

Bystanders and whistleblowers:

A study of the systemic forces driving the journey from denial to action in the face of wrongdoing within organizations.

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Abstract

This study examines how a member of an organization comes to recognize and react to wrongdoing in their workplace. The impact on an individual of perceived systemic processes at the level of the organization and the wider culture which encourage silence or grant voice is analysed within a social constructionist framework.

This focus allowed a more holistic understanding of the decision to speak out or remain silent in the context of organizational wrongdoing. The aim was to produce a plausible and explanatory account of bystanding and whistleblowing, acknowledging that those processes are complex and co-constituted from the interplay of social and psychological processes. In a small way, I hoped to generate testable hypotheses about key processes which explain how people situated within a specific set of norms, faced with organizational wrongdoing construct meaning and make choices about ethical practice.

Nine participants, drawn from a range of organizational contexts, who had raised concerns about wrongdoing within their employing organization were interviewed individually. They were asked to narrate their biographies up to and including the process of speaking out about their concerns. Two further participants, who were bystanders in two of the whistleblowers' incidents were interviewed using the same approach. The interview data was analysed using grounded theory. The research procedure gave participants space and a process which provoked reflection and some newfound perspectives.

Initially an analytic account of the stages and processes leading up to speaking out or remaining silent was obtained. Then the data was re-analysed, using the Transforming Experience Framework (Long, 2016) to explore in greater depth how the organization-in-the-mind was composed in each case. The goal was not to develop a causal explanation but to reach an understanding of how self, role and system interact in shaping a whistleblowing episode.

Investigating the complexity of the full situation of inquiry requires that discourses at the *cultural* level, should also be examined. Therefore, I conducted a supplementary study of

representation of whistleblowers in film. I explored the relationship between historical contextual factors and the changes to the portrayal, of the whistleblowing act, to draw out how discursive concepts construct the subject of the whistleblower. Popular films featuring whistleblowers were sampled across decades and their narratives were scrutinized using situational analysis.

Findings showed that the pathway to speaking out has shared stages and processes, but that the route to speaking out or keeping silent is both iterative and highly individual. Systemic factors were found to inform the process at every stage. Whistleblowers attachment to a contested version of the primary task, when they perceived the alternative version of task to be associated with perversity led them towards raising concerns. Experiences of occupying roles in their earlier life were reflected in how they managed their attachment to organization. Being let down was also formative. Those experiences collectively pushed them towards a new attachment to a *parrhesiastic* self and to attempts to rescue the organization. The bystanders were aware of the same problems within their organizations but, helped by an allegiance to an alternative professional discourse, were acquiescent. The cultural context of the 'market civilization' shaped the discourses and practices operating within the organizations in the study and contributed to the construction of what was recognizable behaviour within the organization.

The implications of these findings for professional practice were discussed. The results point to the value of enabling consultants and other change agents to understand the systemic constraints which make wrongdoing invisible or deter staff from challenging what they see and to develop strategies to empower people within organizations to reach a position where they are prepared to speak out.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and development of a framework to approach the topic.

If the main pillar of the system is living within a lie, then it is not surprising that the fundamental threat to it is living the truth.

(Havel 1985, vi.)

This thesis presents an examination of how a member of an organization comes to recognize and react to wrongdoing in their workplace. The impact on an individual of their experience of systemic processes at the level of the organization and the wider culture which encourage silence or grant voice is analysed. This focus will allow a more holistic understanding of the decision to speak out or remain silent.

1.1 Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the context out of which my interest in this issue emerged and to describe the process of finding an appropriate methodology which could capture the complexity of the phenomenon. As this project is intended to develop professional practice, I will indicate how it can inform policy and practice to avoid pathologizing individual actors while enabling an organization to achieve a culture of learning and change. This chapter will outline the current cultural context where a pre-occupation with acts of whistleblowing is coupled with, on the one hand, a new power of individuals to call organizations to account in a globalized and networked world and on the other an increasing acceptance that truth is relative. Then I will locate my interest in this issue in events in my working history and in my intellectual development. How the project developed and the refinement of the research question is described. A brief account of the epistemology and final research design is given. Then the structure of the thesis and synopsis of each chapter is presented.

1.2 Definition of whistleblowing

Current definitions of whistleblowing are vague and have been described as merely a 'placeholder' term for a set of similar practices. Legal, economic and ethical disciplines each have an interest in its definition, and the ensuing vagueness is an obstacle to developing clarity in ethical or legal thinking or coherence in research programmes (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019).

For the purposes of this research, I am concerned solely with the process by which past and current members of an organisation choose to blow the whistle to call more powerful figures within that organisation to account for their wrongdoing or choose to remain silent. Thus, employees of the organisation's services are legitimately included in the frame, whether they chose to report the wrongdoing internally or externally or remain silent bystanders. Those who might support the calling to account – lawyers, journalists, social activists - who were never insiders, are not part of this investigation. The focus therefore is on how the system within which the wrongdoing occurs, is variously nurtured, tolerated, exposed and defended by actors who are or have been insiders in the system. However, an important caveat is that the data of this research represents only the participants' subjective view of the system within which they were actors.

1.3 The genealogy of whistleblowing

Whistleblowing, a version of speaking truth to power, has a long and respectable history within Western democracy. Foucault traces the genealogy of *parrhesia*, 'fearless' or 'frank' speech', of which whistleblowing is a paradigmatic example, from early Greek to modern civilization, noting how the process transforms in response to political change. Diogenes fearlessly confronted powerful misguided rulers. Luther subversively nailed his 95 theses to the door of the cathedral in Worms, to challenge the corruption of the Catholic church of which he was still a member (Perry, 1998). It has also been a compelling subject for fictional narrative, from early Greek times. Sophocles' *Antigone* is identified as the first whistleblower. Chaucerian tales, Shakespeare's wise fools, hugely popular folk tales such as *The Emperor's New Clothes* all rehearse the drama of the powerless courageously speaking up to the powerful in order challenge wrongdoing. As with Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*

(Ibsen, 2009; Miller, 1977), it is a trope often reprised for contemporary audiences, while current popular cinema, has a spate of films made in the last two decades featuring whistleblowers as heroes of our times.

Ralph Nader in discussing Daniel Ellsberg's leaking of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, is credited with first applying the term 'whistleblower' to those who speak out about wrongdoing within their own organization. Bok (1984), commented on how much attention whistleblowing was beginning to attract. Since then both the term and the phenomenon have acquired an increasingly formalized and demarcated role. Legislation is now in place to protect the process and the perpetrator, for example in the US the Sarbanes Oxley Act 2002; in the UK the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998, modified in 2013 to insist on the public interest criterion, rather than the discloser's good faith. Institutionalized machinery designed to facilitate speaking out, for example, UK NHS Freedom to Speak Out Guardians, has been developed. Whistleblowing is even prescribed and bystanding penalized in some contexts – the duty of candour in health and social care was regulated in law in 2014 in the UK. This may seem to indicate that Western democracy is in good shape as the checks and balances which can call organizations and institutions to account and protect the people from tyranny and exploitation are apparently strengthened.

However, the value and legitimacy of whistleblowing (Andrade, 2015; Bok, 1984) and legislation to prescribe it has been questioned (Contu;2014; Mansbach, 2011; Perry, 1998; Weiskopf & Tobias-Miersch, 2016; Vandekerckhove & Langerberg, 2012) It can be argued that whistleblowers are necessarily individual actors, whose actions should not be institutionalised if their actions are to count as civil disobedience and thus fulfil the *political* function of resistance and highlighting the need for change. Contrary to this, it is argued that positioning whistleblowers who blow the whistle externally, often at some risk to themselves, as *individual* actors frames the ethics of whistleblowing as an act of last resort (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019). It also encourages society as a whole to ignore its collective complicity in the wrongdoing and its responsibility to protect the whistleblower and initiate cultural change (Kenny 2019).

Whistleblowing is essentially relational and is an act of two parts: someone blows a whistle, someone else has to hear it. The speech act which is the whistle blast has to happen in a context where its meaning will be understood, where it is capable of holding some performative value. Staff who successfully alert senior figures within their organization to wrongdoing and experience no reprisal arguably do not meet the criterion for whistleblowers. (Alford, 2001; Kenny, 2019)

However, since Ralph Nader's seminal essay, despite growing recognition for the value of whistleblowing, and lauding of whistleblowers as heroes or secular saints (Grant, 2002) they and their actions have also been persistently vilified. The outcomes for those whistleblowers who experience retaliation is still commonly costly, leaving a profound impact on their financial status, family lives and mental health. Alford vividly characterised a typical whistleblower, post-retaliation as

"a 55-year-old nuclear engineer working behind the counter at Radio shack. Divorced and in debt to his lawyers he lives in a two-room rented apartment. He has no retirement plan and few prospects for advancement" (Alford, 2007 p. 233).

Although the content of their message may be welcomed, their speech may be profoundly silenced and made 'impossible', (Kenny, 2018) so they are left with 'broken lives' (Alford, 2001). However, the retaliation to which whistleblowers are subjected is also evidence of the potential significance and transformative power of their actions. And on a personal level, despite the marginalisation and abjection which Alford's vignette captures, whistleblowers can also take on a reworked moral identity as a person of conscience, through which they can recognise themselves and be recognised as a worthy human subject (Kenny, 2019; Weaver, 2006).

Whistleblowing raises an ethical dilemma: Culiberg and Mihelic (2017) argue it is condemned to ethical failure since a whistleblower can either opt for silence out of loyalty to their organisation but risk harm to it and the wider community as the wrongdoing continues, or speak out, damaging the organization and their colleagues by their disclosures and breach of trust. Efforts to understand this apparent paradox has led to the recognition

that loyalty and dissent are discursively treated as opposites in modern organizational systems (Perry, 1998) The act of whistleblowing is constructed within a historical and socio-economic context and its situated value is discursively contested.

Historically there have always been pathological organizations which fail spectacularly for example, the South Sea Bubble in 1720; the collapse of the US stockmarket in late 1920s; or cause appalling distress to the victims of their activities, for example the slave-trade or genocidal fascist dictatorships. Social-structural changes since 1960 have led to globalization, moral endorsement of autonomous individualism and networked communities of interest linked by technologies which support lateral communication. Together these features have created a 'turbulent environment' (Emery & Trist, 1997) within which certain kinds of systems will flourish, for good or ill.

In recent decades a number of high-profile cases across a range of institutional settings have reflected the capacity of this turbulence to encourage wrongdoing in organizations. In the corporate world the unbridled pursuit of profit and fantasy of endless growth in globalized commodities and financial markets led to the ruthless exploitation of the environment and consumers, for example by the tobacco industry or giants of social media, the credit crisis in 2007/8 and associated collapse of financial organizations (Long, 2008; Lucey, 2015; Stein, 2000). In the field of welfare, failures to protect children and patients in hospitals and care homes from gross physical and sexual abuse or neglect have been linked to an emphasis on individualism, refusal of dependency and associated marketisation of welfare (Cooper & Lousada, 2005). Charitable organizations, large and small have lost sight of their original mission and abused their dependents or misused funds. The investigation of these examples of high-profile wrongdoing have pointed to systemic factors which created an environment in which certain kinds of corruption could flourish. Perverse practices in pathological organizations have features in common (Long, 2008) but equally have unique features which reflect socio-technical structures within the organizational domain. Thus, organizations do not all go to the bad in the same way.

