work longer hours (Broughton et al, 2016). Hence some employees

may wish to ‘get on’ with their jobs in order to secure more hours or advance their contracts to full-time hours. Also, the nature of the jobs of non-standard employment is usually low skilled with limited intellectual stimulation, and low paid hence employees may become alienated by dull and boring routine jobs and wish to ‘get by’ in their workplaces or ‘get back’ at management. In addition, employees working on fixed and casual contracts usually have less protection in individual employment legislation hence they raising complaints and grievances may result in their dismissal or lack of opportunities for future employment, training and/or promotions.

Notwithstanding, this does not mean that employees are working in full-time permanent contracts may not also be subjected to inequality and lack of voice opportunities. Research shows that while full-time permanent employees are generally in less risk of precariousness and poverty, the risk of those is much higher in some sector occupations such as personal services, hospitality and in elementary professions (Broughton et al, 2016). Organisations operating in these sectors usually implement fewer policies and procedures with regards to equality and offer fewer benefits. Hence, employees who are subjected to for example abusive behaviour from co-workers or management may have fewer opportunities to voice their concerns due to the lack of internal arrangements for voice.

3.2.3. Informal social relations

Various actors within an employment relationship may have their own prerogatives and goals (Edwards, 2003, Edwards, 1986, Dundon and Rollinson, 2011). These actors include line managers and/or supervisors, trade unions and other workers' representatives and co-workers. These actors are in immediate contact with employees who form relationships with them. Therefore they may be a strong influence when employees make their decisions to remain silent.

3.2.3.1 Line managers

The literature on employee voice suggests that employees who have opportunities to express their voice can contribute to decision making within the firm and communicate their grievances (McCabe and Lewin, 1992). Such expression of voice may result in better understanding of expectations, needs and concerns of employees and managers (Townsend, 2014). However, not always, employers are in direct contact with employees. Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2002) suggest that regardless of the number of potential voice channels, employees are most likely to communicate directly with their supervisor when they wish to discuss their grievances. Hence the important role of enacting employee voice may rely on workers' line managers. The LP perspective informs this research that managers may not necessarily need to work towards organisational goals (Thompson and McHugh, 2009), or they may choose wrong avenues of communication with employees as they have the ability to pursue their own prerogatives within the workplace (Watson, 1994). Since the employment relationship is according to Townsend (2014:164) 'built around a social component and always evolving', the behaviour and actions of employees' managers may influence their decisions to remain silent. Boxall and Purcell (2016:132) explain that 'employees may be affected by how managers exercise their power and react to managerial approaches that threaten their interests'. Silence then maybe a way; employees may counterbalance the power of their managers and pursue their interests.

The LP perspective explains the main role of line managers in the development of systems that control the labour process with the use of various control strategies (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). In addition, the nature of the employment relationship between line managers and employees can vary among organisations regardless of similarities in the external environment in which they operate; the industry in which they operate, structural variables such as size and technology (Boxall and Purcell, 2016). Hence, it could be argued that the influencing factor of the employment relationship could be social relations within the

workplace and the way employees perceive their line managers' behaviour and actions. According to Purcell (1987), line managers who act from their position of power exercise a degree of choice in the way they treat their employees regardless of the existence of organisational policies and practices that aim to guide the ways employees should be treated in particular situation. Hence, line managers may have a certain degree of freedom of choice when managing employees which is often influenced by their personal beliefs and attitudes.

With regards to research on employee voice, Townsend (2014) claims that managers can be a barrier to effective voice and participation as they remain underprepared in relation to the skills required to get most out of voice schemes for either organisation or the employees. Similarly, Dundon et al (2005) point to the barrier that line managers can set up in the implementation and effective use of voice mechanisms. They identify that a problem usually arises due to the lack of requisite skills of line managers. Without the requisite skills and training of line managers, voice mechanisms usually become ineffective and lose their relevance in the organisation (Cox et al, 2009).

In addition, Townsend et al (2012) argue that the implementation of HR policies related to voice in the organisation by line managers may suffer as a result of the skilled practitioner being promoted to the role of line manager without adequate training in people skills. There is a growing body of literature related to the lack of people skills of line managers and its implication within the workplace. The large section of such literature is devoted to the concept of abusive supervision which has been defined by Tepper (2000) as 'the subordinates' perception of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviour, excluding physical contact' (p. 178). The reason why employees may not take corrective actions in forms of grievance or exiting the organisations may be then, according to Tepper (2000:178), the feeling of powerlessness, economic dependency, or because their supervisor may display abusive behaviour only sometimes which gives employees hope that the abuse will end. The research further shows that some of the consequences of abusive supervision may include less favourable attitudes toward job (Tepper, 2000:186). Hence silence may play a role in individuals' thought process regarding their capacity to protect themselves from abusive supervision when they, for example, remain silent about grievances or when they withdraw information about job improvements.

In addition, Schyns and Schilling (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 57 studies on the topic of abusive supervision to show that relationship between employees and their abusive supervisors is reciprocal. Hence, employees may adopt attitudes towards their supervisors that translate into behaviour and action of resistant nature, and in the long run, they may not comply with the supervisor's dictate. Consequently, employees may express their 'negative attitudes towards their jobs and towards the organisation as a whole' (Schyns and Schilling, 2013:149).

Speaking about this, the important factor, besides abusive supervision, that may influence employee decision to remain silent, maybe whether employees perceive that the abusive supervisor has support from the organisation. According to Dasgupta et al (2012),' supervisors act as agents of the organisation' (p. 194). Hence employees' perceptions of supervisor's abusive behaviour contribute to their perception of the organisation (Zellars et al, 2002; Wang and Jiang, 2015).

Employee silence does not necessarily need to be triggered by abusive supervision. The extent to which supervisors let employees to voice their concerns and contribute to decision making may influence their decision to remain silent or to share their ideas and opinions. For example, Landau (2009) suggests that the presence of multiple alternative voice mechanisms is not required if the employee has a competent and approachable manager. Similarly, Kim (2002) suggests that supervisors who allow employees to participate influence employees' job satisfaction. This is due to the emphasis on communication between supervisors and employees, as employees may perceive that their voice will be heard and their issues and suggestions will be dealt with by management. Especially in situations when employees and management have conflicting ideas and opinions and employees perceive that their managers allow them participation while trying to resolve the issues, employees may feel valued and trust can develop between themselves and management (Chan et al, 2008). Hence, they may decide to express their voice instead of remaining silent.

In contrast, authoritative line managers and supervisors may pressurise employees into remaining silent by being overly controlling. Research by Litzky et al (2006) suggests that intense managerial control, the pressure to conform negative and untrusting attitudes unfair treatment may encourage employees' deviant behaviour towards organisation and management. Silence than may serve as leeway for employees to escape management pressure and controls and give employees' opportunity to challenge managerial dictate.

3.2.3.2 Trade union and other employee representatives

The unequal relationship between managers and workers can reinforce the levels of management control over participation in decision making within the organisation. The way employees can challenge the system's potential for unilateral management control is according to Babson (1993:3) through union intervention. However, the union presence in the organisation does not necessarily mean that employees will have enhanced opportunities to voice their concerns, opinions and suggestions as it may merely translate into 'shallow voice' (Dundon and Rollinson, 2004). The relations between workers and their representatives may be a factor that can influence their decision to remain silent in their organisation.

Employees who may have a negative perception of trade unions or their representatives or they have limited information on what union does may limit their opportunities for voice by not joining trade unions or by not raising their issues to the trade union representatives. In contrast, employees may wish to join a trade union, but they may not have been approached by the representatives to do so (Waddington and Whitston, 1997). In addition, employees' trust in trade union and their representatives may be low as trade union perhaps make a joint decision with management and does not represent the best interests of its members (Babson, 1993; Adler, 1993).

Bryson (2003b) outlined that employees are instrumentalists in their decision to join trade unions and their satisfaction with representation is usually higher if they perceive trade union as effective and capable of representing their interests such as better working terms and conditions. Such perceived effectiveness can then result in employees to decide to join a trade union as it may have tangible benefits for them. Bryson (2003a) then explained what constitutes as trade union effectiveness. Firstly, trade union needs to be perceived by employees as being organisational effective which includes dimensions such as communication and sharing of information and providing advice; unions' responsiveness to employees' grievances; and the power of the union which is reflected upon how seriously is union viewed by management (Bryson, 2003a:6). Secondly, employees need to perceive that union is effective in delivering improvements in work in areas such as pay increases; ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities; increasing managerial responsiveness to employees; and making the workplace better place to work (Bryson, 2006a; Waddington and Whitston, 1997). This is relevant to employee silence research as it suggests that employees who may not perceive their representation as effective in resolving their issues and

grievances may remain silent about them or not to join a union and limit their opportunities to a collective form of voice.

Similarly, Bryson's (2003s) report shows that nearly forty per cent of employees perceive union as powerless. For example, in Graham's study of the Subaru-Isuzu plant, the union presence did not guarantee that employees had an actual say in the organisation. Especially when it came to changes of worker's immediate jobs, 'team members found that policies were routinely instituted from the top down with no input from union' (Graham, 1995:121). This suggests that a large cohort of employees may actually perceive trade unions as ineffective which can again contribute to their decision to no to join and limit their opportunities to a collective form of voice. Hence these employees may, for example, remain silent about their grievances as they do not have access to representation or they perceive union as powerless in representing their interests.

Similarly, research in Ireland by Eurofound (1998) on employees' perception of trade unions may help explain some reasons why employees may remain silent rather than approach union representatives with issues and grievances. For example, forty-nine per cent of respondents actually weren't sure on what union does, and twenty-nine per cent of respondents reported that they have never been approached by a representative to join. MacKenzie (2008) explained that the successful recruitment of workers to the union could be achieved with the help of a dedicated union officer who is crucial in shaping the attitudes of a new member. Hence, the social relations between trade union representatives and employees may play an important role in employees' decision-making process to join a trade union and enhance their opportunities for voice.

However, the trust in union representatives may be low especially when employees perceive that the union represents organisational interests over employee interests. For example, the UAW officials in NUMMI plant believed that employees should participate by sharing information about organisational improvements which led to speeding up the pace of production, increased responsibilities and cutting labour costs (Adler, 1993). Similarly, the UAW representatives negotiated in collective bargaining agreement 'Management Rights' clause that the company would have exclusive right to direct and control the methods, processes and means of handling work at Nissan's Smyrna, Tennessee plant (Babson, 1993). In contrast, in the CAMI Automotive plant (the unionised joint venture between General Motors and Suzuki), the trade union-run poem in their newsletter warning that suggestions

benefit only the company and can eliminate jobs '*Every time we write a tenain, We only do their work. Smarten up, I say – Don't accept their Judas Pay'* (Rinehart et al, 1997:145), which supported the best interests of employees and their decisions to remain silent about organisational improvements.

3.2.3.3 Co-workers

There has been increasing attention to employees' relationships with their co-workers in the literature due to the shift of job content to more complex and collective tasks and team working (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Employees and their co-workers form relationships that are based on the exchange of socio-emotional benefits and governed by reciprocity and obligations (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964), hence they are seen as a core source of workplace social support for employees (He et al, 2011) and one of the main reasons for staying in the organisation (Boxall et al, 2003). Besides the support with the work-related issues, co-workers play an important role in the social dynamics of the employment relationship between employees and managers because of their ability to influence employees' behaviour and actions. Hence they may play an important role in employees' decision-making process to remain silent.

The OB literature on voice explains that when employees express both promotive and prohibitive voice, it may be beneficial for the organisation (Loi et al, 2014). While promotive voice involves sharing innovative ideas and suggestions that would lead to organisational changes, the prohibitive voice informs the management about harmful practices within the workplace. However, the LP perspective can inform the research on the silence that while employees may witness actions and behaviour of their peers that can be harmful to organisations, they may not disclose these with management due to the deeper underlying social relations within the workplace. For example, employees may wish to remain good social relations with their co-workers which may be damaged if they would report their peers' misbehaviour.

Similarly, the OB literature claims that innovative ideas and suggestions are things favoured by co-workers since the impact or change made can bring about improvements that can ultimately benefit the whole workplace (Loi et al, 2014). However, the LP literature explains that sharing information about improvements may lead to, for employees, negative changes in the work processes such as increased workload and intensification of work (Ramsey, 1977;

Rinehart et al, 1997; Babson, 1993; Graham, 1995; Adler and Cole 1993). Such information sharing may be perceived by peers as annoying and troublesome (Hung et al, 2012:448). Hence employees may remain silent about, for example, suggestions or misbehaviour of their co-workers in order to keep harmony within the social relations between themselves and their peers.

The argument that relationship among peers may be an important factor that influences employees' behaviour in the workplace dates back to F.W. Taylor (1903) who explained the concept of 'systematic soldiering'. 'Individuals operating within group settings are typically able to observe other group members, which creates the opportunity for these members to serve as models' (Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998:659). Therefore, employees may adopt the behaviour of other members of their work team and their decision to remain silent may be influenced by the behaviour of the role model among their peers. For example, Bandura (1977) indicates that if employees work in an environment where their co-workers engage in misbehaviour, they are likely to misbehave themselves. The research by Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) then found that the social relations among co-workers and their peers may become damaged if employees engage in less misbehaviour than their co-workers. Hence, employees may be influenced to adopt the behaviour of their peers in order to maintain their social relations with them. The reason for this is that employees and their co-workers may experience similar conditions in their workplace and may behave in a comparable fashion when it comes to their supervision and attitudes towards the organisation.

However, formal employment procedures may influence the informal social relations among peers as, for example, Davis-Blake et al (2003) show that the presence of contract and temporary workers have an impact on changing responsibilities and job security for full-time employees. Also, employees may adopt behaviours of their peers based on length of service within the organisation as the length of service allows for the better building of informal social relations among peers (Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). The presence of temporary workers and contractors are usually short-term hence employees may not fully develop relationships with them which may influence their decision to remain silent, especially about the harmful actions and behaviours. In addition, firms may use temporary workers to limit employee's interest in unionising (Davis-Blake et al, 2003), hence employees may have limited opportunities to express their collective voice and remain silent.

A further barrier to building social relations among employees and their peers may be their perception of how they are treated by management and organisation with regards to justice and equality. Forret and Love (2008) examined such influences on social relations and found that when employees perceive that distribution of rewards, organisational policies and procedures and interpersonal treatment by supervisors is fair and consistent among all workers, they are more likely to build relationships and trust among themselves. Further implication shows that the lack of perceived justice by employees can lead to withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism and misbehaviour (Forret and Love, 2008:256). Therefore, the lack of perceived justice and fairness among workers may influence their decision to remain silent. For example, in situations where employees perceive that their peers have better social relations with a supervisor they may decide to remain silent on certain issues concerning the peer or supervisor due to the lack of trust in either of the party. In contrast, employees who may perceive that they are treated fairly in contrast to their peers may build loyalty and relationship with them and share information on certain issues with them.

3.3. Re-conceptualising the Process of Employee Silence

The previous section discussed issues shaping dynamics of the employment relationship with a view towards silence (e.g. nature of the job, formal employment procedures, informal social relations). This pointed to various actors and processes regulating employment relationship and possibly silence. The aim of this section is to extend the discussion to help re-conceptualise intentional and unintentional silence drawing on LP and ER perspectives.

3.3.1. Intentional silence

Intentional silence process reflects situations when employees have the opportunity to express their voice, however, they decide to remain silent for a number of reasons which subsequently result in different outcomes of the silent process. There is evidence of such silence in some studies mainly from lean production that aimed to investigate employee participation practices and Japanese form of management and its implication for workers. While these studies have not been aimed at broadening of the knowledge of employee silence, they offer a fruitful explanation of how employee silence process may help employees to achieve various outcomes.

For example, Adler (1993) and Adler and Cole (1993) found in their studies of NUMMI plant that interviewed employees didn't share knowledge of production improvements with management. Graham (1995) described a situation where employees in the Subaru-Isuzu plant had duties to inform the management about defects on the production line. However, the particular interviewed employee indicated that he knows about products made by his co-worker that had defects, but instead of fixing the product or reporting it to management he just let them go through. Similarly, employees in the Subaru-Isuzu plant frequently sabotaged production by stopping the assembly line. The rest of the employees on the team who were aware of the sabotage never told management (Graham, 1993). Rinehart et al (1997) found in CAMI plant that a time study engineer accidentally counted a workstation from an adjoining team as a part of the interviewee's team workload. It had never occurred to the team members to report the miscalculation to the area leader. Similar withdrawal of information by employees can be however found also in the services industry. For example, Woodcock (2017) described that employees in call centres often encounter a situation when the system displayed error in generating a pool of leads however they were possible to pretend that they were still receiving leads '*so long as other workers on their team also kept quiet*' (p. 48).

Such disruption required a collective withdrawal of information from line managers who were not able to keep track of who run out of leads.

The process of silence in all of these case studies is intentional as employees make conscious decision not to speak up. However, as these studies were not aimed at investigating silence the outcomes of the silent process may be speculative, similarly as the reasons why employees decided to remain silent. Employees in these studies appear to 'withdraw' as a by-product of the social relations they encounter. For example, they could have felt loyalty towards their co-workers (Graham, 1993; Rinehart et al, 1997, Woodcock, 2017) or they may have been dissatisfied with how the line managers treated them. There may have been other factors such as the nature of the job employees performed which led to the 'withdrawal' of information or voice. The job may have been dull and boring, and the intensity of work was perhaps too high, and employees needed to reduce their burden of work (Rinehart et al, 1997; Woodcock, 2017).

The LP perspective helps to understand that employees' actions and behaviours may result in employees to 'get back' at management, to 'get on' with their job and/or to 'get by' in their workplace. The intentional silence process may lead to all of these outcomes or a combination of them based on the dynamic of the effort-reward exchange relationship influenced by both the ER processes as well as agency capacity of actors involved. For example, in the case of NUMMI plant, the employee interviewed reported that he didn't share information about improvements because the information would lead to speeding up of production line and management would just give more responsibilities and work to the employee (Adler, 1993). However, while employee's intentional silence may have led to 'get back' at management as the employee may have deliberately resisted the organisation of work, it could have also been the case that employee just wanted to 'get by' in his boring and repetitive job as improvements would lead to perhaps even more tedious work for him.

Similarly, in the case of an employee in Subaru-Isuzu plant, the intentional silence about defects could have led the employee to 'get back' at management as he may have wanted to cause trouble for his line manager. Also, it could have led the employee to 'get by' in his job as he could find his job boring and didn't care about the quality of the product. Lastly, it could have led the employee to 'get on' with his job as he perhaps liked his job and wanted to continue production and hit his target. This suggests firstly that intentional silence may be a process that can lead to various outcomes and secondly, that the methodology of proposed

research needs to be designed in a way allowing employees to share what outcomes intentional silence results in.

3.3.2. Unintentional silence

This section explains the 'unintentional' silence which refers to incidents where employees have limited or no opportunity to express their views. Such silence may be engineered by management by for example limiting the presence of voice channels and adapting control/command management style (Allen and Tuselmann, 2009). Employee voice may be shallow in-depth and narrow in scope (Wilkinson et al, 2004). However, the creation of such silence may also have roots in social relations in the workplace where managers engender a climate of silence by managing employees out of voice systems (Donaghey et al, 2011).

Donaghey et al (2011) offer insight into how management can structure silence in organisations with regards to certain issues through agenda-setting and institutional structures. Such silence may be engineered by management as it is shown for example in the study from lean production based on Japanese model which aims, according to Graham (1995:131), 'to create a harmonious system of collaboration between management and workers through the process of kaizen where organisational philosophy of participative management is implemented through a variety of participative programs and policies in order for an organisation to continuously improve its operation'. Graham (1993:147) outlined that the aim of these participation programs is supposed to engage worker's minds with the managerial aspects of their job by providing them with greater employee involvement in decision making and therefore potentially expanding worker's control over their work.

However, the study from Subaru-Isuzu plant by Graham (1993:170) did not find support to this contention as the results suggest that implementation of 'kaizen' provided a mechanism for management to tightly control the topics that could be raised for consideration as well as when, where and how suggestions were implemented. Management usually announced and implemented the new policy and stated that it was 'not up for discussion' (Graham, 1993:167) therefore the silence had been enforced on employees as managers did not allow them to participate in decision-making. Graham (1993:167) outlined that workers were usually granted voice while providing suggestions on how to improve quality and how to speed up their jobs, while many things that had a direct effect on worker's lives such as overtime, line speed, and shift rotation were not up for discussion.

Similarly, the MIT study by Babson (1993) has surveyed employees in ninety assembly plants from seventeen countries, where the philosophy of continuous improvement through participatory management 'kaizen' has been implemented and found that only one out of seven Mazda workers reported that they could consistently count on their supervisor to actually implement the company philosophy of participatory management. In addition, according to Babson (1993:5), of the seventy-two per cent of employees who answered that their supervisor allows employee participation at least sometimes or rarely, many commented that the supervisor plays favourites or adhered to the company philosophy only when it suits him. The survey also evaluated whether employee's worksheets had been changed without being consulted about the change. As many as thirty-five percents of employees claimed that it happened many times while thirty-seven per cent claimed it happened several times (Babson, 1993:8). The changes then usually made the job harder. This finding would suggest that having 'sophisticated' employee voice mechanisms such as frequent participatory meetings with management within the workplace does not guarantee employees to have an unlimited voice. In fact, the evidence from these particular studies shows the opposite trend as managers were creating silence over a range of issues despite organisational policies and a set of standard participatory procedures.

The study of lean car production in CAMI by Rinehart et al (1997) shows a similar trend. Only thirty-four per cent of CAMI employees reported that they were actively involved in making decisions about their immediate jobs at work and as few as ten per cent of employees considered quality consultation circles as the source of their capacity to make decisions (Rinehart et al, 1997:142). The reason for this is according to Rinehart et al (1997:142), limited perception of control that employees get from participation as the quality consultation circles and suggestion programmes are implemented by management for management's purposes. Therefore, even when managers in CAMI provided employees with a number of mechanisms to voice their opinions, they controlled the topics for discussions and did not allow employees to have an actual say. The outcomes of the participatory schemes in lean production seem to generally limit the topics employees are allowed to have to say about to those that would bring cost reduction and silence in this particular case have been imposed by managers over topics such as worker's safety, satisfaction, or skills development (Rinehart et al, 1997:155). Similarly, based on Adler's (1993:104) work at GM-Fremont, the silence imposed by managers rooted in the indifference of organisational and employee's prerogatives; with the former trying to achieve cost-cutting measures.

While these studies are set in the context of lean production, they inform about various strategies set by management to limit voice opportunities or create a shallow voice for employees, that may be possible to find in a different context as the initial managerial agenda of cost-cutting, and increasing productivity prevails in most of the capitalist enterprises. The studies show that employees who have limited voice opportunities about issues that concern them are usually exposed to greater effort extraction and further exploitation. Hence a possible outcome of such silence process may be that employees become alienated and subsequently they ‘get by’ in their jobs.

3.4. Forms of outcomes of the process of silence

The initial thoughts behind re-conceptualising employee silence and this study have a foundation in the LP perspective's views of exploitative nature of the employment relationship between employees and managers, and employees' ability and desire to challenge managerial controls and organisation of production. The previous section discusses the intentional and unintentional process of silence and some evidence from lean production, call centres (Rinehart et al, 1997; Adler, 1993; Graham, 1995; Woodcock, 2017), and NER's (Donaghey et al, 2012). Many of these studies were however not aimed at investigation employee silence, specifically, hence the inferences about voice and silence require further application in terms of possible outcomes it results in. In this section, possible forms of outcomes of silence are presented as to 'get back' at management, to 'get on' with their jobs, and to 'get by'.

3.4.1. Silence as a way to 'get back' at management

Both LP and ER analysis locates conflict and indeterminacy between workers and employers over terms on which labour power is extracted (Edwards and Scullion, 1982). The conflict of interest can be, according to Kornhauser (1954:13), expressed 'by the range of behaviour and attitudes with the oppositional and divergent orientation depending on circumstances, Employees can alter the terms which effort is extracted from them by 'getting back' at management in order to challenge the imbalance of power, even within unorganised settings (van den Broek and Dundon, 2012:100).

The research of ways employees can 'get back' at management has been recognised within the literature on the organisational misbehaviour (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999, Karlsson, 2012), defined by Sprouse (1992:3) as 'anything you do at work you are not supposed to do'. Collinson and Ackroyd (2005:306) distinguished between resistance, which they explained as overt behaviour with the formal organisation; the organisational misbehaviour defined as self-conscious rule-breaking by employees; and dissent that includes linguistic or normative disagreement. This would suggest that organisational misbehaviour and resistance are different concepts or, as argued by Collinson and Ackroyd (2005:306), a conceptual continuum where both concepts are not noticeably different from each other, but the extremes are quite distinct. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999:81) further argue that misbehaviour fills the gap in areas of behaviour that has been neglected by the resistance as organisational

misbehaviour is a social relation rather than a set of specific activities, placed in a continuum that is a mix of these opposing conceptual principles. However, Karlsson (2012:184) criticised this approach by stating that while overt behaviour is a type of behaviour independent of social relations, rule-breaking is part of the relationship between management and workers, and linguistic disagreement is again, an activity in itself. Therefore both resistance and dissent are, in fact, conscious rule-breaking and thus really parts of misbehaviour (Karlsson, 2012:185).

In addition, researchers recognised the necessity to incorporate the worker's identity. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) argue that 'the predisposition to certain misbehaviours in a workplace can be related to class and other identities', such as the wider social construction of masculinity and feminity which consequently shapes employees' expectations (p. 29). Karlsson (2012) therefore incorporated two additional dimensions into the definition of organisational misbehaviour that marks the identity of employees: 'anything you are, do and think at work which you are not supposed to be, do and think' (p. 156). Also, the identity of employees can be shaped by contextual factors within the workplace such as the perception of unfair treatment. Van den Broek and Dundon (2012:98) outlined that within the social nature of much workplace conflict, employees may moderate the power and authority of managers by misbehaviour such as humour, cynicism, incivility, culture, harassment, etc. These can be influenced not only by the employee's identity but also by their self-interest. Hence, employees'decision to remain silent may be a form of resistance to 'get back' at management.

However, it may be a limited view to expect that all actions, misbehaviour or thoughts of employees that break management rules would constitute misbehaviour. For example, working to rule is based on precisely following all the rules which raise the issue of whether this is really a breach of an employment contract as when employees follow all the rules, the work process can quickly break down. Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) specified certain conditions that ought to be met when considering employee actions as forms of misbehaviour. For example, if employee behaviour is functional to efficiency and profitability, the manager's judgement about its appropriateness can be influenced (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999:81). Employee silence can play a role in such form of misbehaviour as illustrated by Thompson (1989:137) who discusses silence by Chrysler workers, who followed management instructions to fit doors on vehicles, despite knowing that management

sent the vehicles on the line in the wrong order. The error meant costly corrections and it was constituted as an act of resistance on behalf of employees.

The organisational misbehaviour is however rather a wide concept as it may be difficult to identify which employees act, behaviour or thoughts can constitute misbehaviour, subjected to the relationship between managers and employees in various situations and within the hierarchy of the workplace. Therefore Karlsson (2012) proposes to evaluate the misbehaviour from the perspective of social relations based on two theoretical principles, one being the power hierarchy of superior and second being the position of subordinates in the workplace. The conceptualisation of organisational misbehaviour is within this model influenced by the hierarchy of command where managers decide which subordinate's actions thoughts and identities are not desirable and constitute as organisation misbehaviour. This gives rise to different forms of misbehaviour with narrower meaning such as resistance, abusive supervision, collective discipline and private business based on social relations rather than on the activities of the actors involved (Karlsson, 2012).

According to Ackroyd and Thompson (1999), resistance, as a distinct form of misbehaviour, has roots in the exercise of management's control. Employee silence can play a role in resisting and challenging management authority. While early research on employee resistance focused on the collective and formal forms of industrial actions such as strikes, the decline of trade unionism and the decline of formal collective representation shifted the focus of academics on the analysis of the individual and informal forms of workers resistance.

According to Dundon and Rollinson (2011:379), the resistance can take either formally organised form of action, with the support of institutions (e.g. trade unions), or it can take the informal, unorganised form of workers' action usually initiated by employees themselves. The former can be expressed through collective bargaining and industrial actions such as strikes, withdrawal of co-operation, working to rule, overtime bans and sit-ins. The latter can be found in more covert forms rooted in subjective recalcitrance. The literature for example identified sexual harassment as a form of misbehaviour targeting other members of the organisation (Lucero et al, 2003); incivility towards others in the organisation (Montgomery et al, 2004); expression of anger and workplace violence (Domaglaski and Steelman, 2005; Leck, 2005); manufacturing personal artefacts at work (Anteby, 2003); playing dumb including ignoring correct procedures and making intentional mistakes (Hodson, 1995); absenteeism (Edwards and Scullion, 1982), cynicism (Fleming, 2005), time spent on social

media (McDonald and Thompson, 2016); satire (Taylor and Bain; 2003); and humour (Linstead, 1985; Collinson, 1988).

Some of these forms of individual resistance may contribute to the restriction of output and employees may gain more autonomy in their workplace by controlling the pace of their personal labour process (Hodson, 1995). In contrast, some of these forms of individual resistance may contribute to the creation of workplace countercultures in which employees may express their subjective values rather than those promoted by the organisation (Taylor and Bain, 2003).

Hodson (1995) argues that different forms of resistance may overlap and occur simultaneously with other forms of resistance. Hence, within the context of the employment relationship between employees and employers, employee silence may play a role in other forms of resistance, and it can be an expression of employee resistance in its own rights. For example, employee silence can be part of the process of working to rule as illustrated previously by Thompson, 1989). Also, it can be resistance towards the speed of production line and towards the organisation and allocation of work as illustrated by Adler's (1993) study in NUMMI plant. Here employee interviewed explained that he does not share his knowledge of production improvements with management as management would take away the spare seconds the improvement would save and give him more responsibilities and make him work harder. In addition, employees can through silence resist towards individual manager if they perceive they are not being treated with dignity and respect (Hodson, 1995).

For the purpose of the study, there is a need to specify the operational definition of silence as a way to 'get back' at management. The literature on the topic of organisational misbehaviour and resistance suggests that employees' who are 'getting back' at management may counterbalance the power and controls of management (van den Broek and Dundon, 2012). Donaghey et al (2011) suggest that silence operating on the frontier of control may act for employees and against management, hence it may play a role in employee misbehaviour and resistance, and maybe a way employees can 'get back' at management. Therefore, the operational definition of silence as a way to get back at management for the purpose of this study is: ***'anything employees are silent about their managers do not want them to be silent about'.***

3.4.2. Silence as a way to 'get on' with the job

In addition to the outcome of silence to 'get back', its application may also future as a way employees 'get on' within their work context. The management literature has been traditionally considered with the control strategies developed on behalf of management that would align the interest of employees with those of management (Nyberg and Sewell, 2014). The analysis about the compliant worker has a long tradition in work and labour relations studies (Edwards et al, 2006; Wright, 2000).

Nyberg and Sewell (2014) propose that compromise can appear in the workplace in various forms, collaboration, co-operation and collusion. Collaboration lays in the unitary presumption of shared organisational goals between employees and managers, perhaps linked to OB concepts considered earlier. Collaborative employees are not able to recognise that management is creating games to generate their consent (Burawoy, 1979). They are subsequently consenting to their own further exploitation by providing increased effort that results in more income for business owners (Burawoy, 1979, Burawoy, 1983). HR practitioners then usually design bundle of practices and policies that positively affect the attitudes and behaviours of individual employees, provide them with discretion, and enable them to use their skills at work (Koster, 2011; Ramsay et al, 2000). This then related to employees' levels of organisational commitment and work effort. Collaborative employees, who buy into the unitary premises of employment relationship, may 'get on' with their jobs as they may 'lose sight of their interests' and collaborate because they 'mistakenly believe that the employment relationship is equal' (Nyberg and Sewell, 2014:310). Silence may be a process through which employees may collaborate with management. For example, employees may remain silent instead of voicing their disagreement with management about organisational processes as they do not want to disrupt production.

Both LP and ER perspectives point out that employees' and organisational goals can diverge, cooperation may simultaneously exist (Edwards, 1986). Since Fox's explanation of pluralist frame of reference as one where 'co-operation of employees one to be engineered' (Fox, 1966:14), academics have been intrigued by employee co-operation with management. For example, Burawoy (1979) poses the question why do workers work at all since their interests are opposing to those of capitalist, and their increased effort results only in more income for the company owners. However, Fox (1974) explains that co-operation does not necessarily mean that employees put their own interests aside, it is rather a recognition on behalf of employees and managers that organisation is 'a coalition of individuals and groups with their

own aspirations and perceptions' (p.250). This is consistent with Edwards' (1986) proposition of the analysis of the employment relationship based on materialist structured antagonism.

The co-operation should help realise goals for all parties involved. Hence employees may 'get on' with their job by co-operating with management while achieving their own prerogatives. Employees usually decide to co-operate with their organisations either by participation or by increased effort on the job (Kostner, 2011). However, 'managers are usually more interested in consultative participation to tap into the knowledge of employees in order to improve the efficiency of production than to allow them to have a say in the decision-making of the organisation' (Milkman, 1997:140). In addition, employers can take employees ability to co-operate into account in decision-making, for example in recruitment decisions and decisions based on the right to direct and allocate work. The lack of co-operation on behalf of employees may form the basis for an employment decision that slows the employees' salary and career development (Votinius, 2012). Similarly, employees may perceive that the employment relationship is not only in balance but it actually exceeds their expectations. Hence they may feel obliged to increase their effort. For example, it is argued that career-enhancing measures such as training and promotion possibilities may encourage employees to co-operate with their supervisor (Lambooij, 2007).

