CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Tensions in algorithmic HRM: worker voice and organizational silencing in app-based platform work
Authors	Duggan, James;Dasgupta, Prakriti;McDonnell, Anthony;Carbery, Ronan;Sherman, Ultan
Publication date	2026-07-16
Original Citation	Duggan, J, Dasgupta, P, McDonnell, A, Carbery, R & Sherman, U 2026, 'Tensions in algorithmic HRM: worker voice and organizational silencing in app-based platform work', International Journal of Human Resource Management, vol. 37, no. 8, pp. 1432-1465. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2026.2699267
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/105044763587 - 10.1080/09585192.2026.2699267
Rights	© 2026, The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the creative commons attribution-noncommercial-noDerivatives license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the accepted manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Download date	2026-11-02 00:41:03
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/19118



University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



The International Journal of Human Resource Management

ISSN: 0958-5192 (Print) 1466-4399 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rijh20

Tensions in algorithmic HRM: worker voice and organizational silencing in app-based platform work

James Duggan, Prakriti Dasgupta, Anthony McDonnell, Ronan Carbery & Ultan Sherman

To cite this article: James Duggan, Prakriti Dasgupta, Anthony McDonnell, Ronan Carbery & Ultan Sherman (2026) Tensions in algorithmic HRM: worker voice and organizational silencing in app-based platform work, The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 37:8, 1432-1465, DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2026.2699267

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2026.2699267

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 16 Jul 2026.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 713

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=rijh20

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
2026, VOL. 37, NO. 8, 1432–1465
https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2026.2699267

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Tensions in algorithmic HRM: worker voice and organizational silencing in app-based platform work

James Duggan[a], Prakriti Dasgupta[b], Anthony McDonnell[a], Ronan Carbery[a] and Ultan Sherman[a]

[a]Cork University Business School, University College Cork, Ireland; [b]School of Business, Maynooth University, Ireland

ABSTRACT

The use of algorithms to manage human resources represents one of the most significant recent developments in HRM research and practice. While harboring the potential to facilitate more efficient and accurate HR processes, the emergence of algorithmic HRM raises concerns for workers operating under advanced, data-driven systems. This is particularly salient in labor markets within the gig economy, where localized, app-based forms of platform work are prevalent. In this paper, we adopt a qualitative research design to examine how platform workers in the food-delivery sector experience the dynamic, control-based features of algorithmic HRM. Drawing on the concept of algorithmic HRM control and the worker voice and silence literatures, we explore how these algorithmic systems can foster 'enforced silence' and a sense of voicelessness amongst workers, inhibiting their ability to express concerns, contest decisions, and/or participate in shaping their work environment. Crucially, and a key contribution of the paper, is the role that non-organizational actors play in either compounding and/or mitigating this silence. Experiences of frustration, disillusionment, cynicism, and detachment emerge as workers navigate the constraints of algorithmic HRM. In some cases, workers may resort to adopting informal and individual coping mechanisms to endure and reclaim aspects of their autonomy.

KEYWORDS

Algorithmic HRM; gig economy; app-work; worker silence; HRM control; platform organizations

Introduction

The algorithmic control of human resources (HR) represents a profound tension in contemporary work arrangements: as technological sophistication in management increases, workers' ability to express concerns and influence decisions dramatically decreases. While harboring

CONTACT James Duggan jamesduggan@ucc.ie Department of Management and Marketing, Cork University Business School, O'Rahilly Building, University College Cork, Ireland.
© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

the potential to facilitate more efficient and accurate HR processes (Keegan & Meijerink, 2025; McDonnell et al., 2021), the use of algorithms in people management fundamentally reconfigures the nature of the working relationship by creating a form of heavily structured and enforced silencing, where worker voice is systematically constrained through technological design rather than by human managerial practice or workplace norms. This is particularly evident in labor markets within the platform-based gig economy, where localized, app-based forms of work have become increasingly prevalent.

Algorithmic HRM, defined as 'the use of software algorithms that operate on the basis of digital data to augment HR-related decisions and/or to automate activities' (Meijerink et al., 2021: 3), represents one of the most significant developments in HR research and practice. Its use can vary from supplementing parts of the decision-making process to full automation of HR-related decisions, whereby highly prescriptive algorithms are responsible for people management duties without the need for, or use of, a human manager (Duggan et al., 2023). This is especially and increasingly evident in the app-work variant of platform work, where online labor platforms (OLPs) utilize these technologies to direct, monitor, evaluate, and reward workers' activities remotely (Duggan et al., 2020).

While extensive research has examined how and why workers may choose silence over voice in traditional organizational contexts (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne et al., 2003), we know relatively little about how algorithmic HRM systems may influence silence. We argue that the unique features of algorithmic HRM – its opacity, automation, and removal of human intermediaries – can create a distinctively different silencing mechanism than those documented in conventional employment relationships, historically characterised by employer-led union avoidance or suppression strategies and unitarist ideologies (Dundon & Gollan, 2007). Moreover, the role of third-party actors (e.g., customers or restaurants) in reinforcing or occasionally alleviating this silence remains virtually unexplored, despite their critical function in platform work.

App-work involves service-providing intermediaries, in the form of OLPs, that utilize workers to perform tasks locally, such as food-delivery and transportation services, for customers (Duggan et al., 2020). Noteworthy in this form of labor is that workers are commonly classified and treated as independent contractors, meaning there is typically an absence of a formalized employment relationship. Although app-work challenges conventional HRM theory and thinking (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019), the lack of a standard employment relationship is increasingly recognized as not obviating the need for, and role of, HRM (Cross & Swart, 2022; Keegan & Meijerink, 2023). For example, research indicates that HRM activities and practices exist in app-work, both in how workforce

supply and demand is determined, and in how worker behavior is influenced by reward and performance management practices (Norlander et al., 2021; Waldkirch et al., 2021). However, the platform business model means there is a greater dispersal of influencing actors in shaping and affecting HRM activities (e.g., the role of customers and restaurants) (Duggan et al., 2023) in contrast to formal organizational HR support systems.

A significant line of enquiry has focused on how various types of platform workers experience their work conditions. Studies from the sociology of work and industrial relations literatures show that, in certain institutional contexts, platform workers experiencing issues around precarity, worker status, and health and safety have collectively and successfully mobilized to improve working conditions and express their voice (Cini & Goldmann, 2021; Dasgupta et al., 2025). Meanwhile, in other less favorable institutional settings, such efforts have been limited or constrained (Barratt et al., 2020). While these point towards the role of various environmental factors shaping and influencing worker voice, and how platform workers respond to their working conditions and the overall experience of the work, we know less about the effects of algorithmic HRM, specifically in relation to suppressing and silencing workers' voice.

This leads us to our research question: *how does algorithmic HRM shape organizational silencing in app-work?* Accordingly, this paper has two aims. First, to assess how algorithmic HRM may potentially foster and perpetuate organizational silencing by marginalizing opportunities for worker voice. Second, to explore how app-workers experience and are affected by this form of organizational silencing in the execution of their tasks. In doing so, we focus specifically on algorithmic HRM control (Duggan et al., 2023) - a distinctive HRM control system that relies on pervasive algorithms and the input of non-organizational parties - as opposed to an overly general and prescriptive view of the role of algorithms in app-work.

By design, the app-work variant of platform work is the focus of our study, because, more so than other forms of platform work, app-work is bounded entirely by the various processes of algorithmic HRM (Duggan et al., 2020). We consider a distinctive and prominent form of app-work by focusing on the *food-delivery sector*. While food-delivery app-workers are subject to similar algorithmic HRM conditions as other types of app-workers (e.g. ride-hail workers; McDonnell et al., 2021), there are critical differentiating features in the nature of the food-delivery app-work arrangement, owing the presence of an additional party, namely restaurants who offer their services *via* an OLP. This adds an additional layer of complexity to the deployment of algorithmic HRM – and its potential to influence organizational silencing – as the restaurant indirectly impacts

the workers' task allocation, earning capacity, and customer rating score (Duggan et al., 2023). At the same time, the restaurant may also support the worker by engaging in 'mutually beneficial' disruptive practices against OLP interests (Yu et al., 2022). Correspondingly, we seek to tease out the nuances of the shaping role of algorithmic HRM in this unique labor form.

Our contributions to the HRM scholarship are threefold. First, we draw greater attention to how HR processes enacted by an algorithm can reduce opportunities for worker voice and instead foster and perpetuate a form of enforced silence among workforces *via* a lack of organizational presence and the heavily automated design of labor. Herein, we importantly highlight how the presence of third-party actors in food-delivery app-work can, in varying scenarios, either reinforce or alleviate organizational silencing among workers. This is an underdeveloped line of enquiry in the literature, where the focus has tended to examine the broader experience of app-work and the controlling nature of algorithms, rather than focusing on HRM matters and the unique influence of non-organizational, external actors (Norlander et al., 2021; Waldkirch et al., 2021).

Second, we illustrate how organizational silencing unfolds in a prominent form of app-work, and furthermore, how workers in this unique setting experience and may react to the silencing fostered by algorithmic HRM. Understanding workers' affective responses can provide pertinent information on how algorithmic HRM can be developed or re-designed in the interests of creating a better working relationship for all parties, particularly given their encroaching presence in more conventional work arrangements (Keegan & Meijerink, 2025). Our paper, thus, comes at an important time in HR research, with practical implementation of algorithmic HRM outpacing scholarly inquiry (Cheng & Hackett, 2021). In this paper, we help to bridge this gap by adding empirical weight to recent calls for extending the boundaries of HRM research to non-standard workers and working arrangements (see Cross & Swart, 2022).