In our contemporary globalised and networked context, control of communication is a corporate necessity and has been associated with both scandal, as for instance in the

Cambridge Analytica affair & OlmosCadwalladr, 2018) and large-scale whistleblowing and leaking, by Snowden and Assange for example. De-regulated capitalism and new kinds of media have increased reliance on self-authorising individuals to act as the locus for calling power to account. The individual women who spoke out from 2017 onwards, to protest the exploitative power of a media mogul, Harvey Weinstein and then several other powerful and celebrated figures, present a paradigm case. Each woman used her own specific biography to mount her accusation, but the reach afforded by new media platforms then made possible the creation of *#MeToo*, a global organization of a sort, created solely to resist the corrupt use of power, ironically, within the media industry itself. In such a context whistleblowers pose an even greater threat to the integrity and commercial safety of their organization when they expose wrongdoing. Yet whistleblowing may have an increasingly important role in ensuring the transparency and integrity of organizations as they become increasingly dispersed and complex (Miceli et al, 2008). Indeed it can be defined as a 'fundamental organizational duty' in order to maintain accountability in organizations in ordinary circumstances (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2020, p.8)

Another feature of the current postmodern context which impinges on how whistleblowing acts are constructed and received is the wide acceptance of moral and epistemological relativism (Sementelli, 2009). The idea that there might be verifiable universal and objective truths which the whistleblower is referencing has been debunked as much by scientific developments which recognise that 'facts' are contingent on paradigms (Kuhn,1994) as by respectful scrutiny of diverse cultures. In postmodern 'hyper-reality', where copy and reality have interchangeable status, (Perry, 1998) it is appropriate that the contestation of inconveniently spoken possible truths should have created its own reflexive weapon: disputes about inconvenient revelations scarcely need to engage with content when all facts can be seen as contingent. This mind-set has been weaponised. Information which challenges vested interest is simply labelled 'Fake news' and counteracted by an 'explosion' of scarcely credible and easily disproven falsehoods (Butler, 2020a; Kessler, 2019;)

Thus, to understand how whistleblowing can be an effective force in contemporary organizations, it is not sufficient to study the phenomenon as a simple opposition of sovereign autonomous individual up against repressive social control. Instead, the focus

needs to shift to how the whistleblowing act is constructed within the specific discourses of power which hold within the organization within which it occurred and the cultural norms, regimes of power and truth, within which the organization itself is embedded.

Understanding the whistleblowing act systemically will avoid the risk of focussing attention exclusively and misleadingly on the personal features of the whistleblower.

1.4. Locating myself in the research

As I developed and refined the focus for this research I have reflected on where the impetus for my choice of topic has come from. This has led me to understand that my intellectual curiosity and concerns have, without my particularly realising it, converged with my working history and career choices. In one way or another I have engaged with the question of how an individual becomes aware of experiences or makes moral choices which are independent of the cultural context within which they have been raised.

This personal history may have begun with the social and geographical mobility of my parents whose abilities and ambition led them to uproot themselves from a classically working-class community (Hoggart, 2009; Williams, 2015) acquiring both social and geographical mobility, but as a result, living with a sense of being permanent outsiders. I attended schools where I was the only child who did not speak with a local accent and did not have grandparents living down the road. This experience of deracination and marginalisation perhaps sparked my curiosity about phenomena that others took for granted but which struck me as arbitrary.

Tracing my intellectual concerns, I recall that my undergraduate dissertation addressed, in naïve terms, the relational quality of care provision in a secure hospital setting where the staff, referencing reductive bio-medical models, unproblematically located the origins of abnormal behaviour within individual patients. Neither my undergraduate psychology degree nor my professional clinical training gave me a satisfactory conceptual framework to understand the cultural determinants of how distress was enacted or perceived. Early in my career as a psychological therapist working in an economically depressed provincial town, I saw many miserable housewives who self-identified as either agoraphobic or obsessional.

Contemporary popular media aimed at women were similarly pre-occupied with describing, defining and providing advice about these phenomena. The desperate housewives who I saw then were very much a product of their time: trapped in domestic roles in an era just before it became routine for women to work outside the home (Riley, 1983). Their individual and private distress found a form within shared discourse which enabled them to make sense of their own experience and be understood by interlocutors. Currently the same people might wonder if they had a personality disorder, autism or attention deficit disorder, for which popular media again offers much description and advice. These disorders reflect contemporary dilemmas in a culture dominated by a concern to maximise individual autonomy and mediate communication through technology which dispenses with the need for face-to-face contact. There is no underlying 'true' account of what ailed those housewives. Nor could they have readily articulated a version of their distress which would have challenged the social norms which imprisoned them in their homes repetitively washing their curtains. Around the same period, I read Menzies Lyth's ground-breaking essay (Menzies Lyth, 1960/1988) on the defences used by an institution to defend itself against awareness of unmanageable and inconvenient emotions prompted by its primary task. This helped me to understand how difficult it was for both Menzies Lyth's student nurses and those small-town housewives to think or feel in ways other than those dictated by institutional power and beyond that, prevalent cultural norms.

Occupying increasingly senior roles in frontline NHS mental health services, I was constantly alert to the realisation that I held a pivotal position in an intricately balanced system. As junior figures in the system, frontline staff, including myself, witnessed practices which were ethically dubious but initially hard to register as such and then to challenge. I felt constrained by a toxic mixture of personal and organizational factors. How I perceived, labelled, and decided on a course of action was determined by being inevitably situated within a 'regime of practice' which controlled what could be visible to me and then also by my personal history, shaping my willingness to voice dissent. Within the institution, the response to crises, critical incidents or recognition of more pervasive poor practice often ended with the blame and scapegoating of individuals. Efforts to identify systemic issues and argue that the cause of a problem might not be lodged in a single individual proved alien to institutional ways of thinking. Later, as a senior manager I was aware of the

pressure to face, Janus like, two ways: to be loyal both downwards to my junior staff and our professional integrity and interests and upwards to the needs of the organization. Consequently, I often identified wrongdoing but hesitated to speak out. On one occasion, I witnessed one colleague demean and bully a respected colleague. I failed to protest for a complicated mix of personal and contextual reasons. A decade later I had the opportunity to describe the incident to an independent investigative team and was astonished to find myself in tears as I told the story. As an organizational consultant I have worked with the same ethical-political individual and collective struggle with silence. I have witnessed, in both clinical and organizational work, individuals caught within organizational norms struggling to keep a blind eye turned to wrongdoing and falling back on escalating commitment (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014) to resolve these painful albeit unconscious dilemmas. These experiences have alerted me to how damaging organizational silence is to both individual players and the wider system, but have showed me that the capacity to identify and react to organizational wrongdoing, whether by speaking out or keeping silent has to be understood at the system-level to avoid splitting off and projecting responsibility into a vulnerable whistleblower or bystander (Gold, 2014; Rioch, 1975; Verhezen, 2010)

A greater understanding of how the 'social capacity to know' (Cooper & Lousada, 2005) is achieved and supported within organizations would counteract this bias towards focussing on individual factors. My professional experience has taught me that disturbance is inevitably relational. I have learnt that the internal and external world is experienced and constructed iteratively and that to reach an adequate formulation of a problem and intervene successfully I need to find out how that works in each case.

Since I am tempted by experience to admire the act of whistleblowing, I risk distorting the data-gathering process and overlooking the nuances of individual choice. However, I recognise that I must cultivate a reflexive awareness of value judgments surfacing as they are likely to carry useful information about projective mechanisms at work. Further, intending to focus on systemic influences could pre-dispose me to think about organizations as 'wrong-doers', forgetting that groups do not have a mind (Bion, 1961) and cannot therefore have agency.

1.5. How this project developed

1.5.1 Influences from theory

The systems-psychodynamic understanding of organizational functioning links micro-level individual phenomenological description of institutional experience to more generalizable concepts of macro-level social structure and function. Menzies Lyth's study of nursing practice in an acute hospital in the 1950's (Menzies Lyth, 1960/1988) led to the development of the idea that socially constructed, but unconscious defences help workers to manage the anxiety evoked by the specifics of their identified task and are institutionalized in routine practices – "*the way we do things around here*".

Engaging with the systems-psychodynamic paradigm played a significant part in helping me to make sense of my experiences in the workplace, as a therapist, employee, manager and consultant. I was persuaded by the social constructionist argument that society gives individuals structures to think with, that individuals are constituted rather than constrained by the social and that ideas about truth, right and wrong are also discursively formed. I gained a way to think about what I observed without having to locate the origins of dysfunctional behavior exclusively in my own or others' individual psyche. Within the paradigm, instances of individual behavior are construed as the outcome of a complex mix of personal history and internalized but collective perceptions, rules and values. I wanted to understand more about how those 'collective perceptions' were formed and operated.

However, if organizations are formed within 'regimes of practice' (Weiskopf & Tobias-Miersch, 2016) which construct what is possible, then so too is the group or individual, embedded in those organizations. This socially determinist theoretical understanding cannot readily account for how an individual's unique experience within an institution is formed.

Further, it is a puzzle how change might be brought about in a dysfunctional organization dominated by pathological defences (Papadopolous, 2015). The fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" (Andersen, 2004) vividly exemplifies different shades of willingness to live

within the lie within a single community: the mesmerizing spell of denial which gripped the adult players in the narrative could only be challenged by a child whose sensibility was not fully socialized. However, the child's challenge was not strong enough to break the Emperor's commitment to the version of reality which maintained him in power. The nurses studied by Menzies Lyth seemed to have only two options: either to conform to the existing rigid hierarchical structures, or to leave. Douglas, while describing how change can be achieved using cognitive tools provided by institutions, seemed to perceive institutions as inherently conservative, blocking curiosity and encouraging collective unjustified certainty (Douglas 1986, p.102)

If every aspect of an organization's functioning including the nature of its primary task and the idea of an individual subject can be contested, resistance and change might be possible. (Hoggett, 2006). Gaining a better understanding of how culture determines organizational behavior can potentially empower agents of change, including individual staff-members, to challenge the hegemony, including by identifying and challenging wrongdoing.

1.6. The individual in relation to a pathological external world

Individuals within a pathological system can respond to the prevailing culture in a variety of ways ranging from stages of denial through collusion and other forms of acceptance to dissent. Denial is a complex continuum spread along the dimension of ignorance and knowledge. (Cohen, 2001) Similarly collusion and dissent take a variety of forms ranging from tacit and passive to overt and active.

Reflecting on how wrongdoing is responded to within an institution prompted my curiosity about two particular questions. How are members able to identify and speak out about wrongdoing which is culturally normative? And why, if some find it possible to voice a concern, do other members not protest in greater numbers?

1.6.1. The process of finding a voice to protest or remain silent.

In transgressive acts, of which whistleblowing is a paradigmatic example, an individual must stand out against prevailing norms and the pressure to conform. The process of finding a voice to speak out against the prevailing culture is neither uniform nor linear – instead emotional dynamics and organizational structures influence each other in an iterative loop (Argyris, 1977)

The concept of the organization-in-the-mind provided me with a way to think about the relationship between the individual and their organization within a systems-psychodynamic framework (Armstrong, 2004). As a dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship operates between actor and social context (Hoggett, 2015) the dilemma that *either* everything about wrongdoing in organizations must be explained at the level of the social, *or* the only useful explanations are at the level of the individual is avoided.

Studying specific whistleblowing cases from the point of view of the whistleblower's organization-in-the-mind gave me the opportunity to observe how regimes of practice within which an organization is embedded (i.e its social and political context, identity, structure and task) influence the form of the act while also resonating with the personal history of the whistleblower.