While the role of employee silence has not been yet considered in the literature, it may help explain why employees co-operate as a way to 'get on' with management or to enhance their interests in the employment relationship. For example, employees may remain silent about grievances as they do not want to be perceived by management as troublemakers. A being seen as cooperative may gain access to future promotion, training, pay rise or get a permanent contract if they are working on fixed or short term one. Similarly, there is a possibility that employees actually like their jobs and wish to perform well; they may have positive attitudes towards the organisation, product or service and customers; and/or they wish to keep positive social relations within the workplace. Silence may give them space to achieve these goals by 'getting on' with their jobs.

There are a number of influences that may affect employees' decision to 'get on'. For example, the role of other actors in the employment relationship may contribute to employees' positive perception of the social relations within the workplace. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) explained that social bonds within the workplace such as social integration

and cohesion might positively influence employees' commitment and attitudes towards their job and organisation. There may be a high trust, support and/or friendship between workers and their managers and employees to maintain these. Similarly, employees may perceive they have low support from trade union and other employee representatives, and they may wish to build individual relationships with their managers for future gains.

Besides actors, there are various processes within the employment relationship that may influence employees' decision to 'get on' with their job through the silence process. For example, the nature of the job itself may be a high indicator of whether employees may collaborate or cooperate with their managers. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) explained that task characteristics such as job complexity, autonomy and intrinsic rewards from a job might positively influence employees' attitudes towards their jobs and organisation. Similarly, the application of formal procedures such as HR practices and policies may positively affect the attitudes and behaviour of employees (Koster, 2011). The opportunities for employee voice may also result in employees' collaboration and cooperation as employees may perceive they have an actual choice whether to speak up or to remain silent which can help to build trust within the employment relationship.

However, while reasons for employees to 'get on' with their jobs are complex and overlapping, the aim of workers utilising this strategy is rather to compromise with management in order to either improve their working lives or to remain social relations within the workplace. Silence may be a process that allows employees to do so. Donaghey et al (2011) suggest that silence operating on the frontier of control may in some instances act for employees and for management at the same time. In other words, certain behaviours of employees may aim at maintaining the status quo within the employment relationship with regards to individual control. Hence, the operational definition of silence as a way to get on at management for the purpose of this study is: '***withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'***.

3.4.3. Silence as a way to 'get by' in the workplace

A third potential form of employee silence outcome, drawing on LP and ER literature insights, is labelled 'get by' (van den Broek and Dundon, 2012). While previous sections considered the application utility in terms of 'getting back' at management or 'getting on' with their job, the aim of this section is to shed light on silence resulting in perceived lack of control over personal labour process that is conceptually distinct from resistance (get back) or compliance/cooperation (get on).

Katz's (2004) work on resilience explained that workers sometimes need to cope with day to day realities of their workplace which may not necessarily result in changes in social relations of the employment relationship. Hence, 'getting by' is viewed as a coping strategy, rather than an attempt to improve the conditions of employment. However, 'getting by' should not be viewed as an isolated strategy as its link to resistance and co-operation is significant. Katz (2004) explained that while 'resilience enables employees to get by, it also enables them to maintain or enter reciprocal social relations with other actors of employment relationship' which are crucial resources for resistance and cooperation (p. 246). Also, there is much concern on behalf of academics whether the 'getting by' is actually the intentions or consequences of employees' agency (Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2010:216).

With regards to the research on employee silence, this suggests that employees who may intend to 'get by' in their workplace may find silence as a suitable strategy to do so. However, it may also explain that 'getting by' may be an unintended outcome of the silence process as the human capacity to transform agency is bounded by existing structures and conditions within the workplace. Therefore, silence as a way to 'get by' in the workplace may be an intention of employees or outcomes of the social processes within the effort-reward exchange and contextual influences. In such an instance, there is a need to identify why employees wish to get by in their workplaces and how social processes and contextual influences may limit their voice opportunities.

Employees may 'get by' in their workplaces for a number of reasons. These reasons may include a combination of exhaustion and differences between personal values and work environment. Employees who may otherwise gain a sense of identity from their jobs may become disillusioned when they encounter barriers that limit their autonomy, creativity or a sense of purpose. There are various concepts within the literature on employees' attitudes and behaviours that may explain why employees may 'get by' in their workplaces. The rest of the

section explains the concept of alienation and how it may contribute to employees decision making to remain silent.

The concept of alienation dates back to Marx (1844/1932) who explained it as a state where employees have no autonomy and ownership of their jobs. Hence its roots are in employees' perceptions of lack of freedom and control over their work. Since then, the literature suggests that the concept is more complex and its definition and interpretation is problematic (Sarros et al, 2002). The psychology literature explains alienation as a state where a person becomes estranged from self (Fromm, 1955). With regards to the workplace, Seeman (1959) then suggested that job alienation has five dimensions, powerlessness, meaningless, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement.

Powerlessness may have, for example, roots in the inability of employees to influence general managerial policies and lack of control over the conditions of employment and work process (Blauner, 1964). Employees who feel powerless in their job may behave in a way to 'get by' in their workplace because they may not expect that their individual behaviour can influence outcomes they seek in their jobs (Seeman, 1959). For example, alienation has been linked with the loss of control over the production process and task (Kohn, 1976; Mottaz, 1981). This suggests that employees who may otherwise communicate their grievances and suggestions for improvements in attempts to change organisational processes or their working conditions may remain silent intentionally as speaking up would not lead to their desired outcomes. However, while this decision may be conscious, there is the further possibility of lack of voice opportunities and management behaviour and structures that prevent employees from having a say which may result in the same consequences as intentional silence.

Meaningless has been defined by Seeman (1959:786) as to occur 'when workers are not able to understand the complex system of goals in their organisation and its relationship to their own work'. Kanungo (1982:26) explained that the 'job becomes meaningless' because workers may perceive their task as simple, dull and boring which limits their sense of responsibility and purpose. Blauner (1964) connects the occurrence of meaninglessness with working processes such as standardisation of production and the division of labour. Employees who are alienated from their work due to its meaningless may withdraw their voice and remain silent because they are bored or perhaps because they do not care about production. They may not suggest organisational improvements as those may increase their workload or /and make work even more tedious.

Normlessness arises from Durkheim's book Suicide (1897) where he defined the concept of anomie as a desire that is impossible to fulfil hence it becomes more intense. The early research of the concept in the context of the workplace dates back to the era of industrialisation, where employees' resistance to change led to disruptive cycles of collective behaviour. Dean (1961) explained the term as a social situation in which social norms are not effective, or they became obsolete. The concept then captured a workplace condition in which management provides limited guidance to employees which may result in employees' perception that their input is pointless due to the lack of clarity in goals, or their feeling of anxiety and uneasiness that their input would not be approved by others (Seeman, 1959). Hence, employees may withdraw information from management as they feel that there is no point in communicating them, or they may feel that their ideas would not be accepted by other actors of the effort-reward exchange.

Isolation refers to the form of alienation in which people, according to Seeman (1959:789), '*assign a low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society'*. In the workplace, employees may feel isolated because they lack integration within the social group they work in or they may not be assimilated with the standards of other actors of the effort-reward exchange. Hence, isolation is rather social alienation having its roots in emotional detachment from others and lack of empathy (Blauner, 1964). Employees who feel detached from the social relations in the workplace may remain silent as they may not be interested in building a relationship with other actors of the effort-reward exchange.

A self-estrangement form of alienation refers to *'the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work'* (Seeman, 1959:700). In the workplace context, this has been explained as a condition where employees perceive their job only as a mean to make money rather than a source of personal pride and achievement (Shepard, 1977). For example, job offers limited opportunities for employees to show their unique abilities (Blauner, 1964:26). This may have a similar implication to silence as a meaningless form of alienation where employees may not care about their job or/and find it boring.

Research on antecedents of job alienation usually recognises that there are factors that may trigger the alienation of employees. Some factors may be individual. However, there is a relatively wide gap in the research except for links of alienation to individuals who have an external locus of control and show loss of affiliate satisfaction (Korman et al, 1981); links to

personal factors such as level of education (Rosner and Putterman, 1991); and socio-economic status background (Lang, 1985).

The structural factors leading to alienation have received more attention on behalf of researchers. For example, Blauner (1964) links alienation with the division of labour, standardised, routine and repetitive jobs on the assembly lines. Hence, the nature of the job may play an important determinant whether employees remain silent and 'get by' in their workplaces. Similalry, Simpson's (1999) study of work context and alienation shows that jobs where employees have limited contact with other actors of employment relationship contribute to alienation. The study also explains that the nature of contracts such as contractual work influences employees' alienation as it limits their ability to form relationships (Simpson, 1999). In addition, employees may feel alienated as their attempts to change their working conditions have been previously ignored by management or cannot be communicated due to the weak and ineffective voice channels.

Therefore, the structural organisational factors may play an important role in employees' decision to 'get by' in their workplace through the silence process or it may be an outcome of the lack of opportunities for voice. As the literature suggests, these may be factors related to the social relations among actors such as the inability to build friendship and/or processes within the employment relationship such as the nature of the job itself, contractual conditions and/or lack of direct and indirect voice opportunities. However, while reasons for 'getting by' are complex and overlapping, the aim of workers utilising this strategy is rather to cope with existing working conditions than attempting to improve them. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, this outcome of silence may be unintentional on behalf of employees, which suggests that with regards to the employees' perception of control over their personal labour process, the control shifts towards the managers and employers. Donaghey et al (2011) suggest that silence operating on the frontier of control may in some instances act 'against' employees. Therefore the operationalised definition of employee silence as a way to 'get by' in their jobs is: '***withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'***

3.5. Sensitising framework of employee silence

Discussion on the suitability of competing for perspectives to consider employee silence in Chapter 2 reviewed OB, ER and LP approach. Several limitations with OB suggested ER and in particular, LP offers a more useful lens to take the research forward. To this end a sensitising framework (Fig. 3.5.) is outlined, considering the aforementioned issues and discussion about the dynamics of voice and silence among workers. It therefore specifically adopts a worker rather than a managerial perspective about employee silence.

The framework starts with the range of factors that may influence the dynamics of the employment relationship with regards to voice and silence. These are nature of the job (e.g. intensity, intrinsic rewards, tediousness), formal employment procedures (e.g. contracts, absence or presence of voice mechanisms, management structures), as well as informal social relations among actors involved in the employment relationship (managers, co-workers, union and other employee representatives). The LP perspective helps to understand here a range of influences within the social relations of the employment relationship while it also informs on structural dynamics such as management structures and voice initiatives. These have been discussed in section 3.2 of this chapter where it is argued for both informal and formal aspects of the employment relationship to play an important role in actual practice (Marchington and Suter, 2013). The unique configuration of formal and informal structures and behaviours of actors of the employment relationship may influence how employees perceive and evaluate whether their opportunities for voice are limited which may result in their silence; or whether they may achieve their prerogatives through silence.

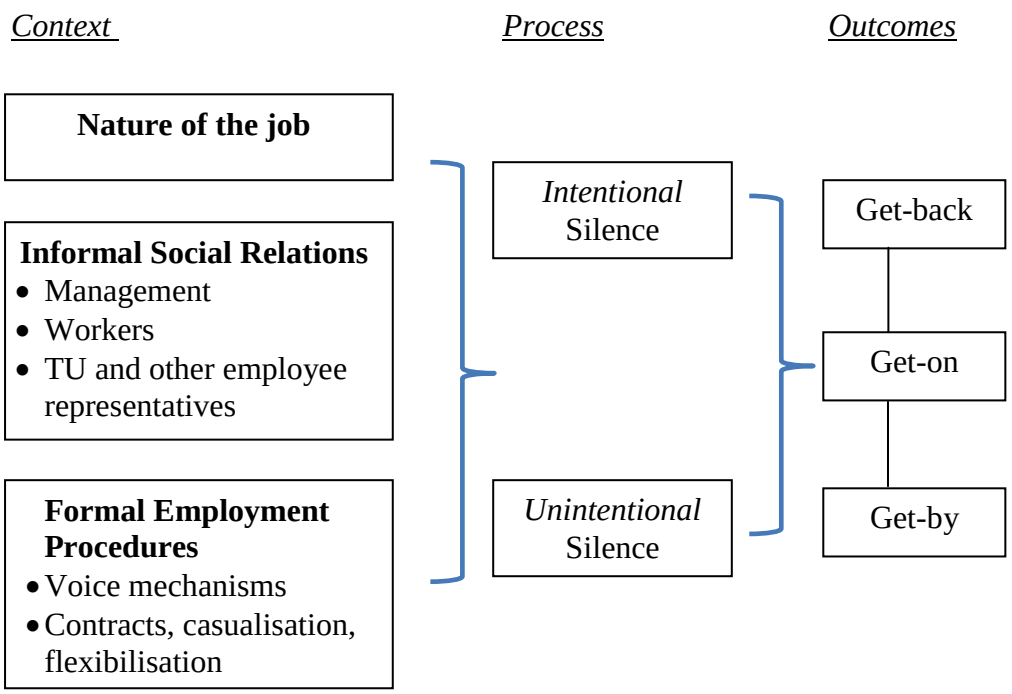
The research framework further depicts how intentional and unintentional silence translates into possible actions or applied forms of outcomes of silence. Employees may seek to 'get back' at their managers or employers by a counterbalancing source of power displayed by managers usually through resistance when they refuse to accept or comply with organisation and allocation of work and the state of social relations between themselves and other actors in the employment relationship. (discussed in section 3.4.1 of this chapter. The operationalised definition of employee silence as a way to 'get back' at management for the purpose of this research then covers: '***anything employees are silent about that their managers do not want them to be silent about.'***

However, it cannot be assumed that possible antagonism is always evident in the employment relationship as the relationship would not continue without a certain level and degree of

cooperation or at least compliance. In such a scenario, employees may 'get on' with their jobs as a source of their satisfaction as discussed in section 3.4.2 of this chapter. The operationalised definition of employee silence as a way to 'get on' with their job for the purpose of this research then covers: '***withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'***.

However, not all actions and behaviour of employees that do not challenge the managerial prerogatives can be constituted as cooperation. Similarly, not all misbehaviour on behalf of workers could be seen as a dysfunctional episode of conflict in the workplace. Sometimes, employees may seek to 'get by' in a degrading job and/or daily work routines and silence allows them space to achieve this. In addition, employees may not have opportunities to express their views resulting in a similar outcome of 'getting by'. Such an outcome of silence then rather shift the frontier of control towards the management than towards the employees. Hence the operationalised definition of employee silence as a way to 'get by' in their workplace covers: '***withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'***

Figure 3.5: Sensitising Framework of Employee Silence



The research framework in Fig. 3.5 suggests that the intentional and unintentional forms of employee silence process are influences and subsequently mediated by a series of factors and inter-organisational and intra-actor dynamics. These mediating influences may coexist in the organisation simultaneously, depending on the nature of the issue or interest of concern to either employer or employees. While employees may intentionally withdraw information about organisational improvements as a form of resistance to improve their side of frontier of control and ‘get back’ at management; they may intentionally remain silent about criticism of organisational practices to remain positive social relations with management and ‘get by’ in their jobs; and/or they may intentionally remain silent about their grievances to improve social relations with other actors of the employment relationship and ‘get on’ with their job. In contrast, management may limit employees’ opportunity to express their grievances which may subsequently trigger employees’ resistance, cooperation or alienation.

3.6. Conclusion

The content of the chapter informs the research on how workplace context (including nature of the job, formal employment procedures and informal social relations among actors) may influence employees to remain silent or to limit their voice opportunities. The aim here was to inform the research question *'how do employees' perceptions of workplace context influence the process and outcomes of silence?'*. Secondly, the chapter explained intentional and unintentional forms of silence process which informs the research question '*how do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'*. Thirdly, the chapter explained possible forms of outcomes of the silent process (get back, get on, get by) informing the research question '*why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'*. Finally, the chapter presented a sensitising framework of employee silence that informs on the empirical investigation of the phenomena of silence. The next chapter discusses the suitability of various methodological approaches that may help with the operationalisation of this framework and data collection and analysis.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses alternative philosophical approaches and explains the methodological approach that has been chosen to help answer the research questions presented below in section 4.2. In addition, the aim of the chapter is to justify the chosen research method, describe the strategy for the data collection and explain the methods for data analysis. Firstly, the chapter examines the philosophical foundation of the research and explains why interpretivism is the better-suited alternative to other research paradigms. Secondly, the chapter outlines the research design. This includes the discussion of possible data collection methods with presenting arguments on why interviewing is the most appropriate method. In addition, the chapter introduces the sampling method used, participants for the study and the nature of the data collected by the researcher. Thirdly, the chapter presents the interview design and the methods of data analysis that were employed by the researcher.

4.2. Research questions

The main focus of the study is to investigate how and why employees may be or remain silent at work. Based on the literature review, the process of employee silence can take intentional and/or unintentional forms. In addition, the literature suggests that the outcome of the silent process may be employees 'getting back' at management, 'getting on' with their jobs', and/or 'getting by' in their workplace. The literature further suggests that the nature of the job, formal employment procedures, and informal social relations among actors of the employment relationship may influence the sources and rationalisation of silence. Specific subsidiary questions were developed to assist in answering the main research objectives. The three main research questions together with the subsidiary questions were the sole questions used during the interviews, however, they were addressed to different respondents with a different context. For example, participants who did not have trade union presence in their workplace, nor were members of trade unions were not asked questions about their relationship with their workplace representatives.

1. How do employees' perceptions of the workplace context influence the process and outcomes of silence?

- How does the nature of the job influence employees' decisions to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views?
- How do formal employment procedures influence employees' decisions to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views?
- How do informal social relations influence employees' decision to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views?

2. How do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?

- Are employees intentionally and/or unintentionally silent?

3. Why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?

- Do employees remain silent in order to 'get back' at management?
- Do employees remain silent in order to 'get on' with their jobs?
- Do employees remain silent in order to 'get by' in their workplace?

4.3. Research Paradigm

According to Bryman (2012:19), the methods of social science research are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied therefore they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different views about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined. A research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of enquiry along three major dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:6). As Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) argued that 'questions of method are secondary to the questions of paradigm', there is a need to outline the philosophical foundation of the research before outlining the research approach and the methods used.

A paradigm, used by Kuhn (1962), means a basic orientation to theory and research shared by a community of scientists which provides them with a model for analysing problems and discovering solutions. While Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) defines paradigm as the 'basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in

ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways', Neuman (1991:45) argues that it includes the 'basic assumptions, the important questions to be answered or puzzles to be solved, the research techniques to be used and examples of what scientific research looks like'. Hence, the paradigm deemed most appropriate to inform this research, will help to develop the research strategy, including methods of data collection.

The varying community of scientists held different perceptions of reality that influenced by ontological and epistemological aspects. These perceptions are either objectivistic which argues that reality is mind-independent; or constructivist which argues that humans generate subjective knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas. However, either of these is not considered to be superior to the other as both of them may be appropriate in varying circumstances based on the nature of the research. This research aims to investigate 'how and why' employees remain silent by looking into employee's subjective experience and perceptions of the reality in their workplaces hence the research is influenced by the constructivist view.

Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) argue that there are four paradigms (positivism, post-positivism, postmodernism and post-structuralism), reflecting beliefs of academic communities about the world that are competing in informing and guiding inquiry. While positivism and post-positivism are both objectivist and assumes that the 'reality is only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable with the aim of enquiry to explain, predict and control' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:109); postmodernism and post-structuralism are grouped under critical theory which adopts a more transactional and subjectivist epistemology, and the aim of enquiry is critique and emancipation. Hence, within critical theory, the researcher and study participants interact, and therefore the inquiry is influenced by the values of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:110).

Gephart (2004:456) distinguished three research paradigms that are popular in organisational and management research: positivism, interpretivism and critical modernism. This classification seem to be appropriate for proposed research as all three perspectives through their underlying epistemological assumptions can influence qualitative research and inform and develop the knowledge of employee silence in the context of effort-reward exchange relationship within the management field and this research. However, the focus will lie in two paradigms, namely positivism and interpretivism as they may be perceived as two extremes placed in the continuum. The discussion of the view of reality, the nature of the knowledge

and the varying methods the knowledge is generated within each of these two paradigms follows, however as mentioned earlier, these research paradigms are not necessarily conflicting, and each of them can contribute to developing this study. Hence, logical reasoning will assist in determining the appropriateness of each paradigm to inform this study.

4.3.1. Positivism

According to Neuman (1991:45), positivism is the oldest and the most widely used approach which is based on an early nineteenth-century philosophical school of thought founded by the father of sociology, Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Positivism is known for its argument that knowledge is generated through observation and experiments hence positivist researchers are likely to use quantitative research methods such as experiments, surveys, and statistics. Therefore, only statements that are verifiable logically or empirically would be cognitively meaningful and contribute to knowledge. The statements that are unverifiable are then cognitively meaningless and so not develop new knowledge. However, according to Bunge (1996:317), the logical positivism failed to solve many problems as its failure to find an acceptable statement of the 'verifiable criteria of meaningfulness'. It often verifies or disproves, but fails to explain the 'how' and 'why' type of research inquiries.

Neuman (1991:46) further argues that positivist 'objective' research, attempts to measure precisely things about people, and test hypotheses by carefully analysing numbers from the measures. According to Bullock et al (1999:692), positivism has been criticised for its view that social processes are reducible to physical systems and for its wrong representation of human social actions. According to the positivist way of thinking, a scientific theory is a mathematical model that describes and codifies the observations we make. The role of the observer in this model is ignored (Bunge, 1996:317), and therefore it consequently fails to prove that there are 'not abstract ideas, laws and principles, beyond particular observable facts' and relationship and necessary principles that are relevant to the actual lives of real people (Neuman, 1991:46).

The research about employee silence has for the most part fallen within a positivist paradigm, primarily from OB perspective, and employing of quantitative research methods. For example, Vakola and Bouradas (2005) conducted the empirical investigation of the antecedents and consequences of organisational silence by surveying 677 employees, which included questions about supervisor's attitudes and communication opportunities in relation

to job satisfaction. One problem, according to Godard (2014:8), is in order to conduct quantitative research such as this, it is necessary to abstract the subject from human society, and most importantly the power dynamics of the employment relations are ignored or reduced to a quantifiable coefficient. Positivism views employees who are silent as subjects amenable to simple laws of behaviour with quantitative measurement. A further problem with such an approach to silence research is one of ontology, as it creates a descriptive instead of an explanatory contribution to knowledge (Godard, 2014:8). This is due to the positivist view that research study is within a stable context and unchanging reality. In such a context, the researcher may believe that the epistemological stance based on employees' perceptions is either true or false. Consequently, research tends to follow an idealised version of the ontology as it focuses on 'prediction and control rather than understanding' (Godard, 2014:8).

There are further flaws with the positivist approach to researching employee silence. Godard (2004:374) argues that it is not just the positivist method, but also the positivist attitude to over-specify the research models in the belief it can provide a crude representation of a more complex social reality. Positivism can then consequently over-objectify employees in the research. Employees as a human beings have varying personalities however positivists, according to Godard (2014:9), can through their research establish how these personalities matter to the way in which employees respond to external stimuli which can lead to weak and inconsistent research results. In other words, positivism views employees as objects (like metal or machinery), whereas in reality, they are subjects who can influence the external environment themselves. Hence, positivism by its focus on experiments, prediction and control through quantitative methods is not appropriate research paradigm for this study.

4.3.2. Interpretivism

Researchers within the interpretive paradigm view reality as being influenced by people's subjective experiences of the external world hence the research inquiry differ substantially from the inquiry within natural sciences. Walsham (2006:320) argues that interpretive methods of research start from the position that the knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors. This is due to the fact that human acts are meaningful and consequently contribute to further actions of both themselves and of others. Thus the role of the researcher is to understand people's action and thinking and interpret them from their point of view (Bryman, 2012:30). Researchers may then

employ an inter-subjective epistemology and the socially constructed ontology because theories concerning reality are ways of making sense of the world, and shared meanings are a form of intersubjectivity rather than objectivity (Walsham, 2006:320).

Interpretivism seems to be most appropriate for this study as it focuses on human experiences within a specific context (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) and in contrast to positivism, there are no true or false statements within this paradigm. In addition, opposed to the positivist inquiry which employs the measurement and statistic, the interpretivism employs observation and interpretation through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings to collect information and interpret them. As mentioned earlier, the main focus of interpretivism is to collect data from subjective experiences of individuals, therefore, research methodologies such as interviewing or participant observation may be used to determine the participant's views within a certain context. The context is determined by the participant's experience in a certain situation and their subjective understanding of it hence as oppose to the positivist approach, interpretivists do not construct a hypothesis and predefine the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Interpretivism is based on the philosophical approach of hermeneutics and phenomenology (Bryman, 2012:29). Hermeneutics provides the philosophical grounding for interpretivism, and it is, according to (Bryman, 2012:29), concerned with the emphatic understanding of human action rather than with the forces that are deemed to act on it. Hence the analysis aims to understand participant's interaction with the world around them and the social context of their actions and behaviour. Phenomenology is a philosophy articulated by Alfred Schultz, who suggested that human beings pre-select and pre-interpret the world they experience as reality through a common sense constructs (Schutz, 1962:59). Therefore, the researcher's effort needs to be placed on the gaining access to participant's thinking, judgement and emotions of their experiences; and consequently, interpret participant's actions and behaviour and their perception of the social world from their point of view. In order to collect information about an individual's perceptions, data needs to be collected through qualitative research methods such as interviewing or observations.

While interpretivists approach could be criticised for its subjectivity as the results may be influenced by the researcher's personal biases, this study is conducted within interpretivist paradigm as its ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions are best suited to guide the nature of the study's inquiry. This is due to the aim of interpretivism which

studies the subjective meanings motivating people's actions in order to be able to understand the reality (Saunders et al., 2003:84).

Ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:6). Within interpretivist ontology the varying social realities can exist as an individual's knowledge, beliefs and experience are differently interpreted. Therefore, the interpretivism approach allows us to study employee silence using the subjective experiences of the various participants which help to explain how employees remain silent within their social interactions in their workplaces by sharing their beliefs and individual experiences. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:6) explains that epistemology reflects the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known, hence the unique opinions and experiences of employees are critical to the study. The epistemological stance of the research is, therefore, to construct knowledge about employee silence through the interactive methodological process with employees based on posing questions and active listening and analysing responses.

4.4. Research Methodology

Research methodology helps to design an appropriate strategy for collecting and analysing data and its consequent formulation and representation. There are two commonly used research methodologies guiding researcher: qualitative and quantitative. These methodologies differ in varying aspects ranging from the questions they pose to the nature of data they produce which will be discussed in more detail later in this section. In addition, as quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are derived from differing philosophical assumptions, the nature of the knowledge they generate is different.

The quantitative research methodology developed to provide guidance of the researcher within the natural sciences while qualitative research methodology aims to study social and cultural phenomena and therefore guide the inquiry of the social scientists. Both methodologies can be applied to the management and social science fields and assist with further development of the labour process theory. For example, a recent study by McDonald and Thompson (2015) on the private use of social media in the workplace and its consequent disruption of relations within organisational setting used quantitative methods, particularly the surveys of employees. In contrast, qualitative methods such as participant observation and

interviews were used by Taylor and Bain (2003) while determining humour as a part of employee conscious strategy to undermine management. Hence, the suitability of the methodology employed by the researcher depends on the nature of the research problem, the question to be answered, and the context in which data needs to be collected.

The main difference between the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies lay in the nature of the knowledge generated hence the strategies developed to collect data, and their further analysis and presentation vary. While quantitative research presents statistical data about 'what', 'when' and 'how much', the qualitative research presents its results by analysing and interpreting information collected from individuals who share subjective experiences of the social worlds they live in, asking about processes concerned with understanding 'how' and 'why' questions. Hence, quantitative research collects its data through questionnaires and surveys which are further analysed by mathematical and statistical models such as correlations in order to test relationships between variables and confirm or reject research hypothesis. In contrast, qualitative research aims to understand the experience of the participants in their natural setting by using methods such as observation, interviewing, ethnography and case studies. The data is then analysed by the researcher, who based on his/her impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009), aims to find links between themes and develop general patterns that emerge from the data.

Bryman (2012) explains that qualitative and quantitative research methodologies differ mainly in the researcher's preoccupation. As quantitative research purpose is an explanation, the researcher is concerned with the measurement of the information collected. In addition, to find relationships among the variables and test hypothesis, the researcher's attention is turned to causality. The findings then need to be generalised beyond the confines of the particular context in which the research was conducted (Bryman, 2012:176) as the researcher may seek to replicate the study with the same results to ensure its validity. In contrast, qualitative researcher aim through his/her study develop a deep understanding of some phenomena hence his/her role is to firstly view the social world through the participant's perspective with the emphasis placed on the context of the participant's experience. This helps to develop knowledge of why certain experience took place. Secondly, researcher views social life in terms of processes (Bryman, 2012:402) hence his/her concern lays in the explanation of participant's behaviour and experiences in the context of events that took place over time. The study collects data from human beings who differ in their ways of thinking, in ways they interpret their experiences and in the ways they are influenced by the social world around

them, hence researcher's role is to develop data collection methods that are flexible and have a limited structure (Bryman, 2012:403). The generalisation of the data is based on the specific context. The main differences between qualitative and quantitative research methodology devised from Bryman (2012) are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Purpose	Understanding of the social phenomena based on participant's perspectives	Explanation of the relationships between measurable variables
Research process	Flexible, limited structure	The hypothesis generated before data collection
Role of the researcher	Understand the participant's experiences and interpret them	Explain the phenomena studied through objective observation and without participating
Generalisability	Based on the context in which participant's experiences took place	Seeks universal replicable fit.

4.4.1. The rationale for a qualitative study

According to Guba (1981:76), the suitability of the paradigm and consequent research methodology is based on the extent to which their suitability meets the aim of the investigation. The qualitative research methodology is deemed most appropriate for the purpose of this study as its purpose is to collect data about respondents' subjective experiences within a certain context. In addition, qualitative research methodology allows the researchers to understand the participant' role in interactions within their social context and their perceptions of the experiences that took place. The quantitative research would not allow gathering data that could help to explain these events within their social context. Also, the objectivity of the research could be lost in the quantitative data collection process by the testing of context-free hypothesis.

The study aims to develop the knowledge about employee silence, particularly the forms that process of silence can take and the reasons and influences that may explain how and why employees remain silent. The design for data collection in this study includes investigating and recording in detail the unique experiences of individuals who may remain silent in their workplaces. In addition, the social context that influences employee decision making about voice and silence is recorded and analysed.

Silence is a complex phenomenon in which existence may depend on varying processes and interactions within the context of the employment relationship between employees and managers. Hence, many variables such as nature of the job, formal employment procedures and especially informal social relations among actors need to be captured by the descriptive, subjective and attitudinal data. The knowledge about employee silence that is generated by this research may be generalisable regarding theory development. Guba and Lincoln (1982:238) argue that generalisations from the qualitative research are impossible since phenomena under investigation is neither time nor context-free, however, there is a certain level of transferability possible depending on the degree of temporal and contextual similarity. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) add that qualitative studies gain their potential for applicability to other situations by providing comparability and translatability. While the former 'refers to the degree to which components of a study (e.g. the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and setting) are sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the result of the study as a basis for comparison' (p. 228); the latter refers to 'a clear description of one's theoretical stance and research techniques' (Schofield, 2002:179). Hence, the researcher needs to collect a substantial amount of information about employee silence in various settings which enables to draw conclusions from the study that may be useful in understanding other contexts.

4.5. Research Design

According to Bryman (2012:45), a research design is a framework for the generation of evidence that is suited both to a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which is researcher interested. The choice of data collection method should reflect an overall research strategy (Mason, 1996: 19). Hence, this section helps to develop a plan of the data collection method that optimises the validity of data. There are varying data collection strategies within the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research methodologies such as ethnography, case studies and interviews. These will be briefly discussed in order to develop the most appropriate research design for this study.

4.5.1. Rejecting the ethnography strategy

Howell (2013:117) defined ethnography as a methodological approach, which emerged through an interest in the origins of culture and civilisation and describes social groups. In workplaces, ethnographies are based on observational work in particular settings (Silverman, 2005:49) therefore it entails the extended involvement of the researcher in the social life of those who are studied (Bryman, 2008:401) and consequent understanding of the social action and the meaning of these actions. The ethnographer observes behaviour, listens and engages in conversations with participants which mean as argued by Howell (2012:118) that the inductive process is used rather than deductive process and hypothesis testing.

The induction process of ethnographers minimise the researcher's presuppositions, and he/she can witness the subject's world on their own terms (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997:34). However, Silverman (2005:79) stated that it doesn't mean complete omnipresence of theory before the field work as such a purely inductive approach can be blind to the need to build cumulative bodies of knowledge. Hence, researchers always start their field work with some orienting ideas (Miles and Huberman, 1984:27) or use some form of a theoretical framework to ensure the distance between the researcher and participants (Howell, 2013:117).

Ethnographers can use overt strategy (participants are aware of the researcher) or covert strategy (participants are not aware they are being observed), and they usually investigate small numbers of cases or one case in great detail. Bryman (2008:405) argues that overt researcher may come across difficulties when trying to gain access to the organisation as managers tend to protect proprietary information and the company's image. In addition, securing access to an organisation doesn't mean researcher gains access and trust of people in the organisation as Bryman (2008:408) argues that they may have a suspicion that the researcher is an instrument of management to note and report back to management what has been said by participants.

In contrast, the covert researcher may not have difficulties with access and participants are less likely to adjust their behaviour because of the researcher's presence (Bryman, 2008:405). For example, Graham (1993) worked as a covert participant/observer at the Subaru-Isuzu Automotive plant while both management and workers were unaware that they were under observation which allowed him to develop an understanding of worker's behaviours within the specific organisational context. However, it can bring besides ethical considerations such as not allowing participants opportunity for informed consent, problems for the researcher to

take notes or interact with participants. Chinoy (1955) worked on an assembly line as a participant/observer in an auto plant and found that he was so tied to the line, that it was difficult to talk to other workers. Similarly, Ditton found it impossible to keep everything he wanted to remember in his head until the end of the working day, so he took rough notes as he was going along while using lavatory toilet paper: *'The time I spent on lavatory began to get noticed'* (1977:5).