Third, our examination of silencing arising from the use of algorithmic HRM speaks to fundamental questions and ongoing debates about the nature, psychology, and outcomes of human-technology relationships in contemporary organizations (Sherman et al., 2025). As algorithmic HRM extends beyond app-work into traditional employment settings, understanding how these systems shape voice dynamics becomes increasingly critical for both organizational theorists and practitioners. By illuminating the mechanisms through which algorithmic HRM constrains worker expression, our study contributes to ongoing discourse about algorithmic accountability, technological determinism, and the future of voice in increasingly digitized workplaces (e.g., Dasgupta et al., 2025; Schafheitle et al., 2020; Waldkirch et al., 2021).

Algorithmic HRM and organizational silencing

To understand how algorithmic HRM generates organizational silencing, we synthesize insights from two distinct conceptual domains: research on employee silence (Donaghey et al., 2011; Morrison & Milliken, 2000) and the multidisciplinary scholarship concerning algorithmic management and control (Duggan et al., 2023; Kellogg et al., 2020). We contend that integrating these domains is essential for analyzing how technological systems shape voice opportunities in app-work.

From the silence literature, we note Van dyne et al's. (2003) treatment of silence as a multi-dimensional, motive-based construct that distinguishes why an employee withholds information, where 'acquiescent silence' reflects resignation and disengagement, 'defensive silence' emerges from fear of personal risk or retaliation, and 'prosocial silence' reflects a conscious, altruistic choice to protect organizational interests. Such a typology focuses on the employee's intrinsic motivation to withhold versus express voice but fails to consider how organizations equally shape these motivations. This aspect is addressed by Donaghey et al. (2011) conceptualization of how silence may be structured through organizational mechanisms that systematically exclude workers from decision-making processes. They note how organizations may create a 'hollow shell' (Charlwood, 2003) or 'empty shell' (Hoque & Noon, 2004) voice structure, restricting workers' opportunities to speak up or raise concerns, making silence a product of organizational constraints rather than purely the workers' personal motive. We build on this conceptualization by examining how these structures manifest within technologically-mediated, non-standard working arrangements - such as app-work. From the literature on algorithmic control, we incorporate Kellogg et al. (2020) argument that algorithms function as a new 'contested terrain' where power dynamics are negotiated through *technical design* rather than traditional managerial authority, along with Duggan et al. (2023) concept of 'algorithmic HRM control' where algorithms and non-organizational parties shape and enact the control system used to manage workers. Synthesizing these perspectives, therefore, offers a way for analyzing how algorithmic HRM creates distinctive silencing mechanisms in app-work.

Worker voice and silence

Worker voice has long been a central focus and concern in management and organizational studies, encompassing both academic and practical perspectives. While much research has explored the various ways in which workers may articulate voice, a significant and growing area of focus is the

antithesis of voice: *worker silence* (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Brown & Coupland, 2005). Worker silence has been defined as a worker's decision to withhold or express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Research in this area seeks to understand the conditions under which workers choose to exercise voice versus silence, examines the reasons behind their decisions and the types of issues they avoid speaking up about, and considers how organizations might address this phenomenon (Charlwood, 2006; Dundon et al., 2004).

Early research on voice, such as Hirschman's (1970) Exit-Voice-Loyalty framework, provided foundational insights into the phenomenon of silence, exploring how individuals might respond to undesirable situations, including choosing to remain silent (Donaghey et al., 2011). When applied to employment relations, this framework suggested that worker dissatisfaction could lead to disengagement and a withdrawal into silent, alienated behaviours. Importantly, these early studies also acknowledged the potential risks associated with speaking up, as workers who exercise their voice may face adverse consequences (Harlos, 2001).

Since then, worker silence has grown into a distinct area of academic inquiry, broadening conceptual focus towards understanding situations '*where workers do not have avenues to pursue issues of concern to them, either because of a failure of pre-existing voice mechanisms or because of the absence of them altogether*' (Donaghey et al., 2011: 58). This marks an important expansion from solely examining factors influencing an individual's decision to remain silent about workplace issues (Donaghey et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2024), where silence is a communicative 'choice' for workers who consciously decide to withhold concerns, ideas, information, and opinions relevant to improvements in the workplace, rather than an unintentional failure to communicate.

Current theories of worker silence, however, are limited in their capacity to explain silencing in algorithmically managed labor for three key reasons. First, they typically assume the presence of human managers who serve as potential recipients of voice (Donaghey et al., 2011), whereas algorithmic HRM generally removes these human intermediaries entirely (Dasgupta et al., 2025). Second, existing theories tend to focus on the cultural or psychological factors influencing silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000), rather than technological constraints that make voice structurally challenging or impossible. Third, the scholarship on silence to date overlooks the unique role of third-party actors, such as customers and restaurants, who perform critical evaluative functions in platform-mediated work (Duggan et al., 2023). This is especially prevalent in food-delivery app-work, where the lack of traditional employment relationships and protections may leave workers particularly vulnerable to negative repercussions for voicing concerns within algorithmic HRM systems.

Critiquing research on worker silence and highlighting its conceptual weakness, stemming from a purely unitarist perspective that subscribes to silence as a behavioral choice, Donaghey et al. (2011) argued that such an approach risks overlooking the significant role of the organization and management in actively shaping and perpetuating silence among workforces. Management, through various mechanisms such as agenda-setting and the establishment of organizational structures to create a non-union workplace (Dundon & Gollan, 2007) have effectively perpetuated silence on a range of issues, thereby excluding workers from the voice process (Donaghey et al., 2011; Fletcher & Watson, 2007). Indeed, Allen and Tuselmann (2009) argue that managers play an important role in determining what can and cannot be addressed by voice mechanisms, with silence subsequently arising from management's efforts to intimidate, confine, and enclose the voice process. However, this approach has also been criticized for its managerial bias, which can overshadow the power dynamics and conflicting interests inherent in an employment relationship (Heery, 2024).

Therefore, to fully understand worker silence, it might be crucial to shift the analytical focus towards also examining how management structures influence worker silence within specific organizational contexts (Oyetunde et al., 2026). We note this is particularly salient in the context of algorithmic HRM and app-work, where the management function is increasingly performed by technological systems, thereby reducing opportunities for almost any direct interaction (Kougiannou & Mendonça, 2021). Subscribing to Donaghey et al. (2011) arguments for extending conceptualizations of worker silence to emphasize the active role of management/organizations in strategically structuring silence and potentially limiting the scope of worker voice, our study unpacks the deployment of algorithmic HRM in platform work in relation to the exclusion and subordination of workers from the realm of discussion and co-determination.

Algorithmic control and management

In various ways, algorithmic HRM fundamentally alters our understanding of workplace management by determining protocols, dictating rules and guidelines, making decisions, and recommending specific actions for workers (Kellogg et al., 2020). As such, once the rules are set and algorithmic HRM is deployed, it can be argued as being akin to 'locked doors' (Pentland & Feldman, 2008, p.242) and will shape - either by enabling or constraining - worker behavior accordingly (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023). These mechanisms combine to form a strategic system of HRM, at once limiting the information that app-workers can access, placing incentives on compliance, and pressuring individuals to treat offers or prompts as commands (Keegan & Meijerink, 2023).

Many actors in traditional work contexts - with more direct, human managerial oversight - can opt or attempt to ignore policies, practices, and procedures. However, this is less straightforward in app-work, where managerial oversight is more opaque and less negotiable. In app-work, algorithms are used to compute rules and then set and assign work, in addition to directing, evaluating, and rewarding workers systematically (Kellogg et al., 2020; McDonnell et al., 2021). This becomes highly relevant to the deployment and use of algorithmic HRM by OLPs, where the design of the algorithmic system itself can act as a powerful mechanism for agenda-setting, determining what information is collected, how it is used, and what issues workers can raise (Kougiannou & Mendonça, 2021).

In algorithmic HRM, silencing may be exacerbated by the opacity of algorithmic decision-making processes, making it difficult for workers to understand how and why their voice is, or is not, being heard (Donaghey et al., 2011). This is particularly problematic in app-work, where algorithmic control can be highly pervasive and may limit workers' ability to challenge management decisions (Kougiannou & Mendonça, 2021). Likewise, algorithmic HRM can be designed in ways that constrain worker input and prioritize certain types of information (e.g., performance metrics) over others (e.g., worker grievances). Additionally, the literature often overlooks the fact that silence can be expedient for management, and that workers may have valid reasons for remaining silent, such as distrust or self-preservation (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). This is critical to consider in algorithmic contexts too, where workers may strategically withhold information to navigate algorithmic systems or protect their interests. Hence, although there is much potential for business value in algorithmic HRM (see Schildt, 2020), concerns around ethics, rights and dignity at work remain (Kellogg et al., 2020; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021).

The role of third-party actors

The presence and role of third-party, non-organizational actors in app-work represents a particularly underdeveloped aspect of both the worker silence and algorithmic HRM literatures. Unlike traditional employment arrangements where voice typically involves a direct worker-manager dynamic, app-work creates triangular or even quadrangular relationships between workers, OLPs, customers, and restaurants (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). This complex relational network fundamentally transforms silence dynamics by dispersing evaluative authority across multiple actors.

In food-delivery app-work, customers and restaurants effectively become extensions of the algorithmic HRM system through their ratings

and feedback, which directly impact worker evaluations and task allocations (Duggan et al., 2023). This creates a form of silencing which is both distributed and enforced - wherein multiple actors collectively contribute to constraining worker voice, often without explicit coordination or awareness of their role in the silencing process. For example, potential errors or mistakes made by restaurants - such as an incorrect order for a customer - can result in workers being held responsible for rectifying such errors, often with little recourse to complain about these injustices (Goods et al., 2019). Hence, understanding the distributed and enforced nature of silencing is critical for developing a comprehensive conceptualization of voice in algorithmically managed environments.