1.7 Engaging with narrative

“A life as led is inseparable from a life as told “

(Bruner, 2004, p. 708)

Familiarising myself with findings from quantitative and positivist research, I realised that the methodology would struggle to capture meaningfully, the complexity of what was essentially a relational process, unfolding over time. I was reading or listening to autobiographical accounts (e.g.Drew, 2014; Murray, 2017) from whistleblowers which similarly underlined the importance of temporality and connectedness in the process of responding to organizational wrongdoing.

During this development stage I attended conferences at which a number of whistleblowers spoke about their experience in formal presentations. I also had the privilege of speaking informally, during those conferences, with many delegates who were also expert by experience. I was struck by how often the delegates I encountered were driven to share their individual story and how important it seemed to be that they were heard out – that they were recalling their experiences as stories with a powerful narrative arc which needed to be heard from beginning to end. As their audience I was profoundly moved and gripped by their stories. I had the impression that telling their stories in full in this way was serving an important sense-making function and that each telling was perhaps helping them gain a healing perspective on such a complex, nuanced process. I was aware that people willing to attend a public event constituted to explore such a traumatic part of their personal history were likely to be an unusual subgroup of whistleblowers. However, this experience led me to reflect that studying whistleblowing and bystanding using a narrative approach would honour, or do less violence to, the experience of individuals who have lived through these dilemmas, capturing the complexity of the dilemma as well as harmonising with their own preferred sense-making strategies.

1.8 Outline of the research design

My aim in researching how responses to wrongdoing developed over time in particular organizational systems was twofold: firstly, to enable consultants and other change agents to understand more about the systemic constraints which make wrongdoing invisible or deter staff from challenging what they see and secondly to inform the development of policy to empower people within organizations to reach a position where they are prepared to speak out.

Thus, my research purpose is explorative and descriptive: - to describe how staff in organizations identify wrongdoing and choose how to respond within their specific context. I hope therefore to deepen my understanding of regularities I observe, through interrogating the relationship between an individual's narrative of their whistleblowing journey and their experience of system-level processes.

My personal experience of navigating the moral and relational complexities of confronting institutional wrongdoing and through reading and hearing whistleblowers' narratives led me to recognise that a social constructionist epistemology would be appropriate for the study. It was apparent that I and they could only give an account of their experiences by drawing on culturally available concepts of meaning, morality, causality and personhood. Although each narrator, myself included, might have a romanticised yearning for establishing 'objective truth' in an effort to justify choices made and action taken, the stories could only be articulated and understood by drawing on shared constructs.

However, the 'recalcitrance of facts' highlighted by Wengraf (2001) as underpinning narrative inquiry, was also evident in the material – things happen in organizations, which are independent of how they are construed: 'the social is relentlessly material' (Clarke et al, 2018, p. 26). Realist ontologies argue that reality exists, independent of our knowledge of it and places constraints on how sense-making (both everyday and technical) can construct that knowledge. Critical, or 'subtle' realism (Hammersley, 2007) however, argues that our knowledge of that independent reality does not equate, or aspire to uncovering objective truth. Instead the constructed knowledge provides a model of and model for 'reality' (Geertz, 1973) which can be judged as more or less credible and useful in accounting for observed processes. The focus of my interest therefore, the situated constructions of my participants, made critical realism, paired with social constructivism the best ontological fit for this study.

In designing the study, I wanted to ensure that both the psyche and the social were given equal weight, – neatly expressed by Hollway (2013) as focussing on the hyphen in *psycho-social*. To achieve this, I needed a design which would move fluidly between micro- and macro- levels of analysis: I wanted to avoid assumptions about either the existence of an "autonomous knowing subject" (Mead, 1934) or an individual-social binary.

Investigating the complexity of the 'full situation of inquiry' (Clarke et al, 2018: Chap 1) requires that discourses at the *cultural* level, should also be examined. Canonical stories will determine, always-already, the possibilities for how whistleblowing and its alternatives could be constituted within a particular historically and geographically situated culture

(Alford, 2007; Perry, 1998). These stories can be found in contemporary form, in news items, fiction and popular film, so I planned to conduct a supplementary study to explore these cultural constructions.

In summary I proposed to address the following questions:

- 1. What systemic factors are associated with the occurrence of whistleblowing in an organization?**
- 2. What factors influence individual choice to whistleblow or remain silent in the face of perceived organizational wrongdoing?**
- 3. How do wider cultural norms, including system domain defences (Bain, 1998) contribute to the construction of appropriate responses to organizational wrongdoing?**

This set of questions pre-supposes the aim of building a middle-range theory (Perry, 1998; Rustin, 2000; Wengraf, 2000) to reach a level of abstract understanding of situated actions in the context of organizational wrongdoing. The goal is to uncover meaning, patterns and connections evident within cases. The intention is not to generate causal explanation. Indeed this would not be possible from this small data set, which deals only with participants' accounts of their experience and appraisal of the organizations within which they were situated. However, my hope is that the exploration of similarities and differences between the reflections of participants drawn from heterogeneous contexts will provoke further questions about processes which are otherwise represented as naturalised practice. In this way the project can address Miceli and Near's plea to develop theory:

"concerning similarities across types of cases that also recognises the unique nature of each whistleblowing incident" (Miceli & Near, 1985, p.14).

1.9. Structure of the thesis

This first chapter has outlined the origins, in my personal and professional biography, of my research interest, how that interest was refined down into the definition of the research questions and selection of an appropriate epistemology and research design to address those questions.

Chapter 2 provides a critical review of literature addressing conceptual distinctions and empirical evidence relating to the issue of responding to institutional wrongdoing. The complexity of defining wrongdoing is highlighted by a review of the philosophical debate about the basis for ethical judgments. Findings from quantitative empirical research which search for causal explanations are reviewed to demonstrate the limitations of a methodology which cannot readily work with complexity and meaning or handle the awareness of the constructed nature of social reality. The value of taking a psycho-social approach to this issue is argued. This is followed by an account of critical social theory and the systems-psychodynamic perspective on organizational functioning, highlighting its relevance in understanding how behaviour which transgresses institutional norms is conceptualised. The process of finding a voice, becoming a whistleblower, is conceived as constructed reflexively out of personal history and a system context which required silence.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodology and design of the study. The social constructionist/critical realist ontological and epistemological assumptions of the study are outlined. Abduction, as the appropriate epistemology, is described. The purpose and design of the study is described. The selection of grounded theory and situational analysis for the method of analysis is described and discussed.

Chapter 4 describes the process of identifying and contacting study participants who were drawn from a range of organizational contexts. A detailed account of the demographics of the sample, plus an outline of the events comprising their whistleblowing or bystanding is summarized. The interview process is described: participants were interviewed individually and asked to describe the emerging process of finding a voice or choosing to remain silent through their biographical narratives. The procedure for analysing the interview data using

grounded theory is described. A further section describes a reflexive exercise undertaken to explore barriers to gaining a deeper understanding of the material I was analysing.

Chapter 5 presents the analysis of data obtained in the interviews of the whistleblowers which describes the arc of the participants' narratives. Increasingly abstracted categories were obtained and clustered into concepts which were linked to extant theories. The abstractions and the case material on which they are based are described.

Chapter 6 presents a similar analysis and findings derived from the interviews conducted with the bystanders

Chapter 7 presents findings from the re-analysis of the interview data which explored how factors within the person, organizational system and context might engage with each other to compose the organization-in-the-mind of whistleblowers and bystanders. The development of a template to organise material relevant to extant theoretical systems- psychodynamic constructs is described. Case formulations based on that template, which were developed for each participant are presented.

Chapter 8 sets out findings from a study of fictional and drama-documentary popular films representing whistleblowers. The purpose of this substudy was to explore the relationship between historical contextual factors and the representation of the whistleblowing act, in order to draw out the 'genealogy' (Foucault & Pearson, 2001) of discursive concepts which construct the subject of the whistleblower. The rationale, design and analysis of the narratives using situational analysis is described. Tentative theories emerging from the analysis are presented.

Chapter 9 draws together the findings from both the main and subsidiary study, linking them with theoretical concepts.

Chapter 10 explores the implications of my findings in answering the research questions. Methodological limitations are also discussed.

Chapter 11 briefly summarises the conclusions and explores their implications for practice.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The detection and management of wrongdoing is currently a hot topic in both public service and corporate sectors. Whistleblowers may be the heroes of the hour, but their journey to have their concerns recognised and endorsed has often been at best a pyrrhic victory – their assertions vindicated but their personal and professional lives left in ruins (Alford, 2001; 2007; Smith, 2014) while delinquent organizations remain resistant to change (Bain, 1998; Francis, 2015; Mannion et al, 2018). Now most organizations have a whistleblowing policy, to inform their employees about how to report wrongdoing and legislation to prosecute ‘wilful neglect’ is promised. Yet abuse, negligence and exploitation continue to be widespread, and passively observed by a majority of bystanders (Miceli et al, 2008; Discombe, 2021).

The act of whistleblowing is driven by a complex set of social and personal factors, motivations not all of which are necessarily heroic and outcomes which may not benefit any part of the system. (Bok, 1984; Alford,2001). On the other hand organizational silence, which is much more common, (Miceli et al, 2008), can be damaging to both individual players and the wider system but needs to be understood at the system-level to avoid splitting off and projecting responsibility for failings into a scapegoated bystander (Gold, 2014; Verhezen, 2010).

The literature on the response to wrongdoing in organizations, and on whistleblowing more specifically, has lacked a systemic approach to the issue. By a systemic approach here I mean one that takes account of the interrelation of component elements within a holistic functioning system. Empirical research has tended to focus on individual factors such as position in organization, cognitive bias or stage of moral development to identify predictive variables. (e.g. Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017; Miceli et al, 2008; Miethe, 1999) A separate line of enquiry has explored consistencies between cultures within which atrocities have been perpetrated (Hofstede,1999; Cohen, 2001). These two bodies of research have struggled to capture the complex,

processual and co-constituted nature of how an individual within a specific system makes the journey from denial to action.

In this chapter I begin with a summary of the complexity of defining wrongdoing by reviewing the philosophical debate about the basis for ethical judgments. I go on to describe how the pathway to identifying and then responding to acknowledged wrongdoing has been conceptualized. The definition and evaluation of whistleblowing is then discussed. Findings from quantitative empirical research which search for causal explanations are reviewed to demonstrate the limitations of a methodology which cannot readily work with complexity and meaning or handle the awareness of the constructed nature of social reality. The value of taking a psycho-social approach to this issue is argued, highlighting its relevance in understanding how behaviour which transgresses institutional norms is triggered and conceptualised. The process of becoming a whistleblower is conceived as constructed reflexively out of personal history and a systemic context which requires compliance.

2.2 Defining wrongdoing

Identifying universally agreed criteria for discriminating right from wrong has vexed philosophers of ethics and jurisprudence for millennia (Foucault & Pearson, 2001). They are divided on what is a justifiable basis for a moral judgment. Normative ethics, concerned with defining standards which guide ethical behaviour distinguishes principles based on rights and duties, on outcomes, or on the character of the actor.

‘Deontologists’ search for universalizable laws based on logical, a priori reasoning. Pure deontologists consider morality is an end-in-itself and base moral judgments on means, so are concerned about rights and duties and are relatively uninterested in the consequences of an act. Kant, an influential deontologist, argued that the will to do good was a categorical imperative, i.e an absolute and unconditionally necessary

action, free of any appeal to higher authority and supposedly acceptable to all rational agents (Kant, 1990).