While the strategy of ethnography could inform the current research by studying participants within their organisational context, particularly the actions and mechanisms managers can use to influence employee decision making to remain silent or withdraw from articulating their voice; the nature of the research question suggests that employee decision making processes to remain silent can be intrinsic and hence difficult to observe. Also, the further theory building of employee silence from the data collected in a few organisations would be tied to specific context such as organisational size, the industry in which the organisation operates, etc. Hence, ethnography is not deemed as an appropriate data collection strategy due to the nature of the inquiry in this research.

4.5.2. Rejecting the case study strategy

A case study is commonly used as an umbrella term for the research that investigates and interprets the behaviour and attitudes of the participants in a particular setting. The methods of data collection are usually interviews or participant observation with the emphasis on the social context and how it influences participant's behaviour (Bryman, 2012:68). According to Punch (1998:150), while the nature of the research questions can vary, the general objective is to develop as a full understanding of the particular case as possible. This approach is suitable in situations where the context of the phenomena that is being studied is crucial for theory development. Hence, the data collected serve to explain the context from the varying perspectives of the participants. For example, Gouldner's (1954) study aimed to investigate employee's reasons to resist in one particular mining organisation, therefore, the data collected described a number of the contextual factors such as the behaviour and structure of management and their influences on employee's decision making.

Bryman (2012) outlines that the case study research does not utilise the particular method of data collection hence it could range from collecting information about participant's perspectives by observation or interviews to collecting information about contextual setting

by reviewing policies and procedures. The data analysis then aims to investigate and explain the relationships among the contextual factors and the participant's experience. Given the nature of this research, where the forms that employee silence can take and the individual employee's perception of management are investigated in order to determine their influences on employee decision making to remain silent, the case study strategy could inform the research only in a limited way with reference to few organisations and their explicit context. The data collected would help to generate knowledge of silence that would be dependent on such context hence the generalisation of the theory created on such data is difficult to apply to a different context.

4.5.3. The rationale for the interviewing strategy

Different interviewing options are reviewed in this section. However, the semi-structured interviews were evaluated as the most appropriate data collection strategy for the purpose of this research. The qualitative interviewing strategy for data collection seeks to describe and understand the meanings of central themes in the life world of the participants (Kvale, 1996). Therefore, qualitative interviews can help with collecting and analysing information about employees understanding of and experiences in their workplaces (Rubin and Rubin, 1995:3). As the main task of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees experience, the findings of the study using such data collection strategy are based on the researcher's interpretation of the data collected on the topic of the research. Interviewing is a more active approach than surveys or ethnography as the participants have the opportunity to elaborate on their answers. The specific topic of this research, employee silence, can be explored in the context of a particular event or happening. In addition, topical interviews with their narrow focus on employee silence gather data about how and why employees decided to remain silent including the issues they were silent about. As Rubin and Rubin (1995:28) outline, 'the aim is to seek an explanation of events and understanding of human actions processes'. This will help particularly with enhancing the knowledge about how and why the decision about remaining silent was made on behalf of employees and/or how the context prevented them from having a say on certain issues.

While interviewing may often be used as a data collection method conducting case studies, there is a need to distinguish between these two strategies for data collection. As mentioned previously, case studies aim to investigate the relationship between perceptions of the group

of participants related to the researched phenomena within a specific context. However, as the aim of this study is to generate knowledge of why and how employees may remain silent in the employment relationship, the case study strategy would limit the scope of the research to the relationship between employee silence and specific organisational factors. While a case study would suit this research and research questions, there were some difficulties. It felt too problematic and risky to seek access to a case study, as the prevalence of silence in a given single organisation may not be sufficiently known before gaining access. Therefore, the interviewing strategy is designed in various work settings to help generate wider knowledge about the variability and scope of employee voice and silence and the reasons why. What will be cognisant to the interview design are potentially important context factors: sector, gender, occupation, skill, unionisation and other related employment relationship dynamics.

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995:22), 'research needs to identify its scope and boundaries' which will determine who will be interviewed for the purpose of the study and about what. As the topic of the research is how and why employees remain silent in their workplaces, the research arena includes employees. Each employee is an individual who has concerns and interests of his/her own and responds in a distinct manner to the phenomena being studied in their social setting. Questions need to be asked in order to allow all participants to express their views on the same topics. However, while in surveys or structured interviews each participant is asked the same questions, the same questions asked during the interviews makes little sense. The goal of the interviews is to find out rich and deep interpretation of what voice and silence mean to employees and particular processes shaping different outcomes. It is not much the individual or single interview that is crucial, but analysis, coding and interpretation of the collective mass of interviews about the phenomenon that supports conceptual generalisation to theoretical knowledge.

In contrast to structured interviews, the unstructured interviews aim to encourage participants to say stories that are analysed by the researcher with regards to participant's perception and construction of their views. The participants hence lead the interview by sharing, constructing and structuring the stories themselves. The nature of the questions posed by the researcher is usually open-ended related to the topic of the researcher's interests, but they do not encourage participants to answer them in a short direct manner. Instead, the researcher encourages participants to elaborate on parts of the stories that are relevant to the research. However, according to Rubin and Rubin (1995) as the interviewer usually plays a more active role in directing the questions and in keeping the conversation on specific topics,

‘interviewing process is sometimes criticised for researcher’s ability to influence or impose his/her world on the interviewees’ (p. 5).

The data collection strategy deemed most appropriate for this research is a semi-structured interviewing strategy that combines both structured and unstructured interviewing. This includes according to Flick (1998) ‘more or less open-ended questions researcher asks based on the interview guide constructed and generated by the research framework’ (p. 94). According to Bryman (2012), structured interviews allow a certain degree of freedom for participants with regards to their replies to a set of questions. The questions posed gather data about particular information while participants have the opportunity to expand upon their answers and give more detail about their perceptions of particular experiences. The rationale for the semi-structured interviews was to allow research subjects to describe their own experiences with workplace silence while following a theoretically relevant discussion to the research aim. In addition, semi-structured interviews are particularly suited in a research context where the interviewer can probe further into the information shared by the participant to allow for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that has been investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, while semi-structured interviews capture the diverse experience through a flexible structure of questioning, they allow for a high degree of reliability compared to unstructured interviews which was an important rationale for the employment of this research strategy (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

Hence, the interviewing strategy is designed in a semi-structured manner which firstly allows for the interviewer to collect data on proposed topics discussed in the next section and secondly it allows for interviewees to explain their own perception of reality and inner motivation for remaining silent. The data collection process is presented in section 4.7 of this chapter followed by the interview design in section 4.8.

4.6. Participants in the study

The subjects of this research are employees who are subjected to some form of supervision in their workplace. Particular individual characteristics (such as age, gender, education, nationality, etc.) of those participants will be noted and recorded during the research process. Similarly, particular organisational characteristics (such as size, the industry in which organisations operate, unionisation, non-union voice, etc.) will be part of the data collection.

While these employee and organisational features are not core to the research questions, they may have a bearing on the respondents' experiences of silence and are therefore necessary. The key important issue is accessing worker informants who are willing to share their stories about the decision-making process that led to their silence. This will be explained below, using purposeful criterion sampling techniques.

4.6.1. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling has been deemed an appropriate method when strategically choosing the participants for interviewing in situations where the sample of interviewees needs to be tied to the objectives of the research. It usually aims to analyse why particular people feel a particular way, the processes by which these attitudes are constructed, and the role they play in dynamic processes within the organisation or group (Palys, 2008:697). Hence it is a useful sampling method when analysing the process of employee decision making to remain silent and the forms and role of silence in the dynamic of the effort-reward exchange between employees and managers.

While there are various strategies for purposive sampling, the *Criterion Sampling* (Palys, 2008:697), which involves searching for individuals who meet a certain criterion has been employed for the purpose of this research. The reason for this strategy is that given the nature of the study, there is a need to identify and interview people in the paid employment relationship. The reason for this is to analyse social relations within the workplace that led to their decision making to remain silent. Hence the main criterion for interviewee selection is being in the paid employment. The sample of interviewees will then through interviewing process explain the contextual conditions for their silence (e.g. nature of their jobs, their perceptions of the informal social relations between themselves and other actors and formal employment procedures), the forms of their silence processes, and their outcomes.

The purposive sampling has been operationalised through the posting of the Invitation to Participate in Study (Appendix 1) to various social media and by emailing it to various Trade Unions with a request to circulate it to their members. The researcher was made aware of the various social groups created by foreign nationals living in Ireland on Facebook (e.g. Cesi a Slovaci v Irsku; Cesi v Galway etc.), where she posted the Invitation to Participate in Study. In addition, the researcher posted the Invitation to Participate in Study to LinkedIn. This purposive sampling strategy has been deemed succesfull as the researcher has been contacted

by many participants willing to share their experience and stories about social relations n their workplaces (i.e. outlined as a research focus by the Invitation to Participate in Study). The potential respondents emailed to the researcher who then evaluated their suitability to participate in the study by making sure that the potential participants were in paid employement and worked in organisation that has not been already represented by more than 1 other participant.

4.6.2. Snowballing

Snowballing sampling has been described as 'technique for finding research subject when one subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on' (Vogt, 1999). Usually, this strategy is associated with problems finding participants for research such as participant from concealed populations (e.g. criminals, drug users etc.) (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997; Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). Snowball sampling is a useful tool for building networks and increasing the number of participants (Morgan, 2008:816). The reason for this strategy is that it allows for an easy and informal method to reach a target population of participants. However, as the aim of the study is to analyse views from employees within a wide variety of contexts, the researcher allowed for a maximum of three participants from the same organisation and maximum of two participants from the same department.

The snowballing sampling has been utilised by the researcher asking each participant if they know anybody who would be willing to share their stories about social relations in their workplaces. However, the researcher informed the participants that the potential recommended participant can not work in the same department and under the same supervisor as them. The strategy has been deemed succesfull as the researcher was contacted by various colleagues, friends and family members of participants which effectively enlarged the pool of potential participants for the study. For example, P7 and P11 were brother and sister; P35 and P34 were mother and daughter; P15 and P16 were husband and wife. Each of those related participants worked in a different industry and organisation hence they fulfilled the criteria required by the researcher.

4.7. Data Collection

The study employed semi-structured interviewing with 51 participants from a period from April 2016 to February 2017. The basic information about the study (Appendix 1) had been posted on various social media, displayed on notice boards in various locations around Ireland and circulated to trade unions. Interviewees have been invited to participate in a study on social relations in the workplace rather than to share their experience with silence as it allowed for gaining of truthful and rich information about what led to employees' decision making to remain silent or to speak up. All interviewees gave permission to record the interview which allowed the researcher to conduct a thorough analysis. Researcher granted anonymity to all participants by changing their names but also names of other actors of their employment relationship and the organisation in which they work. All participants were chosen based on the criteria of purposeful sampling hence being employees in paid employment. Access to some participants allowed for a snowballing sampling when they recommended others who may be willing to share their experience and perceptions of their workplaces, however, the researcher did not interview more than two employees from the same organisation.

Interviews lasted from 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes depending on the participant's experience with silence. Some participants were silent only partially and on minimum occasions while some participants decided to remain silent often or were often subjected to limitations in their present employment and in their former employment which showed that employees make the decision to remain silent based on contextual conditions rather than their personality traits.

Since participants for the research were located in various locations around the Republic of Ireland, some interviews were conducted by Skype and some face to face. In addition, the researcher speaks Czech and Slovakian which allowed for interviewing of some low-skilled foreign employees in the Republic of Ireland with limited knowledge of the English language. This allowed for informal conversation and participants' feeling of comfort which led them to share their experience in greater depth. In tables 4.7a and 4.7b the profiles of the repsondents are set out. In table 4.7a the repsondents profile is catergorised by nationality education, age, gender, trade union membership and occupation. Table 4.7b shows respondents' tenure, nature of their contract, the industry in which their organisation operates, the size of the organisation and whether the trade union is present.

There were a wide variety industries represented by the sample including, manufacturing, retail, education, health services, hospitality and financial services. Thirty-three per cent were male and the average tenure in participants' current jobs was 6.5 years (min=3 months; max=28 years). While the initial research has been conducted in Ireland, there were other than Irish nationalities interviewed (Irish=32; Czech=11; Slovak=3; English=2; polish=2; German=1). The average age of participants was 36 (min=23; max=60); and they had a varying levels of education (leaving certificate=17; Level 5=3; Level 6=2; Honours Degree=15; Masters Degree=10; H-Dip=1; PhD=3). Twenty-two participants were members of Trade Union and majority was working on the permanent full-time contract (n=30). However, over third of participants reported non-standard working contracts (permanent part-time=14; fixed term contract=4; temporary=1; casual=1; agency worker=1). Finally, the participants worked in organisations of varying structures and sizes including SMEs, medium size enterprises and multinationals. The sample has been evaluated as representative as it included wide variety of participants with different individual factors (e.g. nationality, age, gender, education laevel) working in various contexts (e.g. organisational size, presence of voice mechanisms etc). This allowed for more indepth exploratory research and subsequent analysis and building of the sensitising framework of employee silence.

Table 4.7a. Profiles of Respondents

Resp.	Age	Gender	Occupation	Nationality	Education Level	TU Member
1	52	Male	General Operative	Czech	Level 5	No
2	53	Female	Kitchen Porter	Czech	Leaving Cert	No
3	23	Female	Administrator	Irish	Honours Degree	No
4	46	Female	Carer	Irish	Honours Degree	Yes
5	38	Male	Psychiatric Nurse	Irish	Master Degree	Yes
6	36	Female	Social Care Worker	English	Honours Degree	Yes
7	34	Female	General Operative	Polish	Master Degree	Yes
8	31	Female	Swimming Instructor	Irish	Honours Degree	No
9	34	Male	Project Coordinator	Irish	Master Degree	No
10	60	Male	General Operative	Irish	Leaving Cert	Yes
11	47	Male	Social Welfare Inspector	Irish	Master Degree	Yes
12	28	Female	Retail Assistant	Irish	Leaving Cert	Yes
13	23	Female	Customer Service Advisor	Irish	Honours Degree	No
14	44	Female	Youth Worker	English	Master Degree	No
15	50	Male	Administrator	Irish	Master Degree	Yes
16	42	Female	Special Needs Teacher	Irish	Master Degree	Yes
17	33	Female	Quality Analyst	Irish	PhD	No
18	32	Male	General Operative	Czech	Leaving Cert	No
19	47	Female	Document Technician	Irish	Leaving Cert	No
20	28	Male	General Operative	Irish	Leaving Cert	Yes
21	27	Female	Customer Care	Irish	Master Degree	No
22	56	Male	General Operative	Irish	Leaving Cert	No
23	24	Female	Accountant	Czech	Leaving Cert	No
24	26	Female	Lecturer	Irish	Master Degree	No
25	46	Female	General Operative	Czech	Leaving Cert	Yes
26	31	Male	Risk Analyst	Slovak	Honours Degree	Yes
27	46	Female	Accommodation Assistant	Czech	Leaving Cert	Yes
28	27	Female	Accommodation Assistant	Slovak	Master Degree	No
29	33	Female	Customer Care	Czech	Leaving Cert	Yes
30	28	Male	General Operative	Czech	Leaving Cert	Yes
31	40	Female	General Operative	Czech	Honours Degree	No
32	42	Female	Accountant	Czech	Honours Degree	No
33	23	Male	General Operative	German	Level 5	No
34	24	Female	Childminder	Irish	Level 5	No
35	50	Male	General Operative	Irish	Leaving Cert	Yes
36	20	Female	Childminder	Irish	Level 6	No
37	50	Female	Shop-floor assistant	Irish	Leaving Cert	Yes
38	24	Female	Receptionist	Polish	Honours Degree	No
39	50	Female	Lecturer	Irish	PhD	Yes
40	36	Female	Teacher	Irish	Level 9	Yes
41	34	Female	Registrar	Irish	PhD	No
42	55	Female	Waitresses	Czech	Leaving Cert	No
43	35	Female	Quality Checker	Slovak	Leaving Cert	Yes
44	26	Female	Customer Care	Irish	Honours Degree	No
45	25	Female	Technical Support	Irish	Honours Degree	No
46	28	Male	Chef	Irish	Level 6	No
47	24	Male	General Operative	Irish	Leaving Cert	No
48	48	Female	General Operative	Irish	Honours Degree	No
49	50	Female	Midwife	Irish	Honours Degree	No
50	23	Male	General Operative	Irish	Honour Degree	Yes
51	23	Male	General Operative	Irish	Honours Degree	Yes

Table 4.7b. Profiles of Respondents

Resp	Tenure	Nature of Contract	Industry	Size of Org.	Union Presence
1	11 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	150	No
2	10 years	Permanent Part-time	Hospitality	20	No
3	4 months	Fixed term	Non-profit	6	No
4	1 year	Permanent	Health	300	Yes
5	15 years	Permanent-Full-time	Health	150-200	Yes
6	12 years	Permanent Part-time	Health	700	Yes
7	10 years	Permanent	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
8	15 years	Permanent Part-time	Recreation	30	No
9	8 years	Permanent Part-time	Non-Profit	22	No
10	10 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
11	9 years	Permanent Full-time	Public Administration	8	Yes
12	6 years	Permanent Part-time	Retail	Multinational	Yes
13	5 years	Permanent Part-time	Retail	8	No
14	6 years	Fixed Term	Non-profit	22	No
15	8 years	Permanent Full-time	Education	1800	Yes
16	19 years	Permanent Full-time	Education	21	Yes
17	8 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	No
18	12 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	150	No
19	10 months	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	No
20	4 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	350	Yes
21	8 years	Permanent Full-time	Transportation	162	Yes
22	2 years	Temporary	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
23	13 months	Fixed term	Transportation	Multinational	No
24	3 years	Casual	Education	1800	Yes
25	7 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	350	Yes
26	2 years	Permanent Full-time	Financial activities	1400	Yes
27	4 months	Permanent Part-time	Hospitality	80	Yes
28	3 months	Permanent Part-time	Hospitality	Multinational	No
29	2 years	Permanent Part-time	Retail	Multinational	No
30	2 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	200	Yes
31	7 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	400	Yes
32	1 year	Permanent Full-time	Retail	Multinational	No
33	6 months	Agency	Manufacturing	Multinational	No
34	2 years	Permanent Full-time	Education	22	No
35	13 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
36	17 months	Permanent Full-time	Education	22	No
37	28 Years	Permanent Full-time	Retail	Multinational	No
38	5 months	Fixed term	Hospitality	60	No
39	19 years	Permanent Part-time	Education	1800	Yes
40	14 years	Permanent Full-time	Education	50	Yes
41	3 years	Permanent Full-time	Education	50	No
42	18 months	Permanent Part-time	Hospitality	180	No
43	6 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
44	4 months	Permanent Part-time	Retail	Multinational	No
45	2 years	Permanent Full-time	Communication	Multinational	No
46	2 years	Permanent Full-time	Hospitality	250	Yes
47	11 months	Agency	Manufacturing	Multinational	No
48	15 years	Permanent Full-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	No
49	25 years	Permanent Part-time	Health	1500	Yes
50	13 months	Fixed-term	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes
51	2 years	Permanent Part-time	Manufacturing	Multinational	Yes

4.7.1. Nature of the data collected

The data collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews vary in their nature which influences the consequent analysis. While employees described their experiences with the phenomenon of silence through providing some descriptive information about context in which silence took place; the attitudinal and behavioural data researcher collected helped draw the further and deeper understanding of the employees' attitudes and behaviours and their perception of the social relations in their workplace that lead to their decision making to remain silent or to prevent them from having a say. Attitudinal data collected information about employees' beliefs and their thoughts about other actor's beliefs. In contrast, behavioural data collected information that informs research on what employees do and their perceptions of what other actors do.

4.8. Interview design

The aim of this section is to draw an overview of the interview schedule that collected data about participants' perceptions of their experience with silence in order to answer the research questions posed by the researcher. Employees experienced and shared varying stories the semi-structured interviews allowed for the flexibility of the researcher with regards to the order in which questions were posed and with regards to the questions' structure. The section hence presents the themes that needed to be investigated through interviewing of participants. Interviews followed the same structure however the questions posed varied based on the nature of the silence and the factors that led to it.

The literature identifies that the nature of the job may influence how employees perceive their working experience. Hence, participants were asked about various aspects of their jobs. Similarly, the formal employment procedures such as voice mechanism in the workplace and contracts employees have with their employers were asked about in order to identify how these can influence employees working experience. Since employees form social relations with their co-workers, managers and representatives, the interview collected data on how these relationships whether positive and friendly or negative influenced employees work experience. Such data helps explain the workplace context in which silence takes place and how this context influence employees' decisions to remain silent or prevent them from having a say.

In order to collect data that would help with answering the research question on '*how employees remain silent in the employment relationship*', the researcher asked about voice opportunities and potential silence among employees. Data were collected to ascertain how and why participants engaged in intentional or unintentional silence or why they spoke up. The participant was asked about various situations in the workplace such as if they have any grievances and/or suggestions and whether they communicate them or not. Questions then followed to identify reasons why employees do or do not communicate these.

In order to determine '*why employees remain silent in the employment relationship?'*, The researcher posed questions to reveal what form of outcome employees' silence process took. It posed challenges as the concepts may overlap and the intentions of employees may be a combination of few forms at the same time. Similarly, the factors leading to employees' decision making to remain silent may result in a different form of outcomes in similar situations depending on the participant' perception, set of beliefs and attitudes. As the working definition of silence as a way to 'get back' at management suggests that employees through their silence seek to advance their interests and extend the frontier of control towards themselves, the researcher asked participants about their intentions while remaining silent. Similarly, to identify whether participants aimed to 'get on' with their jobs and maintain the status quo within the employment relationship, the researcher asked questions about the participant's intentions while remaining silent. The working definition of silence as a way to 'get by' in the workplace suggests that the outcome of their silence shifts the perceived frontier of control over their personal labour process towards the management, hence the researcher investigated whether this was participants' perception.

4.9. Analysis Design

Rubin and Rubin (1995:30) argue that due to the topical researcher's interpretation of participant's stories, the analysis needs to be designed in a way to show the interpretation did not go far from the evidence collected. The analysis starts with the assumption that flexibility is needed while interpreting the data as the participants in the study are not answering the questions posed in the standardised close-ended structure.

There are various ways to analyse qualitative interviews after they are transcribed. While there is an option of software NVivo as a tool for qualitative analysis, the transcripts can also

be analysed manually. The researcher used the sensitising framework presented in Chapter 4 as the guiding principle for analysis, and the data were analysed in relation to the varying concepts within this framework.

Manual analysis has been evaluated as a preferable approach over NVivo software as the researcher would take considerable time to learn how to use the program. Transcripts were read carefully one by one numerous time and each reported instance of silence has been coded with regards to its context, process and outcome to maintain the track of the links between various contexts, processes of silence and outcomes for further analysis. This has been recorded in Excel, where fifty one-sheets were created – one for each of the participants.

The approach employed to analyse the data was a template analysis that has evolved as a generic approach within the wider tradition of thematic analysis. This approach tends to encourage a greater depth of coding where data are rich and highly relevant to the research question (King & Brooks, 2017). The rationale for template analysis was therefore the ability to investigate the data in greater depth since the semi-structured nature of the interviews ensured the data is highly relevant to the research questions. According to King & Brooks (2017), the process usually contains seven steps that the researcher followed and that are presented in Table 4.9a below together with a specific action researcher conducted at each stage.

Table 4.9a: Template analysis process

Phase	Action
1. Familiarisation with the data	Transcribing the interviews, carefully re-reading the transcripts and getting familiar with their content.
2. Preliminary Coding	Noting all participants' answers that were relevant to research questions and the Sensitising framework of silence constructed by literature review. The coding of the transcripts has been then conducted manually. Firstly, the main coding scheme has been developed based on the sensitising framework (Table 4.9b). The researcher generated a document with eleven headings also based on the sensitising framework and all relevant quotes were copied under these headings. All eleven sections had been separated into documents ready for the third phase of analysis.
3. Clustering	Based on the preliminary analysis, the researcher clustered the primary and emerging themes into meaningful groups. Additional themes were emerging from the analysis for which the researcher developed an appropriate coding scheme (Table 4.9c).
4. Producing and initial template	The clusters of themes allowed for the design of the initial version of the coding template. Here, the additional categories of workplace factors that influence employees to remain silent or prevent them from having a

	voice, types of silence process, and various outcomes of silence as presented in Table 4.9c were created.
Phase	**Action**
5. Developing the template	The template has been applied to additional transcripts to investigate any shortcomings or weaknesses. However, there were not identified at that stage of analysis.
6. Applying the final template	The researcher applied the initial template from Table 4.9 to all interview transcripts.
7. Writing up	The final template has been used to organise the data and to present the data in the Findings chapters.

Table 4.9b: Phase one coding scheme

Factor within the sensitising framework	Code
Nature of the job	NJ
Line Managers	LM
Co-Workers	CW
Employee Representative	ER
Voice Mechanisms	VM
Nature of contract	NC
Intentional Silence	IS
Unintentional Silence	US
Get back	GB
Get on	GO
Get by	GBY

The phase one coding scheme has been developed based on the Sensitising framework of Employee silence presented at the end of Chapter 3. The phase two coding scheme has been developed mainly with the help of a literature review in Chapter 3, however, some new themes emerged from the data, especially with regards to answering the research question two '*How employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship'.*

Table 4.9c: Phase two coding scheme

Factor within the sensitising framework	2nd Phase factor	Code
Nature of the job	Autonomy	A
	Effort-Reward Exchange	ERE
	Repetitiveness / Tediousness/ Intensity	RTI
	Tenure	T
Line Managers	Past treatment of co-workers	PCW
	Keep a good relationship with LM	KGR
	Collusion	CLM
	Voice has negative consequences	VNC
	LM steal suggestions	LMSS
	LM is aggressive/intimidating	LMAI
	LM dismisses discussion on certain topics	LMDV
	LM has no support from an organisation	LMNS
	LM lacks organisational skills/experience	LMLE
	LM does not care	LMDC
	LM does not follow up	LMDF
Co-Workers	Collusion with CW	CCW
	Keeping a positive state of social relations with CW	CWPR
	Protecting CW	PCW
	CW steal suggestions	CWSS
	Avoiding confrontation	CWAC
Employee Representative	Negative experience with TU Rep	NR
	Rep doesn't follow up	RDF
	The poor state of social relations between rep and participant	NRR
Voice Mechanisms	Direct Voice Mechanisms	DVM
	Refusal to Recognise the union	RRTU
	Penalisation of employees who try to join the union	PTU
	Management bypassing the union	BTU
	The scope of collective Bargaining	SBTU
	Lack of communication from the union	LCTU
Nature of contract	Nature of the contract	NC
Intentional Silence	Intentional Silence	IS
	Shallow Voice	SV
	Dismissed Voice	DV
	Intentional Institutional Silence	IIS
Unintentional Silence	Unintentional Silence	US
	Unintentional Institutional Silence	UIS
Get back	Get back	GB
Get on	Get on	GO
Get by	Get by	GBY

4.10 Evaluation of Approach Taken

According to Silverman (2006), the researcher must ensure both validity and reliability to his/her chosen approach to conducting research. The validity or the extent to which the research accurately reflects and measures the phenomenon under investigation has been ensured by an extensive literature review. The sensitising framework of employee silence has been constructed to allow for the operationalisation of the research. In addition, the structured interview has been constructed to allow for questions to be mapped back to the literature review and the sensitising framework. Also, according to Johnson (1997), the data analysis stage of research is prone to researches personal bias, and therefore claiming causality in relationships needs to be justified. Therefore the emergent themes were again assessed against the theory to ensure their credibility.

The reliability has been ensured by consistency in applying the interviewing schedule and by recording the interview. In addition, the researcher had no prior personal relationship with any of the research subjects or any personal bias to any of the organisations in which participants worked. Also, the entire data collection and analysis process has been documented in excel files to produce and evidence of how the researcher collected and analysed the data.

4.11 Conclusion

The chapter discussed alternative philosophical approaches and explained the methodological approach that has been chosen to help answer the research questions presented in Section 4.2. The chapter justified the chosen research method, describe the strategy for the data collection and explain the methods for data analysis. The chapter also outlined the sampling method used, participants for the study and the nature of the data collected by the researcher. In addition, the chapter presented the interview design and the methods of data analysis that were employed by the researcher.

The next three chapters are findings chapters that will set out and dicuss employees perceptions of workplace context that contributed to their decision to remain silent or prevent them from having a voice, the process of their silence and its outcome.

5. Findings: Employees' perceptions of their workplace context

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the empirical research findings for the first primary research question; *How do employees' perceptions of the workplace context influence the process and outcomes of silence?* Using the methodology described in chapter four, the analysis was conducted in the context of the sensitising framework which suggests that the nature of the job, formal workplace procedures, and the social relations among actors of the employment relationship may influence the dynamics of the employment relationship which may consequently influence the climate of silence.

Therefore, the chapter has three sections and each presents empirical research findings for a particular secondary research question. The first section outlines interviewee's responses in relation to the secondary research question; *How does the nature of the job influence employees' decisions to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views?* Here, the data reveals how the employee materialist motivation aiming at balancing their effort-reward exchange together with the perceived level of autonomy contribute to their decisions to remain silent about a variety of workplace topics. In addition, the participants' responses bring to light other factors related to the nature of jobs such as tenure, isolation, and nature of the product/service that may influence participants' silence and voice outcomes.

The second section presents empirical findings for the secondary research question; *'How do formal employment procedures influence employees'* decisions to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views? Here, the findings describe the formal workplace procedures such as embeddedness of voice mechanisms and the nature of participants' contracts they reported as the leading factor for their silence or voice.

The third section engages with empirical findings related to the secondary research question; *'How do informal social relations influence employees' decisions to remain silent and/or prevent employees from expressing their views?'* The section explains how the social relations in a workplace, particularly the participants' relationships with their line managers, co-workers and trade union and other employees' representatives affected the participants' decisions to remain silent.

5.2 Nature of the job

The literature review Section 3.2 provides a theoretical basis for consideration of the nature of participants' jobs as one of the driving workplace factor for silence and voice decision-making process. Indeed, nearly two thirds (n=32) of fifty-one employees reported that some aspects of their jobs contribute to their decision to remain silent on certain topics while third of participants (n=18) explained which aspects of their jobs contribute to their decision to speak up on certain topics. The reported range of job attributes driving participants' silence and voice is presented in Table 5.2. Some respondents reported more than one job attribute.

Table 5.2: Job attribute as a silence or voice driver

Job attribute	Number of respondents who reported this job attribute as a silence driver (n=32)	Number of respondents who reported this job attribute as a voice driver (n=18)
Effort-reward exchange imbalance	21	N/A
Autonomy	15	N/A
Repetitiveness/ Tediousness/ Intensity	13	4
Tenure	7	3
Nature of the product/service	N/A	9

5.2.1 Effort-reward exchange imbalance

The participants' perception and subjective evaluation of their potential silence and voice behaviour outcomes related to their effort-reward exchange may be an important indicator of whether they withdraw their voice on certain topics. In total, twenty-one participants from various industries and sectors (e.g. Manufacturing, Hospitality, Health, Education, Transportation, Finance, and Retail) reported the potential negative and/or positive effect on their effort-reward exchange as a most common driver of their silence behaviour. There were four topics identified by the analysis that employees may decide to remain silent about as opting for voice could increase their perceived effort-reward exchange imbalance. Table 5.2.1 lists the topics and the percentage of participants who reported this as a topic they remain silent about when aiming at maintaining or increasing their effort-reward exchange ratio. Some respondents reported more than one topic, which is why these numbers add to more than 21.

Table 5.2.1: Topics of silence in the context of an effort-reward exchange imbalance

Topic	Number of respondents who reported this topic (n=21)
Suggestions that would result in more workload	12
Suggestions that would not increase rewards	6
Finishing work early	3
Co-workers' misbehaviour	2

Eighteen participants reported that they always remain silent about suggestions that would result in a greater imbalance of their effort and reward ratio. However, while the majority of them reported that they do not share any suggestions because management would increase their workload, some reported that they remain silent because they would not get any rewards for their suggestions and the increased workload does not concern them.

> *'It [suggestion] would make it more efficient... Obviously then, if you did that you know you've saved an hour a week. And that'll be two months down the line. Ok, you have an extra hour, what else you can do during that hour? Thanks for making all those changes, there are ten other things that we want you to look at because you are really good at making things efficient.'* [P15-Administrator]

> *'No. It is because I know he [line manager] won't give me more money. After twelve years I am on a minimum wage...that is not fair, is it?'* [P1-General operative]

Only a minority of participants (n=3) reported they do not report to their line managers when they finished their daily target or a particular assignment in a shorter period of time; however, they are supposed to do so. While two participants reported their main reason is to avoid additional workload that their line manager would allocate to them if they speak up; one participant reported a monetary motivation as her voice would result in a decreased reward.

> '...*if you have your work done, they'll [line managers] send you to do something else. I have to sweep or have to look busy...you work slower so.'* [P35-General operative]

> *'...sometimes people don't want our service, and they send us away. Then our working time gets cut, and we have to report this to our supervisor. So what happens is that we report that and she [line manager] sends us home earlier, and we lose money. So, when you are finished earlier, you are hiding somewhere from your supervisor so she wouldn't see you are finished.'* [P28-Accommodation assistant]

A marginal number of the participants (n=3) reported that they remain silent about their co-worker's misbehaviour in the effort-reward exchange context. Such silence had positive outcomes for their labour process as it allowed them to work more efficiently and resulted in ease in workload. For example, P47-General operative shared a story of how his co-worker taught him incorrect working procedure that simplified the working process.