The pervasive role of non-organizational actors in the working relationship is central to the operation of algorithmic HRM and offers a key distinction compared to how HRM is traditionally enacted. OLPs are reliant on other parties to institute HRM activities and direct and control worker behavior (Duggan et al., 2023). Most obvious in this regard is the prominent role of customers and/or restaurants in providing the underlying data for OLPs, which is processed *via* the algorithmic HRM decision-making system (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023). Customers are typically asked to provide ratings and reviews for the service provided by the worker, which in turn generates the data that drives the OLP's HRM algorithm (Duggan et al., 2023). Thus, non-organizational actors have an especially prominent role in shaping the app-work relationship and the experiences of workers; whether knowingly or unwittingly.

Methodology

Our research employs a qualitative study of the food-delivery sector – one of the most prominent areas of the gig economy – to explore how algorithmic HRM systems contribute to the silencing process in app-work. We focused on food-delivery workers due to the sector's distinctive analytical advantages for understanding voice and silence in algorithmically managed environments. Critically, food-delivery work involves a complex quadrangular relationship – OLPs, workers, customers, and restaurants – which introduces an additional layer of complexity compared to the triangular relationships in services like ride-hailing. This allows us to examine how multiple external stakeholders participate in silencing processes and how their potentially conflicting interests shape workers' voice opportunities (Dasgupta et al., 2025). Additionally, the work involves distinctive operational contingencies (e.g., variable wait times, navigation, food-quality preservation) that make voice critical but also challenging, potentially conflicting with algorithmic performance expectations. Finally, food-delivery

work occurs in public spaces, rendering workers highly visible yet isolated – a paradoxical condition that creates a unique voice/silence dynamic.

Data collection

We conducted a total of 32 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with food-delivery workers across three leading OLPs. The sampling focused on workers who were active with at least one of these OLPs and had been so for at least three months. Participants were recruited using a multi-tiered strategy, which was primarily purposive and opportunistic in nature (Patton, 2015), consisting of street intercepts (Herzog, 2012), online participant recruitment (Mendelson, 2007), and snowball sampling techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This involved recruitment across several international contexts, primarily in major cities in Ireland, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. The street-intercept technique was the most used recruitment tool in this study, as it enabled randomized and enhanced access to hard-to-reach segments of the population in a safe manner. This was particularly effective when sampling food-delivery app-workers, as the technique allowed for the indiscriminate selection of all those actively engaged in these duties in a particular urban area. Across our sample, 44% of workers indicated that they were multi-homing (i.e., working on multiple OLPs simultaneously and interchangeably). Full participant characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Our multi-site approach across three major OLPs and four countries serves to enhance the depth of our findings, and to provide a more holistic picture of the algorithmic HRM practices found in food-delivery OLPs. While OLPs inevitably possess platform-specific nuances (Veen et al., 2025), the core algorithmic HRM practices studied were structurally consistent across our sample of food-delivery OLPs. These shared high-level practices include dynamic job allocation and scheduling, real-time performance monitoring and ratings driven by third-party stakeholders (customers and restaurants), and automated, non-human communication channels for all support and dispute resolution. The consequences of these, and other practices, lead us to conclude that worker silencing in food-delivery app-work is an inevitable consequence of the use of algorithmic mechanisms.

Data analysis

All interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission and stored in accordance with ethical protocols. The first author transcribed

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

Identifier	Age	Gender	Multi-homing	Location
FD01	20	M	No	Ireland
FD02	44	F	No	Ireland
FD03	22	M	Yes	Ireland
FD04	25	M	Yes	Ireland
FD05	28	M	No	Ireland
FD06	30	M	Yes	Ireland
FD07	37	M	Yes	Ireland
FD08	41	M	Yes	United Kingdom
FD09	30	F	No	United Kingdom
FD10	27	M	Yes	Ireland
FD11	32	M	No	Ireland
FD12	22	F	Yes	Ireland
FD13	29	M	Yes	Ireland
FD14	31	M	Yes	United Kingdom
FD15	38	M	No	United Kingdom
FD16	45	M	No	United Kingdom
FD17	28	F	No	Ireland
FD18	34	M	No	Ireland
FD19	26	M	Yes	Ireland
FD20	28	M	No	Ireland
FD21	26	M	No	Ireland
FD22	27	M	No	Netherlands
FD23	23	M	Yes	Netherlands
FD24	30	M	Yes	Ireland
FD25	32	M	No	Netherlands
FD26	40	F	No	Netherlands
FD27	22	M	No	Ireland
FD28	36	M	Yes	Netherlands
FD29	21	M	No	Ireland
FD30	28	F	Yes	Ireland
FD31	20	M	No	Ireland
FD32	27	M	No	Ireland

all interviews, which helped with immersion in the richness of the data and re-experiencing each participant's recollections. Interviews were anonymized and identified with a code throughout (e.g., FD01 refers to food-delivery interviewee #1, and so on). The analytical process was led by the first author, who wrote numerous brief notes and memos to document the choices made and to further develop insights. The remaining four authors then engaged in blind, secondary coding of a sample of transcripts to ensure inter-coder consistency. Finally, all four authors jointly reviewed coding procedures, discussed ambiguous codes, and then made agreed refinements to categories and themes (Mäntymäki et al., 2019).

The data were analyzed in NVivo (software) using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), complemented by Vaughan's (1992) theory elaboration approach. Thematic analysis aims to present the meaning and experience that addresses the reality of each individual by identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theory elaboration occurs when pre-existing conceptual ideas drive a study's design, providing a basis for developing new theoretical

insights by contrasting, specifying, or structuring theoretical constructs to account for and explain empirical observations (Fisher & Aguinis, 2017). Underpinning this approach is the recognition that many theories used by contemporary management researchers were formulated several decades ago, and that the recent forces of change and fragmentation in the employment landscape subsequently seem to restrict theory advancement (Pfeffer, 2013; Suddaby et al., 2011). Accordingly, theory elaboration fosters the development, expansion, and tightening of existing theoretical ideas.

As in the case of algorithmic HRM and app-work, the emergence of a new research context or the transformation of an existing context offers a fruitful opportunity for theory elaboration (Fisher & Aguinis, 2017; Vaughan, 1992). Given the prevalence of multi-homing among platform workers, the decision was made to analyze data across the sector as a whole, rather than by individual OLPs. In doing so, this study offers the ability to construct a more inclusive, well-rounded account of the commonalities and divergences of food-delivery app-workers' experiences of organizational silencing, thereby aligning with the principles of the theory elaboration approach (Vaughan, 1992).

The data were analyzed inductively using first-order or open coding, which involved labelling each line of data with a descriptive code that captures its theme and using *in-vivo* codes (i.e. participants' own words) whenever feasible. Simultaneously, as per Vaughan's (1992) approach, open codes were used to consider similarities and differences across the entire data set, and to draw connections to previous research and theory. This process allowed for concept- and data-driven development of initial first-order codes, informed by existing literature on worker silence and algorithmic HRM. New codes were also developed from an iterative process, where we aimed to remain open and alert to additional emerging themes (Schafheitle et al., 2020). Following this, second-order categories were established by systematically combining initial codes with similar content to detect consistent and overarching themes. During the final stage of analysis, we refined our themes, identifying relevant similarities and comparisons where appropriate (Mäntymäki et al., 2019). A more detailed overview of the coding process, along with sample interview excerpts, is illustrated in Table 2.

Findings

Our analysis reveals that algorithmic HRM systematically constrains worker voice by fostering organizational silencing, where workers are prevented from expressing concerns or contributing input about their work and how it is designed. However, in contrast to traditional

Table 2. Summary of coding and theme development.

First-Order Codes	Second-Order Categories	Aggregate Themes	Sample Interview Excerpts
- *Feeling isolated* - *Lack of supervisors/colleagues* - *Limited support structures* - *Struggling in roles* - *Low earnings*	*Experiences of Isolation and Vulnerability*	***Silencing Arising from Lack of Human Managerial Representatives***	*"You feel very isolated and alone, and I know it probably sounds like the opposite, like it should be empowering, but the job is too, like, unstable and just too low brow to ever feel that way." (FD09)*
- *Lack of concern by OLP* - *OLP is hands-off* - *Workers feeling devalued* - *Limited communication channels* - *Lack of belonging / no links to OLP*	*Perceived Organizational Disregard and Lack of Engagement*		*"It sounds dramatic but to be honest it's a constant struggle to just survive in the job. The pay isn't great, the conditions aren't great, the whole experience just isn't great, and [the OLP] is, well, they're just not there, you know? They don't care at all, and they don't get involved with you in any way" (FD14)*
- *Inflexibility of work* - *Pressurized nature of work* - *Undisputable decisions* - *Workers feeling stressed or detaching* - *Difficult to succeed*	*Challenges in Navigating Work and Feelings of Powerlessness*		
- *Importance of customer feedback and ratings* - *OLPs prioritize customer feedback* - *Delays or grievances with restaurants* - *Workers punished for issues with customers and/or restaurants*	*External Actor Influence of Algorithmic HRM Control*	***Silencing Arising from the Presence and Role of Third-Party Actors***	*"You know, people complain a lot about [the OLP], about the takeaways and the restaurants and the staff and the customers. And sometimes I sort of think, you know, is it really this bad? Why are you complaining all the time? Because it's exhausting to live that like. But then other times I can feel the same way about it and I can sort of see where those workers are coming from." (FD15)*
- *Workers unable to contest or dispute ratings* - *Poor transparency re. performance ratings/metrics* - *Workers' lack of voice in raising issues* - *Lack of formal channels for redress with OLP*	*Asymmetrical Power Dynamics and Lack of Redress*		*"I'd usually wait until I'm far into the journey to drop-off the food to the customer before telling the app that I've left the restaurant, and you know, for the app and the tracking algorithms, that makes it look like I'm really fast, you know, really speedy and efficient at getting the job done. So yeah, again, I think it's like the longer you do the job, the better you get as being clever and smart at how you work, and I suppose that happens in every job, you learn the ropes and you learn how to be good at it." (FD08)*
- *Collective knowledge-sharing among workers* - *Blacklisting of restaurants* - *Forming strategic connections with restaurants*	*Informal Worker Responses to Third-Party Pressures*		*"People don't want to go into certain areas of [the city] because the conditions there are bad or it's too busy or too dangerous…And so, yeah, that's a big one, in my time doing this I've seen that become a bigger issue, you know, orders from certain restaurants are basically blacklisted because of how badly they treat riders." (FD15)*

(*Continued*)

Table 2. Continued.