In contrast, 'consequentialists', typically utilitarians, evaluate actions by their ends. They argue that moral judgments are universally based on the value of the outcome of an act for humanity as a whole. However, judgments invoking humanity's interests tend to promote hegemonic privilege and power and therefore readily reflect prevailing cultural norms, particularly individualism in Western culture. Bandura (2002) described the utilitarian calculus as 'quite slippery'. The judge presiding over Clive Ponting's trial in 1985 for whistleblowing described the public interest as "whatever the government of the day says it is" (quoted in Lewis et al 2014, p. 14).

Virtue ethicists argue for evaluation of the character of the actor as virtuous or not, focussing on being rather than doing, leading to a debate about what should be included in a list of virtues. Deontological and consequentialist theories overlap with this third position, which does talk about virtue as enabling certain defined ends. Virtue ethics otherwise struggle to define rules for action. Virtue ethics are thus more pertinent for identifying good or bad individuals or systems than for definitions of wrongdoing. However, MacIntyre, (1981) a leading virtue ethicist argued that since society is now morally pluralist and relativist, it makes more sense to develop virtuous characters and debate moral agency based on shared cultural ideas of a life well-lived, than to follow rules devised by institutions to maximise their hold on power (Faunce, 2004; Levy, 2006; Ludwig & Longenecker, 1993; Weaver, 2006).

How wrongdoing is defined therefore, is far from logical or objective. The same action can be judged either right or wrong, depending on which ethical system is used. In practice most ethical choices and judgments are made on a pragmatic 'all-things-considered' basis, a 'vague mixture' of incompletely theorized deontological and consequential reasoning (Gergen, 1997; Katz, 1996). People tend to use a variably stringent threshold to identify degrees of wrongness and do not use abstract reasoning as a basis for moral choice. Instead, moral actions are a product

of the “reciprocal interplay of personal and social influences” (Bandura, 2002 p. 102). Whistleblowing and bystanding also follow this vague, complex and multi-factorial philosophical path

Both individual moral choices and formal laws and rules define right and wrong to reflect the community’s prevailing norms, even if those are rhetorically constructed as enacting moral absolutes. Judgements of wrongdoing lie on a spectrum from serious criminality, through impermissible to merely improper (Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017; Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019; Miceli et al, 2008). A practice can be judged immoral but legal or, conversely, illegal but moral: for example, tax avoidance may be regarded as immoral but is certainly legal; not wearing a seat belt is illegal in the UK but not immoral. The process of moral disengagement enables actors to selectively reframe behaviour as not subject to moral judgment (Bandura, 2002). The practice of ‘avoision’, the manipulation of means to make permissible what would otherwise be forbidden, further blurs categorical distinctions between right and wrong: for example, tax avoidance (legal) falls short of tax evasion (illegal). Avoision occurs within more personal contexts too: Katz (1996) cites the use of ‘shabbes goy’ in orthodox Jewish communities, non-Jews who perform services for their Jewish neighbours on the sabbath which religious laws forbid them from doing for themselves. Kenny (2012) describes how ethical principles may be compromised to gain desired ends. Finally, wrongdoing can lie in an act of omission – failure to call a halt to escalating commitment for example (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014) - as much as in commission of an action.

In practice therefore, moral judgments are subject to considerable variation on a micro- and macro-level. What counts as wrong, legally or morally, is defined relative to the norms of a specified reference group and can be ‘policed’ in subtle ways (Kenny, 2010). As social beings we live within plural overlapping reference groups whose ethical norms may not coincide. Warren (2003) proposes a matrix of ‘hypernorms’ x ‘reference group norms’ to highlight the complex and relative quality of definitions of wrongdoing. Cultural norms and values are iteratively connected to define the boundary between wrong and right. The moral value attached to a

virtuous practice, such as gift-giving, might in another context be construed as bribery, or a legitimate practice such as political lobbying, might be construed as nepotism, (Hofstede, 1999). Vandekerckhove et al (2014) regret the ‘shallowness’ of cross-cultural research on identification and reactions to wrongdoing, which has so far not explored cultural factors coherently or reliably. They also highlight the need to consider ‘culture’ at ethnic, national, local and purely organizational levels. Post-modern relativism has rightly encouraged respect for cultural differences which can be profound. However, it has added a layer of discomfort about making moral judgments which can be paralysing and lead to mismanaging gross neglect and abuse (Jay,2015).

2.3 The process of responding to wrongdoing

In this and the following section I describe how the pathway to identifying and then responding to acknowledged wrongdoing has been conceptualized. The definition and evaluation of whistleblowing is then discussed. Difficulties in quantifying the phenomenon are outlined, followed by data about prevalence, predictive factors, and outcomes. Finally, legislation relevant to whistleblowing is described.

2.3.1 Stages before taking action

“the main dangers lie in the “unknown knowns”—the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values” (Zizek, 2004)

For actors in wrongdoing scenarios, making a conscious ethical judgment occurs at quite a late stage in the process of responding. Cohen (2001) proposed a typology of denial, reflecting that there are stages of acknowledgement of wrongdoing, including steps which precede moral evaluation. His actor potentially moves through rejection of factual evidence of wrong, to an interpretive stance where the existence of factual evidence is acknowledged but interpreted to deny wrong. In Cohen’s final

stage of denial the actor accepts the existence of a wrong but, in a process of moral disengagement, rejects the implication that they could or should take action.

Miceli et al (2008, p.38) proposed a Prosocial Organizational Behaviour ('POB') model for whistleblowing. Faced with 'questionable activity' an actor will pass through up to three judgment phases before a response emerges. Their first phase echoes Cohen's stages of denial: the wrongfulness and the locus of responsibility for action is evaluated. If that evaluation indicates that a response on their part is called for, then in phase 2 the actor considers the quality of the organization's response. In phase 3 the decision to act or not is taken, as the actor considers the responsibility for and efficacy of taking action personally and the costs and benefits of taking action are evaluated.

Both Cohen's and Miceli et al's models emphasise that responding to wrongdoing is an emerging process in which social and individual factors converge to determine an actor's eventual course of action. Miceli et al focus on actors' cognitive and behavioural attributes, while Cohen is more concerned with conscious and unconscious affective phenomena. He helpfully draws on the conceptual paradox of the unthought known (Bollas, 1987) and the defensive function of turning a blind eye (Steiner, 1993) in emphasising the role of the unconscious in denial and by implication, bystanding. However, both effectively place the individual at the centre of the process, leaving the social level of explanation undertheorized.

Culiberg and Mihelic (2017) also developed a model of whistleblowing which establishes a conceptual framework from the whistleblower's perspective, while emphasising that it is a process of ethical decision-making. Their main motivation was to provide a systematic framework to review empirical findings. Situational and environmental factors are structured into their model, which nevertheless places the individual at the centre, undermining their intention to view the process systemically.

2.3.2. Responding to acknowledged wrongdoing

2.3.2.1 Definitions of voice and silence

Faced with an acknowledged wrongdoing an actor has apparently two options: to keep silent or report. However, treating these as a dichotomy has been criticised for being simplistic (Loyens & Maesschalck, 2014) and even for tending to re-inforce hegemonic power by limiting the capacity of staff to constitute themselves as moral subjects (Teo & Caspersz, 2011)

Keeping silent or 'bystanding', can take three forms: full acknowledgement of wrong coupled with inaction; attempts to reframe it as not wrong, a 'strategic manipulation of doctrine' amounting to avoision (Katz, 1996); a cover-up or conscious distortion of known facts. Many corrective acts will go unremarked and unrecorded if the identified wrong is promptly and effectively righted by an internal agent. However, a variety of strategies of below-the-radar informal control, such as gossip and jokes and passive foot-dragging resistance are common responses to wrongdoing in organisations and can only uncertainly be classified as keeping silent as they exercise a 'disciplinary' function (Teo & Caspersz, 2011)

Similarly, giving voice or reporting is not unitary: it can take increasingly public and formal forms, running from 'raising concerns', through 'speaking up' to actual whistleblowing. Whistleblowing, one form of corrective action, tends to be employed to address wrongdoing which has gone uncorrected. However, no clear dividing line separates whistleblowing from its less formal counterparts. In the public's mind whistleblowing is equated to more extreme solutions, exemplified by high profile cases such as Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning and Katherine Gun. However, as Ceva and Bocchioli (2019; 2020) argue, a firmer moral basis for whistleblowing can be derived from the more ordinary duty to correct threats to the well-being of one's organization.

Mannion et al (2018) note that in the NHS there is a preference for 'raising concerns' over whistleblowing, although it is not clear whether this is a terminological or

procedural preference. Perhaps euphemistically, NHS whistleblowing procedures have been formalised in Freedom to Speak Up protocols. Mannion et al reflect, perhaps rather poignantly,

I think if you have to call someone a whistleblower, then it's already gone wrong . . . I think you've already, sort of, lost the battle. (Mannion et al, 2018 p.161)

For the purposes of this study, I have adopted Near and Miceli's (1985, p.4) classic definition of whistleblowing:

- there must be a disclosure
- by one or more members of an organization
- about illegal, illegitimate or immoral practices under the control of their employers
- to persons, internal or external to the organization
- who may be able to effect action to correct the wrongdoing.

In addition, Alford (2001) and Kenny (2019) both argue that someone who raises a concern within their organization, which is duly attended to and does not experience retaliation should not be counted as a whistleblower in the strict sense. Such individuals are simply fulfilling their duty to help the organization function as well as possible, rather than calling it to account. All the whistleblowing participants in my study did experience some form of retaliation

Each item in this definition has been debated and extensions proposed (Lewis et al 2014). Who counts as a member of an organization may be extended beyond its current staff to include former staff, and an increasingly important cohort, temporary and contracted staff (Oakley & White, 2006). External stakeholders, such as consumers of a service or investigative journalists, who protest about wrongdoing they witness not included since they have not been insiders in the organization. Miceli et al (2008) argue that 'bellringers' would be a more appropriate label for these figures.

Whistleblowing may call attention to problems or harm which fall short of illegal or immoral activities, particularly in personal care services (Vandekerckhove et al, 2014). Evidence shows that whistleblowing is an escalating process of disclosure, in which the whistleblower communicates information increasingly more publicly, beginning with recipients internal to the organization, through regulators to the wider public such as the media. How the disclosure is responded to determines whether escalation occurs (Vandekerckhove, 2018). Indeed, some whistleblowing incidents focus more on the failure of the recipient to act on information disclosed rather than on the original wrongdoing. However, institutional boundaries between internal and external can be constructed to influence the moral loading of the whistleblowing and how policies are drafted to support the process (Andrade, 2015). Similarly, who has the authority to define an act as wrongdoing or to stop it varies between systems and cultures (Skivenes & Trygstad, 2014)

2.3.2.2 Whistleblowing as a morally ambiguous process.

The moral value of virtually any act - and whistleblowing is no exception - can be contested. Mannion et al (2018) point out that unfolding events, including those involved in whistleblowing incidents, are inherently ambiguous and their moral status is emergent at best. Diverse definitions of whistleblowing are offered from legal, economic and ethical disciplines and across a range of organizational contexts (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019). Bowden (2013,) therefore argued that moral philosophy could provide a useful, neutral basis from which to develop a universally applicable definition and justification

Whistleblowing has been assumed to be a pro-social behaviour, in which promotion of public interests, reducing the risk of serious harm, complicity in wrongdoing and increasing accountability in organizations, trumps accusations of disloyalty or illegality. However, alternatively, whistleblowing may be considered both illegal and undermining of democracy since it forces the will of a single individual onto a system

(Contu,2014; Delmas, 2015). Bok (1984) questioned how a legitimate human and social need for secrecy and confidentiality can safely be balanced against the risk of concealing wrongdoing. Whistleblowing can be detrimental for the organization, as trust between workers and between worker and organization may be broken, reputations damaged or security undermined (Mansbach, 2011). Government whistleblowing can threaten national security (Delmas 2015). It may also be detrimental to the whistleblower's own well-being, leaving many with 'broken lives' (Alford, 2001). While whistleblowers may be lauded overtly as saints or heroes, retaliation which so often follows, punishes and destroys careers, family life and even mental health (Kenny, 2019).