> *'...there was a process by which you pass the bag you are packing, you are supposed to do that with every individual bag, but it was much faster if you just leave the same bag in and you just take the next one and seal it, scan it and toss it in. He [co-worker] came around and said 'you can just do this and just fire them away', and I see, common sense dictates that you are not supposed to do this.'* [P47-General operative]

5.2.2 Tediousness / Repetitiveness / Intensity

The nature of the job in the context of employees' perceived subjective labour process exchange and in particular, physical exhaustion was reported as a significant driver of silence and voice behaviour by nearly a third of participants (n=13). This factor has been reported in most cases as concurrent and/or complementary to the previously analysed effort-reward exchange imbalance factor. Employees who perceive their job as repetitive, tedious or intensive may remain silent about topics that would make their work more tedious and intensive which would result in, as previously mentioned, an effort-reward exchange imbalance. Table 5.2.2 presents the topics and the number of respondents who reported this as a topic they remain silent about or they speak about.

Table 5.2.2 Topics of silence in the context of physical extraction of the labour process

Topic	Number of respondents who reported silence over this topic (n=51)	Number of respondents who reported voice this topic (n=51)
Suggestions that would result in more tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	13	N/A
Suggestions that would result in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	N/A	4

With regards to this particular context, all participants reported they never communicate any suggestions and/or improvements that would result in a further intensification of their personal labour process as they perceived it as already physically challenging or boring.

> *'...we have suggestion boxes. Like the best ideas of the month. You can put your ideas in....my participation would be very low...there is always a quick way of doing things but it is for yourself, you probably try to shave off few seconds of how you are gonna do the day. Different patterns, to get a few seconds for yourself.'* [P51-General Operative]

In contrast, a minority of participants reported that they always voice their suggestions that result in their work being more interesting, easier, and/or less tedious. For example, the quote from P46-Chef shows why he always comes up with new ideas in his workplace.

> *'...for yourself, to have personal pride that you made something nice on the menu or to spice up the job a little bit. Otherwise, it is boring to make the same things all the time.'* [P46-Chef]

5.2.3 Autonomy over the personal labour process

The empirical results show that participants may choose to remain silent rather than to speak up if they have perceived autonomy over their personal labour process. Especially in situations where employees disagree with the working process set by the management or by an organisation or when they get wrong instructions to do their tasks, the autonomy allows employees to continue working by their preferred way rather than to voice their disagreements.

There were fifteen participants from various industries and sectors (e.g. Manufacturing, Hospitality, Health, Non-profit, Public Administration, Retail, Education, and Transportation) that reported their silence being facilitated by their workplace autonomy. Similarly, as in previous sections, various topics that were reported by the participant are recorded in Table 5.2.3 together with the number of respondents who reported silence about this topic.

Table 5.2.3: Topics of silence in the context of autonomy over the personal labour process

Topic	Number of respondents who reported this topic (n=15)
Wrong Instruction	7
Suggestions that would results in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	4
Disagreement over the personal labour process	3
Co-workers' misbehaviour	1

A wrong instruction to carry out the task was the most commonly mentioned topic reported by participants. In particular, the autonomy allowed participants to avoid confrontation with their line managers' and to maintain the state of the social relations between them.

> *'I just don't say anything and do it my own way. We work by ourselves. It is less hassle and less personal confrontation. The decisions she makes are not best really for the client.'* [P11-Social Welfare Inspector]

Similarly, participants reported that they do not raise the issue when they disagree with the working process set by management as their autonomy allows them to carry the job in their own judgment.

> *'When I disagree and tell them it doesn't change anything because they are my managers, so I have to listen to them. I do things my own way. For me, it is easier than trying to explain to them for thirty minutes why it wouldn't work and I can organise my day much better.'* [P29-Retail Assistant]

Interestingly, a number of respondents reported their line managers as a source of their workplace autonomy. This was either due to very positive social relations they had with the line manager or the line managers displayed a certain level of alienation towards their own and respondents' labour processes. The autonomy then allowed participants to implement improvements into their tasks without suggesting it to and getting them approved by the line manager. Such improvements made in all instances make their job easier and more efficient or more interesting and enjoyable.

> '*When I want to improve something I'll just do it myself. For example, some improvements that supposed to help you with your work. So you just do it yourself and*

organise it yourself, you know you don't tell him [line manager].' [P30-General Operative]

In addition, one participant explained how his autonomy allows him to deal with co-workers when they misbehave rather than reporting it to the management which would have detrimental consequences for both him and his co-worker.

'*I would have dealt with it myself. The lady who came into work, she was high on drugs, she was drunk. I sent her home. I was trying to control the situation. I would have been concerned if I had reported it. I would have been dragged into something more serious.'* [P9-Project Co-ordinator]

5.2.4 Tenure

The length of service with the organisation may give employees a certain level of uncertainty or power when it comes to the decision-making process to remain silent or to speak up. Seven participants reported that they remain silent about various topics due to their short length of service in their organisation. However, all of these participants reported that they would speak up if they would be in the organisation for a longer period. The topics participants remained silent or speak up about are recorded in Table 5.2.4 together with the number of respondents who reported silence or voice over this topic. Some respondents reported more than one topic.

Table 5.2.4: Topics of silence in the context of participants' tenure

Topic	Number of respondents who reported silence about this topic (n=7)	Number of respondents who reported voice about this topic (n=3)
Disagreement over the personal labour process	3	1
Personal grievances	2	1
Wrong instructions	N/A	1
Suggestions that would result in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	N/A	2
Misbehaviour of line managers	1	N/A
Workplace Bullying	2	N/A

The short period of service with an organisation may result in insecurity and disempowerment when voicing certain topics due to the shallow social relations between employees and their line managers or the lack of knowledge of formal and informal organisational processes. For example, one participant explained that he didn't report his line manager who was abusing organisational resources because he was working in the organisation for a short period of time.

> *'It was soon after I started in the organisation. So I said listen just stay silent, stay out of this. Now after eight years I think I could turn and say that I don't think it is appropriate. I'll check with the finance department, and I'll get their opinion on it. I would have no problem doing that whereas at the start I would say for the first couple of years I was a bit more naive.'* [P15-Administrator]

In contrast, employees may feel empowered by their length of service as it allows them to develop deeper social relations with others in their workplace. In addition, lengthy experience on the job enables developing, for the organisation, valuable skills. Three participants reported that they always voice their opinions over several topics due to their tenure with the organisation. For example, one participant explained that his experience and length of service gives him empowerment to openly disagree with his line manager over his personal labour process or when he receives wrong instructions to perform his task.

> *'I tell him [line manager] everything. I don't care that he can fire me. He won't do it. It could be because I am there for so long. But it is only like last year that I can voice my opinions as I do. For ten years I have been silent, I did my work like the other idiots. I didn't say anything, did all they told me even when it was wrong.'* [P18-General Operative]

5.2.5 Nature of a product or service

Employees' concerns with the nature of product or service seem to be an important factor contributing to their voice decision-making process. This is an important finding related to Section 5.4.2 on the social relations between employees and their co-workers as employees

may prioritise the nature of the product or service over their social relations with their co-workers.

Table 5.2.5: Topics of voice in the context of the nature of product or service

Topic	Number of respondents who reported this topic (n=9)
Co-workers' misbehaviour	8
Wrong instructions	1

Nine participants reported that they always speak up in situations that could result in deterioration of the quality of the product or service they are producing. Majority of these participants always report co-worker's misbehaviour that either deteriorates the quality of the product or service, and/or results in a breach of health and safety policies. One participant reported that he speaks up about wrong instructions when he is supposed to pass a product that his co-worker manufactured in a poor standard of quality.

> *'I would report it [misbehaviour] immediately because the products we make go to peoples' bodies and you could kill somebody. Anything concerning the quality of the product I report.'* [P10-General Operative]

> '*I am a carpenter. I have to make sure it [product] is good. Here, people don't care. Nobody cares about quality. Every week there are so many rejects and remakes. I tell him [line manager] straight: 'Fucking hell! What the fuck is this shit! Send it back to production! The one who fucked it up should fix it!'* [P18-General Operative]

5.3 Formal workplace procedures

5.3.1 Employee voice mechanisms

There are various voice channels that may be of presence in organisations to allow employees to communicate their grievances and/or to contribute to decision making in their organisations. However, the presence of voice mechanisms does not necessarily result in employees' perception of having a voice. From the sample of fifty-one participants, twenty-one reported they have some form of formal indirect voice mechanisms available in their workplace. Such a mechanism was in majority cases a trade union (n=20) and in one case a

staff association. The presence of the formal direct mechanisms for the voice was then reported by forty-three participants. This included formal meetings with their line and senior management, employee surveys, suggestion boxes, participation schemes and human resource manager. Thirty-seven employees reported that they also have the opportunity to speak up during the informal chat with their line manager (Table 5.3.1 Voice mechanisms available to participants).

However, regardless of voice mechanisms present in the workplace, the results suggest that important factor indicating whether participants perceived they had an opportunity to express their views or they remained silent is on what topics their organisation allows communication and how the process of communication is structured and implemented through the voice mechanisms. The majority of participants (n=25) explained this factor resulting in either their silence or voice which is presented in detail in the last part of this section.

Table 5.3.1 Voice mechanisms available to participants

Partic-pant	Formal indirect mechanisms	Formal direct mechanisms	Informal direct mechanisms		Particip ant	Formal indirect mechanisms	Formal direct mechanisms	Informal direct mechanisms
1	N/A	N/A	Chat with LM		**27**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
2	N/A	N/A	Chat with LM		**28**	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A
3	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**29**	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A
4	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**30**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
5	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**31**	Staff Assoc.	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
6	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**32**	N/A	Meetings with LM, HRM	Chat with LM
7	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**33**	N/A	N/A	Chat with LM
8	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**34**	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
9	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**35**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	N/A
10	Trade union	Meetings with LM, HRM	Chat with LM		**36**	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
11	Trade union	Meetings with LM	N/A		**37**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
12	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**38**	N/A	N/A	Chat with LM
13	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**39**	Trade union	Meetings with LM, HRM	N/A
14	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A		**40**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	N/A
15	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**41**	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A
16	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**42**	N/A	Meetings with LM, Suggestion boxes	Chat with LM
17	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A		**43**	Trade union	Meetings with LM, Suggestion boxes	N/A
18	N/A	N/A	Chat with LM		**44**	N/A	Meetings with LM, Participation schemes	Chat with LM
19	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A		**45**	N/A	Meetings with LM, Suggestion boxes	N/A
20	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**46**	N/A	Meetings with LM, HRM	Chat with LM
21	N/A	HRM	Chat with LM		**47**	N/A	Meetings with LM, Participation schemes	Chat with LM
22	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM		**48**	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
23	N/A	Meetings with LM, Employee survey	Chat with LM		**49**	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A
24	N/A	Meetings with LM	N/A		**50**	Trade union	Meetings with LM, HRM	Chat with LM
25	Trade union	N/A	Chat with LM		**51**	Trade union	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM
26	N/A	Meetings with LM	Chat with LM					

5.3.2 Formal indirect voice mechanisms

The findings suggest the possibility of various implementation strategies to structure formal indirect voice mechanisms by management which may influence the silence and voice outcomes of employees. While some participants reported that their organisation recognises trade union and engages in collective bargaining, a number of participants perceived their organisation's attitude towards trade union as negative. Furthermore, findings suggest that organisational recognition of (and negotiation with) trade union may be perceived by employees as shallow and their opportunities for voice limited. In addition, there were instances found in the data, where organisations and unions negotiated deals which participants did not welcome and they had limited say in them.

5.3.2.1 Trade union avoidance

Employees may perceive that they have no option to join a trade union and enhance their opportunities for voice when their organisation engages in trade union avoidance. Over one-sixth of participants (n=8) reported that their organisations have negative attitudes towards trade unions and the management uses various tactics and strategies in the trade union avoidance process. These are presented in Table 6.3.3 together with the percentage of participants who reported the particular tactic.

Table 5.3.2.1: Trade union avoidance tactics

Tactic	Number of respondents who reported this tactic (n=8)
Refusal to recognise the union	2
Penalisation of employees who try to join the union	6

The majority of participants reported that they or their co-workers tried to join a union in the past, however, they had been penalised by management for doing so. Hence, the past co-worker's experience contributed to their decision making the process to not to join the union in present. Such penalisation may include, for example, inequality in treatment compared to other workers in the organisation or in more extreme cases the termination of employees' employment.

> *'Yes, the union is there. I am not a member because I would be penalised for it. My husband works in the same company, and when he started he joined the trade union*

for one year, and he was the only one who didn't get any overtimes and he was doing all the secondary bad jobs. So the first thing he told me when I was starting was 'please don't join the union.'' It is not written anywhere, but you can see their [management's] attitude changing. But nobody tells you 'you can't join.' [P31-General Operative]

'*Well, the culture in the place is that everybody can be replaced very easily so if you want to join a union, they will just get rid of you.'* [P17-Quality Analyst]

In addition, a minority of participants reported that their organisation refuses to negotiate with the union they joined.

'The organisation doesn't accept the union, and it doesn't acknowledge the union. They don't negotiate with them. There were issues there last year, when the union wanted things, and they [management] wouldn't speak to them. The court recommended that they would speak to them, but they ignored that completely and sent a letter saying 'we don't deal with them'. End of story! There was one day strike which did not have any effect. We do have meetings with the union in now, and then, we go through strategies and what they think we should do, but it comes to nothing because there is no negotiating, there is no speaking, they are just ignored.' [P37-Retail Assistant]

5.3.2.2 Management bypassing the union

In some instances, organisations may recognise and negotiate with the trade union. However, employees may perceive that the management tries to limit the power of the union by bypassing it, especially when it comes to decision making. In particular, participants reported they perceived that their management uses various tactics to avoid dealing with the union recognised by their organisations (n=6). Such tactics included, for example, cancelling the meetings with the union representatives and implementing changes regardless the outcomes of negotiating with the union.

'The union has been bringing up issues, but senior management keeps moving the goal posts. The union do speak up but management they don't have to, they are under no pressure to answer to us. The union is raising those [issues] with senior

management, and senior management keeps cancelling union meetings.' [P5-Psychiatric Nurse]

'There are meetings with trade union but....the way we see it in the office is, regardless of what argument the union has to oppose to management, they will implement it anyway.' [P11-Social Welfare Inspector]

5.3.2.3 The scope of collective bargaining

The findings suggest that the scope of collective bargaining may be perceived by employees as limited to only certain topics and issues. However, since there were twenty participants in the study that are represented in the workplace by a trade union, and only eight of them reported that the collective bargaining takes place, the findings suggest that employees may be not fully aware of the scope of activities that their trade union engages in.

The majority of participants who were aware of the collective bargaining process and scope reported that to the best of their knowledge the collective bargaining process involves only negotiating over pay increases while one participant reported that the bargaining is only related to hours. Hence, the union may have limited opportunities to defend employees' other concerns and grievances.

'*We got some pay rise...they negotiated a pay rise for the next two years. It was a few cents, and it cannot be changed for the next two years. I am not happy that the union is not helping more about other things.'* [P43-General Operative]

In addition, three participants reported that the union and management negotiated deals in which employees perceived that they had no say, and which are not necessarily welcomed by employees.

'Well, the majority of grievances at the moment is related to heavy workload, they are giving us more and more work. It is part of that Croak Park agreement, so we can't raise it with the union; we have no say in it.' [P11-Social Welfare Inspector]

'When I started, I was told that overtimes are only when I want to work more and get more money. But now they [management] turned to us and said that we have a flexible contract and we must work overtime at least once a month. It is not written in

the contract as it was some deal between management and SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union).' [P43-General Operative]

5.3.3 Formal direct voice mechanisms

The findings suggest that there are some forms of direct voice mechanisms available to employees in most organisations. Whether these may be organised formally and include for example meetings with management and employee surveys; or they may be informal and include, for example, chat with the line manager. Majority of participants reported that they have formal direct mechanisms (n=43). However, the findings suggest that employees may perceive that these mechanisms are structured in a way that prevents them from expressing their views on various topics.

Nearly a fifth of participants reported management structures as a significant factor that prevents them from speaking up in their organisations (n=10). Majority of those participants (n=7) perceived they have no channel in their workplace where they can raise issues and grievances such as bullying.

> *'Well, once the issue came up which I had, and I went to her [line manager's] manager....then her line manager mentioned it to the other senior manager. Then it got all confusing. And then I was told to go back to my line manager because the grievance procedure is in place ... if it is a grievance I have to go only to the line manager. So even if your problem is with your line manager you have to go to your line manager which makes things very awkward.'* [P14-Youth Worker]

Similarly, a minority of respondents (n=3) contributed their lack of opportunities for voice about their issues and grievances in situations where there is a low frequency of the meetings as they may be initiated only by management.

> *'I had one meeting with him [line manager] in last three years which was organised by him. It was just that one meeting, and it took about fifteen minutes or so. There were four of us there. They should talk to people more and ask them what problems they have.'* [P43-General Operative]

In addition, a minority of participants (n=2) reported that they have no opportunity to speak up as they do not know who their manager is.

> *'I don't even know who they [management] are. They would never come to meetings. I mean I feel like we are almost invisible...We think that management is like this spaceship that is completely disconnected from those of us who actually work on the ground and yet they still make these decisions. We've no control.'* [P39-Lecturer]

Only one employee reported that she has no opportunity to speak up about issues she is faced during her shift due to her workplace isolation. However, since she was the only participant working night shift in the sample it may be an important factor for others working in a similar context.

> *'When I have any problems on the night shift it won't get sorted...the quality manager works only day shifts. My work station is isolated from everybody, and the supervisor works on day shift.'* [P25-General Operative]

With regards to organisations structuring frequent meetings with employees or allowing informal forms of direct voice mechanisms, the results indicate that the social relations between line managers and their subordinates are an important factor that influences employees' decision making to either withdraw their voice or to speak up. The findings related to the informal direct voice mechanisms are hence presented and explained in detail in Section 5.4.1 of this chapter.

5.3.4 Topics of silence in the context of formal voice mechanisms

The results of the study show that the collective communication between participants and their management may be perceived by employees as structured around certain topics. Since the results of the study show that individual communication that usually takes place on one-to-one meetings may be influenced by the social relations between line manager and employees, it is discussed in detail in Section 5.4.1 of this chapter. The collective forms of communication usually take place at workforce meetings with management. Nearly half of all participants reported the formal presence of collective communication through workforce meetings (n=25). The findings then show how the structures and processes of such

communication may influence participants' decisions to either remain silent or prevent them from speak up about a certain range of topics.

Over half of those participants (n=13), who reported collective voice structures and processes in their workplaces, reported that their input is welcomed and always heard by management. However, the topics allowed for discussion were in all except one case related to suggestions on how to improve the product, service or the production process; or to issues related to participants labour process that may be solved. Only one participant reported that the organisation seems to be actively seeking employees' feedback to resolve collective grievances with shift patterns.

> *'In the case of an issue with the product, let's say an increased number of rejects, all our suggestions are very welcome.'* [P7-General Operative]

> '*They are willing to listen to you if you have ideas about how to make more money.'* [P8-Swimming Instructor]

The rest of those participants (n=12), who engage in formal collective voice processes, reported that they have no opportunity to speak up while communication takes place either because management uses the opportunity to channel down information or they usually inform the participant that the certain topics are not for discussion.

> *'It is basically about how you get on with your work. But it ended up being what work you need to do. They [management] don't let us know about the other stuff. They don't ask people who actually work there on the floor to participate in anything.'* [P6-Social Care Worker]

> *Well some things, like if you would ask them about certain plans they have...if they don't want to tell you they won't. Then they just say that is not for discussion. Normally they are fairly good but then just some things, like financial matters, planning of overtime, yeah some things like that.'* [P20-General Operative]

5.3.5 The nature of the employment contract

The literature review offers a theoretical foundation for the argument that the contractual conditions of employees may influence their decision to remain silent. From fifty-one participants, nearly quarter reported that the nature of their contract indeed influences their decision to withdraw their voice (n=12). Employees may remain silent about certain topics when they perceive that expressing their views could endanger their future employment prospects especially when their contracts are temporary.

Majority of participants working on temporary contracts (n=5) reported they have various grievances they remain silent about including perceived inequality of treatment by management compared to their co-workers; grievances about pay or hours; and/or mistreatment by their line managers.

> '*The fact that I am not permanent, I wouldn't rock the boat. I wouldn't want to ruin my chances.'* [General Operative]

> '*It is after two years [getting permanent contract], they are kinda using it against you as leverage when you are not permanent. I work in a clean room where they are taking on a lot of young people who don't have a voice. They don't want to speak because they are afraid as they are not there for two years. They are not permanent. They don't speak out when something is wrong you know.'* [P51-General Operative]

Similarly, a majority of participants working on part-time contract (n=6) reported that the nature of their contract influences their decision to remain silent about various topics including grievances, disagreement about working process and/or misbehaviour of their co-workers. Such silence may be a result of perceived inequality where employees consider their voice to have less impact than the voice of their full-time co-workers. For example, one participant explained that she does not report misbehaviour of her co-worker that damages the quality of the service provided by her organisation because she is on part-time contract while her co-worker is a permanent employee.

> *'I never really thought I could do that [report co-worker's misbehaviour] and it is when I think about why I wouldn't do that, it is back to the fact that I am part-time and she [coworker] has a full-time position there. She is much more secure, and there*

is power-imbalance, and people [other co-workers] would just look at me and go: 'Why are you kicking up the fuss? This is not something for you to comment on!' [P24-Lecturer]

In addition, employees who work on part-time contracts may withdraw their voice about grievances and disagreements when they have only a limited amount of hours specified in their contracts. Nearly half of the participants with the part-time contract (n=3) reported they perceive that such contractual limitations may give management the power to cut their hours when they raise their grievances.

'I knew that they [management] would actually cut my hours and I know that because I spoke to the receptionist who worked there for four years, and she told me that they would actually cut my hours. If you say something they won't give you hours, and I need that job.' [P38-Receptionist]

While only one participant reported that the flexibility of her contract plays a role in her decision-making process to remain silent about her grievances and issues with work, it may be an important factor for other employees that work under similar contractual conditions.

'In our contract, it states that we can be employed in any hospital within the H&S (Health & Safety), so there is always a power if you create the trouble in the area. When I was younger, that would always be a thing. If you are happy where you are, then stay quiet because they can move you to Mullingar or they can move you to Castlebar.' [P49-Midwife]

5.3.5.1 Joining a trade union

The results of the study suggest that contractual conditions may also impose restrictions on employees who wish to join a trade union and enhance their opportunities for voice. While only a minority participants (n=2) reported that they are not allowed to join trade union due to the temporary nature of their contract, it may be an important factor for employees working in a similar context.

'They [union] are there, but I am not a member. Not until I am permanent. You can't join the union until then. I think it is the policy of the union; it wasn't HR. Then after three years, it is automatic [joining the union].' [P22-General Operative]

5.3.5.2 An organisation using non-standard contracts

Employees may perceive that their organisation is using non-standard working contracts for new staff in order to limit their voice opportunities or to disempower their representatives. Such perception has been reported by nearly a fifth of participants (n=8) who reported that their organisations started to hire staff on temporary contracts. This was perceived by participants as a management strategy to either limit temporary workers' and contractors' representation or to restrict their voice at the individual level.

> *'Well, a lot of them [temporary staff] are quite vulnerable. That would be contracted. They are disempowered and that they are not able to get permanent jobs. There wouldn't ever be any union involvement; they would never get a job in Ireland if they seek their assistance. You see a lot of disempowerment with registrars and SHO's, they'd be working sixty hours a week, and they have no power to say anything because they would be seen as a bad SHO (Senior House Officer). They wouldn't get a good reference...so the only people who are kept on and get good positions are the ones that stay quiet and don't say anything.'* [P49-Midwife]

However, while this may be an important finding with regards to management strategy to limit voice opportunities of employees, participants who reported this driver of silence did not experience the silence themselves. They rather reported their perceptions of their workplace context resulting in the silence of others. In other words, it was reporting of participants assumptions and conclusions made from the observation of their co-workers' behaviour rather than their own experience with silence, therefore it is not possible for the interpreter to conclude whether their co-workers perceived their voice opportunities being limited, how was their silence process formed and what did they perceive as an outcome of their silence.

5.4 Informal social relations

5.4.1 Line managers

As mentioned in Section 5.3.1, the direct voice mechanisms in the workplace are usually implemented by employees' line managers. However, the findings suggest that employee' perceptions of how line managers structure these mechanisms and allow employee voice on an individual and collective level may be significantly influenced by social relations within the workplace, particularly the relationship between the employee and the line manager. The majority of participants (n=37) reported that actions and behaviour of their line managers influence their decision to remain silent and or prevent them from having a say about various topics while just over half of participants (n=26) reported that certain actions and behaviour of line managers contribute to their decision to speak up. The line managers' actions and behaviours contributing to participants' silence are recorded in Table 5.4.1 together with the percentage of respondents who reported this as a driver of their silence. Some employees reported more than one driver.

Table 5.4.1: Silence in the context of social relations with the line manager

Line managers' actions and behaviours	Number of respondents who reported this as a factor driving their silence (n=37)
Line managers dismiss discussion on certain topics	21
Line manager does not follow up on participants enquires	19
Line manager is aggressive and/ or intimidating	18
Employee perception of how the line manager treat their co-workers	8
Line manager steals employees ideas	3
Line manager engages in misbehaviour	1

5.4.1.1 Line manager dismisses discussion on certain topics

As mentioned in section 5.3.1 of this chapter, results indicate that the individual communication between participants and their line manager is influenced by the state of their social relations and how line managers structure and implement voice mechanisms in the

workplace. The findings show that line managers may dismiss communication on certain topics which results in fewer opportunities for employees to express their voice. Over third of participants (n=21) reported that their line managers often dismiss discussion on certain topics reported in Table 5.4.1.1 together with a number of respondents who reported this topic. Some participants reported more than one topic.

Table 5.4.1.1 Topics of communication dismissed by the line managers

Topic	Number of respondents who reported silence about this topic (n=21)
Suggestions that would result in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	14
Personal grievances	9
Disagreements over the personal labour process	5
Issues with a personal labour process	4
Wrong instruction	1

In most of the incidents, participants' silence arose from previous experiences when their line managers dismissed the discussion over the topic participant wanted to communicate about. Such experience resulted in the participants' perception that there was no point to voice their concerns again after the incident.

> *'...the director was just like: no, only do what you need to do! I was getting shut down. Or sometimes she went like: Don't question me with that! So, I just wouldn't.'* [P3-Office Administrator]

> *'She [line manager] shushes you. She wouldn't listen to you, absolutely. She turns her back on you and walks away. She just walks away before I can even start to talk. Or when I tried to tell her I had no supplies she said 'shush, don't talk back to me'.*[P27-Accommodation Assistant]

In contrast, results suggest that employees may decide to speak up on certain topics when they perceive their line manager as willing to listen to their point of view. Over a quarter of participants (n=17) reported that they express their views on various topics including disagreements about working process (n=6), issues related to work (n=7), suggestions on improvements that would results in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process (n=8), and grievances (n.2) as they perceive that their line managers are willing to discuss these.

'She [line manager] would give me an opportunity to contribute to the meetings. I think I am relaxed enough that I could actually say: I think I have disagreed on things. As she says to me: 'Have you any opinions on this?' In fairness, she has said things to me in the past: 'Feel free to disagree if you have different ideas, just let me know'.[P15-Administrator]

5.4.1.2 Line managers do not follow up on employee's inquiries

Whether line managers follow up on employees' inquiries may be an important factor that contributes to employees' decision to withdraw their voice or to express their views. Over third of participants (n.19) reported that their line managers did not follow up when they communicated various issues and suggestions in the past hence in presence they remain silent as they don't see any point in trying to express their views. Such silence arises from shallow voice, where participants perceive that the communication channel with their line manager exists, however, their voice is shallow as it has no impact and no action is taking on behalf of the line manager. The topics reported by participants within this context are presented in Table 5.4.1.2 together with the number of respondents who reported their silence about the topic. Some respondents reported more than one topic.

Table 5.4.1.2 Topics of silence in the context of no follow up from line managers

Topic	% of respondents who reported silence about this topic (n=19)
Suggestions that would result in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	9
Issues with a personal labour process	7
Personal grievances	6
Misbehaviour of Co-workers	2

Participants whose line managers do not follow up on their queries reported silence about suggestions that would result in less tedious, intensive and/or repetitive personal labour process; about issues they experience during their labour process including poor organisation of work or lack of resources; and about personal grievances such as pay, hours and being overlooked for promotion. In addition a minority of participants explained that they are not reporting their co-workers' misbehaviour as they tried in past and the line manager did nothing about it.

'*He'd [line manager] say something like I'll get back to you, but then you'll never see him again. He is just gone. There would be staff meetings, he just stands in the front like a lecturer and runs through the motions of health and safety and different things. It doesn't matter if you are there or not. You could speak up, but nothing ever changes, so there is no point even speaking up. Everything just remains as it is. He does nothing, so no point, it is like a waste of time.'* [P40-Teacher]

'I wouldn't be bothered to tell her [line manager] because there would be no point, it wouldn't go anywhere. Like to get something we need such and such, it never happens, like resources. She is a nice supervisor, but she is the crap boss because she doesn't follow up things through, you can come up with stuff, and she would listen, and she would agree with you and then she wouldn't do anything about it. She does not bring it to middle managers. So the next layer doesn't know what happens on the ground, she stops the information.' [P4-Psychiatric]

'...you need to get me some sort of promotion or... and she [line manager] just said: 'Oh, yeah, yeah, I 'll look into it, blah blah...' and she never did.' [P17-Quality Analyst]

The results further suggest that employees may perceive the inability of their line managers to follow up having a basis in other organisational or line managers' individual factors. For example, nearly a fifth of participants (n=10) reported that such inability arises from their line managers' lack of organisational skills and experience.

'No management qualifications, not able to manage [line manager], abuse of resource, not putting enough staff in certain areas. But she is actually not dealing with issues. We are noticing she is actually letting things snowball, instead of dealing with them...she is inexperienced.' [P5-Psychiatric Nurse]

Similarly, employees may perceive that their line manager does not care about the job and they feel there is no point to communicate their inquiries as they wouldn't be dealt with. While an only minority of participants (n.5) reported that their line manager does not care, it may be an important factor contributing to employees' decision to remain silent in a similar context.

> *'He [line manager] doesn't put any effort into resolving anything. He doesn't follow up; he doesn't want to do it. You wouldn't really say Paddy [line manager] any suggestions about anything, or if you have problems with hours or pay. I think the problem is that Paddy went for a management position in the different store about two years ago and I think it really de-motivated him. That makes things worse; he doesn't care at all now.'* [P13-Retail Assistant]

In addition, a small sample of respondents (n=5) do not communicate their issues and grievances to their line manager as they perceive that the line manager has no support from the organisation hence he/she cannot follow up on their inquiries due to the lack of empowerment in decision-making.

> '*The shift managers have no power over the schedules. He [line manager] doesn't have a choice who is going to put in it. We see him doing it in the staff room, and he is stressed because he has to put people working when they said they couldn't because that is what he was told to do by the store manager.'* [P44-Retail Assistant]

However, the organisational support for line managers may be also an important decision making factor for employees to speak up, especially about instances where they are bullied by their line manager. While only a minority of participants (n=2) reported voice outcomes driven by a lack of organisational support for their line manager and by organisational follow-up, it may be an important decision making factor for employees working in a similar context.

> '*The Polish one [line manager] is problematic. Last year she was terrible to us, but we were complaining about her, so she was told [by middle management] that if she continues to be horrible to people, she'll get a warning. So, now she is better.'* [P42-Waitresses]

In addition, over a quarter of participants (n=13) reported that because their line manager always follows up when they communicate certain issues, they feel they can always express their views. The most common topics participants communicated and were followed up and sorted out by their line managers were issues related to working including H&S, suggestions that would not result in more tedious, repetitive and/or intensive personal labour process such as the better organisation of work, and/or some personal inquiries.

'*If I would have an issue I would just go and talk to him [line manager] about it. He is very approachable. He dealt with all the issues I had like time off. I had never had any requests that I wouldn't get.'* [P22-General Operative]

5.4.1.3 The line manager is aggressive and/or intimidating

The line manager's attitude may be an important decision-making factor whether employees remain silent or speak up. Over third of participants reported they withdraw their voice on various topics due to their perception of their line managers being aggressive and/or intimidating (n=18). The particular topics respondents were silent about in such context are presented in Table 5.4.1.3 together with the number of respondents who reported this topic. Some participants reported more than one topic.

Table 5.4.1.3 Topics of silence in the context of line managers' aggressiveness and/or intimidation

Topic	Number of respondents who reported silence about this topic (n=18)
Disagreements over the personal labour process	88.9% (n=16)
Suggestions that would results in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	27.8% (n=5)
Personal grievances	27.8% (n=5)

The most common topic participants reported to not voice in the workplace context with an intimidating and/or aggressive line manager was the disagreement over their personal labour process. In most instances, the silence arose from previous experience with a personal confrontation with the line manager.

'*We never, ever contribute [at the meetings]. You don't do it. He [line manager] is talking so much. It is pure intimidation when you sit there. No water break, no toilet break; kind of stories like thirty years ago; all sort of nonsense; and eventually, at the very end he would then bring up the finances. We gave up because what happened was, I'll go up and say: 'Hi Adam, listen I met with the two coordinators, and we feel...' 'Who appointed you spokesman?' That is how he addresses you then. It is pure venom.'* [P9-Project Coordinator]

In addition, witnessing line managers treating participants' co-workers in a confrontational manner also contributed to respondents' decision-making process to remain silent. However,

besides vocal confrontations, participants remained silent about various topics when their voice or the voice of their coworkers in the past resulted in some form of repercussions from their line managers.