- *One-sided interactions with OLP* - *Needing to follow algorithm's rules* - *Inability to question decisions or provide feedback*	*Algorithmic Control and Suppression of Worker Voice*	***Silencing Arising from the Design and Automation of Working Arrangements***	*"The interaction is very, uh, one-sided, I think that's probably how I'd describe it. They sort of send the orders and I deal with them, there's not really any back and forth or, you know, any interaction between us. And you know, that's how it is, and I guess that's how they have to do it, they have technology and bots and algorithms that handle everything in an automatic, automated sort of way. But that means you're always on the receiving end of the algorithm's rules that you just have to follow. There's no negotiation about that – like I said, it just is what it is and you either accept that or else, well, you'd have to quit, basically." (FD07)* *"The way it works is that the system makes it seem like we have a choice about accepting each order, as in it'll sort of present the job to you as an offer and you can choose to accept it or decline it, so it makes it seem like you're this, I don't know, like a free agent who can pick and choose. But all the jobs are basically the same thing and they're all worth pretty much the same money." (FD06)* *"Some of my friends had already been doing it for a while before me so I think I had an advantage when I started and I knew that if you just did what your phone tells you to do, you probably won't do very well or make a lot of money in the job. There's all different tricks that people have come up with…all of that sort of boosts your scores on the app and it can help you to get more orders." (FD13)*
- *Lack of understanding of design and organization of work* - *Automated communications and responses* - *Limited autonomy in navigating role*	*Algorithmic HRM as Opaque and Restrictive*		
- *Treating work as a 'game'* - *Setting boundaries* - *Manipulate the app* - *Timing activities to improve performance metrics*	*Worker Resignation and Strategic Navigation*		

organizational silencing which often stems from cultural norms or managerial practices, our findings indicate that silencing in app-work is structurally embedded within the technological architecture of algorithmic HRM systems, which serves as a hidden proxy for the organizational agenda. Participants consistently described experiencing what we term 'enforced silence', extending Van Dyne et al. (2003) typology of silence behaviours to conceptualize for an alternate scenario where the organization overrides employee volition, recasting silence from a 'motivated' act to an outcome produced by organizational structures (Donaghey et al., 2011), or, in our case, the technological architecture of algorithmic HRM systems. In effect, we claim that individual motives underpinning acquiescent, defensive and prosocial silence, which are understood as behavioral choices grounded in worker/employee agency, may be displaced, reframing silence as a structural phenomenon. In our findings, we note this is produced by the limited access to human managerial representation, unique presence and role of third-party actors in the labor process, and technical design and digitization of working arrangements that prevent workers' ability to exercise voice. This enforced silence manifests through what Dundon and Gollan (2007) describe as a deliberately restrictive voice architecture that determines how, when, and whether workers can express concerns or influence decisions affecting their work, but also where algorithmic HRM can be seen as recreating and advancing the organizational agenda of sustaining a 'non-union workplace'. The themes below delineate how enforced silence is generated and subsequently experienced by our participants.

Theme 1: Silencing arising from the lack of human managerial representation

The first theme to emerge from our analysis highlights how, within the studied contexts, algorithmic HRM enables OLPs to strategically minimize human managerial representation. This illustrates the structurally imposed isolation of workers who are cut off from traditional voice intermediaries such as supervisors or colleagues, demonstrating how technology enables OLPs to control a workforce at scale while deliberately maintaining a highly restrictive voice architecture. Workers in our study described feeling *'very isolated'* (FD09) and explained that *'the job is very much just you and you alone'* (FD07). Elaborating on this, one participant detailed the uniquely isolating nature of their role, and the subsequent struggles that accompany this solitude:

> From day one, you're on your own, it's just me and the app and you can't ask a supervisor or another colleague for help, or you can't even ask them a question or run something past them, so yeah, that's definitely been a less enjoyable part of the job. (FD09)

Describing their experience as an app-worker as *'pretty bleak'* (FD07), workers were clear that they felt that the OLP was *'very unconcerned about me, very distant from me and my experience of working for them'* (FD07). Several participants shared similar sentiments of feeling devalued and disposable, noting that OLPs seemingly *'don't care at all and don't get involved with you in any way'* (FD14), and explaining that they did not expect the OLP to be *'so hands off'* (FD09). Detailing their experience, the participant below starkly describes how the lack of human managerial representation impacts on them:

> It's like I'm nothing; I feel like I'm at the bottom of the pile, to be honest. After two years of doing any job, you'd be expected to have some roots there, you know? Just to feel like it's something you know fairly well and something you feel confident about, but that's not the case at all and I don't think that could be the case even if I was doing this for 5 years. (FD14)

The isolation described by participants is further underscored by the economic and emotional challenges encountered by these workers. Describing how ongoing *'cuts to our earnings'* (FD09) have made it *'a constant struggle to just survive in the job'* (FD14), the interview data suggests that algorithmic HRM further diminishes worker voice by embedding an enduring sense of isolation and vulnerability. Workers' descriptions – from feeling *'very distant'* (FD07) to witnessing the system *'hide stuff from us'* (FD01) – underscore a pervasive atmosphere where individual concerns are routinely silenced by an omnipresent algorithm and without the ability to consult with management or colleagues. One participant noted how the hands-off management style enabled by algorithmic HRM made it difficult to succeed: *'I have found it difficult, and I still do, to kind of navigate my way through the work and really trying to actually do well and succeed'* (FD09).

In navigating these concerns, some workers explained how they *'detach'* (FD02) from the job, because *'it's not healthy to get that stressed over a job like this'* (FD02). As workers repeatedly encountered unresponsive communication channels, undisputable penalties, and an ever-intensifying pressure to deliver, many described a similar slide into resignation. Over time, they came to view their powerlessness as an inherent feature of app-work. One participant candidly stated:

> At first, I used to complain all the time. Now I don't bother. It's just how the app works – you can't change it. (FD03)

Additionally, several workers described how informal group chats in their respective locations formed a mechanism to overcome some of the isolation experienced by workers. Participants described these communication channels - which were entirely worker-led and open to workers

from various food-delivery OLPs - as *'an outlet for all of us to talk about the problems we have'* (FD07), with workers typically sharing *'a lot of tips and advice'* (FD08).

Interestingly, some participants also described using these channels to coordinate activities with fellow workers, typically with the goal of *'beating the system'* (FD08) by *'manipulating the app so that you're able to make more money or get more orders'* (FD08). While acknowledging that such activities are *'not really a big deal for [the OLP]'* (FD07), it remains a meaningful demonstration of workers' shared frustrations and grievances in the absence of formal voice mechanisms:

> They try to add everyone into it, but I wouldn't say it's very, like, active or anything…there's probably a comforting element in that because you see that everyone's going through the same situations with the app and with restaurants and with payments. (FD07)

Such networks thus served a dual purpose; first, by providing emotional support for workers who felt isolated and silenced by algorithmic HRM, and second, by offering practical guidance on how to navigate algorithmic constraints. The isolation and lack of voice opportunities described in this theme are further compounded by the role of external actors in the algorithmic HRM system, as we explore in the next section.

Theme 2: Silencing arising from the presence and role of third-party actors

Despite receiving relatively little attention in existing research on algorithmic HRM, customers and restaurants emerged as significant non-organizational stakeholders in the food-delivery app-work ecosystem who reinforce or occasionally alleviate organizational silencing. The algorithmic HRM system's heavy reliance on user input means that customers effectively become extensions of managerial control, intensifying worker vulnerability, shaping performance evaluations, and limiting opportunities for redress. At the same time, a small but notable subset of partner restaurants offered supportive gestures, demonstrating the potential for these third parties to mitigate certain silencing effects.

Beginning with customers, our findings indicate that the algorithmic HRM system creates a notable asymmetry by heavily weighting customer feedback and ratings. This structure inherently positions the customer's voice as absolute, with OLPs typically *'always believe[ing] the customer'* (FD10). This means customers *'can just leave a bad review for any reason'* (FD10), with workers rarely having any opportunity to contest or dispute such reviews, resulting in a broken accountability loop where negative customer feedback *'counts against you…even if you explain what happened'* (FD10), and contributing to *'not a great environment or a great*

feeling to have' (FD07). With customer feedback and complaints seemingly being taken at face value by the OLPs in our sample, this potentially results in penalties being issued – sometimes immediately – for workers. One participant recalled such a scenario:

> A customer complained that the food was cold, but I had been waiting at the restaurant for something like 20 minutes or more because they were busy and it wasn't ready. I told the customer about it, but they still complained and the app just immediately dropped my rating for delivery times and punctuality, no questions asked. (FD04)

The excerpt above illustrates that customers' complaints not only affect worker evaluations but also deepen the sense of being unheard given the structural absence of credible channels to question these sanctions. Participants' firm belief that OLPs prioritize the customer's perspective underscores the asymmetry: the customer seemingly has an uncontested voice, while the worker is denied the opportunity for response or redress. This sentiment also reflects a broader culture of blame within algorithmic HRM systems, where accountability for service quality rarely extends beyond the individual worker.