Navigating this ethical minefield Ceva and Bocchiola (2019; 2020) searched for an organizational account of a watertight and comprehensive moral justification for whistleblowing. They described six individually necessary and collectively sufficient elements to correctly identify what counts as a case of whistleblowing, namely action; object (what is reported); agent; locus of the wrongdoing; addressee; purpose of the action. Their definition placed a firm boundary around acts which would qualify and excluded false positives, such as those which might count as bellringing. In the process they also ruled out various over-stringent criteria, particularly about conclusive evidence, which would deny whistleblowing status to many obviously qualifying acts. Helpfully they also offered a definition of an organization as a relevant locus, which emphasised how interrelated roles constitute an organizational system.

They described two complementary normative ethical descriptions of whistleblowing: as an individual conscientious action of last resort, ("*extrema ratio*") relevant in crisis situations to prevent serious harm or complicity in wrongdoing, when ordinary systems of accountability have failed; as an ordinary 'deontic' duty to correct threats to an organization's well-functioning. They argue that the ethical basis for the two descriptions is different but complementary and therefore, comprehensive if applied together.

The actions of last resort, those more high-profile cases which tend to be taken up by the media and dominate the public imagination, they see as individual acts of civil disobedience, which may be justified by appeal to culturally shared principles of justice and public interest when legal channels have failed. They share with Rawls (1999) and MacIntyre (1981) the view that civil disobedience is not inherently anti-democratic but able to contribute to a well-functioning democracy by encouraging positive change (Butler 2020b) in common-sense morality or 'ethos'. Because of the risk to their own welfare Ceva and Bocchiola argue that no individual in such circumstances has an absolute duty to whistleblow, but does have a moral obligation. Alford (2001) describing his informants' experience of 'choiceless choice' indicated that eventually they experienced a moral imperative where weighing of consequences had no part in their decision making. Grant (2015) suggested that whistleblowers' motivation has a spiritual dimension. Thus these last resort cases act on a mix of consequentialist considerations, where public interest is balanced against other concerns such as state security and as Alford asserts (2001, p.89) as virtue ethicists, compelled to seek out a good way of being.

Ceva and Bocchiola (2019) argue that these extreme cases are not sufficient by themselves to provide a comprehensive rationale for whistleblowing. It can be an ordinary but 'perfect' duty, where it is incumbent on members of an organization to ensure their organization avoids wrongdoing, the misuse of power mandated by organizational roles. They have been criticised for this somewhat narrow definition of wrongdoing, since ultimately, protection of the public interest must be the final and wider aim (Boot, 2021). An organization has a moral duty to establish adequate reporting mechanisms to support their duty of accountability. Although they don't label it as such, they propose accountability as a virtue ethic which will characterise the state of being of a well-functioning system. However, Faunce (2004a 2004b), in line with MacIntyre (1981) argues that what counts as a virtue is culturally determined and will therefore be relative to the organization or institution's purposes. For example, Faunce identifies relief of patient suffering as the pertinent virtue in clinical and academic medical systems. Ceva and Bocchiola allow that the tension between this duty and considerations of personal trust and public security

mean that its implementation will remain 'imperfect and conditional' (2019, p.107) in non-ideal circumstances.

Whistleblowing remains morally troublesome therefore, even after this effort to provide a comprehensive ethical guide: actors face a no-win dilemma, since often at great cost to themselves, they have to choose between breaching loyalty or their own sense of ethical probity.

Whistleblowing prescribed by state authorities, such as during the McCarthy era in the US, China's cultural revolution (Stein, 2000) and in East Germany before 1989, might be more accurately termed 'informing' which had a destructive impact on personal relations while shoring up the political process. However, informing plus dissent becomes whistleblowing (Perry, 1998). These concerns have prompted uncertainty about the risk of unintended consequences arising from making reporting a statutory duty, including the possibility that 'silent' witnesses become defined in their turn as wrongdoers (Contu, 2014; Mannion et al, 2018).

2.3.2.3 Methodological issues in researching stages in the whistleblowing process.

Given the lack of uniformity about how independent and dependent variables in the process are defined and measured, it has proved hard to accumulate meaningful comparative data about factors which predict either the decision to blow the whistle or outcomes (Lewis et al, 2014). Culiberg & Mihelic (2017), following Near, Miceli and colleagues (e.g Near & Miceli 1985; Miceli et al, 2008) review research programmes and findings by first establishing a coherent conceptual framework for the process which is a basis for generating testable propositions and summarizing research findings and gaps in knowledge. Culiberg and Mihelic (2017, p. 789) propose a five-factor model which places the individual decision-making whistleblower at the centre of the process. A whistleblowing episode can be characterized by answering five W questions – Who\What\HoW\Why\to Whom. Although they acknowledge that it is a complex process and in places that it is systemic, their approach which

privileges the cognizing individual also favours a focus on research findings and interventions which assume linear causal connection.

Sampling biases, particularly in interview studies affect the reliability of cumulative data. Recruitment of interviewees will tend to select in those who self-identify as whistleblowers. This is more likely to include respondents who have reported externally and suffered more retaliation. This bias has shaped the perception that the outcome for whistleblowers is likely to be negative (Alford, 2001). Empirical findings are unclear whether or not a majority of whistleblowers do not experience retaliation (Kenny, 2019, p.20). However, qualitative studies which explore the complex, processual and systemic nature of whistleblowing have understandably chosen to focus on those experiencing retaliation (Alford, 2001; Kenny, 2019). Reporters who 'raised concerns' which received a positive response are unlikely to count themselves as whistleblowers (Lewis & Vandekerckhove, 2015). Even in well-designed interview studies it is difficult to test the significance of underlying variables because samples are likely to be small. Non-reporters, although a much larger group, are understandably hard to identify or recruit for interview studies.

Typical research strategies each had their problems in generating reliable and /or valid generalizable findings. Near and Miceli (1985) critique strategies used to study actual events, such as case studies, surveys or field experiments for relying on retrospective recall, partial evidence and a lack of comparable material.

Laboratory studies which investigate intention and use hypothetical scenarios are not adequate methodologies to explore the complex and situated process of actual whistleblowing and data suggests that the link between responses to hypothetical scenarios and behaviour in actual events is tenuous (Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017). To date Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour has proved useful for investigating the situational complexities of moral decision making, especially through factoring in cultural norms (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2009). But the model has its critics particularly because of its narrow focus on cognitive variables (Haidt, 2001). Near and Miceli (1985) advocate the use of multiple methods and heterogeneous samples along with building a taxonomy of types of whistleblowing across a range of organizational

contexts in order to theorize about similarities as well as recognise the uniqueness of each incident. Subsequent wide ranging reviews of findings, such as Miceli and Near's own work (Miceli et al, 2008) and Culiberg and Mihelic (2017) have been able to satisfy those agenda, although without capturing whistleblowing's processual quality.

2.4. Whistleblowing in action

2.4.1. Incidence of whistleblowing

Survey data suggests that wrongdoing is more common in organizations than expected, as about half of those sampled across different contexts reported observing incidents (Olsen, 2014). Equally, the 'inaction' rate calculated by Brown et al (2008) does not support the idea that whistleblowers are lone heroes: the mean percentage of serious wrongdoing incidents observed which were not reported in his large-scale study of Australian public service workers, was 29 percent, but with a wide range from 10 to 55 percent. Official data for reporting produces lower figures than self-reported survey data, possibly because official data uses a more stringent threshold to define whistleblowing than survey respondents do. External reporting is rare – Brown et al (2008) reported that less than 10 percent of reports were made to external recipients and reports to the media, at less than 1 percent, were even less common.

2.4.2. Factors which predict whistleblowing

Meta-analyses of data (Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli et al, 2008) obtained from quantitative studies of whistleblowing discovered inconsistent results for most factors considered, including situational features such as the characteristics of the wrongdoing, organizational factors or the demographics or motivations of the whistleblowers. Methodological and definitional variations also impacted on findings. Loyens and Maesschalck (2014) cautioned that factors which predict reporting and keeping silent are not symmetrical. Intended and actual whistleblowing correlated with different variables

The few studies of actual whistleblowing tended to show small and unstable effects in tested factors.

Individual factors such as being female, higher seniority, job satisfaction and performance were all related to increased probability of whistleblowing (Brown, 2008; Olsen, 2014) Cognitive features such as stage of moral development (Haidt, 2001), self-efficacy beliefs, attributions of control and the drive to reduce cognitive dissonance are found to play a part. The nature of the affect triggered by the perceived wrong also contributes: anger and guilt increasing and fear and shame lowering the probability of speaking out. Culiberg and Mihelic, (2017) found individuals' ideology and values were more predictive than personality factors but cautioned that generally situational factors have greater and more consistent explanatory power than individual factors.

Once they have consciously acknowledged a wrong, studies show that individuals appear to conduct a cost-benefit analysis before deciding to speak up or remain silent. Evidence suggests that actors weigh up the risk of retaliation and the likely effectiveness of speaking out (Morrison, 2011).

Having a reliable and well-publicised procedure for reporting about which staff were fully informed and confident encouraged reporting in the NHS (Mannion et al, 2018). Ceva and Bocchiola (2019) argue that the existence of such procedures creates an ordinary 'perfect' ethical duty. Although fear of a blighted career undermined the intention to report, threat of retaliation did not deflect that intention once the decision was made. Thereafter actors tend not to compute consequences. Arguably at that point they become Wigand's 'person of conscience, a change agent', (NP, 2013) for whom the virtue of their moral identity becomes more salient than the consequences of their actions (Weaver, 2006) Reporting was more likely to follow a more serious or frequent transgression or if the wrongdoing personally impacted on the reporter. Both statutory guarantee of protection and incentives for disclosure generally encouraged reporting, although the latter, because of its moral ambiguity, could be a disincentive in some contexts (Mannion et al, 2018). How the

components of this cost-benefit analysis are experienced by individual actors is shaped by organizational as well as individual factors, such as the stability of their contract of employment (Oakley & White, 2006) A key feature is the distribution of authority and the extent to which an individual is prepared to delegate their authority in role upwards (Rioch,1975; Verhezen, 2010). Near and Miceli (1985) speculate that perceptions of the balance of power and dependency between management and employee also influence willingness to act

Reviews of available quantitative studies (Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017; Olsen,2014; Mannion et al,2018) conclude that searching for characteristics which might distinguish between reporters and non-reporters is unhelpful, partly because no consistent features have been found, but also because it encourages a focus on the whistleblower as a de-contextualised individual. This distracts attention from the contents of the message in order to focus on the messenger. The risks of such a focus are threefold: that the whistleblower will be pathologized and the ground prepared for easy retaliation; that the disputed wrongdoing goes uncorrected; that the pathology within the system which created the context for the wrongdoing remains invisible thereby continuing to ‘naturalise its own arbitrariness’ (Bourdieu,1977). Crucially, research strategies which explore multiple predictive factors cannot capture the essential character of the process of reporting wrongdoing which can best be understood as situated, interactional and unfolding over time (Kenny, 2015)

2.4.3. Outcome of whistleblowing

2.4.3.1. Consequences for whistleblowers

Despite regulations and legislation protecting whistleblowers from retaliation, they are widely perceived, not necessarily accurately, to suffer for their actions (Alford, 2001; Kenny, 2019). Not all whistleblowers do experience adverse reactions particularly if the whistleblowing was limited to internal channels (Lewis, 2014). UK survey data (eg PCaW, 2010) indicate that about one third of whistleblowers suffer significant adverse consequences, which may strike at their career, marriage and

family relationships, finances and mental health. Retaliation, like the process of whistleblowing itself, was shown to be phased and escalated over time (Kenny, 2015) and varied considerably between organisations. Retaliation was more likely to follow whistleblowing if external reporting channels were used and if the wrongdoing was more serious or frequent. (Brown, 2008). The form it takes may vary from formal measures, such as dismissal or other disciplinary processes to informal and more or less covert behaviours. It might be limited to ostracization by colleagues (Teo & Caspersz, 2011) but in hierarchical organizations like the NHS bullying from every level of the hierarchy was possible (Mannion et al, 2018). Seventy percent of whistleblowers never returned to work in their own industry or as the same level of seniority (Alford, 2001; Rothschild & Miethe, 1999).