> *'I think if I had said anything [disagreements about the working process], it would have been a massive black mark against my name. There would have been opportunities for that but the director was very controlling, and she didn't like in any way to be questioned, or like if I said it would be better to do stuff this way...no, she didn't have that at all. 'Why do you question my authority?'...and if you did it or you tried to cross her, she didn't like you. She would actively make your life hell.'* [P45-Call Centre Operative]

In contrast, results suggest that employees may decide to speak up about certain topics when they perceive their relationship with the line manager as good and when a line manager has a positive attitude towards them. Over a fifth of participants (n.10) reported that they often voice their disagreements about the working process (n.5), issues related to work (n.3), suggestions (n.2) and grievances (n.1) because they have good relationships with their line managers.

> '*She [line manager] can say what she really feels, and I can say to her how I really feel, and then we just work better. She is easy to go to talk to. You can sit down and have a cup of tea with her and just express your feelings, and she'll just make you feel comfortable, and then you can kind of tell her anything.'* [P34-Childminder]

Similarly, a minority of participants (n=6) felt they can voice their concerns even in situations when the confrontation with their line manager follows, however, the line manager does not enforce any negative consequences on employees who argue with him/her. Such relational dynamic has been reported especially by participants from hospitality and manufacturing organisations.

> *'He [line manager] always comes down to tell us what kind of idiots we are, and then he walks away. It is the Irish way of joking. So I'd say we have a good supervisor. You can talk to him. When something does not work, he is all panicking, shouting at everyone. He comes over, and says: 'You are an eejit, don't do it anymore' and he walks away and everything is ok in an hour time. We all like him. He makes you*

laugh. You can even use bad language around him. I can joke with him and tell him 'Fuck off.' [P30-General Operative]

5.4.1.4 Line manager steal employees' ideas

Employees may decide to remain silent about their suggestions that would results in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process because when they suggested these to their line managers in the past, line managers took the idea as theirs. A minority of participants (n=3) reported that they are withdrawing their improvements in their workplace as their line managers previously took credit for their ideas. While such line managers' behaviours have been reported only by a minority of participants, it may be an important factor why employees do not communicate their ideas in their workplaces.

'...but she [line manager] took it as her idea and then send it down as policy.' [P23-Accountant]

5.4.1.5 Line manager engages in misbehaviour

Employees may not communicate their concerns with the quality of the product in situations where their line manager engages in misbehaviour. While such instance of silence has been reported by only one participant, it may be an important factor that contributes to employees' decision making to remain silent in a similar context.

'I came in at 8 am, and there were no trays left to pack the stuff properly and get it assessed by the quality, so all the catheters coming from the machine that we made were falling on the top of each other without being assessed by the quality and the manager came in, and he looked at the boxes and was like: 'What is going on? Where are the trays?' ...and then he looked at me and went 'quick, fuck them into the other box before anyone sees it'. So we went to the other room and started packing them into packages... for people...you know medical...it will be put into their [peoples'] body...but you see all sort of things like that there all the time'. [P51: General Operative]

5.4.1.6 Perception of employees on how line managers treat their co-workers

As mentioned previously, employees may remain silent due to their perceptions of how their line managers treated their co-workers who tried to express their views in the past. Nearly a fifth of participants (n=17) reported that they decided to remain silent about various topics including suggestions, grievances, disagreements about working process and wrong instructions that were given to them by their line managers because they perceived that when their co-workers tried to raise such issues, line manager either express a negative attitude towards them; or the line manager enforced some form of negative action towards the co-worker.

> *'I heard stories about her shouting and being disrespectful to people...So I am not starting any conflicts with her.'* [P11-Social Welfare Inspector]

> *'He'll make your life a living hell. The girl ended up getting sacked. I still remember that staff meeting. She questioned him [line manager] about funding in front of all of us. Funding. Where is all this money going, you know.'* [P9-Project Coordinator]

5.4.2 Co-workers

The social relation between employees and their co-workers may be an important factor that contributes to employees' decision to remain silent. Indeed, half of the participants (n=25) reported such a relationship to be an important indicator of their silence. The topic of silence that was reported by the participants in most cases was co-worker's misbehaviour; however, there were two respondents who remain silent about their co-workers being bullied and one respondent remains silent about her suggestions that would result in the less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process. The topics and reasons participants reported for their silence are presented in Table 5.4.2 together with a number of respondents who reported this reason. Some participants reported more than one reason.

Table 5.4.2: Silence in the context of social relations with co-workers

Factors within the social relations with co-workers	Topic of Silence	Number of respondents who reported this as a factor driving their silence (n=25)
Keeping a positive state of social relations	Co-workers' misbehaviour	12
Protecting co-workers	Co-workers' misbehaviour	10
Collusion with co-workers	Co-workers' misbehaviour	10
Avoiding confrontation	Co-workers' misbehaviour	7
Confidentiality	Bullying	2
Co-worker steals suggestions	Suggestions that would result in less tedious/ repetitive/ intensive labour process	1

The most common reason for employee silence about co-workers' misbehaviour, reported by participants, was the maintenance of positive social relations with their co-workers. Respondents explained that they do not wish to disrupt an existing positive state of relationships with their co-workers.

> *'I know if I say it I would be stepping on all the waitresses toes and you need to juggle a bit there because you may have a friend who does it. Then you are going to look like an arsehole if you go crying to the boss you know. I don't want to ruin it [the relationship].'* [P46-Chef]

Interestingly, employees may not report co-worker's misbehaviour when they perceive that speaking up would lead to negative consequences for those co-workers who engage in misbehaviour regardless of their own state of social relations. Such reason for silence has been reported by nearly a quarter of participants.

> '*I know she [line manager] would have taken the worst step because that person would have to either voluntary left or she would make that person's life living hell. She did it at the end over a couple of other things. It was loyalty towards my friend even when she wasn't my friend, loyalty to the fact she does her best ninety-five per cent of the time, just sometimes there is a little problem.'* [P41-Registrar]

Nearly a quarter of participants reported that the reason why they do not report co-worker's misbehaviour, such as not following the prescribed working procedure, is collusion. The reported collusion had two different forms, one being silence due to the social reciprocity,

where participants remained silent about co-workers' misbehaviour because their co-workers do not report them either when they misbehave. The second form of collusion was actual physical participation of respondents in the misbehaviour process, hence a collective form of misbehaviour.

> *'I haven't reported anyone. So that is kind of the general atmosphere there, so no one said it: 'I'll get you away with it if you let me get away with it'...but it is kind of unwritten rule I suppose. You don't snitch somebody else out. We are all on the same side, and you wouldn't do that to me kind of.'* [P47-General Operative]

In addition, employees may remain silent about their co-workers' misbehaviour, if they wish to avoid confrontation with them. Such silence has, again, its roots in the maintenance of the positive social relations with co-workers.

> *'I might be afraid to say it [misbehaviour of contract worker] because the person might ring up Betty [middle manager] and say I verbally abused the resident. This happens regularly. And now because you can report anonymously, you don't even have to put your name when you report an allegation. And what is happening now is there are personality clashes, and contract staff who don't like you are going to say you verbally abused a patient. And they will report it to Betty, and Betty rings HIQA, rings the guards, and then the person gets sent off the floor awaiting investigation. So it is a real fear environment.'* [P5-Psychiatric Nurse]

There were two additional topics participants remain silent about in the context of the social relations with co-workers. Two participants explained that because they do not want to break confidentiality with their co-workers, they remain silent about these co-workers being bullied.

> *'I should have, you know as a senior person to her. I was always thinking to myself, should I have gone [to report bullying]. I was keeping confidence basically. She asked me not to say anything. And I left her, and she is still living in that environment that is toxic, and she is being bullied.'* [P9-Project Coordinator]

One participant reported she does not suggest any improvements because her co-worker took her idea as hers.

'They [management] were thinking about improving quality, and so they started to think of clothing. And because I used to work in a hospital I knew a lot about laundry and related hygiene. So when they started renovating our lockers and dressing rooms, me, the stupid idiot, said aloud in the canteen how I thought it should have been done. I didn't realise this Bulgarian woman was sitting there, so then I found out that she went to the quality manager and she got 250 Euro reward for coming up with a good idea.' [P31-General Operative]

While these two topics of silence were reported only by a minority of participants, it may be an important factor contributing to silence for employees working in similar contexts.

5.4.3 Trade union and other employees' representatives

The literature review suggests that the employees' perception of actions and behaviours of their trade union and other representatives may be an important decision making a factor of whether they remain silent or speak up about their grievances. From the twenty-one employees who reported they are members of a trade union or they have a staff association in their workplace, all participants also reported having the opportunity to meet and talk to their representatives. However such communication has not been in many cases realised for many reasons presented in this section.

While over half of the twenty-one participants who have an opportunity for collective representation reported that they always communicate their issues and grievances to their representatives (n=11), nearly half of the participants reported that they never communicate with their representatives (n=10). A minority of respondents (n=2) explained that the reason for their silence is that there is no need to talk to their representatives as they have no grievances or issues in their workplaces that would need representative's involvement. The rest of the participants (n=8), who do not communicate with their representatives, reported that there is either a lack of opportunities to talk to their representatives; the representative does not follow up on the participant's inquiry; and/or the participant reported a poor state of social relations between herself/himself and the representative.

'I know which one he [trade union representative] is, but I've never met him personally. When we have a meeting, it is all our shift together, he speaks for about thirty minutes and tells us what is happening, and then he leaves. If you ask him anything in the meeting about what has been said by him, he does answer, but he would not meet you one to one. He only says what he communicates to management and the organisation and what deal they close or what agreement they reached.' [P43-General Operative]

'SIPTU didn't solve anything even after being there three times. Since then I finished my membership because they did fuck all'. [P27-Accommodation Assistant]

'She [representative] works in the same area as me but to be completely honest, I would never approach her. I just do not feel I can trust her'. [P7-General Operative]

In addition, employees may limit their opportunities for collective voice and refuse to join trade union due to the negative experience with the trade union representatives in the past. Such experience has been reported by a small number of participants (n=5), however, due to the size of the sample interviewed it may be an important decision making factor for employees who had a similar previous experience with their representatives.

'I hate trade unions. I used to be in a union when I was working for the Roscommon County council. I didn't get into any trouble, but I got extra duties when I worked there. I said 'yeah, no problem, just give me more money or something like that'. So I arranged a meeting with the HR person. So inevitably I got my union rep to come with me. Little that I know I am walking into an ambush. I was told, basically, the HR people are giving the union lady paying out towards college. So she screwed me basically. That day I left the union, and I swore I'd never go back again.' [P9-Project Coordinator]

In contrast, as mentioned earlier, over half of the participants who have the opportunity to communicate with their representatives always do so as they perceive their representation as effective. Nearly all of those participants (n=9) reported that the representative deals with collective issues such as wages and hours.

> *'How it works there is that you go to the union and they go then and say: 'Look this person should be on this'. So yeah union straight away. When I started there first, there were different rates for different jobs, and you won't get it unless you go to the union.'* [P20-General Operative:]

In addition, participants who always voice their concerns and grievances to their representatives (n=8) reported they do so either because their representative is open to communication and always follows up on participants' inquiries.

> *'I can ring him [representative] or text him, and he will get back to me. He is very good, because any dealings they [union] have with management, they will email all the members. The emails they send, the emails they receive, before they go into meetings they will send text messages to see if anyone has any issue or concerns. They say what issues they are bringing up. They are very accessible.'* [P5-Psychiatric Nurse]

The results further suggest that while some employees may communicate their issues and grievances to their representatives, they do not speak about them to their management. Such management-oriented silence has been reported by a minority of participants (n=6) and can be explained by other contextual conditions explained in previous sections.

5.5 The integration of the workplace context

Employees may remain silent in their workplaces as a result of multiple factors rather than a single one. However, in some instances, one factor may be perceived by participants as more influential than others. The topic of silence may be in the majority of cases an important indicator of the factor that influences an employees' decision to withdraw their voice. The majority of participants (n.47) reported that they may opt for silence based on multiple factors in their workplaces. Also, the minority of participants that reported they are silent only about one topic explained that it is usually a combination of workplace factors that resulted in their silence.

In addition, some topics of silence were the result of one or two specific contexts. For example, all participants who reported that they do not suggest any improvements in their workplaces that would make their work more tedious, repetitive or intensive do so due to the nature of their job.

However, some topic may be an important indicator of employee voice rather than of silence. For example, the nature of the product or service was perceived as a more important workplace factor for participants to opt for voice about their co-worker's misbehaviour regardless of the state of social relations between themselves and their co-workers.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings from fifty-one participants suggesting that employees may opt for silence due to various workplace factors including the nature of their job; formal workplace procedures such as embeddedness of voice mechanisms and the nature of their contracts; and informal social relations with their line managers, co-workers and/or trade union representatives.

With regards to the nature of participants' jobs, they withdrew information that would result in a further intensification of their personal labour process or no personal return unless their suggestions would have the opposite effect and made their work more interesting and less tedious. Also, the data explains how the length of service and experience with the organisation may empower employees to speak up about various topics or to contribute to their decision to remain silent. Autonomy may allow employees to remain silent and carry on with their tasks while avoiding unnecessary confrontation and deterioration of social relations in the workplace. In addition, employees may speak up about information that prevents deterioration in the quality of the product or service.

With regards to formal workplace procedures, the findings suggest that employees may perceive they have limited opportunities for voice when they evaluate their management's attitude towards trade union as negative. In addition, participants may perceive the role and activities of their trade union limited to collective bargaining about pay increases which may contribute to their views that there is no point to communicate their personal grievances to the union as they would not be dealt with. Similarly, employees may perceive they have limited voice opportunities if their union and management negotiate deals that are not welcome by employees.

In the context of formal direct voice channels, employees may perceive that management structures prevent them from expressing their views especially when the workplace policies limit their communication only to a line manager or when the meetings are very rare and initiated only by management. In addition, the findings suggest that employees may perceive that there are certain topics they have no say about due to the structures of communication at the workforce meetings. The individual communication between participants and their line manager was found to be influenced by the state of their social relations

Employees may decide to remain silent on various topics in situations when they work on a temporary contract as they do not want to ruin their chances for permanent employment. Also, part-time contracts may influence employees' decision to remain silent as they may perceive that their voice would have less impact than the voice of their full-time peers; and/or they may be afraid that management would cut their hours. In addition, participants explained that they might have limited opportunity for collective voice as their temporary contracts do not allow them to join trade unions.

The findings suggest that social relations between employees and their line managers contribute to employees' decision-making process to remain silent or prevent them from having a say. Especially when employees perceive that their line managers do not follow up on their inquiries, they may opt for silence. In addition, employees' perceptions of their line managers' attitudes towards them and their co-workers may influence their decision to withdraw their voice on certain topics. In particular, the situations where employees perceive their line managers to be aggressive, and/or intimidating, and /or when speaking up would be followed by some form of repercussions. Also, since the line managers usually serve as the first contact for employees within the voice structures in organisations, they may allow voice on certain topics while dismissing discussion on other topics. Line managers' behaviour may hence prevent employees from having a say. In addition, employees' past experience when they communicated their suggestions and line managers took those ideas as theirs or when employees' learned from past situations on how their line managers' treated their co-workers.

With regards to informal social relations between employees and their co-workers, the chapter presented empirical evidence suggesting that in the majority of cases, employees may remain silent about their co-workers' misbehaviour as they may collude in the misbehaviour, aim to maintain the positive state of social relations, protect the co-workers and/or avoid confrontation. A minority of participants reported silence towards their trade union and/or representatives mainly due to the poor social relations with them or perception that the representative does not follow up on their inquiries in past. The next chapter presents the findings on the various forms of silence processes that were reported by participants.

6. Findings: Reconceptualising the employee silence process

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the empirical research findings for the second primary research question; *How do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?* Using the methodology described in chapter four, the analysis was conducted in the context of the sensitising framework which suggests that employees remain silent intentionally and unintentionally.

The analysis identified six distinctive types of the silent process; therefore, the chapter has six sections. Each section explains one type of silent process and presents empirical evidence from the interviews conducted with participants. The analysis further suggests that a particular context is related to a particular process of silence; hence the findings are presented with a link to the context of silence presented in the previous chapter.

The summary of the findings for this chapter is presented in Table 6.1 below. The table shows the number of occasions reported by participants reporting this type of process. Some participants reported a similar silent process while remaining silent about different topics and in different contexts. That is why the total number of processes of silence is 320.

Table 6.1: Summary of the findings for the process of silence

Type of silent process	Number of occasions reported by participants reporting this type of process
Intentional silence	N=156
Shallow Voice	N=53
Dismissed Voice	N=60
Intentional Institutional Silence	N=9
Unintentional Silence	N=13
Unintentional Institutionalised Silence	N=29

6.2 Intentional silence

The literature review provides a theoretical basis for the process of silence being intentional on behalf of employees. From overall 320 instances of silence reported by 51 participants, the analysis identified nearly half of them being instances where participants made conscious decision to remain silent. In all of these instances, participants did not try to speak up in the past hence it is **'*a voice that has not been and may not be expressed within a particular context*'.** While is some cases, participants reported to be silent about some topic once

> *'...I won't be explaining it to him for 10 minutes...it would slow down everything else.'* [P25-General Operative]

in most cases, the silence was a continuous intentional process, where participants either do not speak about certain topics and will continue not speaking about them in the future.

> *'...I wouldn't suggest anything...'* [P22 - General Operative]

> *'...I have never disagreed with her or complained...'* [P7-General Operative]

There was a wide variety of topic reported by participants and summarised in Table 6.2a that participants remain silent about intentionally. Interestingly, all processes of silence about suggestions that result in more workload, finishing work early and nearly all instances of co-workers misbehaviour (n=45 out of 49) were intentional hence participants never considered to speak about them to management and will remain silent about them in the future.

Table: 6.2a: Topics of the intentional silence process

Topics of silence	Number of instances of the intentional silence process
Misbehaviour of Co-workers	N=45
Suggestions that would result in more workload or less rewards	N=31
Personal Grievances	N=29
Disagreements over the participants' personal labour process	N=19
Wrong instructions	N=10
Suggestions that would result in less workload	N=8
Issues with the personal labour process	N=7
Finishing work early	N=3
Misbehaviour of line managers	N=3

While the synthesising framework of silence in Chapter 3 suggests there may be six various contextual factors leading to silence, the analysis identified four factors that contribute to

employees' decision to remain silent intentionally. These are presented in Table 6.2b below. Those that were not reported as a decision-making factor for participants' intentional silence were the nature of the social relations with trade union and other employees' representatives and employee indirect voice mechanisms.

Table 6.2b: *Context of the intentional silence process*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the intentional silence process
Nature of the job	N=59
Social Relations with Co-workers	N=42
Social Relations with Line Manager	N=38
Nature of Contract	N=18

The importance of context leading to a process of silence is evident from the analysis as the nature of the job and social relations with co-workers were a decision making factors reported in a link with only intentional process of silence. In addition, all participants reporting the nature of the job as the decision making factor to remain silent reported this factor leading to their intentional silent process.

All aspects of the nature of participants' job identified in the previous chapter led to intentional silent process. In particular, participants reported that they make a conscious decision to remain silent in the context of perceived effort-reward exchange imbalance (n=23), in the context of their personal labour process being repetitive, tedious and/or intensive (n=13); when they have perceived autonomy that allows them certain control over their personal labour process without line managers' input (n=15); and in the context of short tenure when they were either not fully familiar with their personal labour process or had limited opportunities to engage and establish the nature of social relations with other members of their organisation (n=8).

Similarly, the context of the nature of social relations with co-workers was repeatedly reported as giving rise to the intentional process of silence. The topics not reported within this context were the misbehaviour of co-workers (the majority, n=38), bullying (n=2) and suggestions that don't result in more workload (n=1). Interestingly, as mentioned previously, all factors within this context led to the intentional process of silence. In particular, participants made conscious decision to remain silent when they colluded with co-workers in misbehaviour (n=10); when they tried to protect co-workers from negative consequences that

may have been imposed on them by management (10); when they wished to maintain the positive relations with their co-workers (n=10); when they wished to avoid confrontation with their co-workers (n=7); to keep confidentiality to co-workers who asked them not to speak up about bullying (n=2); and when co-workers took credit for their suggestions in past (n=1).

There were three specific factors within the context of the social relations between line managers and participants that led to their conscious decision to remain silent. These factors were related only to the intentional process of silence and were over a variety of topics. Participants reported that they withdraw their voice in instances when they learnt from past experience that the voice would result in a less favourable treatment by their line managers (n=30). However, it is important to distinguish that the past was experienced only by observation of the social relations between their co-workers and line managers and not by their own experience with voice.

> '*I just don't say anything. I heard stories about her shouting and being disrespectful to people. I am not starting any conflict with her.*' [P11-Social Welfare Inspector]

In other words, participants never expressed their views as there were negative consequences for co-workers who spoke in the past. In addition, participants reported they made conscious decision to not speak up about disagreements and grievances when their social relations with their line managers were positive and they did not wish them to deteriorate (n=3) and when line manager took credit for their suggestions in past (n=3).

A particular factor, the nature of participant contract, within the context of formal workplace procedures was reported to contribute to a conscious decision to withdraw participants' voice. The nature of contract has been linked to an intentional process of silence in a majority of instances when this factor has been reported to give rise to silence (n=18 out of 20). Participants reported that the nature of their contract, whether it is casual, part-time or flexible, results in their insecurity and perception of having fewer opportunities to express their views on various topics. The most common topic of silence was personal grievances (n=8).

> *'I was on zero-hour contract...I didn't want them to sack me so I said nothing*' [P3-Administrator]

6.3 Shallow Voice

As mentioned in the previous section, the literature review provides a theoretical basis for the process of silence being intentional on behalf of employees. However, the analysis recognised that intentional silence may have various forms arising from a particular context and within particular topics of workplace conversation. The previous section dealt with the intentional process of silence conceptualised as a voice that has never been and may never be expressed within a particular context, while this section presents a quite distinctive process of silence that arises from a perception that voice regardless of its perceived scope and frequency will not change the state of workplace affairs.

From overall 321 instances of silence reported by 51 participants, the analysis identified over sixth of them (n=53) being instances where participants made numerous attempts to share their views in past and after achieving no changes in their working life, they gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present and in the future in a particular context. Interestingly, participants reported that if the context changes in the future, they may try to speak up.

> *'...if I would have a good relationship with the boss, if someone normal would be in charge I would come and say, look it is this way and that way.'* [P2-Kitchen Porter]

However, in all of these instances, participants had the perception they could speak up hence it can be conceptualised as ***'intentional silence arising from a shallow voice'.***

As mentioned previously, in all of these instances of silence, participants tried to speak up in the past and on numerous occasions and even in present they perceive they have opportunities to speak up. However, due to their managers' inactivity or inability to act on their voice, they remain silent.

> *'When I tell them, it doesn't change anything.*' [P40-Teacher]

> '*You could speak up but nothing ever changes, so there is no point even speaking up. Everything just remains as it is.'* [P29-Customer Care]

There was a wide variety of topic reported by participants and summarised in Table 6.3a that participants remain silent about due to their shallow voice.

Table: 6.3a: Topics of the shallow voice process

Topics of silence	Number of instances of the shallow voice process
Issues with the personal labour process	N=19
Suggestions that would result in less workload	N=16
Personal Grievances	N=9
Misbehaviour of Co-workers	N=4
Wrong instructions	N=3
Disagreements over the participants' personal labour process	N=2

While, the synthesising framework of silence in Chapter 3 suggests there may be six various contextual factors leading to silence, the analysis identified only one factor, participants' perception of their social relations with line managers, that contributes to employees' decision to remain silent due to the perception that their voice has no impact (Table 6.3b). Those that were not reported as a decision making factors for participants' intentional silence arising from a shallow voice were: nature of participants' job; nature of the social relations with co-workers; the nature of the social relations between participants and trade union and other employees' representatives; and formal workplace procedures including both employee indirect voice mechanisms and nature of participants' contracts.

Table 6.3b: *Context of the shallow voice process*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the shallow voice process
Social Relations with Line Manager	N=53

There were four specific factors within the context of the social relations between line managers and participants leading to participants perceptions that their voice has no impact, therefore they made an intentional decision to remain silent over the time. These particular factors were related only to the intentional process of silence arising from shallow voice and were over a variety of topics listed earlier. Participants reported that the reason they opted for silence over the time was when their line manager did not follow up on their queries or suggestions (n=24); when they perceived that their line manager does not care about their input (n=10); when they perceive that their line manager lacks organisational skills or experience (n=13); and when they perceive that the line manager does not have support from the middle or senior management, hence has low control over a decision-making process (n=6).

6.4 Dismissed Voice

As mentioned in the previous sections, the intentional silence may have various forms arising from a particular context and within particular topics of workplace conversation. The previous section dealt with the intentional process of silence conceptualised as an intentional silence arising from a shallow voice, while this section presents a quite distinctive process of intentional silence that arises from participants' perception that their voice has been dismissed in the past. The distinction lays in the perceived opportunities for voice. While in the case of intentional silence arising from shallow voice, participants perceived to have opportunities to speak up and so they did in past, in instances of the ***'intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice'***, participants did not have the opportunity to speak up in the past.

From overall 321 instances of silence reported by 51 participants, the analysis identified nearly fifth of them (n=60) being instances where participants made attempt to share their views in past and their voice has been dismissed by their line manager. Participants therefore gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present and in the future in a particular context. Similarly to intentional silence arising from a shallow voice, participants reported that if the context changes in the future, they may try to speak up.

> *'...if I could complain about that, I would...'* [P28-Accommodation Assistant]

As mentioned previously, in all of these instances of this type of silence process, participants tried to speak up in the past, however, they had the perception that their voice was not welcome by their line manager so they remain silent in the present.

> *'I was getting shut down...she [line manager] went like don't question me with that! So I wouldn't.*' [P3-Administrator]

> *'In past, I approached him because I wasn't being paid at the proper grade. He didn't want to deal with me. He would say it is not his business.'* [P8-Swimming Instructor]

There was a wide variety of topic reported by participants and summarised in Table 6.4a that participants remain silent about due to their dismissed voice.

Table: 6.4a: Topics of the dismissed voice process

Topics of silence	Number of instances of the dismissed voice process
Disagreements over the participants' personal labour process	N=21
Suggestions that would result in less workload	N=19
Personal Grievances	N=14
Issues with the personal labour process	N=4
Wrong instructions	N=1
Misbehaviour of co-workers	N=1

Similarly to intentional silence arising from a shallow voice, the analysis identified only one factor, participants' perception of their social relations with line managers, that contributed to employees' decision to remain silent due to the perception that their voice was dismissed in past (Table 6.4b). Those that were not reported as a decision making factors for participants' intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice were: nature of participants' job; nature of the social relations with co-workers; the nature of the social relations between participants and trade union and other employees' representatives; and formal workplace procedures including both employee indirect voice mechanisms and nature of participants' contracts.

Table 6.4b: *Context of the dismissed voice process*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the dismissed voice process
Social Relations with Line Manager	N=60

There were two specific factors within the context of the social relations between line managers and participants leading to participants perceptions that their voice would be dismissed as it was in the past, therefore they made an intentional decision to remain silent in the present. These particular factors were related only to the intentional process of silence arising from dismissed voice and were over a variety of topics listed earlier. Participants reported that the first reason they opted for silence in the present was that their line manager reacted in an aggressive or intimidating manner when they tried to speak up in past (n=27). For example, the line manager walked away or shushed them.

> *'...he just walked away, he didn't engage.'* [P40-Teacher]

> *'He [line manager] said: Stop asking questions!'* [P9-Project Co-ordinator]

The second reason reported by participants was the past experience when the line manager dismissed discussion on a certain topic (n=34). While this has been reported often in combination with the first factor (i.e. aggressive or intimidated line manager), in some instances the social relations with the line manager were positive and the line manager would usually allow voice over certain topics.

> *'Charlie [line manager] would listen to someone's' idea about improving things. It is just things about your employment that would be ignored, for example, if you had a problem with pay.*' [P8-Swimming Instructor]

6.5 Intentional Institutional Silence

The analysis identified an interesting form of intentional silence, reported by a minority of participants (n=9 out of 321), that has been directed towards indirect voice mechanisms and institutions (i.e. participants' trade union and their representatives) rather than at line managers. This form of silence process has been reported only by participants who had the opportunity to join a trade union in their workplace (n=9). Such silence arose firstly in situations when participants refused to join a trade union recognised by their organisation and intentionally limited their opportunities for representation and voice. Secondly, such a process of silence was typical for situations when participants did not communicate with their trade union representatives due to a specific context discussed later in this section. It can be therefore conceptualised as ***'intentional silence towards employees' indirect voice mechanisms and institutions'.***

The intentional institutional silence has not been linked to any particular topic of workplace conversation. It has been rather participants' attitude towards the idea of indirect representation and opportunities for voice. In other words, participants reported to withdraw their voice towards their union or to refuse to join it regardless of the nature of their concerns, grievances or suggestions. All participants who reported this process of silence also reported various processes of silence towards their line management; however, these have been independent of the intentional institutional silence.

The analysis identified only one contextual factor, participants' perception of their social relations with the trade union and other representatives, which resulted in the process of

intentional institutional silence (Table 6.5). Those that were not reported as a decision making factors for participants' intentional institutional silence were: nature of participants' job; nature of the social relations with co-workers; the nature of the social relations between participants and their line managers; and formal workplace procedures including both employees indirect voice mechanisms and nature of participants' contracts.

Table 6.5: *Context of the intentional institutional silence process*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the intentional institutional silence process
Social Relations with Trade Union and Other Employee Representatives	N=9

There were three specific factors within the context of the social relations between participants and their trade union and other representatives leading to an intentional institutional process of silence. Firstly, the negative experience with the trade union in the past (n=5) contributed to participants' decision not to join a trade union in present and limit their opportunities for voice and representation.

> *'I was a member back then and I was one of the first people who left and never ever went back. I think I am the person who can do most for me.'* [P42-Waitress]

Secondly, the participants reported that their representatives did not follow up on their enquiries in past, therefore, they remain silent in present (n=3). Thirdly, one participant reported a poor state of social relations with her representative contributes to her decision not to engage with the representative.

6.6 Unintentional Silence

The literature review suggests that the process of silence can be unintentional, particularly in situations when employees wish to share their views but they perceive they have no opportunity to do so. Hence, it can be conceptualised as: '***unintentional silence arising from a lack of direct voice mechanisms'***. The analysis identified that from the overall pool of participants, this perception was held by nearly a quarter of them (12 out of 51). It is quite a distinctive silence process from the dismissed voice as in the case of dismissed voice, the

voice mechanisms exist. Also, the employee intention here remains to speak up rather than withdrawing their voice intentionally over the time.

> *'I had one meeting with him [line manager] in last three years which was organised by him. It was just that one meeting, and it took about fifteen minutes or so. There were four of us there. They should talk to people more and ask them what problems they have.'* [P43-General Operative]

The most-reported topic of unintentional silence process was personal grievances from which majority was related to participants' experience with abusive supervision (n=5 out of 6). All topics are presented in Table 6.6a below.

Table: 6.6a: Topics of the unintentional silence process

Topics of silence	Number of instances of the unintentional silence process
Personal Grievances	N=6
Issues with the personal labour process	N=5
Suggestions that would result in less workload	N=1
Misbehaviour of line-managers	N=1

The analysis identified one contextual factor, perception of the lack of direct voice mechanisms that limited participants' opportunities to express their views (Table 6.6b). Those that were not reported as decision-making factors for participants' unintentional silence were: nature of participant's job, social relations with other members of organisations (i.e. line managers, co-workers, trade union and other representatives) and formal workplace procedures including indirect voice structures and nature of participants' contracts.

Table 6.6b: *Context of the unintentional silence process*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the unintentional silence process
Direct Voice Mechanisms	N=13

As explained in the previous chapter, participants reported that management structures of direct voice mechanisms can limit their opportunities for voice especially, when the frequency of voice opportunities is sporadic and when the structure is not flexible enough to allow for an employee choice to who to speak up in a case of sensitive topics (i.e. bullying and line manager's misbehaviour).

'I don't even know who they [management] are. They never come to meetings.' [P39-Lecturer]

6.7 Unintentional Institutionalised silence

As mentioned in the previous section, the literature review laid a foundation for the existence of an unintentional process of silence that may arise in situations when employees do not have opportunities to express their views. Also, the section explained an unintentional silence process that employees may experience on an individual level in a particular context of lack of direct voice mechanisms in the workplace. This section explains the unintentional silence that arises from the lack of employees' opportunities for workplace representation by institutions such as trade union and staff association, hence imposed on a wider employee audience.

From overall 321 instances of silence reported by 51 participants, the analysis identified a minority (n=29) of those where participants reported they have no opportunities to express their views as their management limits their opportunities for workplace representation or they have limited contact with their trade union representatives. However, since participants rarely reported a particular topic of silence related to unintentional institutionalised silence, it is important to stress that from the overall pool of participants, over a third reported this process of silence which is a substantial proportion (n=19 out of 51). In all of these instances, participants wished for their existing trade union to be more included in organisational decision making, they wished that their trade union would be recognised by the organisation in the first place, or they wished for more frequent communication with their trade union representatives

'The organisation doesn't accept the union. We do have meetings with the union...we go through strategies and what they think we should do, but it comes to nothing because...they are just ignored.' [P37: Retail Assistant]

'I know which one he is... He would not meet you one to one.' [P43-General Operative]

The unintentional institutional silence may be, therefore, explained as ***'a silence arising from the lack of opportunities for workplace representation'.***

The unintentional institutionalised silence has not been linked to any particular topic of workplace conversation, however, participants frequently mentioned grievances such as pay and overtime as the main reason they would like to have more effective workplace representation. Also, it has been rather participants' perception of their organisational and managements' attitude towards trade unions and collective bargaining. In other words, participants reported having limited opportunities for workplace representation regardless of the nature of their concerns, grievances or suggestions. All participants who reported this process of silence also reported various specific topics they remain silent about with regards to another workplace context.