Moving onto the role of partner restaurants, our findings suggest that these actors can play a similar role to customers in perpetuating organizational silencing, particularly where restaurant delays or errors may negatively impact worker performance and ratings. For example, one participant described how if the restaurant *'messes up the order'* (FD02) or *'makes you wait'* (FD02) beyond the algorithmically determined waiting time, *'it's still your fault in the app's eyes'* (FD02). In this scenario, workers shoulder the consequences for operational or service delays that lie outside their control. According to some participants, even when they attempt to highlight a restaurant's role in a late or incorrect delivery, this is not accurately or fairly reflected within the algorithmic HRM system, leaving workers feeling voiceless and facing potential penalties:

> You can try to report it as a long waiting time, but nothing changes except the restaurant gets pinged that you've reported them as being late while you're still literally standing there waiting. (FD02)

According to our sample, these tensions and potential flaws in the algorithmic HRM system contributed to a broader culture of distrust between workers and restaurants. For example, participants described that certain restaurants become known for treating couriers poorly, noting that workers *'don't like certain restaurants or certain staff in certain restaurants because they've been treated badly there, or they're always left waiting for ages for the orders'* (FD15). In more extreme cases, this distrust can result in collective knowledge-sharing among workers and the potential blacklisting of problematic restaurants:

> Orders from certain restaurants are basically blacklisted because of how badly they treat riders, so they will literally spread the word and say, oh, [this restaurant] was being a pain […] today or the staff were rude or whatever, and the rest of us will sort of try to avoid or just not take any orders from [this restaurant] because of how they've treated us. (FD15)

Such acts of non-conformity demonstrate that, while the algorithmic HRM system may silence workers at an official level, they may still find ways to communicate grievances and protect themselves. Nonetheless, the need for worker-driven tactics also highlights the absence of formal channels for redress within OLPs, leaving individuals to rely on ad hoc, collective efforts to avoid challenging or undesirable situations.

More positively, despite these challenges, a handful of participants described supportive experiences with partner restaurants that actively shielded workers from operational delays or undue blame. One participant shared an example of their positive encounters with a popular restaurant:

> There's one restaurant I deliver for a lot, so I know the staff pretty well and they always let me know if there's a delay or they'd try to prioritize my order so that I don't have to wait too long. (FD12)

Despite being rare within our sample, such examples indicate that restaurants can potentially serve as a counterbalance to the silencing mechanisms fostered by the OLP. Acknowledging and recognising the worker's perspective, or simply clarifying the source of a delay, can '*make a big difference*' (FD12) for workers, not only to prevent unjust downgrades in ratings, but also to foster a degree of mutual respect by feeling like '*someone else is on your side*' (FD12).

Theme 3: Silencing arising from the design and digitization of working arrangements

The final key theme to emerge relates to the impact of algorithmic HRM in designing and digitizing the app-work arrangement, and the subsequent implications for organizational silencing. The automated communication systems deployed by the OLPs in our sample are similar to what Donaghey et al. (2011) identified as structures of silence, wherein organizational mechanisms systematically exclude workers from decision-making processes. One worker articulated their experience of this silencing when describing the algorithmic HRM system's hidden operations:

> I would say I felt, uh, I think I would say annoyed or maybe angry or just fed up with the work a lot of the time. You start to see the way things work behind the scenes…, just sort of making sure we keep quiet and do what we're told and don't question anything. (FD01)

This sense of speaking into an algorithmic void represents what Pinder and Harlos (2001) termed 'quiescent silence', where individuals perceive that speaking up is futile due to structural constraints. The experience was further reinforced by the '*one-sided*' (FD07) nature of communications, where '*there's not really any back and forth*' (FD07), but rather the worker is '*always on the receiving end of the algorithm's rules that you just have to follow*' (FD07), and '*there's no negotiation about that*' (FD07).

Another dimension of silencing arises from the opaque nature of algorithmic HRM. Workers repeatedly expressed frustration over not understanding how performance ratings, pay structures, or disciplinary actions were determined. This opacity forces workers into a dynamic where they are expected to conform without recourse. While OLP interfaces provide continuous, step-by-step operational guidance, this conspicuously avoids providing clarity on the intricate details of the systems used to manage performance and remuneration:

> In a way, it makes things straightforward and takes a lot of the guesswork out of the process when you're starting off but after a while it's not needed really because you know what you're doing but it's still telling you everything as if it's your very first delivery. (FD29)

Similarly, workers also reported that their autonomy is often restricted or constrained by algorithmic HRM features. For example, while workers might seemingly '*have a choice about accepting each order…like a free agent who can pick and choose*' (FD06), the reality is that '*all the jobs are basically the same thing and they're all worth pretty much the same money*' (FD06), meaning workers '*have to take what you get if you want to earn anything*' (FD06). Hence, the underlying pressures created by the algorithmic HRM system leave workers with little room to maneuver.

The lack of clarity regarding the algorithm's rules and functions, combined with the subtle disciplinary interface tactics, only deepened workers' sense of disempowerment. This pressure is frequently manifested through coercive prompts within the platform's interface that enforce acquiescence, as one participant captured when discussing the pressure to accept orders:

> There are times when I really question the fairness of the system…The pressure to accept these orders can be intense – it's not just the notifications constantly coming through, but the way the app seems designed to make you feel bad for saying no. If you reject an order, it doesn't just go away; sometimes, it'll pop up again with this message to ask, kind of in a disciplinary tone, like, 'Are you sure you want to reject this order?' It feels like you're being heavily pushed to take these orders, even when the risks or the payout just don't make sense. (FD30)

Similar sentiments were shared by most participants in our sample, who described the '*frustration and anger and just a sense of being annoyed*

at the whole system of work, just how it's designed and managed and organized' (FD08). For example, one participant recalled experiencing technical glitches with the app, along with the subsequent lack of opportunity to contest or correct the algorithmic decision that was issued because of this technical glitch:

> There was one time the app froze in the middle of a job, and I couldn't mark the delivery as done. I lost a load of time fixing it, and they deducted my pay for being late. I complained through the chat, but they just sent back an automatic message. (FD07)

Thus, on the surface, while the chat functionality gives workers an illusion that they can raise concerns through this channel, in practice and as experienced by workers, the interaction tends to be one way, through a pre-scripted message which depersonalizes the interaction. Also, the opacity of such automated processes leaves workers feeling that they have little control over their circumstances or any means to rectify perceived injustices. Consequently, many workers in our sample described feeling a sense of resignation about their roles, often entailing an emotional distancing from the job that allowed workers to continue without constantly dwelling on or confronting the system's apparent injustices. For instance, one participant described treating their role as a game, explaining that '*you do what the app tells you, and you don't think about it too much*' (FD11), adding that '*if something goes wrong, you just take the hit and move on*' (FD11). Such accounts underscore how resignation is simultaneously a reaction to and a further entrenchment of organizational silence. By no longer attempting to challenge decisions, workers effectively concede to the OLPs' authority, even as they remain acutely aware of its flaws.

Despite the silencing pressures of algorithmic HRM, many food-delivery app-workers described a range of strategies – both individual and collective – that enabled them to navigate the system. These coping mechanisms illustrate how workers learn to '*play the game*' (FD13) and, in some cases, unite with others to counter unfair practices and reclaim control over their immediate working conditions. This ranged from '*setting some boundaries for yourself…[by] actively moving away from just going along with everything [the OLP] told me to do*' (FD07), to developing personal tactics or competencies that allowed them to '*manipulate the app*' (FD08) and subsequently boost their performance metrics and earnings. For example, one participant highlighted the importance of timing updates so that the algorithm registers faster delivery times and performance:

> I'd usually wait until I'm far into the journey to drop-off the food to the customer before telling the app that I've left the restaurant, and you know, for the app and

> the tracking algorithms, that makes it look like I'm really fast, you know, really speedy and efficient at getting the job done. (FD08)

Overall, our findings suggest that app-workers have developed a multi-layered repertoire of coping strategies in response to the silencing pressures of algorithmic HRM. They continually navigate, negotiate, and sometimes actively oppose various constraints imposed by automated decision-making. While these underground tactics do not always dismantle the silencing experienced by workers, they nonetheless offer glimpses of worker agency and resilience within an otherwise isolating and impersonal system. Even when workers seemingly have a choice, the structural constraints imposed by the broader algorithmic HRM system across our sample mean that real voice opportunities are largely illusory. This evidence suggests that organizational silencing in algorithmic HRM is not merely a byproduct of technological mediation, but rather a deliberate mechanism that reinforces worker precarity, fragmentation, and ultimately marginalizes the very voices that are most in need of representation.

Discussion

Our findings focus on the consequences of algorithmic HRM in food-delivery app-work, revealing that these technologies fundamentally shape worker voice and silence in this unique work context. By examining how food-delivery app-workers experience and navigate organizational silencing, we develop a more nuanced understanding of voice and silence dynamics in algorithmically managed environments. Informed by our empirical findings, we present a conceptual framework which illustrates how algorithmic HRM enforces organizational silencing in food-delivery app-work (see Figure 1). This framework maps how algorithmic HRM generates organizational silencing through three key mechanisms: (1) the lack of human managerial contact, which isolates workers and removes traditional voice intermediaries; (2) the influence of third-party actors who reinforce silencing through ratings and operational interactions; and (3) the design and digitization of work arrangements, which create one-sided communication channels and opaque decision-making processes. These mechanisms intersect to produce enforced silencing, which manifests in workers' inability to contest decisions and their exclusion from decision-making processes, given the lack of genuine and meaningful voice channels. The framework further captures workers' reactions to silencing – frustration, helplessness, detachment, and eventual resignation – involving various individual and collective coping strategies they develop to navigate these constraints.

