

Academics and Whistleblowing Research
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I became aware some time ago of the large amounts of money involved in academic research on whistleblowing and how this area has negatively impacted on both whistleblowing and whistleblower legal protection. There is a total lack of understanding of the subject and far too much credence is given to deeply flawed academic research often funded by those with vested interests in law change.

In effect academic research has given a cloak of credibility to whistleblowing policy that has subsequently cost countless lives and allowed unprecedented suffering,

My first encounter with academics was set up by Birkbeck university (*Whose Political Department is **excluded** from this critique as genuinely wanted to learn)

Birkbeck had invited academics Win Vandekerckhove, Greenwich university, and Marianna Fotaki, Warwick Business school.

I presented a session and provided a panel of Whistleblowers.

It became clear as the event progressed that the two academics were as aptly described by one of the Whistleblowers after the event as "clueless"

The sheer ignorance of these two individuals was staggering, for example Vandekerckhove described a detailed example of what he considered whistleblowing, it consisted of a staff member complaining about having to wash up the cups in the staff room. His presentation was peppered with what he considered to be deeply insightful statements about whistleblowing, but which had no relevance to whistleblowing at all and were completely illogical.

The last session of the day was given by Fotaki, whose planned presentation had obviously been scuppered by the earlier session of Whistleblowers experiences. Ms Fotaki proceeded to read a 20-minute presentation in the space of 3 minutes, whilst every word she muttered was clearly a painful embarrassment to her.

I have no animosity toward academics and admire a great many in **other fields**. However, when academics views are compromised because they were bought and paid for by vested interests, they should not be influencing whistleblowing law. For example, those involved with the two flawed reports produced by the APPG on whistleblowing and WBUK, which have no credibility and are fundamentally flawed.

Whistleblowing can all too often be about matters of life or death, suffering or safety. It should never be about making money to feed a lucrative research area especially when such ignorance can have such a devastating impact on peoples lives.

There are far too many flaws to list in academic research in this field but for example Fotaki has concluded that more senior people are more likely to whistleblower, this is completely false for the following reasons,

The research from our helpline shows less then 2% of 8000 Whistleblowers hold senior positions in an organisation.

Ms Fotaki has clearly misunderstood that senior people are **more likely** to participate in academic research. Most Whistleblowers are forced to leave their jobs and cannot access justice, they simply are forced to give up and walk away. These are the Whistleblowers failed the most, who have no voice because they come from the bottom of organisations,

are often on the minimum wage and cannot access lawyers.

As for the academic paper "Mental Health as a weapon: whistleblower retaliation and normative violence"

The interpretation of the power element is completely wrong, the power that an employer has over the whistleblower is absolute, the power to force a whistleblower to leave and stop them working in future, this is not an intermittent flow, this is a fact.

All the examples given in this academic paper are from banking, which skews the whole thing, to look at whistleblowing in one area and apply that one area to all whistleblowing is completely wrong.

No consideration of the core elements of Edna's law for example, The loss of trust and the resulting long-term harm.

There is much reference to mental health generally but complete ignorance of the devastating toll that fear plays in the whole process.

I will return this issue in more detail later and consider the regulators in this area.