The analysis identified that only participants' perception of their formal workplace procedures context resulted in the process of unintentional institutionalised silence. However, there was a number of distinctive factors within this context that are presented in Table 6.7. Those contextual factors that were not reported as a decision making factors for this process of silence were: nature of participants' job; nature of the informal social relations (with line managers, co-workers, and representatives); and formal workplace procedures including employee direct voice mechanisms.

Table 6.7: *Context of the unintentional institutionalised silence process*

Context of silence	**Number of instances of the intentional silence process**
The scope of collective bargaining	N=8
Penalisation of employees who try to join the Trade Union	N=6
Management bypassing the union	N=6
Lack of communication from Trade Union representative	N=5
Refusal to recognise the union	N=2
Nature of the contract	N=2

Participations reported they have limited opportunities for workplace representation, hence their silence is unintentional and institutionalised when they perceive their organisation to engage in trade union avoidance by either penalising employees who try to join the union or they refuse to recognise the union in the first place. Also, participants reported that management limit the scope of collective bargaining or they by-pass decisions there were jointly made by the organisation and the union. In addition, a minority of participants (n=2) reported that the lack of workplace representation is a result of the nature of their contract. It

is important to mention that all contextual factors above except the nature of participants' contracts were factors related only to the unintentional institutionalised process of silence.

6.8 Conclusion

The chapter aimed to answer the second primary research question; '*How do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'* There were six distinctive processes of silence identified by the analysis of participants' interview, and each of them has been explained with the help of empirical evidence in a form of interview quotes. The chapter also aimed to integrate the findings with the first findings chapter describing the various workplace contexts that lead to silence, hence all identified processes of silence within this chapter are linked to the workplace context and to topics of silence.

Firstly, the chapter explained the intentional process of silence, conceptualised as: ***'a voice that has not been and may not be expressed within a particular context',*** which include instances where participants made conscious decision to remain silent, did not try to speak up in the past and will continue not speaking about them in the future if the factors that led to their silence will not change. This silence process was linked to all context related to the nature of the job and to social relations with co-workers; and to a majority of context related to the nature of participants' contracts.

Secondly, the chapter explained the shallow voice process of silence conceptualised as ***'intentional silence arising from a shallow voice'*** characteristic to situations where participants made numerous attempts to share their views as they have the perception they can speak up, however, after achieving no changes in their working life, they gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present and in the future in a particular context. This silence process has been influenced by informal social relations with the line manager, especially by the lack of follow up on behalf of line managers.

The third process of silence found by analysis arises from situations when participants made attempt to share their views in past, their voice has been dismissed by their line manager, and they gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present. Hence, it is conceptualised as ***'intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice'*** and was found in the

context of a specific nature of informal social relations between the participants and their line managers.

The fourth form of silence process has been reported, firstly, by participants who had the opportunity to join a trade union in their workplace and refused to do so, hence, intentionally limited their opportunities for representation and voice. Secondly, it arose from a lack of participants' communicate with their trade union representatives. It has been therefore conceptualised as ***'intentional silence towards employees' indirect voice mechanisms and institutions'.*** The intentional institutional silence has been linked to a particular context of informal social relations between the participants and their trade union representatives.

The fifth type of silence process, the unintentional silence, found by analysis was typical to situations when participants wished to share their views but they perceive they have no opportunity to do so, and it has been conceptualised as: '***unintentional silence arising from a lack of direct voice mechanisms'***. This silence process was influenced by formal workplace procedures, in particular, by the management structures that limited participants' access to direct voice mechanisms.

This last process of silence unintentional institutional silence arose from the lack of employees' opportunities for workplace representation by institutions such as trade union and staff association, hence explained as ***'a silence arising from the lack of opportunities for workplace representation'.*** This process of silence was linked to the nuances with the formal direct voice mechanisms workplace context**.**

7. Findings: Outcomes of employee silence

7.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the empirical research findings for the third primary research question; *Why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?* Using the methodology described in chapter four, the analysis was conducted in the context of the sensitising framework which suggests that employees may remain silent in order to either get back at management, get on with their job, or get by in their workplace.

Indeed, the analysis identified three distinctive outcomes of the silence, hence the chapter has three sections. Each section presents empirical evidence in a form of quotes from the interviews with participants for a particular outcome of the silent process. The analysis further suggests that there are links between particular contexts and outcomes of silence and links between the process of silence with the outcomes of silence; therefore, chapter integrates and synthesises these links.

The summary of the findings for this chapter is presented in Table 7.1 below. The table shows how many times was each outcome of silence reported. Similarly to the results in the previous chapter, some participants reported the same outcome while remaining silent about different topics and in different contexts. That is why the total number of outcomes of silence from fifty-one participants is 320.

Table 7.1: Summary of the findings for the outcomes of silence

Outcomes of silence	Number of occasions reported by participants reporting this outcome
Get Back	N=80
Get On	N=22
Get By	N=218

7.2. Silence as a way to 'get back' at management

The literature review provides a theoretical basis for the silence resulting in employees getting back at management conceptualised as '***anything employees are silent about their managers do not want them to be silent about'***. With regards to participants control over their personal labour process, the literature review suggests that employees may remain silent in order to extend the control over their personal labour process, hence to push the frontier of control towards themselves. The results indicate that remaining silent about the information that managers and organisations do not want employees to be silent about is a very common experience with the majority of participants (39 of 51 people) reporting that, on at least one occasion, they have withdrawn certain information from their managers even though they were supposed to report it as illustrated by the quote:

'I wouldn't report it, no. I should. Of course, I should.' [P9: Project Coordinator]

In terms of individual instances of silence, from overall 320 the quarter of participants (n=80) reported that their silence resulted in getting back at management and extending a certain level of control over their personal labour process. Respondents indicated two specific contexts that led them to decide to remain silent to get back at management. In addition, the analysis identified that in all cases the participants remained silent intentionally. Table 7.2 lists the context and the number of respondents who reported it as a deciding factor to remain silent in the process of misbehaviour and resistance. Some respondents reported more than one context. The following sections serve as a presentation of the results with regards to the links between the context of silence, its process and its outcomes. The empirical evidence is presented in Chapter 5.

Table 7.2: Context of silence as a way to get back at management

Context	Number of respondents who reported this context
Informal social relations	44
Nature of work	36

7.2.1 Informal Social Relations

7.2.1.1 Co-workers

The most common mentioned context that influenced participants decision to remain silent to get back at management was the informal social relations with their co-workers (n=40) especially in situations when they saw their co-workers misbehave and withdraw this information from management. Co-workers' misbehaviour took many forms from for organisation potentially damaging, stopping the production, breaching organisational policies including health and safety, working under influence, breaching quality and hygiene standards, to for organisation less damaging use of phones and social media in the workplace, not keeping the break times, not following the pre-described organisational procedure, signing in and off for others, avoiding work, and working slowly to get overtime. The analysis identified five specific contexts within the social relationship with co-workers that participants explained as driving factors for their silence that are presented in Table 7.2.1.1.

Table 7.2.1.1: Informal social relations with co-workers context of silence as a way to get back at management

Context	Number of respondents who reported this context
Keeping a positive state of social relations	n=12
Collusion with co-workers	n=10
Protecting co-worker	n=10
Avoiding Confrontation	n=8

The most frequently mentioned reason for silence resulting in getting back at management was that employees aimed to keep a good relationship with their co-workers that would otherwise deteriorate should they speak to managers about the misbehaviour (n=12). In addition, participants also mentioned being silent as they engaged in misbehaviour (n=10); to somehow protect themselves or co-workers from negative consequences that speaking up to management would result in (n=10), and to avoid confrontation with co-workers (n=8). Examples are presented in Chapter 5 in the form of interview quotes.

7.2.1.2 Line Managers

A minority of participants (n=4) reported the informal social relations with their line managers as deciding context that influenced participants decision to remain silent to get

back at management. In all cases, participants reported they carry on tasks as pre-described to cause trouble to their line managers. Here, the poor state of social relations between line managers and employees contributed to their decision-making process to remain silent. Silence then acted as a creative way within the work to rule misbehaviour process as employees withdrew their voice when they knew the instructions they received were wrong and had a negative impact on the quality of product or service provided by the organisation. Their silence then helped them to 'get back' at management.

> *'I followed their instructions. Especially if I knew it would fail. Then I would follow their instructions and then presented back to them and showed them: 'This failed!'* [P45: Technical Support]

7.2.2 Nature of work

The second common mentioned context that influenced participants decision to remain silent to get back at management was the nature of work (n=36), especially in situations where such silence helped to gain some element of control over participants' personal labour process. For example, participants reported that they perceived their silence as a way to achieve some level of autonomy in their jobs and balance their effort-reward exchange ratio.

> '*...sometimes people don't want our service and they send us away. Then our working time gets cut and we have to report this to our supervisor. So it happens that we report that and they send us home earlier and we lose money. Well, when you are finished earlier you are hiding somewhere from supervisor so she wouldn't see you are finished.'* [P28: Accommodation Assistant]

In cases, where the job was perceived as repetitive, tedious or intensive; their silence allowed them to incorporate improvements into their personal labour process which would become even more intensive should they share their improvements to management who would formally implement them.

> *'I wouldn't suggest anything to make the work faster. They would increase our workload.'* [P22: General Operator]

The analysis, hence, identified two specific contexts within the nature of the job that participants explained as a driving factor for their silence and these are presented in Table 7.2.1.1.

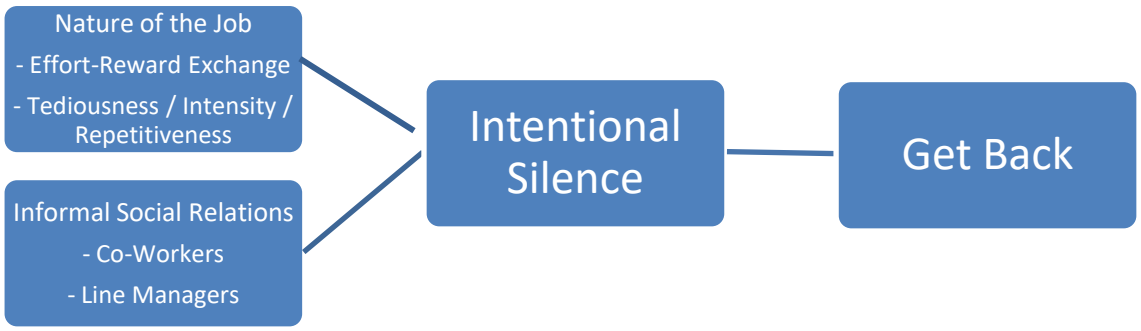
Table 7.2.2.1: Nature of the job context of silence as a way to get back at management

Context	Number of respondents who reported this context
Effort-Reward Exchange	n=23
Repetitiveness/ Tediousness / Intensity	n=13

7.2.3 Illustration of the silence as a way to get back context and process

The analysis identified two specific contexts that influenced participants decision-making process to remain silent as a way to get back at management. These were the nature of the participants' job, specifically the perceived imbalance of effort-reward exchange and tediousness, intensity and repetitiveness of the participants' job; and the informal social relations in particpatn's workplaces, specifically with their co-workers and line managers. The process of reported silence was in all instances intentional. Fig. 7.2.3 below presents the illustration of the findings with regards to this specific outcome of silence. The diagram illustrates that in order to push Frontier of Control towards themselves, employees remain silent intentionally about suggestions on improvements that would cause a greater imbalance of their perceived effort-reward exchange and/or make their work more tedious, intense and repetitive. Such behaviour has been classified as employee misbehaviour as employees withdrew an information that management would welcome. For a similarl reason, employees remain silent about their co-workers misbehaviour and wrong instructions received by their line managers.

Fig. 7.2.3: Silence as a way to get back at management



7.3. Silence as a way to 'get on' with job

The literature review suggests reasons for employees to 'get on' with their jobs are complex, including the aim to maintain the status quo within the employment relationship with regards to perceived control over their personal labour process. The following section presents empirical evidence of employees utilising the process of silence in order to get on with their jobs conceptualised through the literature review as '***withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'*** (Nechanska et al, 2020; van den Broek and Dundon, 2012; Donaghey et al, 2011).

Only a minority of participants reported that they utilise the process of silence in order to get on with their jobs (n=22). Interestingly, most of them reported that they like their work or their workplace and remaining silent about, for example, disagreements about personal labour process allows them to carry on with their tasks and get their work done.

> '*I do like my job and the only way I can enjoy my job is to put a bag around it and close it and just concentrate on my job*'. '*I always try to do the best.'* [P49-Midwife]

> '*I did stuff my way. I didn't see a point to explain him for 10 minutes that it would slow down everything else'* [P25-General Operative]

> *'I'm going behind his back. Now I'm finishing the job. And we are working at that now privately, doing research.* [P9-Project Co-ordinator]

> *'If she is wrong, I just do it my way to get it over with. It is not really confrontation, you are trying to compromise.'* [P12-Retail Assistant]

Most of those participants also reported that they usually remain silent about disagreements over their personal labour process as they wish to maintain a good relationship with their line managers which again allows them to carry on with their tasks.

> *'I don't raise them publicly. It just creates an awful bad atmosphere in work because you are creating that bad atmosphere because you are hassling that manager for more staff.'* [P49-Midwife]

> *'If you tell him you can make him upset and if you upset him, he may think you are cheeky by saying this is not supposed to be done this way. I go off and do it my own*

way. He wouldn't be too happy if somebody would correct him.' [P13-Retail Assistant]

In addition, over a half of the participants who remain silent in order to get on with their jobs, explained that the remaining silent about disagreements with line managers, and consequently maintaining good relations with them, is a strategic behaviour that is necessary for access to a range of workplace benefits such as training, more hours, overtimes etc.

'I'd probably want to keep him on the side as well'. I get everything I want then. If I want more hours I get them. I try and keep him happy so that I get what I want. Say if there's additional training they will pay for me to do it. So, it's all about relationships. Unless something bad happened and I would have to say something, other than that I turn a blind eye because it's easier.' [P8-Swimming Instructor]

'*I don't get grief I get look after. I just go to work and get on with it.*' [P22-General Operative]

Only one participant reported that he remains silent about a disagreement over the quality of the product and misbehaviour of his line manager as he colludes in misbehaviour with his line manager to finish the task. This shows that while collusion may not be a common workplace behaviour, it is important to acknowledge its existence. Therefore, one case is an important finding as it helps to understand the context that gives rise to workplace collusion, specifically in this one case, it was a poor organisation of the production and the organisational demand to meet the production targets. The quote to illustrate this is presented in Chapter 5.

There were two factors within the workplace contexts that were reported by participants to contribute to their decision making to remain silent in order to get on with their jobs; nature of work and informal social relations as presented in Table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3: Context of silence as a way to get on with participants' job

Context	Number of respondents who reported this context
Nature of work	15
Informal social relations	7

7.3.1 Nature of work

The most common mentioned context that influenced participants decision to remain silent to get on with their jobs was the nature of work (n=15), especially in situations where participants had some autonomy to implement changes to their tasks without the necessity to discuss them with management. Such autonomy appears to allow participants to carry on with their work in a more effective way while maintaining the status quo within their employment relationship, especially their social relations with line managers.

7.3.2 Informal Social Relations

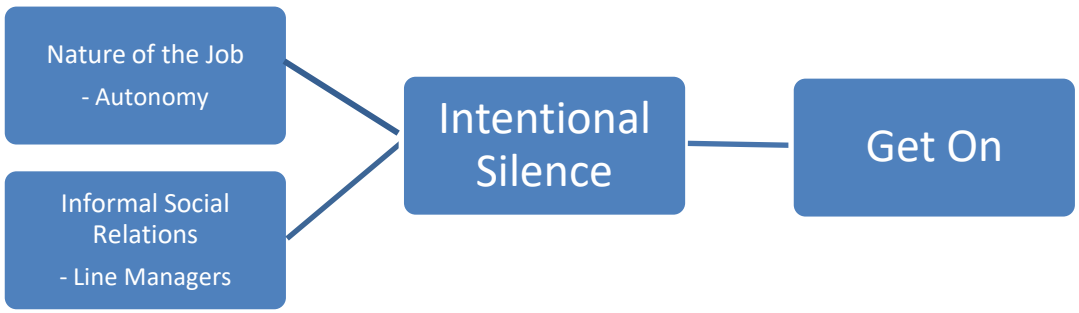
7.3.2.1 Line Managers

The second mentioned context that influenced participants decision to remain silent to get on with their jobs was the informal social relations with their line managers (n=7), especially in situations where maintaining of the positive social relations would result in a positive outcome for the participant in a form of workplace benefits mentioned above. However, there were a few respondents for who the keeping the positive social relations was an outcome of their silence in their own right as speaking up may have resulted in deterioration of the relationship.

7.3.3 Illustration of the silence as a way to get back context and process

As mentioned earlier the analysis identified two specific contexts that influenced participants decision-making process to remain silent as a way to get on with their jobs. These were the nature of the participants' jobs and informal social relations in their workplace. The process of their silence was in all instances intentional. Fig. 7.3.3 below presents the illustration of the findings with regards to this specific outcome of silence.

Fig. 7.3.3: Silence as a way to get on with a job



7.4. Silence as a way to 'get by' in the workplace

The literature review provides a theoretical basis for the silence resulting in employees getting by in their workplaces and suggests that while reasons for 'getting by' are complex and overlapping, the aim of workers utilising this strategy is rather to cope with existing working conditions than attempting to improve it. With regards to employee intention, the literature also suggests that this outcome of silence may be unintentional on behalf of employees. Hence, the silence may result in the frontier of control shifting towards the managers and employers as captured by the working definition of employees getting by in their workplaces as: '***withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'***

The results indicate that the employee silence resulting in this outcome is a very common experience. From all cases of silence, there were over two thirds with the 'getting by' outcome (n=218). Interestingly, most participants reported that they feel somehow alienated towards their work, line managers or workplace hence they were not suggesting improvements.

> '*I gave up. I became apathetic. It is easier to work when someone sees that you are doing your best and say at least the simple humane thank you. But he [line manager] doesn't do that. So you lose interest.'* [P2-Kitchen Porter]

> *'To be quite honest, I couldn't really care. I would be like 'whatever'. I really don't care about the whole workplace. In the store, there is no motivation, there is no life.'* [P12-Retail Assistant]

> '*I know it is not going to be my company for life. I don't care that much for the company.'* [P46-Chef]

Most of those participants also reported that they usually remain silent about personal grievances as they wish to somehow protect themselves from bad consequences that may happen if they voice their concerns.

> *'When you are on a temporary contract and you are perceived as a troublemaker, it is not good. If they want to let people go, you will be the first one on the list.'* [P7-General Operative]

> ‘*I don’t want confrontation because of the last time I complained to him [line manager]. I stay silent to get by* b*ecause before when I complained I was met with a lot of anger and derogative comments. They still make comments about me complaining about this and it was about 4 years ago. I turn a blind eye because it’s easier.’* [P8-Swimming Instructor]

> *‘Whenever you use your voice you are seen as problematic and then all leaders are trying to push you out of the place. They are not interested in hearing you.’* [P43-General Operative]

In addition, over a half of the participants who remain silent to get by in the workplace, explained that they remain silent about suggestions or grievances as they perceive their voice would not result in any changes, hence, they feel a certain level of powerlessness to change the state of the current affairs within the workplace.

> *‘You have no chance to say anything, she shushes you. She wouldn’t listen to you. It is psycho. You are completely powerless. I want to work, but the powerlessness, it destroys you. It makes you understand people who commit suicide because they can’t cope psychologically with such pressure, especially when they are economically dependent on such a place.’* [P27-Accommodation Assistant]

> *‘It doesn’t matter, you could speak up but nothing ever changes. So there is no point even speaking up, everything just remains as it is. He [line manager] just does nothing even when you try to say something to him, so no point; it is like a waste of time.’* [P40-Teacher]

> ‘*I didn’t raise it. After maybe you bring it up initially and you see nothing happening you lose motivation. You would say what’s the point? Nothing’s happening, nothing is changing.’* [P5-Psychiatric Nurse]

Only a few participants reported that they remain silent to get by in their workplaces as they intend to leave the workplace soon. This is an interesting finding, given the specific contexts, these participants reported. Three participants were currently finishing their third level education, specifically master’s degrees and they were planning to move job as soon as they graduate; and two female participants who were pregnant decided to get by until the time for their maternity leave comes.

'I didn't even say anything then because I really didn't intend to stay.' [P44-Customer Care]

'I found out I will go on maternity leave so I didn't care.' [P23-Accountant]

Three categories of factors within the workplace contexts were reported by participants to contribute to their decision making to remain silent to 'get by' in their jobs; nature of work, informal social relations, and formal workplace procedures as presented in Table 7.4a below. The following sections will present the details of specific factors within these categories and therefore link the context of silence, its process and the 'get by' outcome.

Table 7.4a: Context of silence as a way to get by in the workplace

Context	Number of occasions reported by participants reporting this outcome
Informal social relations	N=150
Formal workplace procedures	N=60
Nature of work	N=8

There were six various processes of silence identified by the analysis leading to the 'get by' outcome of silence. These are presented in Table 7.4b below. Each process was closely related to the context as outlined in the previous chapter of this thesis. The following sections, therefore, synthesise the contexts, the processes with the specific outcome of silence 'get by'.

Table 7.4b: Processes of silence to get by in the workplace

Process	Number of occasions reported by participants reporting this outcome
Intentional Silence	N=54
Dismissed Voice	N=60
Shallow Voice	N=53
Unintentional Silence	N=13
Unintentional Institutional Silence	N=29
Intentional Institutional Silence	N=9

7.4.1 Intentional silence

Participants reported three specific contexts when they intentionally withdraw their voice to get by in their workplace (Table 7.4.1). Firstly, the deciding factor was the social relations with their line managers, particularly, in situations when participants observed their co-workers being punished or treated poorly by the line manager for voicing their opinions in the past or line manager previously took their suggestion and presented it as his/hers. Secondly, the nature of the contract contributed to participants' decisions to remain silent and get by in their jobs.

Table 7.4.1: *Context of the intentional silence process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the intentional silence process
Social Relations • Line Manager	N=28
Formal Workplace Procedures • Nature of Contract	N=18
Nature of the job • Tenure	N=8

The third contextual factor was the tenure of participants which in some cases combined with the nature of the contract contributed to participant insecurity. Participants who reported working for their organisation for a short period of time felt that in the time spent in the company, they did not have enough opportunities to build the relationship with their line managers to be able to express confidence to share their views. Also, short tenure did not allow them to be fully familiar with their personal labour process and to be able to come up with suggestions or improvements. The empirical evidence is presented in chapter 5.

7.4.2 Shallow Voice

All instances of Shallow Voice process reported by participants were linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as participants who became disengaged with the voice process over the period of time did not share their, for example, disagreement over the labour process or grievances with management. Consequently, they were not able to change the current state of affairs in their workplaces and the frontier of control shifted towards the management. While Table 7.4.2 briefly illustrates the link between the context and the shallow voice, the previous

chapter presented the detailed analysis of the link between this process of silence and the workplace context, hence the empirical evidence in a form of quotes can be found there.

Table 7.4.2: *Context of the Shallow Voice process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the shallow voice process
Social Relations • Line Managers	N=53

7.4.3 Dismissed Voice

All instances of Dismissed Voice process reported by participants were linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as participants' ability to express voice was limited by their managers which allowed the management to shift the frontier of control towards themselves. While Table 7.4.3 briefly illustrates the link between the context and the Dismissed Voice, the previous chapter presented the detailed analysis of the link between this process of silence and the workplace context, hence the empirical evidence in a form of quotes can be found there.

Table 7.4.3: *Context of the Dismissed Voice process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the dismissed voice process
Social Relations • Line Manager	N=60

7.4.4 Intentional Institutional Silence

All instances of Intentional Institutional Silence process reported by participants were linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as by not joining trade unions while having the opportunities to do so, participant intentionally limited their collective voice through representation and shifted the frontier of control towards the management. While Table 7.4.4 briefly illustrates the link between the context and the Intentional Institutional Silence, the

previous chapter presented the detailed analysis of the link between this process of silence and the workplace context, hence the empirical evidence in a form of quotes can be found there.

Table 7.4.4: *Context of the Intentional Institutional Silence process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the intentional institutional silence process
Social Relations • Employee Representatives	N=9

7.4.5 Unintentional Silence

All instances of Unintentional Silence process reported by participants were linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as by limiting opportunities for employee voice, employers were able to shift the frontier of control towards themselves and restrict participants control over their personal labour process. While Table 7.4.5 briefly illustrates the link between the context and the Intentional Institutional Silence, the previous chapter presented the detailed analysis of the link between this process of silence and the workplace context, hence the empirical evidence in a form of quotes can be found there.

Table 7.4.5: *Context of the Unintentional Silence process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the Unintentional Silence process
Formal Workplace Procedures • Direct Voice Channels	N=13

7.4.6. Unintentional Institutionalised silence

All instances of Unintentional Institutionalised Silence process reported by participants were linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as by limiting opportunities for employee representation and consequently structuring silence over a range of workplace issues, employers were able to shift the frontier of control towards themselves. While Table 7.4.5 briefly illustrates the link between the context and the Intentional Institutional Silence, the

previous chapter presented the detailed analysis of the link between this process of silence and the workplace context, hence the empirical evidence in a form of quotes can be found there.

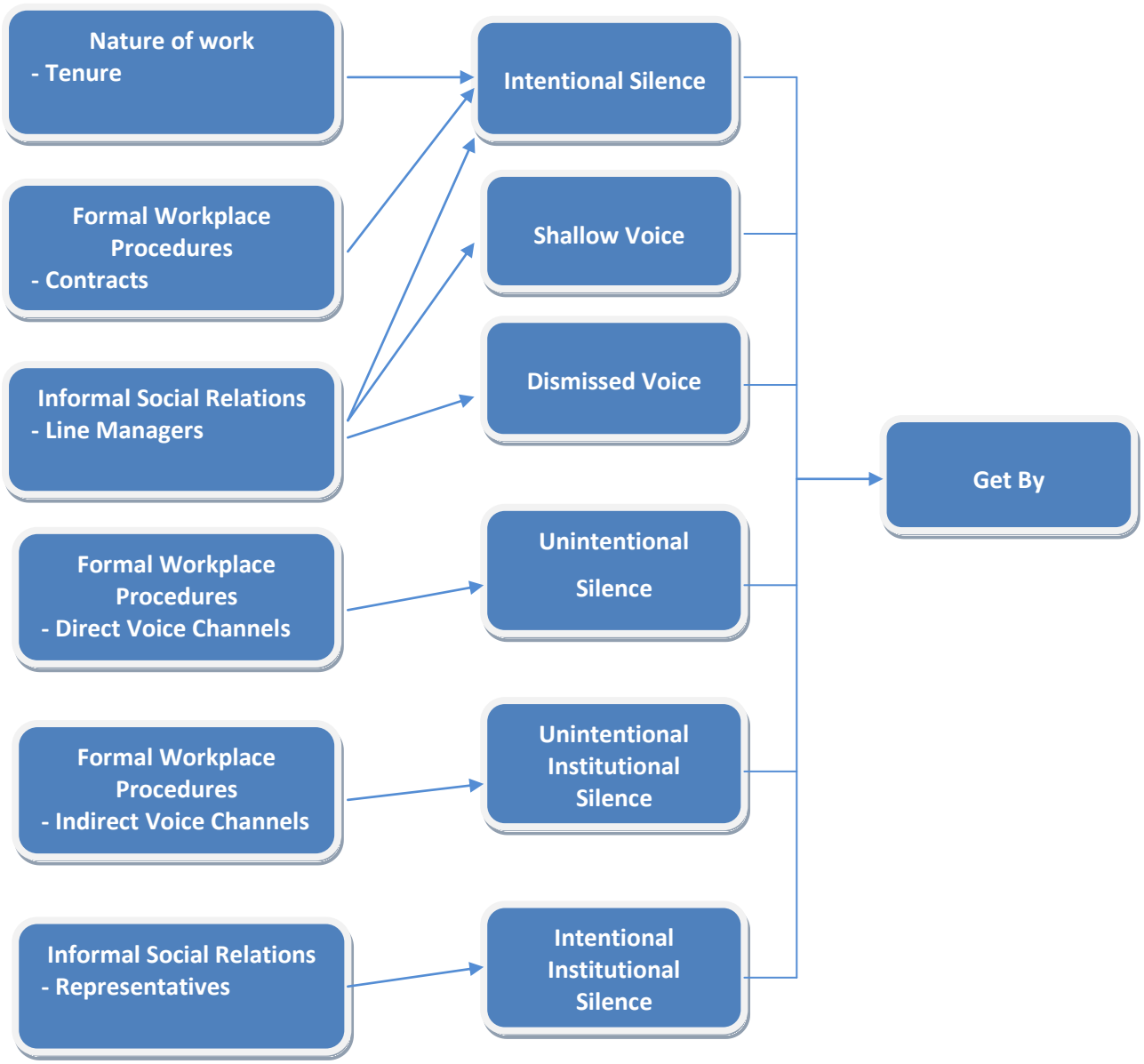
Table 7.4.6: *Context of the Unintentional Institutionalised Silence process to get by in the workplace*

Context of silence	Number of instances of the intentional silence process
Formal Workplace Procedures • Indirect Voice Channels	29

7.5 Illustration and integration silence as a way to get by context and process

The analysis in the above chapters identified three specific contexts that influenced participants decision-making process to remain silent as a way to get by in the workplace. These were the nature of the participant's job (specifically the tenure), the informal social relations (specifically the relationship with line managers and employee representatives), and the formal workplace procedures (specifically the absence of direct and indirect voice mechanisms and the nature of participants jobs). Fig 7.5 below illustrates the integration of the findings from the previous two findings chapters and this chapter, in particular the links between various workplace contexts, the specific processes of silence they lead to and the outcome of silence when participants get by in their jobs.

Fig. 7.5: Silence as a way to get by in the workplace



7.5. Conclusion

The chapter aimed to answer the third primary research question; '*Why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?'* There were three distinctive outcomes of silence identified through analysis of participants' interviews, and supported with empirical evidence in a form of interview quotations. The chapter then proceeded to integrate the findings with the first and second findings chapters describing the various workplace contexts that can lead to silence and the various process outcomes that silence can take; hence all identified outcomes of silence within this chapter are linked to the workplace context and the processes of silence.

This chapter, therefore, presented empirical evidence of employees utilising the process of silence to get back at management conceptualised as '***anything employees are silent about their managers do not want them to be silent about'***. This silence outcome was linked to intentional silence process and triggered by the workplace context of the nature of the job, specifically to the perceived imbalance of effort-reward exchange and tedious, intensive and/or repetitive nature of the job; and to informal social relations with line managers and co-workers.

Secondly, the chapter presented empirical evidence of employees getting on with their jobs by remaining silent. Such an outcome of silence has been conceptualised as '***withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'***. This particular silence outcome was a result of intentional silence process triggered by participants' perceived autonomy on their job and by their informal social relations with their line managers.

The third section presented empirical evidence for the outcome of silence when participants get by in daily jobs conceptualised as '***withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'*** The analysis acknowledged that all six processes of silence identified in the previous chapter are linked to this outcome of silence. And, since the processes were depending on the specific workplace context, the section presents the links to the context that is relevant, particularly, the tenure, informal social relations with line managers and representatives, absence of direct and indirect voice channels and nature of participants' contract. The next chapter discusses the findings in the light of literature and concludes the thesis with highlighting its main contribution.

8. Discussions and Conclusions

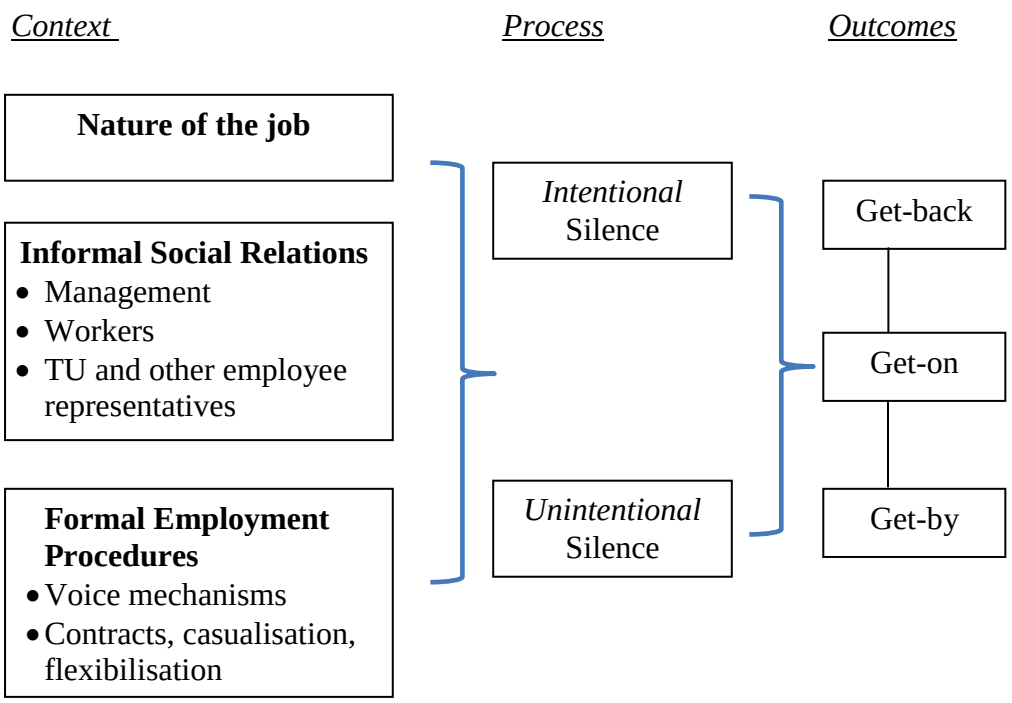
8.1 Introduction

Examining employee silence is a challenging task against the backdrop of the largely unexplored terrain of the employment relationship within the labour process field (Donaghey et al, 2011, Barry and Wilkinson, 2015, Cullinane, 2014). The findings of this research contribute to the conceptualisation of employee silence, in particular, the research explains, the contexts, the processes and outcomes of employee silence, which overall justify the rationale for this study. While the research of employee silence is well established within the organisational behaviour field, the analysis is usually one-sided with an emphasis on positive organisational outcomes due to the influence of unitarist frame of reference (Donaghey et al, 2011; Barry and Wilkinson, 2015). In contrast, the Employee Relations field influenced by the pluralist frame of reference analyses the historical and current developments of employee voice and generally establishes the anticipated 'positive' outcomes for employees who have opportunity to voice their concerns and contribute to decision making within the firm (Pfeffer and Veiga, 1999; Budd, 2004). This study sought to address the gaps presented by both OB and ER, by using the lens of the labour process perspective and explore employee silence within the context of the effort-reward exchange relationship characterised by its exploitative nature, imbalance of power between employees and managers, and capacity of employees to resist management to gain more control over some elements of their personal labour process. The study focused mainly on the context that gives rise to silence, the various processes of employee silence, and the outcomes of silence. In addition, the study presents integrated findings, identifying and explaining the links between particular contexts, processes and outcomes.