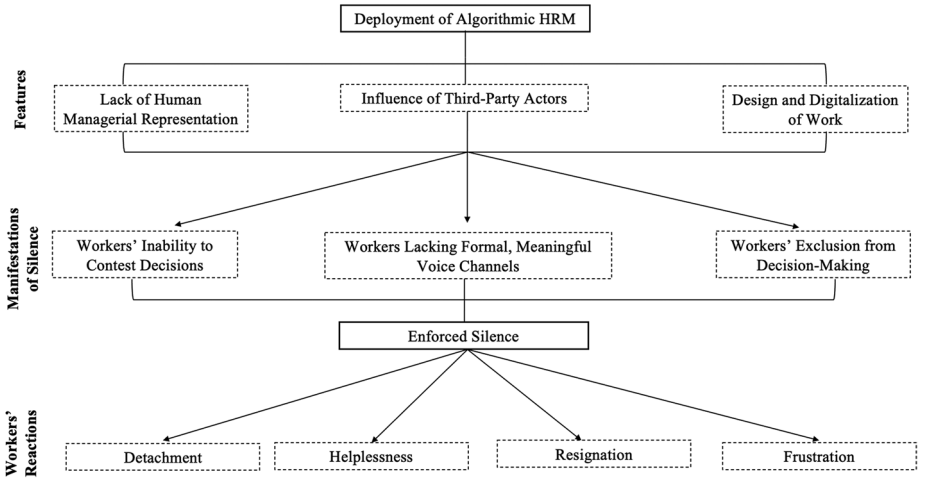


Figure 1. Structure and impact of algorithmic HRM on organizational silencing in food-delivery app-work.

Theoretical implications

While previous research has conceptualized organizational silencing primarily as a behavioural phenomenon (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne et al., 2003), our findings reveal how algorithmic HRM enables organizations to implement a more fundamental form of silencing that becomes structurally embedded through technological design. This enforced silencing – the systematic constraint of worker voice through deliberately designed technological architecture – builds on Donaghey et al. (2011) argument that silence is not merely a product of individual choice but can be actively structured by the organization.

Critically, algorithmic HRM provides organizations with unprecedented capability to enforce such silencing at scale without traditional managerial oversight. Therefore, while technology can also produce certain affordances and constraints through its material features (Doherty et al., 2006), the silencing we observed is not necessarily an inherent feature of the technology. Rather, we suggest that it reflects organizational design choices about how algorithmic systems are configured and deployed. OLPs may deliberately choose to create voice-restrictive architectures whilst maintaining algorithmic control mechanisms, demonstrating that enforced silencing represents a strategic organizational decision. Importantly, our findings suggest that enforced silencing in food-delivery app-work may be strategic, produced by what Duggan et al. (2023) term algorithmic HRM control mechanisms. These mechanisms limit worker voice and encourage silence, generating compliance and in turn enabling OLPs to maintain operational standardization and efficiency while parallelly minimizing the administrative costs associated with managing and

maintaining voice mechanisms or dealing with human feedback and grievances (Kaufman, 2015; Willman et al., 2007).

Unlike traditional organizational contexts where voice suppression often results from managerial intimidation, organizational anti-union agendas, and cultural dynamics, the deployment of algorithmic HRM in OLPs displaces organizational accountability by creating a silence architecture that manifests through automated communication channels, the removal of human intermediaries, algorithmic performance evaluation, and the structural isolation of workers (Keegan & Meijerink, 2025; McDonnell et al., 2021). These elements combine to create a work environment where silence is not simply encouraged but is structurally enforced through technical design, seemingly representing a deliberate and proactive managerial choice. This form of enforced silencing extends existing silence typologies (e.g., (ac)quiescent, defensive, prosocial; see Pinder & Harlos, 2001 and Van Dyne et al., 2003) and builds on Donaghey et al. (2011) description of situations where management actively prevents workers from speaking up through direct intervention (e.g., disciplining those who raise concerns). Our study extends this by highlighting that algorithmic HRM enables the organizational agenda to be executed at a more fundamental architectural level. Here, workers are systemically and structurally prevented from exercising voice regardless of their individual motivations or intentions - which extant typologies have focused on. Instead, this enforced silence represents a broader 'market driven', supply-demand logic around voice, where voice channels may be purposefully designed to be rudimentary and for instrumental purposes rather than to facilitate authentic dialogue or elicit feedback (Gegenhuber et al., 2021).

Our analysis also uncovers a fundamental tension in app-work in how workers are systematically denied the voice mechanisms necessary to influence work conditions, despite often seemingly being promised formal autonomy and independence. This demonstrates how the technological architecture of algorithmic HRM combines with the independent contractor legal classification to produce a fundamental limitation of agency. This tension speaks to Hirschman's (1970) Exit-Voice-Loyalty framework by demonstrating how OLPs simultaneously constrain both exit and voice options. While workers maintain abstract freedom to exit (stop working), the economic dependence and precarity reported by some of our participants render this option impractical (Schor et al., 2020). Simultaneously, voice options are deliberately constructed to be mutable (Gegenhuber et al., 2021) and technologically constrained through automated communication channels and algorithmic control features. This structural limitation leaves acquiescence, or more accurately, enforced silence, as the primary available response, representing a constrained form of loyalty

despite the narratives of worker freedom. This tension also challenges traditional conceptualizations of worker voice by highlighting that the absence of formal voice mechanisms is not incidental but is legally legitimized by the independent contractor classification (Dasgupta et al., 2025; Hyman, 2016), while algorithmic control simultaneously ensures practical subordination and compliance with organizational directives.

Despite the systemic constraints of enforced silencing, our findings contain crucial evidence of worker agency and resilience. While the technological architecture is designed to enforce silence and promote compliance, the data hints at underlying forms of resistance and tactical non-compliance that prevent complete acquiescence. App-workers are not passive recipients of algorithmic HRM control, but active agents who develop innovative strategies to reclaim voice and navigate silencing mechanisms. These strategies reveal a form of algorithmic voice reclamation which captures the deliberate efforts of workers to create, amplify, or protect voice opportunities within algorithmically-managed environments.

Of important note, however, and representing an underexplored dynamic, is how worker silence is influenced by third-party, non-organizational actors within these work arrangements. As our findings have shown, app-workers – particularly in the food-delivery sector – may experience an indirect pressure to remain silent as these external actors are not merely peripheral to the workflow but are instead central to the functioning and success of the OLP (McDonnell et al., 2021). This is evident by the design and deployment of algorithmic HRM by these OLPs, which often elevate the role of customers and restaurants, granting them considerable influence over worker evaluations, workers' access to future work opportunities, and even continued participation on the OLP (Duggan et al., 2023).

Further, given that workers are heavily reliant on performance ratings and feedback from these parties, we find that there is a strong disincentive to raise concerns, especially when there is a prevailing sense among workers that their voices will be overshadowed or disregarded by OLPs in favor of these influential third parties. As a result, silence becomes a rational strategy for self-preservation, and thus, is implicitly enforced. This dynamic shifts and expands the frontier or locus of control (Cameron & Rahman, 2022; Donaghey et al., 2011) from the traditional employer-employee relationship to a more fragmented model wherein power is distributed across multiple actors. Furthermore, a scenario emerges where OLPs, by design, can effectively delegate and distribute their agenda of organizational silencing to these third-party actors by embedding control within customer-worker and restaurant-worker interactions. Such diffusion of control complicates traditional understandings of worker voice, raising key questions regarding

organizational accountability and responsibility in these technologically mediated working arrangements. This suggests that the specific configuration of algorithmic HRM, including the presence of additional stakeholders, shapes both the silencing mechanisms workers face and how voice is expressed within these work arrangements.

Finally, our examination of algorithmic HRM and silencing contributes to broader scholarly debates about technology and work, enhancing the theoretical significance of our findings to address growing concerns about algorithmic fairness, accountability, and transparency (Kellogg et al., 2020; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2021) and their relevance to diverse academic audiences. We have highlighted how algorithmic systems can systematically exclude affected parties from decision-making processes – a fundamental procedural injustice. In demonstrating how algorithmic HRM enables structural silencing, our analysis exposes how technologically constrained voice channels potentially complicate the pursuit of fair algorithmic governance - a matter of considerable practical significance.

Practical implications

Our theorization of worker voice and organizational silencing in algorithmic HRM contexts has several practical implications. For HRM practice, our findings highlight the potential unsustainability of extreme enforced silencing. While algorithmic HRM may deliver short-term efficiency gains by minimizing worker input (McDonnell et al., 2021), the frustration, helplessness, detachment, and resignation reported by our participants suggest that such gains may come at the cost of long-term worker retention, satisfaction, and performance. While the latter may seem less relevant for OLP business models that are designed and structured for high workforce churn, the use of algorithmic HRM increasingly extends beyond these work arrangements and has started to impact traditional work settings (Keegan & Meijerink, 2025), warranting more serious consideration. The defensive or oppositional measures developed by workers also indicate that attempts to silence may ultimately provoke more disruptive forms of voice. To mitigate these negative consequences, algorithmic HRM systems could be redesigned to incorporate more worker-centric features, such as providing transparent explanations of algorithmic decision-making, creating accessible and responsive channels for worker feedback and grievance resolution, and potentially allowing workers to influence algorithmic design and implementation (Cini & Goldmann, 2021; Dasgupta et al.,2026).