Ceva and Bocchiola (2019) argue that media and research attention which has focussed on relatively rare actions of last resort is a distraction from the ordinary duty to report wrongdoing, which enhances public accountability. They and Miceli et al (2008) note that valid reports, following correctly implemented legitimate procedures can be a positive experience for all concerned. Virtue ethicists (e.g Faunce, 2004a; 2007) argue that a firm ethical framework for whistleblowing, developed from shared ideas of a good purpose, would reduce the tendency to treat whistleblowers as pariahs and open the possibility for a cultural change in ethos.

Wider social norms also influence the reception of whistleblowing. Whistleblowers have been constructed as heroes, latter day saints or conversely snitches, squealers, dirty rats. Whistleblowing itself is historically determined and culturally mediated (Perry, 1998; Grant, 2015). Despite acknowledged bad outcomes a 'cosy heroic narrative' is widespread in western democracies. However, in previously Communist Eastern Europe with its history of pervasive informing it is perceived particularly negatively (Perry, 1998). A comparison of Australian and UK attitudes showed that Australians view "dobbing-in" behaviour significantly more negatively than the British, although reporting on close friends and family was negatively regarded in both cultures. Efforts to link these attitudes to underlying cultural structures such as

proposed by Hofstede (1999) has not produced consistent results, however. (Vandekerckhove et al, 2014)

2.4.3.2. Managerial response

An active and positive attempt to address the wrongdoing is required to complete a whistleblowing episode. An active response by the recipient of a report requires 'hearer courage', the capacity to listen, which has been relatively neglected in thinking about good governance generally (Catlaw et al, 2014). The recipient of a report of wrongdoing may therefore become a whistleblower in their turn as the reported information makes its way through tiers of authority in search of a corrective response (Vandekerckhove et al, 2014; Vandekerckhove, 2018). A recipient is more likely to respond actively if that is prescribed in their role. However, role-holders may become absorbed into the culture of their employers and experience a conflict of loyalty after a time. Catlaw et al (2014) argue that listening must involve active attention and questioning of the self as much as the other, in a fearless search for truth which is part of parrhesiac care of the self. Recipients calculate the balance between the public interest and the harm to the organisation which acting on a report might cause (Moberley, 2014) Also, they may be subject to the same bullying in a hierarchical system which the original reporter experienced (Cotton, 2015). These processes contribute to the 'deaf-effect' in individual managers and 'collective myopia' in the larger system which can stifle an appropriate response (Mannion et al, 2018).

2.4.3.3. Correction of wrongdoing

Vandekerckhove's (2018) tiered response model emphasises how corrective action, like deciding to report, also follows a process. Internal reporting frequently leads to no response. Mannion et al (2018) noted that public inquiries in the NHS which investigate serious wrongdoing stretching back over decades almost routinely reported that Trusts say things are improving, without the evidence to substantiate that. However, staff who are appointed to receive reports are more likely to take

action, so the system of freedom to speak up guardians may gradually achieve the kind of culture shift of which Francis (2015) spoke optimistically: that a truly responsive culture will make whistleblowing procedures redundant (Lewis 2015)

2.4.3.4. Legislation

The legal management of whistleblowing involves juggling competing values, interests and objectives (Lewis, 2014). There are implications for data protection, particularly around risks to confidentiality and for the wrongdoer's rights to privacy and information about allegations. There are three main groups of relevant regulation and legislation: that which directly addresses whistleblowing by prescribing a duty of candour or other organizational responses and protecting the whistleblower from retaliation - for example the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) in the UK; that which gives whistleblowers a financial reward; elements of the criminal law which can prosecute retaliation or prosecute the whistleblower, for example for breaching the Official Secrets Act (Lewis et al, 2014) or a non-disclosure agreement.

In the UK NHS it is now a statutory requirement, which is monitored independently by the CQC to have formal whistleblowing procedures in place. However doubt has been expressed about the feasibility of establishing a truly independent monitoring mechanism (Mannion et al, 2018; Cotton, 2015). Further, critical reviews of the impact of Duty of Candour in the UK show that it has not achieved the cultural change intended, but rather has created defensive anxiety about compensation litigation and left staff feeling "*you get to know the truth but you can't do anything with it*" (Vick, 2019)

2.4.4. Conclusion: responding to identified wrongdoing.

Wrongdoing and the reaction to it in organizations is essentially a situated and interactional process. Meta-analyses of quantitative studies summarized above provide limited and inconsistent results, partly because of the dynamic, complex and essentially social nature of the phenomenon. Efforts to describe and explain it using

simple, even if multi-factorial, linear causal modelling and individualistic methodologies are clearly unsatisfactory from an explanatory point of view because of an overfocus on the whistleblower, difficulty in adequately factoring in situational determinants and capturing dynamic affective and unconscious processes (Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017; Mannion et al, 2018; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswervaran, 2005; Miceli et al, 2008) Meta-analyses which provide a coherent framework for conceptualising process have usefully highlighted gaps in research (e.g Culiberg & Mihelic, 2017) and have been supported by efforts to develop a firm normative ethical foundation (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019; 2020. Faunce & Jefferys, 2007). However, these methodologies have not so far provided robust insights about potential avenues for interventions including policy development.

In summary, as those analyses conclude, narrative and autobiographical research strategies have greater scope for capturing the “complexities and ambiguities of the whistleblower’s experience” (Kenny, 2019, p.4). Engaging with the complexity in depth will be essential to progressing understanding and initiating change.

2.5 A systems-psychodynamic approach to responding to wrongdoing.

Systemic and constructivist thinking emphasizes the primacy of social facts and therefore focuses on investigating the dynamic and iterative relationship between the individual actor and their social context (Hoggett, 2015; Kitayama, 2002; Papadopoulos, 2015). Cooper and Lousada (2005) writing from a systemic perspective, argue that wrongdoing requires a triangular set of relationships, involving victim/perpetrator/bystander or rescuer and that these roles are fluid within a specific system or unfolding narrative.

In the section that follows, I shall summarise a number of processes which operate in an organization to construct the experience of its individual members. Throughout I shall pull together the strands of the approach which are of likely relevance to the study of responses to wrongdoing.

2.5.1 Systemic and psychodynamic factors at work

From a systems-psychodynamic perspective, an organization can be defined by aspects of its structure and function including its boundaries, the distribution of authority, its roles and task (Hirschhorn, 1988).

2.5.1.1. Primary task

The definition of an organization's primary task is apparently simple: the work which needs to get done to justify the organization's survival. However, Armstrong and Rustin (2015) warn that the task is not a context-free phenomenon nor a given but contested and constructed (Hoggett, 2006). Lawrence (1985) distinguished normative (the formal, explicitly agreed account), existential (what members of the organization believe they are doing) and phenomenal (what they actually are doing) levels of definition of task to understand the gap between image and reality, often a component of transgressive behaviour in organizations. Lipsky's (2010) concept of 'street-level bureaucracy' illustrates how contested aspects of the primary task are negotiated in practice on the front-line of public services. For example, bias in dispensing resources or policing neighbourhoods was found to be endemic but an essential coping mechanism (Lipsky, 2010), while nurses performed tasks outside a stringent contract to fulfil their sense of mission (Blenkinsopp & Edwards, 2008; Hirschhorn, 1999)

2.5.1.2. Social defences

The experience of belonging to a group and the nature of its work create anxieties which need to be managed. Social defences emerge, usually outside conscious awareness within organizations to manage collectively those anxieties in order to get the work done (Jaques, 1955; Menzies Lyth, 1988), The threats arising from a shared enterprise are contained by those defences and converted into manageable energy which can be used in the service of the task. Although the concept of social defences, was an extension of the psychoanalytic idea of individual defences, Menzies Lyth's intention was to describe an essentially social phenomenon, socially constructed and maintained (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015).

The nature of the primary task shapes the nature of the anxiety against which the organization will seek to defend itself, within a particular cultural context. A specific task may evoke uncontrollable emotions such as fear of annihilation, envy, hope, greed and aggression and so provoke defensive behaviour to manage the threat of being overwhelmed by such unwonted feelings (Hoggett, 2015; Stein, 2000)

Social defences are expressed through norms, explicit and implicit rules of behaviour, and the distribution of roles and authority and are re-inforced by informal processes such as myth-making (Gabriel, 1991) and language games including gossip and jokes (Kewell, 2006; Teo & Caspersz, 2011). Institutions adopt “thought styles”- which generate rules and justifications (Douglas, 2006) shape the conscious and unconscious sense of agents as precursors to behavior (Papadopoulos, 2015) and provide a context to constitute affective experience (Butler, 1997a; Kenny et al, 2020) .They also provide a mechanism for group identification through defining the organizational culture and identity – ‘the way we do things around here’ (Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations with similar primary tasks, which Bain (1998) called “system domains” are likely to share social defences.

The concept of social defences has been helpful in the exegesis of types of organizational wrongdoing, for example corporate corruption, bullying and scapegoating, wilful neglect and escalating commitment (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Long, 2008; Stein, 2000; 2019; Waddell, 2007) Defences are necessary to support the healthy functioning of an organization and to help individuals persist with challenging tasks (Foster, 2019). However, since they are ingrained in the system and resistant to change, they become dysfunctional when they no longer provide containment, but become anti-task, supporting perverse practices (Long, 2008) or stifling change (Bain, 1998; Fotaki & Hyde,2014). For example, Menzies Lyth’s original report was initially greeted with contempt and outright hostility, an early demonstration of how whole ‘system-domains’ (Bain, 1998) can turn a blind eye to wrongdoing and resist change to protect staff from a painful acknowledgment of reality. Lack of adequate containment, a precursor to the social capacity to know, will lead an organization into denial and the turning of a blind eye to wrongdoing (Cooper & Lousada, 2005). Denial at an institutional level permeates the response to wrongdoing of every kind. Organizational silence normalizes corruption, protects the corporate image (Pope & Burnes, 2013) and enables an organization to resist knowing about wrongdoing and enact a collective psychic retreat (Steiner, 1993).

