

## Relations industrielles

***Voice and Whistleblowing in Organizations: Overcoming Fear, Fostering Courage and Unleashing Candour* edited by Ronald J. Burke and Cary L. Cooper. CBE, Cheltenham, United Kingdom of Great Britain : Edward Elgar editions, 2013, 374 pages. ISBN : 978-1-78100-591-0.**

Isabelle Hudon

---

Volume 69, Number 3, Summer 2014

URI: [id.erudit.org/iderudit/1026767ar](http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1026767ar)

DOI: [10.7202/1026767ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/1026767ar)

[See table of contents](#)

---

### Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN 0034-379X (print)  
1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

---

### Cite this article

Hudon, I. (2014). *Voice and Whistleblowing in Organizations: Overcoming Fear, Fostering Courage and Unleashing Candour* edited by Ronald J. Burke and Cary L. Cooper. CBE, Cheltenham, United Kingdom of Great Britain : Edward Elgar editions, 2013, 374 pages. ISBN : 978-1-78100-591-0.. *Relations industrielles*, 69(3), 657-659. doi:10.7202/1026767ar

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online. [<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>]



This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research. [www.erudit.org](http://www.erudit.org)

policing and workplace regulation. The broken windows analogy argues that one broken window, if unfixed, is suggestive of social decline within the community and welcomes further damage. This is compared to the workplace in which small misdemeanors, such as paying employees off the books or verbal abuses, can escalate to large-scale violations if worker voice is thwarted vis-à-vis the workplace. However, educating employees of their rights and building relationships between regulatory enforcers, community organizations, unions, religious organizations, and workers is presented as a solution to the current deleterious state of employer's compliance. This is fascinating because it ties Weil's research with the growing scholarly interest in the role of union coalitions with civil society actors in regulating workplace change. It also captures the essence of a root cause of regulatory failure.

I would recommend this book to students, researchers, and practitioners for its strengths on so many levels. First, while the book presents some interesting and novel arguments at the cutting-edge of industrial relations research, the multitude of case-studies contained would benefit even those seeking an introductory understanding of how prominent global companies, franchises, subcontractors, and other employers organize employment. Second, the fissured workplaces argument has important implications for challenges such as union decline, the social regulation of multinationals, and others. Finally, practitioners could benefit from the practical insights concerning workplace regulation discussed earlier. In fact, since Weil has recently been confirmed as the new US Wage and Hour Administrator in the United States' Department of Labor, it will be fascinating to see whether and how these recommendations translate into practice.

**Sean O'Brady**

Doctoral Student  
Université de Montréal

### **Voice and Whistleblowing in Organizations: Overcoming Fear, Fostering Courage and Unleashing Candour**

edited by Ronald J. Burke and Cary L. Cooper. CBE, Cheltenham, United Kingdom of Great Britain : Edward Elgar editions, 2013, 374 pages. ISBN : 978-1-78100-591-0.

This collection of fourteen articles examines the question of voice and whistleblowing in organizations, particularly in regard of the decision making process underlying the choice to speak up or to keep silent. The authors examine the theory and research addressing this phenomenon by covering the principal issues such as: the role of courage and fear, confidence, transparency and leadership. This book positions the scientific progress in investigating voice and whistleblowing and contains suggestions for new research avenues and to develop the tools necessary for encouraging an «ethic» of both individual and organizational health. Rigorously written, the fourteen chapters are distributed into five parts which, despite some redundancies, succeed in giving a quite robust account of the phenomenon of voice and whistleblowing in organizations.

The first part of the book (chapters one, two and three) outlines the major issues and discussions in the field. In the first chapter, Ronald J. Burke has written a long and condensed chapter in which he presents mainly a review of the principal issues surrounding the phenomenon of voice. Using examples, Burke demonstrates how voice is a key aspect of organizational performance and psychological health of individuals in organizations, and how those questions of courage and fear are a part of the phenomenon. The two key questions the book poses are: "What are the individual, motivational, and organizational factors that help or hinder voice in organizations?" and, "What psychological processes are involved in the decision to express one's voice?"

In the second chapter, Isabel Botero presents a review of the research results about individual correlates of employee voice. She shows how individual differences and individual motivations are important precursors of voice. To complete the introductory part of the book, Jennifer Kish-Gephart and Denise Breaux-Soignet examine the question of fear and silence in the workplace. They focus on the cost of silence for individuals and organizations, and they present fear as a discrete emotion, which is a key antecedent of silence, that they describe from an evolutionary perspective. Among other things, they present opportunities for future research around the theme of trait anxiety, invisible social identities and ego depletion, and they suggest various implications for organizational practices to reduce experience of fear in organizations or to foster courage.