Our findings also may hold direct relevance for traditional organizations, beyond the gig economy, that are integrating algorithmic management into their core HR functions. Specifically, the mechanisms we

identify – the removal of human managerial contact, reliance on third-party input, and one-sided digital communication – are not unique to the gig economy. In traditional settings, the growing implementation of automated scheduling, performance monitoring, and peer-to-peer rating systems can similarly isolate employees and displace human managers (Keegan & Meijerink, 2025; Sherman et al., 2025), creating a form of enforced silence that subordinates the formal employee-employer relationship to the demands of the algorithm. Traditional workplaces implementing algorithmic performance management, automated scheduling, or AI-driven decision-making should be alert to three risks: (1) the gradual erosion of human intermediaries who historically facilitated voice, (2) the creation of opaque decision-making processes that prevent effective grievance resolution, and (3) the potential for technology to enable, rather than prevent, voice suppression by management. This suggests that the protective function of traditional employment relationships against structural silencing is not automatic but requires deliberate design choices that preserve worker voice mechanisms alongside algorithmic efficiency gains. If companies fail to recognize that adopting the technology of algorithmic HRM without implementing robust, transparent voice channels—which are often a legal or cultural expectation in traditional employment—then they carry a high risk of replicating the frustration and 'voice deficit' observed in app-work, potentially leading to greater employee resistance and organizational instability (Dasgupta et al., 2026).

For OLPs, our analysis indicates a pressing need to move beyond a purely efficiency-driven approach to algorithmic HRM and instead prioritize the development of technological channels that facilitate meaningful worker input while preserving operational effectiveness. Algorithmic HRM systems currently often operate as 'black boxes', dictating tasks, evaluating performance, and assigning rewards or penalties with limited transparency or avenues for worker feedback (Cameron & Rahman, 2022; Keegan & Meijerink, 2023), which can result in workers perceiving a lack of voice in shaping their working conditions or contesting decisions. To counter this, OLPs could redesign algorithmic HRM systems to incorporate worker feedback mechanisms, establish transparent communication channels, and create accessible systems for grievance resolution, signaling a shift from unilateral algorithmic control to a model of algorithmic 'dialogue'. Practically, this could involve implementing in-app features that allow workers to provide feedback on algorithmic decisions (e.g., contesting ratings), developing communication tools for worker discussion and suggestions, providing algorithmic explainability by detailing evaluation metrics and decision-making processes, and establishing formal in-app grievance systems with clear resolution timelines and human intervention options. By adopting these changes, OLPs can foster a more balanced and

equitable work environment, helping to build trust, enhance worker satisfaction, and ultimately promote the long-term sustainability of their platform.

Finally, for labor policy, our findings highlight the need to reconsider voice rights in non-standard employment arrangements. The enforced silencing embedded in the food-delivery app-work context raises questions about whether current regulatory frameworks adequately protect worker voice outside traditional employment relationships. By raising critical questions about democratic governance in increasingly automated work environments, our documentation of how algorithmic HRM constrains app-worker voice, and how workers attempt to reclaim it, informs debates about workplace governance and regulatory approaches needed to preserve voice rights in digitally mediated employment arrangements. As algorithmic management continues to expand across sectors, ensuring appropriate voice mechanisms that cater to non-standard workers becomes an increasingly critical policy concern (Dasgupta et al., 2025). Critically, the absence of support structures and human intermediaries, while driving efficiency for OLPs, potentially imposes a significant psychological toll on workers—a job quality issue enabled by the independent contractor classification and regulatory frameworks developed prior to the emergence and use of algorithmic HRM. Future policy initiatives should, therefore, consider extending legal protections for worker voice to app-workers, mandating transparency and explainability in algorithmic management systems, and establishing mechanisms for worker representation and collective bargaining in the gig economy. Alternatively, policymakers could consider mandating compulsory, robust voice channels and grievance resolution procedures even without changing the classification of workers, thereby helping to close the regulatory loophole exploited by the platform design.

Future research and limitations

While a key strength of this study is the substantial number of in-depth interviews that provide rich insights into the food-delivery sector, the qualitative approach naturally constrains the capacity to generalize across the vast nature of the gig economy and its diverse forms of platform work. As such, the findings of this study are specifically relevant to app-work and the food-delivery sector. Studying the dynamics of algorithmic HRM and worker voice and silence in other sectors within the gig economy may reveal different patterns. Likewise, future research could explore the generalizability of our findings through quantitative study designs. Additionally, given the important role of multiple parties in shaping the enactment of algorithmic HRM, empirical studies adopting a multi-informant approach that considers these various perspectives

(e.g., OLPs, customers, restaurants) would be beneficial in developing our understanding of how algorithmic HRM is designed, developed, and intended to be implemented within the food-delivery sector.

Several boundary conditions warrant explicit acknowledgement as they impact on the generalizability of our findings. First, our study focuses on food-delivery app-work, which involves distinctive characteristics including high temporal pressure, physical mobility requirements, and direct customer interaction. These features may amplify silencing dynamics compared to other forms of app-work or gig work more broadly (e.g., freelancing platforms, crowdwork). Second, our sample encompasses workers from four countries with varying labor regulation regimes, yet we did not systematically analyse how these regulatory differences moderate silencing mechanisms. Third, our interviews captured workers' experiences at a single point in time, potentially missing how silencing evolves as workers gain experience or as OLPs modify their algorithmic systems. Fourth, participant characteristics including age, gender, migration status, and whether app-work represents primary or supplementary income likely shape experiences of and responses to silencing—dimensions that our analysis did not systematically explore. Finally, the variance in algorithmic design across platforms, whilst broadly similar in our cases, may produce different silencing effects that our sampling approach could not fully capture.

Furthermore, our multi-sited sampling strategy across four countries and three OLPs was designed to maximize diversity to establish the commonalities of the enforced silencing mechanism arising from algorithmic HRM, rather than to facilitate proportional comparison. Consequently, we did not systematically cross-tabulate platform usage by country, and future research designed specifically for comparative analysis would be required to analyze these context-specific differences. Additionally, future studies that broaden the empirical context within the food-delivery sector, or explore other sectors for comparative purposes, would be welcome. For example, research could fruitfully explore app-workers' nuanced experiences with algorithmic HRM by directly comparing multi-app users and single-app users within the same sector. Such comparisons could reveal important differences in autonomy-seeking behaviors and responses to algorithmic control, offering deeper insights into worker agency. Relatedly, longitudinal research would offer great potential in exploring different and valuable vantage points on the diverse issues inherent to algorithmic HRM and help us understand whether how workers react to silencing has any material impact on the system they are controlled by.

Looking ahead to future research on HR practices in algorithmic-enabled employment contexts, our paper underscores the need for nuanced perspectives into the intricacies of different forms of platform work. While workers operating in different domains share some similar experiences,

there are important contextual differences that are having a formative influence on workers' affective and behavioral responses to their jobs. Future research would also benefit from incorporating the perspectives of OLPs themselves to gain insights into the design logic and intended impacts of their algorithmic HRM systems. Understanding the organizational and managerial rationale behind these systems is crucial for a more comprehensive analysis of their effects on workers (see Dasgupta et al., 2026).

Future studies could also explore the long-term effects of enforced silencing on worker well-being and organizational outcomes in the food-delivery sector. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could examine how workers' algorithmic voice reclamation strategies evolve over time and their impact on OLP policies and practices within food-delivery work. Comparative studies within the food-delivery sector could also investigate the role of different OLP designs or local regulations in mitigating or exacerbating the autonomy-voice paradox observed in this study.

Finally, and of critical importance, future research should investigate how factors such as gender, race, class, and age intersect with algorithmic control and silencing dynamics, as these identity categories likely shape workers' experiences and responses to algorithmic HRM. As is the case with every technologically mediated labor arrangement, it is important that the worker remains front and center of future scholarship exploring how algorithms and HRM co-exist.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was funded by the Irish Research Council through the Government of Ireland Postgraduate Programme (Project Code: GOIPG/2018/2196).

ORCID

James Duggan http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1928-4723
Prakriti Dasgupta http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3815-7607
Anthony McDonnell http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9127-2452
Ronan Carbery http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8836-2038
Ultan Sherman http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2639-746X

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

References

Allen, M., & Tuselmann, H. (2009). All powerful voice? The need to include exit, loyalty and neglect in empirical studies. *Employee Relations*, *21*(5), 538–552.

Barratt, T., Goods, C., Veen, A. (2020). I'm my own boss…': Active intermediation and 'entrepreneurial' worker agency in the Australian gig-economy. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, *52*(8), 1643–1661. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X20914346

Bowen, F., & Blackmon, K. (2003). Spirals of silence: The dynamic effects of diversity on organizational voice. *Journal of Management Studies*, *40*(6), 1393–1417. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00385

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic interview analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brown, A. D., & Coupland, C. (2005). Sounds of silence: Graduate trainees, hegemony and resistance. *Organization Studies*, *26*(7), 1049–1069. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605053540

Burawoy, M. (1979). The anthropology of industrial work. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *8*(1), 231–266. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.08.100179.001311

Cameron, L. D., & Rahman, H. (2022). Expanding the locus of resistance: Understanding the co-constitution of control and resistance in the gig economy. *Organization Science*, *33*(1), 38–58. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2021.1557

Charlwood, A. (2003). Willingness to unionise amongst non-union workers. In: H. Gospel and S. Wood (Eds.), *Representing Workers: Trade Union Recognition and Membership in Britain* (pp. 55–71).Routledge.