This chapter discusses the key findings and contributions of the research on employee silence with regards to extant and future theory and practice. The discussion begins by revisiting the central objective and main research questions of the study. The core objective of this study was to provide a conceptually and empirically grounded framework of employee silence in the context of the employment relationship. A number of shortcomings were identified in the literature regarding employee silence which motivated the examination of the role of context in employee decisions to remain silent or limiting their opportunities for voice (RQ1), form of employee silence process (RQ2) and forms of employee silence outcomes (RQ3). The findings gave a clear illustration of the sensitising framework presented in Chapter 3 (see

Figure 8.1 below). Each key finding will be discussed in more detail, building towards the presentation of Figure 8.2 which shows how the findings provide empirical strength to the sensitising framework. Implications for practice and a number of recommendations for future research are then discussed ahead of conclusion, which culminates with the research key contributions.

Fig. 8.1: Sensitising Framework of Employee Silence



The evidence, which is based on 51 interviews with employees reveals that workplace context is an important decision making factor for employees to either remain silent or to have limited opportunities to express their views. The specific workplace context is therefore discussed in relation to their contribution to extant literature. In addition, the context is also an important indicator for which form the silence process takes. This is discussed in greater detail together with the study's contribution to conceptualising the various forms of the silence process. Finally, the examination of the process of silence enabled the researcher to conceptualise the possible outcomes of employee silence communicated through the experiences, beliefs, thoughts and feelings of employees in the context of the effort-reward exchange with references to the Frontier of Control between employees and their managers (Goodrich, 1920; Donaghey et al, 2011). The examination presented in this study resulted in several key theoretical and empirical contributions which are discussed below.

8.2 Summary of the Main Contribution of the Study

8.2.1 Identifying the context and conceptualising the processes and outcomes

In a general sense, the research aimed to generate a greater understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship. A key contribution is the explanation of contextual factors that lead to employees' decision to remain silent or prevent them from having a say, the categorisation and conceptualisation of six distinct forms of silent process, and conceptualisation of three distinct outcomes of silence with regards to silence operating on the Frontier of Control (Goodrich, 1920; Donaghey et al, 2011).

The literature suggested three possible categories of workplace contexts that may give rise to employee silence.The empirical evidence and analysis of findings outlined in this study have confirmed important indicators of employee silence processes and are listed as folows:

- **Nature of the job** (tenure, effort-reward, exchange, autonomy and repetitiveness/ tediousness/ intensity of work)
- **Formal workplace procedures** (embeddedness of voice mechanisms, nature of contracts)
- **Informal social relations** (with line managers, co-workers and/or trade union representatives).

The literature reviewed in Chapter Three has suggested the possibility of intentional and unintentional employee silence. However, the data collected for this study and the analysis has identified and conceptualised six distinct processes and they are as follows:

- **Intentional silence:** '*a voice that has not been and may not be expressed within a particular context*', which include instances where participants made conscious decision to remain silent, did not try to speak up in the past and will continue not speaking about them in the future if the factors that led to their silence will not change.
- **Shallow voice:** '*intentional silence arising from a shallow voice'* characteristic to situations where participants made numerous attempts to share their views as they have the perception they can speak up, however, after achieving no changes in their

working life, they gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present and in the future in a particular context.

- **Dismissed voice:** *'intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice',* which arises from situations when participants made attempt to share their views in past, their voice has been dismissed by their line manager, and they gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present.
- **Intentional institutional silence**: *'intentional silence towards employees' indirect voice mechanisms and institutions' which arises in situations* where employees either have the opportunity to join a trade union in their workplace and refuse to do so and consequently intentionally limit their opportunities for representation and voice; or they do not communicate with their existing trade union representatives.
- **Unintentional silence:** *unintentional silence arising from a lack of direct voice mechanisms'* arising from situations when employees wish to share their views but they perceive they have no direct voice channels to do so.
- **Unintentional institutional silence:** *a silence arising from the lack of opportunities for workplace representation'* arising from the lack of employees' opportunities for workplace representation by institutions such as trade union and staff association.

There were three possible outcomes of silence operating on the Frontier of Control suggested by the literature in Chapter Three. The analysis presented empirical evidence that these are indeed outcomes of silence that employees experience:

- Silence as a way to **get back** at management: '*anything employees are silent about their managers do not want them to be silent about'*.
- Silence as a way to **get on** with a job: '*withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'*.
- Silence as a way to **get by** in the workplace: '*withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'*

8.2.2 The relationships between contexts, processes and outcomes

Besides the study's main aim to generate a greater understanding of how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship, the empirical findings also contribute to an explanation of relationships between particular contexts, processes and outcomes. Therefore, a secondary key contribution is an explanation of which contextual factors lead to particular forms of silence processes and to discrete outcome by extending the understanding of employee silence as a whole process (Nechanska et al 2020, Donaghey et al, 2011). The relationships are presented in greater detail in Table 8.2 and in Figure 8.2 below which show how the findings provide empirical strength to the sensitising framework.

Firstly, the thesis presented empirical evidence that employees who utilise the silence in a way to get back at management do so intentionally and their decision is shaped by the nature of their job (i.e. if they perceive there is an imbalance of effort-reward exchange and/or they perceive their job as tedious, intensive and/or repetitive), informal social relations with line managers and co-workers.

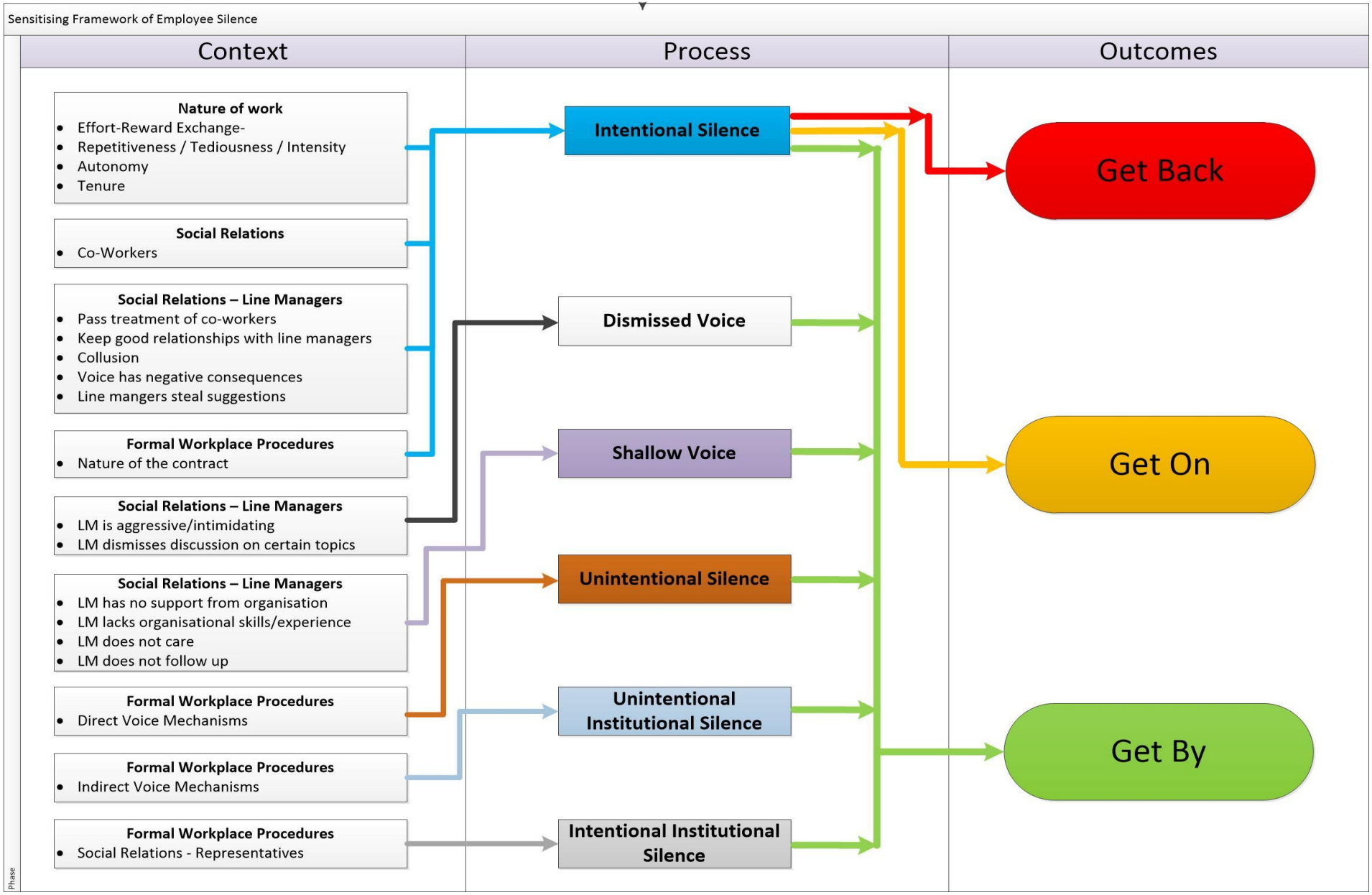
Secondly, the thesis presented empirical evidence that employees who wish to get on with their job by remaining silent do so intentionally and their decisions are triggered by participants' perceived autonomy on their job and by their informal social relations with their line managers.

The third contribution related to the intersection of context, process and outcomes was the presentation of empirical evidence that employees who get by in their workplace by remaining silent do so through four distinct silent processes (i.e. intentionally, dismissed voice, shallow voice, intentional institutional silence) and each of these processes is relevant to a specific context (Table 8.2). In addition, with regards to the 'get by' outcome of silence, the thesis presented empirical evidence that managers may structure silence over the range of issues. The process of silence is then perceived by employees as either unintentional where it is triggered by the lack of direct voice channels or institutional unintentional silence where the context is characterised by the lack of opportunities for indirect voice channels.

Table 8.2: Intersection of the context, process and outcomes of silence

Context	Process	Outcome
Nature of work - Effort-Reward Exchange - Repetitiveness / Tediousness / Intensity	IS	Back
Social Relations - Line Managers - alienation towards LM		
Social Relations - Co-workers - Collusion with CW - Keeping a positive state of social relations with CW - Protecting CW - CW steal suggestions - Avoiding confrontation		
Nature of work - Autonomy	IS	On
Social Relations - Line Managers - Keep good relationship with LM - Collusion		
Nature of work - Tenure	IS	By
Social Relations - Line Managers - Past treatment of CW - Voice has negative consequences - LM steal suggestions		
Formal Workplace Procedures - Nature of the contract		
Social Relations - Line Managers	DV	
- LM is aggressive/intimidating		
- LM dismisses discussion on certain topics		
Social Relations - Line Managers	SV	
- LM has no support from organisation		
- LM lacks organisational skills/experience		
- LM does not care		
- LM does not follow up		
Formal Workplace Procedures	US	
- Direct Voice Mechanisms		
Formal Workplace Procedures	UIS	
- Indirect Voice Mechanisms		
Social Relations - Representatives	IIS	
- Social Relations with Representatives		

Fig. 8.2: Sensitising Framework of Employee Silence



8.3 Context of silence

8.3.1 The nature of work

The literature review suggested that the nature of work may influence employees' behaviour and actions in their workplaces (Braverman, 1974; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). As was shown in the findings chapters, indeed the nature of work was found to influence employees' decisions to remain silent. Interestingly, five key themes arose from the analysis, four of them previously suggested by the literature review: the perceived imbalance of the effort-reward exchange, intensity/tediousness and repetitiveness of the job, autonomy and tenure (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990; Rinehart et al 1997; Walker and Guest, 1952; Delbridge, 1998; Hodson, 1995). The fifth theme was related to the quality of the product or service and while it was not considered in the literature review, it has been linked with existing literature within other than LP perspectives (Lu and Rota, 2016; Jurburg et al, 2017).

Firstly, as discussed in the literature review, one of the main aspects of the employment relationship is the effort-reward exchange between employees and employers (Baldamus, 1961). Ramsey (1977) described this relationship as one of contradiction and antagonism. This is mainly because managers' role in the employment relationship, is to seek control over the way work is organised, the pace of work and the duration of work while extracting both surplus-value and knowledge of working processes from workers (Teulings, 1986; Watson, 1994). In contrast, employees are not always working their best and sometimes they may deliberately limit their effort to increase their effort/reward ratio which informed the research that there may be a possibility of employees withdrawing their knowledge on improving organisational processes and limit managers' ability to extract their labour-power further. (Kaufman, 2014; Rinehart, 1997). The results of the study confirm that perceived imbalance of effort-reward exchange influences employees' decisions to remain silent and there are several ways how employees may balance the exchange in their favour through silence. For example, employees remain silent when they perceive the voice would not bring them any personal return such as less workload, alleviation from boredom or additional rewards. In particular, in line with Rinehart (1997), employees do not share suggestions because management would increase their workload by implementing their improvements. Also, employees can balance their exchange by not telling their line managers they met their daily target earlier than in allocated time. Here, they either aim to avoid additional workload that

their line manager would allocate to them if they speak up or avoid decreased reward they would get if sent home earlier. Such findings also strengthen the argument that employee silence can operate on the frontier of control where it can act against management and/or for employees (Donaghey et al, 2011, Nechanska et al, 2020).

The literature suggests that an important factor influencing employees' behaviour in the workplace is the character of their work tasks, perception of how they use their skills and the complexity of work (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990). The LP academics highlight the ongoing organisational measures to cut costs and improve efficiency through intensification of the labour process, which may result in jobs that are perceived by employees as intense and physically demanding (Rinehart et al 1997; Walker and Guest, 1952; Delbridge, 1998). Such jobs are usually not fulfilling employees' extrinsic rewards and expectations and result in employees' behaviour such as misbehaviour and resistance which provided a rationale for why it may influence employee silence. Specifically, Graham's study (1993) suggested that employees do not share information related to improving their work processes due to their concern that management would raise the speed of the production line if they knew that employees can perform their tasks faster. Similarly, Martinez-Lucio (2010), argues that employers aim 'to capture the knowledge of workers for the ends of capitalist development' (p.111). The results of the study show that intensity, repetitiveness and tediousness of the job indeed contribute to participant's decisions to remain silent about any suggestions and improvements that would result in a further intensification of their work. The nature of the job in the context of employees' perceived subjective labour process exchange and in particular, physical exhaustion was reported as a significant driver of silence. In contrast, suggestions that would make employees' jobs more interesting or less tedious and intensive contribute to voice behaviour. An interesting finding in the line with the literature was that such nature of work was not relevant only to production lines and low skilled jobs but also to blue and white-collar jobs in other industries and sectors as these jobs are becoming increasingly standardised (Holmes, 2009; Andresky Fraser, 2001; Hoff, 2011; Dundon and Rolinson, 2004; Taylor and Bain, 1999, Doellgast, 2012; Royle, 2000).

The LP literature helps to understand the changing nature of work under capitalism with a focus on deskilling, division of tasks and increased or new forms of control over the employees' labour process (Braverman, 1974; Thompson, 1989). Subsequently, the LP developed an understanding and an appreciation of the importance of workers' autonomy and

discretion in the analysis of their workplace behaviour (Hodson, 1995). The findings of this study show that the perceived autonomy influence employees' decisions to remain silent in their workplace. Interestingly, the analysis suggests that it is perceived high level of autonomy rather than lack of autonomy that has an impact on employees' silence behaviour. So far, the LP literature has predominantly aimed to analyse denied autonomy and its links to employees' alienation and resistance (Hodson, 1995; Hodson, 2001), however, it has recognised that perceived high level of autonomy may be a source of intrinsic rewards for employees which shown to be also an important indicator of silence (Burawoy, 1983; R. Edwards, 1979). The results of the study show that the perceived autonomy allows employees to remain silent and carry on with their tasks while avoiding unnecessary confrontation and deterioration of social relations in the workplace. Especially in situations where employees disagree with the working process set by the management the autonomy allows employees to continue working by their preferred way rather than to voice their disagreements. Also, the high level of discretion and autonomy allows employees to implement improvements into their tasks without having them approved by their line manager which makes their jobs easier, more interesting and enjoyable.

Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) suggested that tenure with the company is one of the important factors within the nature of the job that can influence employees behaviour and action in their workplaces. Two main reasons for this were quoted by their study, one being the inability of employees to create social bonds with their co-workers and line managers and the second being the lack of experience and understanding of the complexity of their task and use of their skills in an effective way. The findings have shown that there was indeed a certain level of uncertainty and disempowerment reported by the participants with regards to contributing to decision making or communicating their concerns. This was caused mainly by both factors quoted in Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) study but also by the lack of knowledge of organisational policies and procedures. In contrast, as it was explained by participants who reported long tenure with their organisation, the length of service allows employees to feel secure and empowered and consequently voicing their concerns as they developed deeper social relations with others in their workplace and developed for the organisation, valuable skills.

An interesting finding that has not been suggested by the LP literature and reported by a few participants was related to the employees' concerns with the nature of product or service.

This factor, as explained by the participants, was a decision making factor to speak up in situations where their silence could result in deterioration of the quality of the product or service. Such finding is however not contradictory to similar findings in OB literature where academics explain such voice as having antecedents in, for example, employees' pride, perceived organisational support, social influence or job satisfaction (Lu and Rota, 2016; Jurburg et al, 2017).

8.3.2 Formal workplace policies and procedures

8.3.2.1 Employee voice mechanisms

The literature suggests that the managements' understanding of the purpose of employee voice differs from those of employees. While voice serves employees either as a channel to raise grievances or a channel through which they can contribute to decision making in their organisations (McCabe and Lewin, 1992), managers can use voice as a tool for further extraction of the labour-power from employees (Ramsey, 1977; Thompson and Harley, 2007; Barry et al, 2017). Managers are usually a more dominant party of the exchange hence they play a role in determining whether to allow or restrict employee voice channels (Dundon et al, 2005; Allen and Tuselmann, 2009). Dundon et al (2015) demonstrate how even in unionised organisations the formal recognition of union may not be an indicator of the effective indirect voice channel, hence, the presence of indirect voice channels may not guarantee a genuine collective voice for employees. The findings suggest the possibility of various implementation strategies to structure formal indirect voice mechanisms by management which may influence the silence and voice outcomes of employees. While some organisations may recognise trade union and engage in collective bargaining, their overall attitude towards trade union may be still perceived by employees as negative (Dundon et al, 2015). For example, the results show that employees may personally experience or evaluate their co-worker's experience with joining trade union in past as having negative consequences including inequality in treatment compared to other workers in the organisation or, in more extreme cases, the termination of employment. Such experience then contributes to the employees' decision-making process to not to join the union in the future. In addition, the results show that some organisations refuse to negotiate with the union altogether or while

negotiating with it, they aim to bypass it by cancelling the meetings with the union representatives and implementing changes regardless of the outcomes of negotiation.

Interestingly, however, collective bargaining does not always result in a perceived voice as the results of the study show that the bargaining may be perceived by employees as structured around certain topics, especially when the scope of the bargaining is limited to negotiating over pay increases or hours of work. Consequently, employees perceive that the union has limited opportunities to defend their other concerns and grievances. Similarly, the union and management may negotiate deals in which employees had no say, and which are not necessarily welcomed by them.

The literature suggests that organisations may structure extensive direct voice mechanisms to avoid collective representation (Gollan and Wilkinson, 2007; Millward et al, 2000). The presence of voice channels, however, may not guarantee that employees would always use their voice. The findings show that there are some forms of formal direct voice mechanisms available to employees in most organisations. However, employees may perceive that these mechanisms are structured in a way that prevents them from expressing their views or grievances. Budd et al (2010) show that sometimes direct voice mechanisms can be ineffective as sometimes employees may not have the opportunity to meet their managers and discuss their views, suggestions or grievances. In line with this, the result shows there may be a low frequency of the meetings with management, employees may not know who their manager is, or they may work in isolation. In addition, sometimes employees have no opportunity to speak up while communication takes place either because management uses the opportunity to channel down information or they inform employees that certain topics are not for discussion. With regards to informal forms of direct voice mechanisms, the results indicate that the social relations between line managers and their subordinates are an important factor that influences employees' decision making to either withdraw their voice or to speak up, hence these are discussed in Section 8.3.3.

However, regardless of voice mechanisms present in the workplace, the results show that important factor indicating whether employees perceive they have an opportunity to express their views or they remain silent is on what topics their organisation allows communication and how is the process of communication structured and implemented through the voice mechanisms. For example, management usually welcomes and allow discussion related to suggestions on how to improve the product, service or the production process; or to issues

related to participants labour process that may be solved while other topics such grievances and finances are usually not on the agenda.

8.3.2.2 Contracts, casualisation, flexibilisation

The literature review suggests that as the employment contracts shift from traditional permanent full-time to non-standards forms such as part-time, casual, zero hours, temporary contracts and agency work (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). The non-standard forms of contracts affect the dynamics of the employment relationship, potentially resulting in precariousness (Rubery, 2015) which served as a rationale for the inclusion of the nature of the contract as a potential decision making factor for employees' silence. Since the non-standard employment contract usually brings uncertainty about the future employment prospects, the literature suggests that employees' grievances may result in their dismissal or lack of opportunities for future employment, training and/or promotions (Broughton et al, 2016). The results of the study show that employees remain silent about certain topics when they perceive that expressing their views could endanger their future employment prospects especially when their contracts are temporary.

The recent literature also shows that part-time work may result in a lack of equal treatment in the workplace. (ILO, 2014). In the line of this, the results show that employees consider their voice to have less impact than the voice of their full-time co-workers and they remain silent about grievances, especially when they perceived inequality of treatment by management compared to their co-workers. Similarly, the recent literature suggests that around 25 per cent of employees work involuntarily on a part-time basis and the majority of them would like to work longer hours (Broughton et al, 2016). The results show that this indeed is a major deciding factor for employees to remain silent about their grievances as they have only a limited amount of hours specified in their contracts which gives their management the power to cut their hours.

With regards to collective workplace representation, the literature suggests that non-standard forms of employment can result in a lack of trade union organisation as the management prerogative may be a union avoidance (Bernhardt, 2014). The results show that employees on non-standard contracts have limited opportunities to express their views through indirect voice mechanisms. In particular, the contractual conditions may impose restrictions on

employees who wish to join a trade union as organisations may 'allow' the workplace representation only for their full-time employees. The organisations may subsequently use the non-standard working contracts for new staff to limit their voice opportunities or to disempower their representatives.

8.3.3 Informal social relations

Various actors within an employment relationship may have their own prerogatives and goals (Edwards, 2003, Edwards, 1986, Dundon and Rollinson, 2011). These actors include line managers and/or supervisors, trade unions and other workers' representatives and co-workers. The results show that these actors influence employees' decisions to remain silent as they have close contact with employees and form various relationships and social bonds with them.

8.3.3.1 Line managers

As discussed in the previous section the direct voice mechanisms in the workplace are usually implemented by line managers regardless of the number of potential voice channels (Olson-Buchanan and Boswell, 2002). The findings show that employee' perceptions of how line managers structure these mechanisms and allow employee voice on an individual and collective level is influenced by social relations between the employee and the line manager. Since the employment relationship is according to Townsend (2014:164) 'built around a social component and always evolving', the behaviour and actions of line managers were found to influence employees' decisions to remain silent.

As suggested by the literature and later supported by the empirical data from this study, line managers exercise a degree of choice in the way they treat their employees regardless of the existence of organisational policies and practices that aim to guide the ways employees should be treated in a particular situation (Boxall and Purcell, 2016; Purcell; 1987). Hence, line managers may have a certain degree of freedom of choice whether the communication takes place. The results show that individual communication between participants and their line manager is influenced by how line managers structure and implement voice mechanisms in the workplace. Line managers sometimes refuse to discuss certain topics which results in fewer opportunities for employees to express their voice. Interestingly, employee silence

usually arises from a previous experience when the line managers dismissed the discussion over a certain topic which resulted in the employee's perception that there is no point to voice their concerns again after the incident.

With regards to research on employee voice, the literature shows that managers can be a barrier to effective voice and participation as they lack communication skills resulting in the voice mechanisms becoming ineffective and losing their relevance in the organisation (Townsend; 2014; Dundon et al, 2005; Cox et al, 2009). Sometimes it may be because the skilled practitioner being promoted to the role of line manager without adequate training in people skills (Townsend et al; 2012). Such a line manager may have a lack of people skills and display so-called abusive supervision, including hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviour (Tepper, 2000). Consequently, employees may feel powerlessness and become alienated towards their jobs (Tepper, 2000). The results of this study show that employees withdraw their voice on various topics due to their perception of their line managers being aggressive and/or intimidating. This is usually due to the previous experience with a personal confrontation with the line manager or some form of negative consequences in a form of punishment from the line managers they experienced after they expressed their views. However, it is not necessarily a personal experience that contributes to employees' decisions to remain silent. Sometimes, it is due to their perceptions of how their line managers treated their co-workers who tried to express their views in the past, especially when the line managers either expressed a negative attitude towards them or enforced some form of negative action towards the co-worker. Hence the silence is a vehicle for employees to protect themselves from abusive supervision when they, for example, remain silent about the personal labour process, wrong instruction and personal grievances. In contrast, the results show that employees sometimes quarrel or disagree with their line managers, in situations when the line manager does not enforce any negative consequences on employees who argue with him/her. It has been explained as a form of workplace games employees and line managers participate in, especially in the manufacturing and hospitality sectors.

Employee silence does not necessarily need to be triggered by abusive supervision. The extent to which supervisors let employees to voice their concerns and contribute to decision making can influence their decision to remain silent or to share their ideas and opinions (Landau, 2009). Line managers who allow employees to participate influence employees' job satisfaction as the emphasis on communication between supervisors and employees, as

employees may perceive that their voice will be heard and their issues and suggestions will be dealt with by management (Kim, 2002; Chan et al, 2008). The data show that whether line managers follow up on employees' inquiries is an important indicator of voice or silence behaviour. Employees whose line managers did not follow up when they communicated various issues and suggestions in the past remain silent as they don't see any point in trying to express their views about various topics including suggestions, issues they experience during their work such as the poor organisation of work or lack of resources, and personal grievances such as pay, hours and being overlooked for promotion. Employees sometimes evaluate the inability to follow up arising from the line managers' lack of organisational skills and experience and lack of interest.

The literature further suggests that the important factor influencing employees' decision to remain silent, maybe whether employees perceive that the line manager has support from the organisation (Dasgupta et al, 2012; Zellars et al, 2002; Wang and Jiang, 2015). While the literature links such support usually with abusive supervision and outcomes such as employees' alienation towards the organisation, the results show that a lack of organisational support for their line manager or lack of empowerment in decision making can be linked to employee silence. Specifically in situations where employees do not communicate issues and grievances to their line manager as they perceive that the line manager has no support from the organisation and cannot follow up on their inquiries due to the lack of empowerment in decision-making.

The last interesting finding of this research is related to the arguments that line managers may not necessarily need to work towards organisational goals and that they can pursue their own prerogatives within the workplace (Watson, 1994; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). Here, the data show that in pursuing their self-interests in a form of praise from the middle management, line managers may take employees' suggestion and present them as their own ideas. Consequently, employees withdraw suggestions as they do not see any benefits for themselves to share them. Also, similarly as in the study by Woodcock (2017), the results show a case of collusion, where one particular employee did not communicate concerns about the quality of the product as his line manager engaged in misbehaviour and compromised the quality of the product so the daily target would be met.

8.3.3.2 Co-workers

The literature suggests that employees' relationships with their co-workers affect their workplace behaviour and actions (Thompson and McHugh, 2009). The results show that social relationship between employees and their co-workers is indeed an important factor contributing to employees' decision to remain silent about certain topics such as co-workers misbehaviour, workplace bullying and improvements of organisational processes. Employees and their co-workers form relationships which are based on the exchange of socio-emotional benefits and governed by reciprocity and obligations (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964), hence they are seen as a core source of workplace social support for employees (He et al, 2011; Boxall et al, 2003). 'Individuals operating within group settings are typically able to observe other group members, which creates the opportunity for these members to serve as models' (Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998:659). For example, employees working in an environment where their co-workers engage in misbehaviour, they are likely to misbehave themselves (Bandura, 1977). In line with this literature, the findings show that employees' decisions to remain silent are influenced by the behaviour of their peers. Employees who remain silent about their peers' misbehaviour usually aim to maintain positive social relations with their co-workers, protect their co-workers from negative consequences, to avoid confrontation with them, or in the case of a co-worker being bullied to maintain confidentiality.

Besides, sharing information about improvements may lead to, for employees, negative changes in the work processes such as increased workload and intensification of work (Ramsey, 1977; Rinehart et al, 1997; Babson, 1993; Graham, 1995; Adler and Cole 1993). Such information sharing may be perceived by peers as annoying and troublesome (Hung et al, 2012:448). The findings show that employees do not report co-worker's misbehaviour as they sometimes collude with their co-workers in the misbehaviour such as work to rule, not following prescribed working procedures or work stoppages as they welcome the break from the work and they wish to keep harmony within the social relations between themselves and their peers. However, besides the social-relations with co-workers, the nature of participants job shown to be an important deciding factor for remaining silent which has been discussed in the previous section.

The literature further suggested that the nature of contracts and tenure could have an impact on employees' and co-workers relationships as, for example, firms may use temporary

workers to limit employee's interest in unionising, the presence of temporary workers have an impact on changing responsibilities and job security for full-time employees, and the length of service allows for the better building of informal social relations among peers (Davis-Blake et al, 2003; Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). Also, the unfair treatment by line managers may serve a barrier to building social relations among employees and their peers (Forret and Love, 2008). The result shows that all factors mentioned above influence employees' decisions to remain silent directly rather as a mediating factor between employees' and coworkers' relations and silence, hence they are discussed in their own rights in other sections.

8.3.3.3 Trade union and other employee representatives

The union presence in the organisation does not necessarily mean that employees will have enhanced opportunities to voice their concerns, opinions and suggestions. The literature suggests that the relations between workers and their representatives may be a factor that can influence employees' decision to remain silent in their organisation. Waddington and Whitston (1997) explain that, for example, employees may have a negative perception of their representatives or they have limited information on what union does and consequently withdraw any communication with their representatives. Similarly, research in Ireland by Eurofound (1998) on employees' perception of trade unions presented reasons why employees do not approach union representatives with issues and grievances including uncertainty about what union does and never been approached by a representative to join the union. This is somehow consistent with the findings as there was a large cohort of respondents, members of a trade union, that were not aware of collective bargaining taking a place or about any union activities and consequently they didn't communicate to their representatives.

The literature review also suggests that employees' trust in trade union and their representatives may be low as trade union perhaps make a joint decision with management and does not represent the best interests of its members (Babson, 1993; Adler, 1993). The findings present the evidence that some employees may indeed limit their opportunities for collective voice and refuse to join a trade union due to the negative experience with the trade union representatives in the past. Similarly, some employees join the union but do not communicate with their representatives as they have either a lack of opportunities to do so,

the representative does not follow up on the inquiry, or they have a poor state of social relations with the representative.

In contrast, Bryson (2003b) explains that employees perceive trade union as effective and capable of representing their interests when the representatives share information, provide advice and respond to employees' grievances. Also, employees need to perceive that union is effective in delivering improvements in work in areas such as pay increases; ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities; increasing managerial responsiveness to employees; and making the workplace better place to work (Bryson, 2006a; Waddington and Whitston, 1997). The findings confirm this as the results show that employees communicate with their representatives if they perceive that the representative deals with collective issues such as wages and hours or is open to communication and always follows up on participants' inquiries.

8.4 Silent Process

8.4.1 Intentional Silence

The literature review presented a rationale for intentional silence process which reflects situations when employees have the opportunity to express their voice but decide to remain silent (Adler, 1993; Adler and Cole, 1993; Graham, 1995; Rinehart et al, 1997; Woodcock, 2017). The results show that there the intentional process is indeed utilised by employees, however, there are four variations of it, depending on specific contexts and how the intention is formed from previous experience with voice. Each variation of the intentional silence process is discussed in its section below together with the links to particular contexts that give rise to it.

8.4.1.1 Intentional Silence

The results show an intentional process of silence as one where employees make a conscious decision to remain silent rather than to speak up, therefore, conceptualised as ***'a voice that has not been and may not be expressed within a particular context'.*** It includes situations where employees are silent about a particular topic once but also when their silence is a continuous process.