The second part of the collection of articles presents other important outcomes around voice and whistleblowing in organizations. More precisely, William Schnepfer, David Wernick and Mary Ann Von Glinow examine the role of stakeholder exit and voice, and corporate dysfunction and change in an organizational learning perspective. They propose a diagnostic model which includes feedback from the stakeholders. The following chapter focuses on understanding how voice can impact the decision making process in work teams. With the objective of identifying the role of voice in this process, Jennifer Feitosa, Jacqueline Spencer and Eduardo Salas present a review of the literature and highlight critical factors which affect voice in differing situations of work teams such as: training, team identity, climate for voice and resources. In chapter six, Maiyuwai Reeves deals with the important, although implicit, role of voice behavior in stopping bullying episodes. He makes several suggestions to foster voice by, for example, creating and communicating anti-bullying policies, developing a voice climate in the workplace, and training leaders to

support employees' voice. The last chapter of this second part of the book presents the implications of the voice literature for research on whistleblowing. Beginning by marking the difference between those two concepts, it is clarified that voice is a larger concept than whistleblowing and the key differences between the two concepts are explained. They take place around the matters that may trigger voice of whistleblowing, the channels for expressions, the intended beneficiary of voice and the question of if it is a current employee or a non-employee concern. After detailing those differences, Marcia Miceli and Janet Near conclude that the voice literature could be very helpful in future research on whistleblowing, taking into account those differences. Using the distinctions they draw from the two concepts, they then make ten propositions to investigate for future research on whistleblowing derived from some recent voice studies. For example, they propose that « Clear evidence of the need for change predicts employees' labeling of a voice object as deserving of action » (p.193) and that « Fears of retaliation, retaliatory climate of culture, or experienced retaliation affect voice and whistleblowing differently » (p.197).

The third part of the book presents ways of encouraging and supporting voice in the workplace. More precisely, Lance Frazier chooses an interactionist and pragmatist angle to portray the theoretical and empirical aspects of the voice climate. The author proposes various future areas of inquiry for voice climate research, such as: antecedents to voice climate, downsides of voice climate, voice climate over time and relevance to employees and practical applications of voice climate research. In the following chapter, from a motivated cognition approach which focusses on the epistemic, ideological and existential motivations involved, an original view on the supervisory response to voice is proposed. Despite a somewhat dated perspective on

organizational communication, it presents an interesting theoretical framework to explain cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions from the part of supervisors in response to voice. The next chapter takes up the role of emotions in the context of voice and whistleblowing. Specifically, from their studies of recent theoretical work, the authors propose a process model of employee responses to organizational wrongdoing by showing the relationship between perceptions, appraisals, anticipated emotions and the level of reporting deviant behavior. They also make various theoretical propositions drawn from the relationship between the different aspects of the situation such as: the perpetrator power, the anticipated fear and guilt of the perpetrator intentionality. They argue that moral intensity of the wrongdoing and the power of the perpetrator are key parts of the decision to speak up.

Part four of the book looks at the emergence of new voices as those of women and those from eastern cultures. Linda Dunn-Jensen and Katherine Ryan examine women's voice behavior by placing it in the larger context of organizational citizenship. According to the authors, organizational citizenship has significant gender-specific implications. From a large, but quite superficial perspective, the authors make four propositions about specific issues of women voice in organizations, the fourth one being « Women are less likely to be heard than men. » (p.291). From this statement, they suggest that future research examine the question of hearing women voice in work organizations. In a somewhat different but related view, Erica C. Holley and Keke Wu examine the impacts of the cultural differences between "Eastern" and "Western" organizations with respect to voice. Taking account of the positive effects of voice at both individual and organizational level, they examine how voice can be encouraged in a Eastern organizational culture such as China.

The fifth and last part of the book contains two chapters that examine the central role played by courage in voice behavior. The authors of the thirteenth chapter present their work and progress in developing and validating a quantitative measure of organizational courage. Their instrument offers a useful diagnostic tool to identify the place of courage in organizations and suggest practices to reduce fear and empower individual voice. The last chapter of the book offers basic directions and cautions to foster courage in individuals.

All things considered, despite some unevenness in the contributions and perhaps an over reliance on a psychological perspective, this multidisciplinary book will be a valuable contribution for scholars interested in problems of work, labour, management, organizational ethics, and citizenship.

**Isabelle Hudon**

PhD candidate

Département des relations industrielles

Université Laval