Charlwood, A. (2006). What determined employer voice choice in Britain in the 20th century? A critique of the 'sound of silence' model. *Socio-Economic Review*, *4*(2), 301–309. https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwl011

Cheng, M. M., & Hackett, R. D. (2021). A critical review of algorithms in HRM: Definition, theory, and practice. *Human Resource Management Review*, *31*(1), 100698. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2019.100698

Cini, L., & Goldmann, B. (2021). The worker capabilities approach: Insights from worker mobilizations in Italian logistics and food delivery. *Work, Employment and Society*, *35*(5), 948–967. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017020952670

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Cross, D., & Swart, J. (2022). The (ir)relevance of human resource management in independent work: Challenging assumptions. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *32*(1), 232–246. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12389

Dasgupta, P., Carbery, R., Mcdonnell, A., & Jooss, S. (2026). *Algorithmic management and worker agency: The platform perspective on algoactivism*. Human Relations. https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267261445807

Dasgupta, P., McDonnell, A., Carbery, R., & Jooss, S. (2025). A systematic review on worker voice in the platform economy: The constitution of a grassroots voice mechanism. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *35*(3), 649–666. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12587

Doherty, N. F., Coombs, C. R., & Loan-Clarke, J. (2006). A re-conceptualization of the interpretive flexibility of information technologies: Redressing the balance between the social and the technical. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *15*(6), 569–582. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ejis.3000653

Donaghey, J., Cullinane, N., Dundon, T., & Wilkinson, A. (2011). Reconceptualizing employee silence: Problems and prognosis. *Work, Employment & Society*, *25*(1), 51–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017010389239

Duggan, J., Carbery, R., McDonnell, A., & Sherman, U. (2023). Algorithmic HRM control in the gig economy: The app-worker perspective. *Human Resource Management*, *62*(6), 883–899. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22168

Duggan, J., Sherman, U., Carbery, R., & McDonnell, A. (2020). Algorithmic management and app-work in the gig economy: A research agenda for employment relations and HRM. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *30*(1), 114–132. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12258

Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M., & Ackers, P. (2004). The meanings and purpose of employee voice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *15*(6), 1149–1170. https://doi.org/10.1080/0958519041000167733 59

Dundon, T., & Gollan, P. J. (2007). Re-conceptualizing voice in the non-union workplace. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(7), 1182–1198. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190701391925

Fisher, G., & Aguinis, H. (2017). Using theory elaboration to make theoretical advancements. *Organizational Research Methods*, *20*(3), 438–464. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428116689707

Fletcher, D., & Watson, T. (2007). Voice, silence and the business of construction: Loud and quiet voices in the construction of personal, organizational and social realities. *Organization*, *14*(2), 155–174. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407074221

Gegenhuber, T., Ellmer, M., & Schüßler, E. (2021). Microphones, not megaphones: Functional crowdworker voice regimes on digital work platforms. *Human Relations*, *74*(9), 1473–1503. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726720915761

Goods, C., Veen, A., & Barratt, T. (2019). "Is your gig any good?" Analysing job quality in the Australian platform-based food-delivery sector. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *61*(4), 502–527. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185618817069

Harlos, K. (2001). When organizational voice systems fail. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *37*(3), 324–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886301373005

Heery, E. (2024). Frames of reference in industrial relations. In A. Hodder, & S. Mustchin (Eds.), *The value of industrial relations* (pp. 12–25).

Herzog, H. (2012). *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: Complexity of the Craft*. SAGE.

Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Harvard University Press.

Hoque, K., & Noon, M. (2004). Equal opportunities policy and practice in britain evaluating the "Empty Shell" hypothesis. *Work, Employment & Society*, *18*(3), 481–506. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017004045547

Huang, X., Wilkinson, A., & Barry, M. (2024). The role of contextual voice efficacy on employee voice and silence. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *34*(4), 960–974. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12537

Hyman, R. (2016). The very idea of democracy at work. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, *22*(1), 11–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258915619283

Kaufman, B. E. (2015). Theorizing determinants of employee voice: An integrative model across disciplines and levels of analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *25*(1), 19–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12056

Keegan, A., & Meijerink, J. (2025). Algorithmic management in organizations? From edge case to centre stage. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour, 12*, 395–422.

Keegan, A., & Meijerink, J. (2023). Dynamism and realignment in the HR architecture: Online labor platform ecosystems and the key role of contractors. *Human Resource Management*, *62*(1), 15–29. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22120

Kellogg, K. C., Valentine, M. A., & Christin, A. (2020). Algorithms at work: The new contested terrain of control. *Academy of Management Annals*, *14*(1), 366–410. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2018.0174

Kougiannou, N. K., & Mendonça, P. (2021). Breaking the managerial silencing of worker voice in platform capitalism: The rise of a food courier network. *British Journal of Management*, *32*(3), 744–759. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12505

Leicht-Deobald, U., Huettermann, H., Bruch, H., & Lawrence, B. S. (2021). Organizational demographic fault lines: Their impact on collective organizational identification, firm performance, and firm innovation. *Journal of Management Studies*, *58*(8), 2240–2274. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12747

Mäntymäki, M., Baiyere, A., & Islam, A. N. (2019). Digital platforms and the changing nature of physical work: Insights from ride-hailing. *International Journal of Information Management*, *49*, 452–460. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2019.08.007

McDonnell, A., Carbery, R., Burgess, J., & Sherman, U. (2021). Technologically mediated human resource management in the gig economy. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*(19), 3995–4015. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2021.1986109

Meijerink, J., & Keegan, A. (2019). Conceptualizing human resource management in the gig economy: Toward a platform ecosystem perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *34*(4), 214–232. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-07-2018-0277

Meijerink, J., Boons, M., Keegan, A., & Marler, J. (2021). Algorithmic human resource management: Synthesizing developments and cross-disciplinary insights on digital HRM. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*(12), 2545–2562. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2021.1925326

Meijerink, J., & Bondarouk, T. (2023). The duality of algorithmic management: Toward aresearch agenda on HRM algorithms, autonomy and value creation. *Human Resource Management Review*, *33*(1), 100876. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100876

Mendelson, C. (2007). Recruiting participants for research from online communities. *Computers, Informatics, Nursing: CIN*, *25*(6), 317–323. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NCN.0000299653.13777.51

Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *The Academy of Management Review*, *25*(4), 706–725. https://doi.org/10.2307/259200

Norlander, P., Jukic, N., Varma, A., & Nestorov, S. (2021). The effects of technological supervision on gig workers: Organizational control and motivation of Uber, taxi, and limousine drivers. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*(19), 4053–4077. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1867614

Oyetunde, K., Prouska, R., & Mckearney, A. (2026). Workers' resistance to managerial silencing: A comparative study of temporary agency and platform workers' voice in a developing context. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *47*(1), 218–244. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X241305495

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Pentland, B. T., & Feldman, M. S. (2008). Designing routines: On the folly of designing artifacts, while hoping for patterns of action. *Information and Organization*, *18*(4), 235–250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoandorg.2008.08.001

Pfeffer, J. (2013). You're still the same: Why theories of power hold over time and across contexts. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *27*(4), 269–280. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2013.0040

Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, K. P. (2001). Employee silence: Quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, *20*, 331–370.

Schafheitle, S., Weibel, A., Ebert, I., Kasper, G., Schank, C., & Leicht-Deobald, U. (2020). No stone unturned? A framework for the impact of datafication technologies on organizational control. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, *6*(3), 455–487. https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2019.0002

Schildt, H. (2020). *The data imperative: How digitalization is reshaping management, organizing, and work*. Oxford University Press.

Schor, J. B., Attwood-Charles, W., Cansoy, M., Ladegaard, I., & Wengronowitz, R. (2020). Dependence and precarity in the platform economy. *Theory and Society*, *49*(5-6), 833–861. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-020-09408-y

Sherman, U., Rousseau, D. M., Carbery, R., McDonnell, A., Duggan, J., & Morley, M. (2025). Anthropomorphising the algorithm: A 'Theory of Mind' perspective on psychological contract creation in gig work arrangements. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *35*(4), 817–832. in-press. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12599

Suddaby, R., Hardy, C., & Huy, Q. N. (2011). Where are the new theories of organization? *Academy of Management Review*, *36*(2), 236–246. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2011.59330875

Vakola, M., & Bouradas, D. (2005). Antecedents and consequences of organizational silence: An empirical investigation. *Employee Relations*, *27*(5), 441–458. https://doi.org/10.1108/01425450510611997

Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I. C. (2003). Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multi-dimensional constructs. *Journal of Management Studies*, *40*(6), 1359–1392.

Vaughan, D. (1992). Theory elaboration: The heuristics of case analysis. In H. Ragin & S. Becker (Eds.), *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge University Press.

Veen, A., Meijerink, J., Barratt, T., Keegan, A., & Goods, C. (2025). Overcominglegitimacy challenges of novel HRM practices during internationalization: Thecase of two food-delivery platforms. *Journal of World Business*, *60*(2), 101611. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2024.101611

Waldkirch, M., Bucher, E., Kalum Schou, P., & Grünwald, E. (2021). Controlled by the algorithm, coached by the crowd – how HRM activities take shape on digital work platforms in the gig economy. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*(12), 2643–2682. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2021.1914129

Willman, P., Bryson, A., & Gomez, R. (2007). The long goodbye: New establishments and the fall of union voice in Britain. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(7), 1318–1334. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190701393863

Yu, Z., Treré, E., & Bonini, T. (2022). The emergence of algorithmic solidarity: Unveiling mutual aid practices and resistance among Chinese delivery workers. *Media International Australia*, *183*(1), 107–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X221074793