The importance of context leading to an intentional process of silence is evident from the results as they show the nature of the job and social relations with co-workers as a decision making factors for employees to utilise this process of silence. Specifically, employees make conscious decision to remain silent when they perceive an imbalance in their effort-reward exchange and when their job is repetitive, tedious and/or intensive as has been suggested by various studies from manufacturing context in the literature review (Rinehart et al, 1997; Woodcock, 2017; Adler, 1993; Adler and Cole,1993). Also, the study found links between intentional silence and employees' autonomy on their jobs, and in the context of short tenure as employees, are either not fully familiar with their jobs or had so far limited opportunities to establish the nature of social relations with other members of their organisation.

It has been suggested by the literature review that the context of nature of social relations with co-workers gives rise to the intentional process of silence (Graham, 1993; Rinehart et al, 1997; Woodcock, 2017) For example, employees in the Subaru-Isuzu plant frequently sabotaged production by stopping the assembly line and the rest of the employees on the team

who were aware of the sabotage never told management (Graham, 1993). The results show that employees indeed make conscious decision to not report their co-workers' misbehaviour for reasons including, for example, collusion with co-workers, protection of co-workers from negative consequences, maintaining the positive relations with co-workers, and to avoid confrontation with co-workers.

Besides, the results show other interesting contextual factors not considered by the literature review that result in intentional silence. Firstly, the social relations between line managers and participants lead to conscious decision to remain silent, specifically in situations when employees learnt from previous experience that the voice would result in a less favourable treatment by their line managers. However, the analysis identified that such silence arose from the observation of social relations between co-workers and line managers and not by employees' own experience with voice. In other words, participants never expressed their views as there were negative consequences for co-workers who did. Secondly, the nature of participant contract contributes to employees' intentional silence, whether it is casual, part-time or flexible, as it contributes to employees' insecurity and perception of having fewer opportunities to express their views on various topics including personal grievances.

8.4.1.2 Shallow Voice

The results show a quite distinctive intentional process of silence that arises from a perception that voice regardless of its perceived scope and frequency will not change the state of workplace affairs. Employees sometimes perceive that they have opportunity to speak about various topics including grievances, suggestions or issue at work but after making numerous attempts to share their views and achieving no changes, they gradually make conscious decision to remain silent in the present. Such silence process has been conceptualised as ***'intentional silence arising from a shallow voice'.*** Since it is usually the perceived inactivity or inability of line managers to act on employees voice, this process of silence is linked to a context of social relations with line managers. Specifically, employees remain silent because their line manager did not follow up on their queries or suggestions in past, when they perceive that their line manager does not care about their input when they perceive that their line manager lacks organisational skills or experience to solve any issue they have and when they perceive that the line manager does not have support from the middle or senior management hence has low control over a decision-making process.

8.4.1.3 Dismissed Voice

The previous section discussed the intentional process of silence arising from a shallow voice, while this section presents a quite distinctive process of intentional silence that arises from a voice that has been dismissed in the past. The analysis explains that the distinction lays in the perceived opportunities for voice as while in the case of shallow voice, employees perceive they have opportunities to speak up and they did in past, the ***'intentional silence arising from a dismissed voice'***, is characterised by employees' perception that they did not have the opportunity to speak up in the past and gradually made conscious decision to remain silent in the present unless their workplace context changes. Interestingly, the results show this type of silence process to be found only within a certain context of social relations with line managers, particularly, line managers' aggressive or intimidating manner including walking away or shushing employees during their attempts to speak up, or dismissing the discussion on a certain topic that employee wishes to discuss.

8.4.1.4 Intentional Institutional Silence

The results show an interesting form of intentional silence that has been directed towards indirect voice mechanisms and institutions rather than at line managers. Employees who have the opportunity to join a trade union in their workplace refuse to join it or communicate with their representatives, hence intentionally limit their opportunities for representation and voice It has been therefore conceptualised as ***'intentional silence towards employees' indirect voice mechanisms and institutions'.*** The results show that the intentional institutional silence is linked to a specific context of social relations with the trade union and other representatives. Employees who had a negative experience with the trade union in the past, those whose representatives do not follow up on enquiries and those who have a poor state of social relations with their representative utilise this process of silence. The intentional institutional silence has not been linked to any particular topic of workplace conversation. It has been rather a participants' attitude towards the idea of indirect representation. In other words, participants reported to withdraw their voice towards their union or to refuse to join it regardless of the nature of their concerns, grievances or suggestions.

8.4.2 Unintentional silence

The literature review laid a foundation for the unintentional silence process which refers to incidents where employees have limited or no opportunity to express their views (Donaghey et al 2011, Nechanska et al, 2020). Such silence may be engineered by management by for example limiting the presence of indirect voice channels or their embeddedness (Allen and Tuselmann, 2009; Wilkinson et al, 2004). However, the creation of such silence may also have roots in lack if direct voice channels where managers engender a climate of silence by managing employees out of voice systems (Donaghey et al, 2011). The results show that the two contexts, one being lack of indirect voice channels and second being lack of direct voice channels lead to two distinct processes of silence. The former signals the lack of employees' representation and limited opportunities for collective voice while the latter signals the lack of opportunities and structures for the individual voice. Both are discussed and conceptualised in the following sections.

8.4.2.1 Unintentional Silence

As mentioned above, the process of silence can be unintentional, particularly in situations when employees wish to share their views but they perceive they have no opportunity to do so. The results show that management structures of direct voice mechanisms can indeed limit employees' opportunities for voice on individual level especially, when the frequency of voice opportunities is sporadic and when the structure is not flexible enough to allow for an employee choice to who to speak to about sensitive topics such as bullying. Hence, it has been conceptualised as: '***unintentional silence arising from a lack of direct voice mechanisms'*** and it is directly related to one particular workplace context in which employees perceive a lack of direct voice mechanisms available to them. It is quite a distinctive silence process from the unintentional institutional silence discussed below as it is not characterised by the lack of workplace representation. Also, to distinguish from Dismissed Voice discussed earlier, the unintentional silence process is characterised by the employees' ongoing intention to speak up rather than withdrawing their voice intentionally over time.

8.4.2.2 Unintentional Institutional Silence

The section discusses the findings related to the unintentional silence that arises, as mentioned above, from the lack of employees' opportunities for workplace representation by institutions such as trade union and staff association, hence imposed on a wider employee

audience and conceptualised as ***'a silence arising from the lack of opportunities for workplace representation'.*** The results show that the employees have limited opportunities for workplace representation when their organisation engages in trade union avoidance, penalises employees who try to join the union or they refuse to recognise the union in the first place. Also, management can limit the scope of collective bargaining or by-pass decisions that were jointly made by the organisation and the union which is phenomena well documented in various studies from manufacturing context and illustrated in the literature review. Specifically, the implementation of 'kaizen' provided a mechanism for management to tightly control the topics that could be raised for consideration (Graham, 1995; Babson, 1993; Rinehart et al, 1997; Adler, 1993). However, the results indicate that the unintentional institutionalised silence is not usually linked to any particular topic of workplace conversation. It is rather employees' perception of their managements' attitude towards trade unions and collective bargaining. In other words, employees have limited opportunities for workplace representation regardless of the nature of their concerns, grievances or suggestions.

8.5 Forms of silence outcomes

The literature review provided the foundation for employee silence operating on the Frontier of Control where both employees and managers struggle for increased control over the organisation of production (Donaghey et al, 2011; Nechanska et al, 2020; Goodrich, 1920). With regards to employees' perceptions, the literature suggests three possible outcomes of silence: to 'get back' at management, to 'get on' with the jobs, and to 'get by' in the workplace (van den Broeak and Dundon, 2012; Nechanska et al, 2020). Indeed, the results show these outcomes of silence and also it explains the contexts and processes that lead to them.

8.5.1 Silence as a way to 'get back' at management

The literature review explains that the conflict between employees and their managers can be caused by the indeterminacy over terms on which labour-power is extracted (Edwards and Scullion, 1982). Employees can then express their conflict by a range of behaviour including, an organised and unorganised form of resistance and misbehaviour and alter the terms which effort is extracted from them by 'getting back' at management (van den Broeak and Dundon, 2012; Kornhauser; 1954:13). The silence as a way to get back at management was conceptualised as '***anything employees are silent about their managers do not want them to be silent about'*** which served as a theoretical underpinning for empirical investigation. The results show that employees indeed do not share information that management would like to know as a way to get back at management and push the frontier of control towards themselves. Such behaviour has been recognised in academia as misbehaviour and resistance and having roots in challenging management authority, self-interest and subjective recalcitrance (Dundon and Rollinson, 2011; Ackroyd and Thompson,1999). Hence, the results extend the knowledge of workplace misbehaviour by identifying the silence as a form of workplace misbehaviour through which employees may moderate the power and authority of managers similarly as through, for example, humour, cynicism, satire, playing dumb and incivility towards others in the organisation (Hodson, 1995; Fleming, 2005; Taylor and Bain, 2003; Linstead, 1985; Collinson, 1988; van den Broek and Dundon, 2012; Montgomery et al, 2004). However, the literature also explains that different forms of resistance may overlap and occur simultaneously with other forms of resistance (Hodson, 1995; Thompson, 1989; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999) which was confirmed by the results of this study which

shows employee silence playing a role in other forms of misbehaviour including, for example, work to rule and line stoppages. It is important to note that the results identified that employees utilise intentional silence process to remain silent to get back on management. This is in line with literature that conceptualises misbehaviour as a conscious rule-breaking (Collinson and Ackroyd, 2005; Karlsson, 2012).

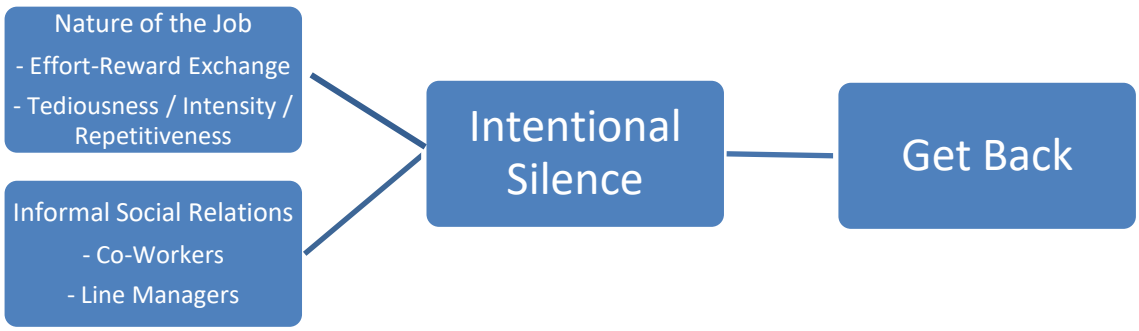
With regards to the context, the results show two specific contexts that lead employees to get back at management through silence; workplace social relations and nature of work. The informal social relations with co-workers are deciding factor, especially in situations when employees see their co-workers misbehave and withdraw this information from management. Such misbehaviour can take many forms from for organisation potentially damaging, stopping the production, breaching organisational policies including health and safety, working under influence, breaching quality and hygiene standards, to for organisation less damaging use of phones and social media in the workplace, not keeping the break times, not following the pre-described organisational procedure, signing in and off for others, avoiding work, and working slowly to get overtime. Employees remain silent about such misbehaviours as they aim to keep a good relationship with their co-workers, they collude in such misbehaviour with co-workers, they wish to protect themselves or co-workers from negative consequences that voice would result in, and to avoid confrontation with co-workers. Such silence contributes to the creation of workplace countercultures in which employees express their subjective values such as social relationships with their peers rather than those promoted by the organisation (Taylor and Bain, 2003).

The literature discusses the informal social relations with line managers factors such as the perception of unfair treatment, lack of dignity and respect as a possible influencing factor for silence which is also shown by the analysis (Ackroyd and Thompson,1999; Karlsson, 2012; Hodson, 1995). Results show that indeed, employees' poor state of social relations with line managers contributes to their decision-making process to remain silent. For example, employees carry on tasks as pre-described to cause trouble to their line managers. The silence then acts as a creative way within the work to rule misbehaviour process as employees withdraw their voice when they know the instructions they received are wrong and can harm the quality of product or service provided by the organisation.

Hodson (1995) explains that some of the forms of individual resistance may contribute to the restriction of output and employees' autonomy on the job by controlling the pace of their personal labour process. In some cases, the resistance may be aimed towards the speed of the production line and the organisation and allocation of work by, for example, not sharing the knowledge of production improvements with management as management would take away the spare seconds the improvement would save and give employees more responsibilities and make them work harder. (Adler, 1993). This specific example set a foundation for the empirical investigation of silence as a way to get back at management influenced by the nature of work. Indeed the results show that the nature of work influences employees decisions to remain silent especially in situations where it helps to gain some element of control over employees' labour process. For example, employees through their silence achieve some level of autonomy in their jobs and balance their effort-reward exchange ratio. Also, if the job is perceived as repetitive, tedious or intensive; the silence allows employees to incorporate improvements into their personal labour process which would otherwise become even more intensive should they share their improvements with management who would formally implement them.

As presented earlier the results identified two specific contexts that influence participants decision-making process to remain silent as a way to get back at management. The process of employee silence is intentional. Figure 8.5.1 below presents a summary of the context, process and outcome of silence as a way to get back at management.

Fig. 8.5.1: Silence as a way to get back at management



8.5.2 Silence as a way to 'get on' with job

The literature points out that while employees' and organisational goals can diverge, cooperation may simultaneously exist even when employee increased effort results only in more income for the company owners (Burawoy, 1979; Edwards, 1986). This, however, does not necessarily mean that employees put their interests aside (Fox, 1974). While reasons for employees to cooperate or 'get on' with their jobs are complex, workers aim to maintain the status quo within the employment relationship with regards to perceived control over their labour process and silence then allows them to do so (Donaghey et al, 2011; Nechanska et al, 2020). The process of silence to get on with their jobs was therefore conceptualised by the literature review as '***withdrawing of information when employees seek to maintain an existing status quo within the employment relationship'***. Such silence is according to the results of this study not frequent, however, it can be found in specific contexts and utilised by employees who enjoy their job and want to get on with it.

The interesting finding is certainly the topic of silence as employees usually remain silent about disagreements over their labour process. The reason for this is to maintain good relations with line managers to gain some form of workplace benefits in the future. In other words, silence as a way to get on is a strategic behaviour that is necessary for employee access to a range of workplace benefits such as training, more hours, overtimes etc. This is in line with literature that explains that employers can take employees ability to co-operate into account in decision-making, for example in recruitment and promotion decisions and decisions based on the right to direct and allocate work hence the lack of co-operation on behalf of employees may slow the employees' salary and career development (Lambooij, 2007; Votinius, 2012).

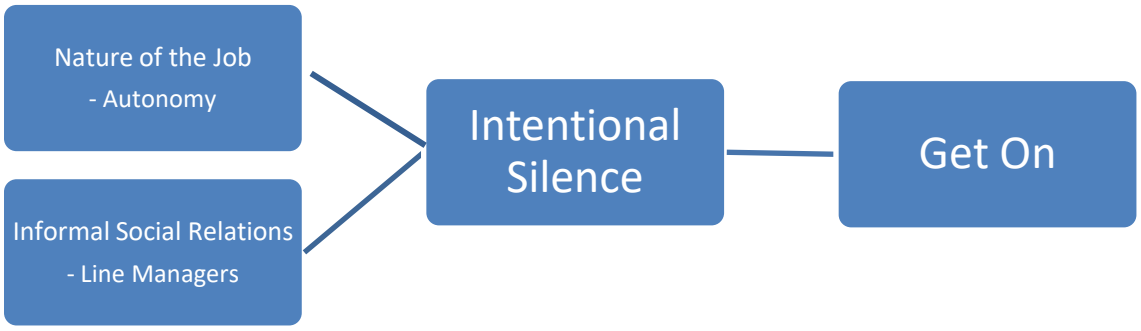
Two factors within the workplace contexts can contribute to employees' decision to remain silent to get on with their jobs: nature of work and informal social relations. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990), for example, explain that the nature of the job itself may be a high indicator of whether employees may collaborate or cooperate with their managers as the task characteristics such as job complexity, autonomy and intrinsic rewards can positively influence employees' attitudes towards their jobs and organisation. The results show that the nature of the job is indeed an important indicator of silence, specifically in situations where employees have the autonomy to implement changes to their tasks without the necessity to discuss them with management. This allows them to carry on with their work in a more

effective way and maintain the status quo within their employment relationship, including the social relations with their line managers.

Also, the literature suggests that the role of other actors in the employment relationship may contribute to employees' positive perception of social relations within their workplace and consequently to 'get on' with the job. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) explained that social bonds within the workplace such as social integration and cohesion might positively influence employees' commitment and attitudes towards their job and organisation. There may be a high trust, support and/or friendship workers and their managers and employees to maintain these. Here, the results show that informal social relations with line manager can indeed influence employees' decision to get on with their jobs through silence, especially in situations where maintaining of the positive social relations would result in a positive outcome for the participant in a form of workplace benefits mentioned above. However, the keeping of the positive social relations can be an outcome of employees' silence in its own right as speaking up could result in the deterioration of the relationship.

The results extend the knowledge and understanding of employee silence as a way to get on with employees' jobs which is closely related to a specific workplace context of social relations with line managers and nature of work. Also, the process of silence is intentional. Figure 8.5.2 below illustrates the relationship between the context, process and the get on the outcome of silence.

Fig. 8.5.2: Silence as a way to get on with a job



8.5.3 Silence as a way to 'get by' in the workplace

A third potential form of employee silence outcome is labelled 'get by' and explaining silence resulting in a perceived lack of control over employees' labour process (van den Broek and Dundon, 2012). This form of silence has been derived from the literature on resilience suggesting that employees sometimes need a strategy to cope with day to day realities of their workplace which may not necessarily result in changes in social relations of the employment relationship rather than to attempt to improve the conditions of employment (Katz's, 2004). With regards to employee intention, the literature also suggests that this outcome of silence may be unintended as the human capacity to transform agency is bounded by existing structures and conditions within the workplace (Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2010). This has been captured by the working definition of employees silence as a way to get by in their workplace as: '***withdrawing of information and/or having limited opportunities to express voice over a range of workplace issues that results in extended management control over employees personal labour process.'***

The results indicate that the employee silence resulting in this outcome is a very common experience. The literature suggests that the intention to get by in the workplace may have roots in employee alienation which has been confirmed by the study (Blauner, 1964; Simpson, 1999; Kohn, 1976; Mottaz, 1981). Employees, for example, remain silent about improvements as they feel alienated towards their jobs, line managers or the organisation. In addition, the study show silence about personal grievances as employees wish to somehow protect themselves from bad consequences that may happen if they voice their concerns; or they perceive their voice would not result in any changes, hence, they feel a certain level of powerlessness to change the state of the current affairs within the workplace. Also, employees remain silent in a situation when they intend to leave the workplace soon.

With regards to the context that gives rise to the silence as a way to get by in the workplace, the literature shows there is a gap in understanding of the link between alienation and workplace context as most of the research explains the individual factors such as loss of affiliate satisfaction (Korman et al, 1981); links to personal factors such as level of education (Rosner and Putterman, 1991); and socio-economic status background (Lang, 1985). There are, however, a few studies that aim to link alienation and workplace context that served as a theoretical basis for this study. For example, Blauner (1964) links alienation with the division of labour, standardised, routine and repetitive jobs on the assembly lines, and Simpson's

(1999) study links alienation with limited contact with other actors of the employment relationship and with the nature of contracts.

The results show that all three categories of workplace factors presented in the sensitising framework contribute to employees' decisions to remain silent to get by in their jobs: nature of work, informal social relations, and formal workplace procedures. In addition, there were six various processes of silence identified by the analysis leading to the 'get by' outcome of silence. Each process was closely related to a particular context.

With regards to the intentional process of silence, firstly, the deciding factor was the social relations with their line managers, particularly, in situations when employees observed their co-workers being punished or treated poorly by the line manager for voicing their opinions in the past or line manager previously took their suggestion and presented it as his/hers. Secondly, the nature of the contract contributes to employees' decisions to remain silent and get by in their jobs. The third contextual factor is the employees' tenure which in some cases combined with the nature of the contract contribute to employees' insecurity. Specifically, employees who work for an organisation for a short period of time did not have enough opportunities to build a relationship with their line managers to be able to express confidence and share their views. Also, short tenure does not allow employees to be fully familiar with their personal labour process and to be able to come up with suggestions or improvements.

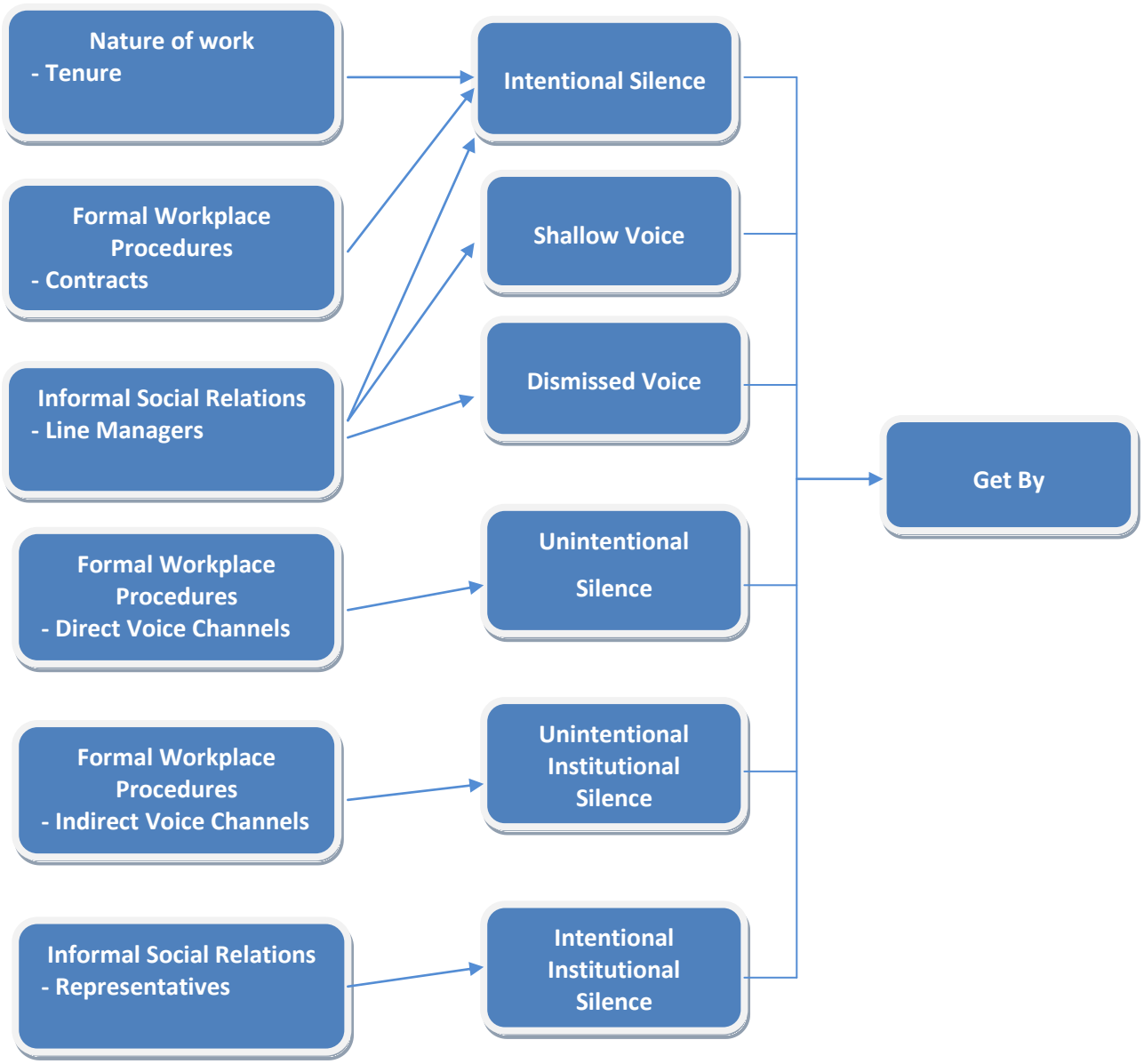
The results show that shallow voice is linked to the 'get by' outcome of silence as employees who became disengaged with the voice process over the period of time do not share their, for example, disagreement over the labour process or grievances with management. Consequently, they are not able to change the current state of affairs in their workplaces. This is in line with the research of workplace powerlessness which has, for example, roots in the inability of employees to influence general managerial policies and lack of control over the conditions of employment and work process (Blauner, 1964; Seeman, 1959).

With regards to the dismissed voice, the results show that this process of silence has been linked to the get by the outcome as employees' ability to express voice is limited by their line managers. Again, this has been suggested by the literature as existing studies show that employees may feel alienated as their attempts to change their working conditions have been previously ignored by management (Simpson, 1999).

In addition, the results show a link between intentional institutional silence process and the 'get by' outcome of silence as by not joining trade unions while having the opportunities to do so, employees intentionally limited their collective voice through representation and shift the frontier of control towards the management. Also, both unintentional forms of silence processes, the unintentional silence and the unintentional institutional silence are linked to the get by the outcome of silence as suggested by the Simpson's (1999) study that linked the employee alienation with the inability of employees to change their working conditions as they cannot be communicated due to the weak and ineffective voice channels. The former limits employees' opportunities for direct voice while the later limits opportunities for employee representation and consequently structuring silence over a range of workplace issues

As discussed earlier the analysis identified there three specific contexts that influence employees decision-making process to remain silent as a way to get by in their workplace and six forms of processes of silence that lead to this outcome. Figure 8.5.3 below illustrates the links between various workplace contexts, the specific processes of silence they lead to and the outcome of silence when employees get by in their workplace.

Fig. 8.5.3: Silence as a way to get by in the workplace



8.6. Limitation of the Research

There are several limitations that this research must allude to and subsequently, suggestions for future research are posed in an effort to address such limitations. The main aim of this study was to explore the context, process and outcomes of employee silence. Fifty-one employees working in the Republic of Ireland were interviewed. Although this allowed for detailed analysis of various workplace contexts and their comparisons and contrasts to be drawn between employees remaining silent or speaking up, its limitation lies in the generalisability of the study across other countries and regions with various legislative frameworks, economic contexts and cultural differences. In order to increase the generalisability of the findings in terms of representativeness, it is suggested that future research incorporates employees working within various legislative, economic and cultural contexts.

The second weakness was the scope of the study with regards to the analysis of formal workplace procedures that may lead to silence. In particular, the research explains the perception of employees how the presence or absence of voice mechanisms limits their opportunities to have a voice. The analysis suggested that employees may perceive that their management is structuring silence over certain issues or they prevent opportunities for voice by, for example, limiting their access to workplace representation. To fully explain this phenomenon, the analysis would benefit from hearing the management view on this issue. Besides, the analysis could offer more detailed information about the embeddedness of voice mechanisms with regards to their scope, frequency and depth (Cox et al, 2006), and more detailed information about specific indirect and direct voice channels available to employees.

The third limitation of the current study is related to the omission of the participants' individual personal attributes in the analysis. While the analysis explained the context that gives rise to silence, due to its scope, the study does not analyse specific personal factors such as, for example, gender, level of education or the migrant status. The emerging labour process literature suggests that these may be important factors with regards to the research of exploitative nature of employment relationship and ability of employers to gain more control over the employees' labour process (Davies, 2019; LeBaron and Gore, 2019).

8.7 Direction for Future Research

The findings of the research highlight several areas that future research should consider in progressing the employee silence field. Firstly, there are several limitations in the current research, as discussed in the previous section. Future research examining employee silence could address these shortcomings, for example, by utilising a larger sample size of participants from various legislative, economical and cultural contexts. This approach would enable researchers to capture the experiences of employees from various regions and countries and develop a further understanding of employee silence arising from both external organisational factors and different context of formal workplace procedures than analysed in this study.

Future research should also focus on a more in-depth analysis of formal workplace procedures, for example, various direct and indirect voice channels and their embeddedness through the participants' organisations. Such analysis would include views of other actors within the employment relationships and reveal their motivations for their behaviour and actions. Comparative analysis through a number of in-depth case studies would generate a further understanding of the unintentional silence imposed on employees by managers which would contribute to further development of the employee silence sensitising framework with regards to the context of silence.

Future research examining employee silence could also use a longitudinal approach which would enable researchers to capture experiences of employees within the context of the ongoing dynamic of managerial styles and changing attitudes towards them. While most of the participants in the current study shared their past experiences that led them to decisions to remain silent, it would contribute to further development of the employee silence concept to examine the changing role and influence of line managers and employees over the time.

In addition, as this study identified the contextual factors of nature of the job, social relations among actors within the employment relationship and formal workplace procedures, research might consider the role of alternative individual participants' factors that were not examined here such as gender, age, educational level and migration status. Finally, the research recommends the future studies delve deeper into how external institutional environment, internal organisational environments and individual personal attributes interplay when employees opt for silence or are prevented from opportunity to have say. This would respond

to literature calling for the intersectionality of organisational behaviour, employee relations and labour process perspectives on employee silence (Nechanska et al, 2020).

8.8 Conclusion

This study has shown how and why employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship. The study offers 4 theoretical and empirical contributions to an important emerging area of research on employee silence. In recent literature the shortcomings of Organisational Behaviour perspective in the analysis of employee silence and proposed Labour Process perspective to allow for more informed conceptualisation, hence Chapter Two reviewed these shortcomings and possible contributions (Nechanska et al, 2020; Barry and Wilkinson, 2015; Donaghey et al, 2011). Identifying the various workplace context that may influence employees' decision-making process to remain silent or prevent them from having a voice over certain topics of workplace conversations; identifying the possible forms of silence process, and conceptualising of the possible outcomes of silence was the mission of Chapter Three. This was framed with Labour Process perspective which led to the development of the sensitising framework. The framework illustrated the argument that various workplace contexts may lead to various forms of silence processes and consequently to various outcomes of silence. It hence illustrated that outcomes of silence may be context dependant.

Using a qualitative methodological approach underpinned by an Interpretivist epistemological position, the data analysis addresses research questions one, two and three. The findings for these were presented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Table 8.2 and Figure 8.2 in this chapter demonstrates how these findings contributed empirical strength to the sensitising framework and provide a robust framework for future theoretical and empirical development on employee silence. The research offers several contributions to the literature at the intersection of silence and silence (Nechanska et al, 2020). This thesis concludes by summarising these contributions below under each research question.

Research Question One: ***How do employees' perceptions of the workplace context influence the process and outcomes of silence?***

Firstly, the thesis presents a unique empirical examination of the workplace context that may lead to employee silence which extends and empirically strengthen the developing field of

employee silence literature by the explanation of the importance of various contexts (Nechanska et al 2020, Donaghey et al, 2011). In particular, it provides empirical support to the sensitising framework regarding how the nature of work, informal workplace relations with other actors of the employment relationship and the formal workplace procedures such as the embeddedness of direct and indirect voice mechanisms together with nature of contract influence employees' decisions to remain silent or prevent them from having a say in their workplace. In this way, the study contributes to the limited theoretical and empirical work on the context of employee silence (Nechanska et al, 2020; Donaghey et al, 2011, Barry & Wilkinson, 2015).

Research Question Two: ***How do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?***

Secondly, by identifying and conceptualising the various processes of employee silence, the thesis extends the very limited literature on the process of employee silence (Nechanska et al, 2020; Donaghey et al, 2011). In particular, the study provides empirical evidence in strong support of the specific processes of silence being linked to specific contexts and outcomes of silence which is a critical contribution with regards to theory development and future research.

Research Question Three: ***Why do employees remain silent in the context of the employment relationship?***

The third contribution of the study is a unique empirical examination of the possible outcomes of employee silence which extends and empirically strengthen the developing field of employee silence literature by the explanation of the motives behind employees' decisions to remain silent (Nechanska et al 2020, Donaghey et al, 2011). In particular, it provides empirical support to the sensitising framework regarding the role of silence in employees getting back at management, getting on with their jobs and getting by in their workplaces. Besides, the study also contributes to the development of employee misbehaviour literature by identifying the employee silence role in employee misbehaviour (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999; Karlsson, 2012).

Overall, in identifying the context and conceptualising the process and outcomes of silence, the fourth contribution of this study is to the broad debate on labour process perspective versus organisational behaviour and employee relations contributions to analyse employee

silence, extending the argument in favour of the labour process perspective in its suitability to explain and enable further explanation of employee silence concept (Nechanska et al, 2020).

9. Appendices

Appendices 1. Invitation to participate in the study

TITLE OF STUDY: Informal social relations in the employment relationship

STUDY INVESTIGATOR: Eva Nechanska, MSc., BBs., BA, *National University of Ireland Galway*, *Department of Management* (e.nechanska1@nuigalway.ie; 086 302 6323)

Invitation to Participate & Study Description

Employees in paid employment are invited to participate in a research study. The study will help us better understand how informal social relations and formal employment procedures in the workplace influence employees to act or behave in certain ways. By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to be interviewed by the researcher about the proposed research topic. Each interview will take about 20-45 minutes to complete and will be recorded. Some personal information about you (e.g., your age, gender, occupation, the industry in which you work) will be added to the interview data as part of this study. All information will be confidential, and anonymity assured.

If interested you can contact the study investigator for more information on e.nechanska1@nuigalway.ie and on 086 302 6323

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. To protect your privacy, your responses to the interview questions will only be identified with a code number and will be kept by Eva Nechanska at the National University of Ireland Galway. Your name will not be associated with the research findings. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences, but your identity will not be revealed.

Your Right to Refuse or Withdraw

The decision to participate in this research project is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study without affecting your relationship with anyone at NUI Galway. You may also choose not to answer any question posed.

Your Right to Ask Questions

You have the right to ask questions about this study and to have those questions answered by study investigator Eva Nechanska before, during or after the research. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant you may contact Eva Nechanska at e.nechanska1@nuigalway.ie or 086 302 6323.

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