2.5.1.3. Basic assumptions

Bion's account of experiences in groups (Bion, 1961) describes 'ephemeral' (Hirschhorn, 1988) unconscious processes which are still uniquely social in origin. Bion considered that

" no individual, however isolated in time and space, should be regarded as outside a group or lacking in active manifestations of group psychology"
(Bion, 1961, p.169)

Bion argued that alongside the surface, rational, commitment to the work task co-exist a set of shared basic assumptions, configurations of mental activity, collectively employed by the group to express and defend against the uprush of unmetabolised feeling that the task and group membership evoke. Group members may experience a range of affects. Envy, hope, resentment, in addition to anxiety, may shape particular kinds of defensive behaviour, (Hoggett, 2015). Group members may behave in the moment as if they all shared the same unconscious assumption, although individuals will have a 'valency' or tendency to act on particular assumptions. Similarly, these assumptions will manifest in organizations with various authority structures and tasks, although different ones may be more likely come to the fore in particular structures (Long, 2008).

Bion identified three basic assumption 'mentalities' or cultures. Dependency ('baD' henceforth) entails the group idealizing the power and understanding of a leader so that they can depend entirely on her/him to provide security and solve their problems. In a group operating under an assumption of pairing ('baP' henceforth), is infused with hope that a dyad, unconsciously elected to produce a magical solution, will solve their existential problems. Under the assumption of fight/flight ('baF' henceforth), the group aims to preserve itself either by banding together to fight a threat or by taking flight, as decided by their leader.

Additional assumptions have since been identified. Turquet (1974) added basic assumption Oneness ('baO' henceforth) in which group members experience an 'oceanic' sense of merging with an omnipotent force. Lawrence et al (1996) then added the basic assumption Me-Ness ('baM' henceforth) which they characterise as an emphasis on separateness and hatred of the idea of 'we'. Cano (1998) argued that baO and baM can best be conceptualised as two poles of a single dimension.

As they function defensively, basic assumptions may support the work of the organization, but can generate 'anti-task' behaviours which tip over from poor performance into outright wrongdoing (Long, 2008; Stein, 2000)

2.6. The socially constructed context and its defences

Organizations are embedded in a wider cultural and political context. Schein (2010) defines three levels of culture, running from the tangible to the unconscious, which impinge on organizational life. Trivially, explicit cultural norms and artifacts prescribe behaviour, but at a more profound level culture constructs what can be known or experienced – sets the limits of the possible and shapes values which define right and wrong and legitimate purpose (Hoggett, 2006). This hermeneutic understanding of the relationship between culture and individual experience accounts for the impact of culture on the formation of primary tasks and social defences. The rise of individualism (Hofstede, 1999; Lasch, 1979) impact of globalization and networked management (Cooper & Dartington, 2004), the marketization of customer/provider relationships in health and social care (Cooper & Lousada, 2005) all play a part in shaping our current context. This has been usefully summarized as a 'market civilization' (Gill, 2003) Foucault argued that neoliberalism creates social conditions which recursively constitute an economic subject structured by specific motivations such as competitiveness and self-interest (Foucault et al, 1991). Knafo and Lo Bosco (2017) argue that we are currently in the age of perversity, characterised by self-authorising freed from structures of hierarchical authority, dehumanization and commodification of persons and excited delight in exploitation and fetishization, all of which has been aided by technological developments. Levine (2005), focussing on

the pathological narcissism underlying greed emphasises the drive towards ultimate fulfilment, commented that this is culturally shared. Chasseguet-Smirgel noted that perversion functions to “*push forward the frontiers of what is possible and to unsettle reality*” and that such a state of mind and associated behaviours are particularly common during periods of social and political upheaval (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1988, p. 177).

Cultural norms act as defences against prevailing fears, such as the threat to individuation entailed in dependency, or the threat to survival entailed in the recognition of limit and scarcity (Long 1999; Lucey, 2015). The ‘dark sides’ of organizational life (Stein & Pinto, 2011) can be linked to the distorted operation of defensive mechanisms. Corruption in financial enterprises has been linked to collusion and destructive narcissism and to manic omnipotence, triumph and over-activity (Stein, 2000; Stein & Pinto, 2011). Idealization of the profit-motive seeks to deny the survival risks associated with greed, limit and scarcity (Levine, 2005; Lucey, 2015). In the case of bullying and scapegoating, splitting and projection are used to externalize badness and re-inforce boundaries (Gold, 2014). This rids the organization of aggression and hatred, defends against a fear of difference and re-inforces boundaries, concretely enacting basic assumption of fight/flight (Gold, 2014) For example, Francis (2015) has identified a culture of bullying in the NHS due to the drive to meet targets replacing the ethic of care. The neglect of abuse in recent child physical and sexual abuse tragedies can be understood as a borderline or narcissistic defence: turning a blind eye is made more possible by the marketization and regulation of welfare, which dehumanizes its object and protects the worker from the risk of dependency and empathic suffering (Cooper & Lousada, 2005; Dartington, 2010). Escalating commitment, such as in the Challenger spacecraft disaster, reflects institutional denial. The purpose of the organization is idealized, subordinates project all authority into seniors and responsibility for different aspects of the project are split off (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Krantz & Gilmore, 1990). Those calling attention to the project’s failure are scapegoated and become the focus of projections of badness.

Long (2008) has provided an extensive survey of the impact of unconscious, perverse dynamics on wrongdoing in organizations. She argues that:

“corporate corruption is a conscious manifestation, the iceberg tip of an unconscious perverse societal structure and dynamic” (Long, 2008, p:3)

She outlines five indicators of a ‘perverse state of mind’ existing within an organization, or indeed an entire system-domain. Although these indicators are developed from understanding of the individual psychology of perversion, she shows how they are generated out of defences operating at a societal level. Organizations employing these defences pursue their own interests without concern for legal or moral consequences. The indicators can be summarised as follows:

1. A state of ‘primary narcissism’ grabs for individual benefit at the expense of more general good and allows the other to be used merely as an object to further that aim. Underlying that is a denial of difference between self and other.
2. Reality is simultaneously acknowledged and denied, disavowed, to allow perpetrators to triumph over powerlessness, reflecting the process identified by Bollas (1987) as ‘the unthought known’ The absence of a clear boundary between image and reality allows truth to be distorted to serve the interests of the hegemony.
3. Bystanders are engaged collusively as accomplices to enable a wholesale ‘psychic retreat’ (Steiner,1993) A gang mentality may build up, which enforces collusion and denial about wrong-doing among its members (Long,2008; Stein,2000a; 2000b).
4. Instrumental relations dominate the system, obliterating difference and denying others the right to independent existence
5. ‘Perversion begets perversion’ by recruiting others into cycles of corrupt practice which are hard to terminate (Long, 2008 p.15)

She distinguishes different manifestations of the operation of these indicators, each reflecting a deadly sin: pride, greed, envy, sloth and neglect, wrath. This is not an

explanatory typology, but rather a way to describe different combinations of unconsciously held structures and dynamics.

Long's account of perversion includes a thorough review of psychoanalytic thinking about how perversity is manifest in the individual, which she extends to the organizational and cultural level, with the caveat that this is an extrapolation. She acknowledges, but does not make much of the idea that perversity is "*a temptation in the mind common to us all*" (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1988, p. 177), and does not deal with the argument that there is a continuum with no clear demarcation between the perverse and non-perverse (R. Stein, 2005). Knafo and Lo Bosco suggest examples of stages in that continuum: at the extreme of cultural perversion lies mass cruelty such as genocide; corruption of public interest goods lie in the middle; civil disobedience does repudiate existing norms but with the intention to challenge bad laws and create a positive new order. Universal perversity can turn into outright perversion, if the impulse becomes entrapped into something fixed and rigid (Knafo & Lo Bosco, 2017). However, the repudiation of prevailing norms and dissolution into chaos which is part of perversity can have a creative as well as destructive aspect. Something new may emerge from the abolition of difference and excitement in transgression entailed in perverse activity. (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1988; Knafo & Lo Bosco, 2017; R. Stein, 2005). Parody and humour have a generative role to play in questioning and subverting oppressive laws (Butler, 1993; Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1988; Linstead, 2007). It is striking that civil disobedience can have a role to play in both perverting norms and attempting to address the wrong which follows (Delmas, 2015, Knafo & Lo Bosco, 2017). Hirschhorn (2018) explored how the usual scaffolding of a well-functioning regular work organization must be subverted for a 'developmental project' to flourish. The features of a perverse organization outlined by Long (2008) are put to good use in a developmental project. But Hirschhorn pointed to the risk that objects at the boundary become fetishized, so that reality is disavowed.

Individuals faced with wrongdoing in their organization have to address the challenge of distinguishing where the behaviour they are witnessing lies, along the continuum from generative to destructive. Similarly, because perversity is a

temptation common to us all, potential whistleblowers cannot be immune to its exciting pull.

Another aspect of perversion which has been somewhat neglected by Long, is what Ruth Stein (2005) calls the perverse pact in which one actor within a relationship enacts their hatred and destructive feelings arising from the loss of the good, loved object in a perverse manipulation of the other. Revenge is exacted by triumphing over and controlling the other, who is seduced into excited collusion (R. Stein, 2005; Stein, 2021a; 2021b). This dynamic can be observed in some of Long's 'sins' (e.g, wrath, envy, neglect) but is less apparent in greed and pride. Arguably, perversion is not a unitary phenomenon and can include both the reversal of good and bad, with the dynamic of revenge and triumph and the disavowal of difference, repudiation of prevailing norms and descent into chaos, which contains some capacity for creativity.

2.7. The socially constructed individual within the organization.

Social constructionist theory regards phenomena such as the status of a subject, identity, meaning, truth and knowledge as socially created, arising out of shared discourse. Discourse was defined by Foucault as the point of intersection between bodies of knowledge and power and 'disciplinary practices' (Foucault, 1979) which together constitute a subject. The extent to which individuals' subjectivity is entirely fixed from birth has been questioned and whistleblowers pose a particular challenge to this socially determinist position. They are by definition insiders within a given institutional culture but consciously choose to place themselves outside prevailing norms in the service of challenging wrongdoing. How therefore does a whistleblower arrive at a position where they feel compelled to act contrary to that discourse, while surrounded by colleagues who continue to comply?

In his earlier writings, Foucault, like Althusser (2008) considered that an individual subject is always-already 'hailed' i.e. interpellated, from birth by ideology which transforms the biological individual into a subject functioning within formal and

informal laws, who is thus led to believe that what is happening is natural, inevitable and cannot be challenged. This process of interpellation takes place in the unconscious of the subject, via structures of thinking imposed by language and a system of meanings, defining what is possible, including within the realm of ethical action. If individual subjects are socially constructed, then there is a risk that subjects become actors without psyches, possibly capable of cognition, but without a theory to account for emotions (Hochschild, 2012) or for the possibility of personal subjectivity and identity (Frosh et al, 2003).

Judith Butler, accepting that the construction of subjects is 'radically external', argues that subjects are not fully determined or passive beings. Discourses are complex, conflicted and multiple, giving subjects the chance to evolve in the process of their contact with the other. To exist as a recognisable subject, an individual enters into a world of experience constructed by language, which constrains what can be experienced, said or done. (Butler,1993). Both world and self are constantly changing, therefore. In her view subjects are 'always-becoming' (in contrast to Althusser's fixed and hailed subjects) through congealed layers of experience in which affect plays a significant role. Following Lacan's (1999) emphasis on the subject's awareness of lack as a developmental driver the subject experiences a 'passionate attachment' to reproducing discourse in order to assume an identity, 'come into being' within the social world, even if this leads the subject to "embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially" thus being active participants in normative violence. (Butler, 1997a p.101; Kenny, 2010; 2020)

The systems-psychodynamic understanding of organizational functioning also links micro-level individual phenomenological description of institutional experience to more generalizable concepts of macro-level social structure and function. Instances of individual behavior are construed as the outcome of a complex mix of personal history and internalized but collective perceptions, rules and values. Thus, here too the individual within an organization is not a passive recipient of social norms and values but is creating and adapting those attributes in a complex interaction with the open system of their workplace and the unfolding narrative of events.

Not all individuals want to speak truth to power. The convergence of cultural and political pressure and individual collusion behind a ‘boarding-house’ state of mind (Stokes, 2015) was vividly captured by Havel’s description of a green-grocer’s compliant posting of a politically correct slogan in communist Czechoslovakia. Havel describes the majority opting for speakability in choosing to ‘live within the lie’. (Havel, 1985) and is vividly expressed by an employee in a hospital implicated in the Jimmy Saville scandal:

“It’s not my business to know; I can only know what I know....I can’t be judge or jury and don’t want to be”¹

2.7.1. The rebellious subject

Subjects who refuse to identify with core signifiers which contribute to a dominant discourse cross a boundary of ‘possibility’ according to Butler (1997b) which render them ‘object beings’. They have been described as poised between different discourses (Perry, 1998). By falling outside dominant norms by virtue of their speech and behaviour, subjects become de-realized and their speech becomes ‘impossible’. While this is potentially catastrophic for an individual’s sense of self, the militant insistence on a hearing creates the possibility of change and development as the boundaries of the sayable are pushed back. Butler’s claim for the radical externality of the Self, argues that subjectivity is formed through relatedness – “whoever I am will be sustained and transformed by connections with others” (Butler 2020b, p.200). Thus, whistleblowers’ demand to be heard allows them to re-invent themselves as ethical subjects (Kenny et al, 2020).

Foucault’s (1991; 2001) late work discussed the conditions which historically made it possible for an individual to speak truth to power, stepping out of the clutch of discourse. He argues that regimes of truth change over time as much as regimes of power and that what counts as a truth-telling game is located within a specific

¹BBC Radio 4 Today Programme 26 Feb 2015.

discourse. His analysis of *parrhesia* (translatable as frank or 'fearless speech') therefore describes truth-tellers as situated subjects engaging in situated actions. However, through engaging in practices of the Self, attending to their own relation to truth, they gain the capacity to constitute their own subjectivity, while disclosing the historically situated and arbitrary nature of normative constraints. He defined *parrhesia* as

“a verbal activity in which the speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself)” (Foucault & Pearson, 2001: pp 19-20)

Foucault offers five criteria which construct the identity of a *parrhesiastes*: what they say must be critical, of prevailing opinion, practice, or the politically powerful; they show courage, placing themselves in danger by speaking out to a powerful other; their belief in the truth expressed must be credible; they feel a duty to speak out, yet exercise free choice; they speak frankly and plainly. The process of becoming a *parrhesiastes* involves practices to care of the self (Foucault, 2008/2012) in which the subject searches for a virtuous way of being-in-action. His criteria usefully characterise the actions of many whistleblowers and so scholars have taken up his concept of *parrhesia* as a framework to describe and analyse the process of reacting to wrongdoing (Kenny et al, 2020; Mansbach, 2011; Munro, 2016; Vandekerckhove & Langenberg, 2012; Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013). However, the data from Kenny & colleagues' study of whistleblower subjectivities call into question whether whistleblowers can fairly be characterised as *parrhesiastes*. They did not find their informants were fully aware of the risks entailed by their truth-telling, nor were their selves free from being constituted by their organization. It is questionable whether leaking counts as *parrhesia* since it is done anonymously, at minimal risk to the leaker and with less motivation for truth-telling than on achieving political change. (Delmas, 2015)

Butler discusses the case of subjects who deliberately make themselves vulnerable, in order to claim the possibility of challenging the dominant order. For example

street protestors such as Extinction Rebellion actively appropriate an abject identity as an act of resistance (Bargu, 2017; Butler, 2016; 2020b; Varman & Al-Amoudi, 2016). As the credibility of the whistleblower's testimony is rooted in evidence of their personal integrity, subjects have publicly exposed their own suffering and humiliation in order to testify to wrongdoing by the powerful, as for instance in the #MeToo movement and during the 2020 investigation of Brett Kavanaugh's suitability for election to the US Supreme Court. Butler describes this use of vulnerability as actively opening up sites of resistance to power. Vulnerability is not an attribute of the subject but instead becomes a feature of social relationships (Butler, 2020b p 201).

2.8. Narrative and identity

Bruner (2004) argues, there is a reflexive relationship between narrative ('life as told') and experience ('life as lived'). Narratives construct coherent accounts out of chaotic or random experiences, in turn shaping what can be experienced. Studying narrative provides a route into observing how humans create and communicate meaning in their lives.

Stories, vehicles which communicate narratives, may reflect either cultural, organizational or individual levels of experience. Culture contains a 'stock of canonical stories' (Bruner 2004), which reflects shared assumptions and meanings and provides models of and for social life (Douglas, 1986; Gabriel, 1991; Lule, 2001). The narrative approach emphasises the interconnectedness of personal and social meanings, temporality, the relational quality of events and concern with morality.

Especially in the face of disturbing experience, individuals show a drive towards imposing temporality and coherence on constructed narratives (Crossley, 2000). However, narrative does not, in itself, impose structure on experience – instead it makes explicit the process of shifting between practical action and symbolisation. Indeed, subjects' avoidance of linear and coherent narratives in constructing their preferred subjectivities has been noted (Riach et al, 2014)

Individuals connect to culturally available stories, whether presented as fact - historical or contemporary news - or fiction – novels, theatre or film - through recognising typicalities (Rustin et al, 2000) in the story and testing them against their own experience. However, because of their polysemic, ‘slippery’ (Gabriel, 1991) nature, stories do not function as an uncritical mirror of the status quo.

Organizational stories may capture either the managed, official account of the organization or the ‘unmanaged’ version. Gabriel explicitly links such stories to the development of social defences. They will also contribute to forming personal or collective organizations-in-the mind (Armstrong, 2004) Subversive stories create tension between versions of ‘facts’ or supposed reality and dramatically portray how trouble happens where social legitimacy has been breached. In these ways the dominant hegemony and the ‘regime of truth’ on which the legitimation of its power rests, (Foucault, 1979) can be made apparent and challenged. In stories arising from the unmanaged organization, criticism, resistance or even resigned acceptance of its practices can be expressed and shared by its members (Gabriel, 2012; Teo & Caspersz, 2011).

The ‘biographical turn’ within social constructionism makes possible the study of situated individual experience. Temporality and connectedness are key features of narrative and provide a framework for describing agency and identity (Bruner, 2004; Kenny, 2015; Rustin et al, 2000; Wengraf, 2001). Individuals use their autobiographies to constitute their own identities, but their choice of possible selves is made within disciplinary discourses which both repress and produce their subjectivity (Driver, 2015; Kenny, 2010; Thornburrow & Brown, 2009). Subjects try out different available narratives in sense-making work to achieve coherent self-narratives (Sims, 2005). Whistleblowers are no exception, rescuing themselves from a position as a non-subject, by constructing a narrative of an ‘ethical self’, in which bystanders are constituted as abject (Kenny, 2018). This emphasis on the reflexive relationship between the individual and the social restores interest in an agent’s inner world, while maintaining interest in how it is shaped by culture and language (Chamberlayne et al, 2000).

In summary, an individual's actions at a moment in time reflect a dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship between and actor and social context (Hoggett, 2015). Layers of meaning, personal, organizational and cultural, are thus intertwined to form the ideas, feelings and behaviour which compose an individual's experience within an organization

2.9. Organization-in-the-mind

'Organization-in-the-mind' (Armstrong, 2005) is a useful synthesising concept. The idea an individual holds of their organization, and the aspirations and anxieties they bring to their role are formed iteratively out of their history of object relationships, emotions generated by the organization's work (Armstrong, 2004) and prevalent discourses. Personal history determines an individual's valency for tapping into the organization's defensive manoeuvres and the extent to which they are in step with the identity of their organization or profession (Bain, 1998; Stokes, 2015). As Tucker neatly expresses it, they are:

"pushed in terms of self... pushed in terms of role and pushed in terms of the organization" (Tucker, 2015, p. 266)

And, one might add, pushed in terms of disciplinary discourses.

Thus an individual's organization-in-the-mind emerges from something that the 'psychic reality' of the organization does to them, a process that Armstrong calls 'in-actment', which resonates with their personal narrative and sense of identity, idea of role and task (Tucker, 2015) to elicit en-actment, of their internal state in the context of the organization.

2.7 Conclusion: a theoretical formulation of denial and whistleblowing.

Wrongdoing results when an organization's social defences fail to contain destructive impulses. External cultural pressures, which make the contested nature of the primary task unmanageable create the context for this failure. The internal and external gang (Stein & Pinto, 2011) converge to exert extreme pressure on

individuals to collude, consciously or unconsciously, to join the spiral of silence (Morrison, 2011). Individuals' personal histories give them a valency to share in prevailing basic assumptions or to position themselves on the outside, to become the dissident who refuses to live within the lie (Havel, 1985). The role of whistleblower is thus defined by the context of silence from which they emerge. In other words, they become a whistleblower only because the system requires silence.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Purpose

The aim of this study is to analyse the processes of identifying wrongdoing and choosing how to respond within specified organizational contexts. My eventual purpose is to inform professional consultation which promotes ethical practice within their organisation. To that end, I have interviewed a sample of whistleblowers and bystanders who observed wrongdoing within their place of work.

My purpose is primarily descriptive. I asked '*What*' questions (Blaikie, 2010) to investigate what actors (i.e. staff in organizations) do to construct their understanding of particular kinds of experiences within their situation. Following that I have explored what processes drive the action they choose to take to resolve the emergent problem they faced - of having recognized wrongdoing.

Beyond these descriptive investigations, I asked '*Why*' questions to understand and theorise the reasons why individuals acted as they did, situated as they were. I compared individuals facing a common dilemma, but in contrasting contexts. I used this comparative method, not to identify underlying causal factors to explain their behaviour, but to interrogate observed relationships between individual and system-level factors. My intention was to produce a complex description, accessing the tacit knowledge which individuals use to constitute situated meaning-making and action. I hoped that this complex description could form the basis for an abstracted, theorized understanding of my informants' choices and actions.

Because my method explored only my participants' subjective accounts of their experiences I was aware that I must be cautious about making any claims for the validity or objective reality of their experience of the organization they worked in. Nor could I legitimately assume a causal connection between their external circumstances and their responses. As Armstrong (2005) reflects, what people

choose to speak about when discussing their organization provides useful 'intelligence' about the organization. This can guide abductive hypothesising but does not provide an independent or objectively true account. Critical realism as an ontology, which this study embraced, accepts that external reality places constraints on what its observers might construct, but those constructions are part of sense-making, not objectively 'true'. As is described below (see section 4.2.3iii), the interview technique I used was designed to provoke my participants to deconstruct their narrative of events (Pangrazio, 2017) which they implicitly accepted as static (Alford, 2007) and as naturalised practice (Barthes, 1972; Douglas, 1986). In extracting a sequential list of baldly described incidents from participants' narratives and giving an account of the socio-political context of events, as Clarke et al (2018) and Long (2016) require for a thorough description of the full situation of inquiry, I aimed to develop a more objectively constructed narrative of events. Thus the research was designed with the relatively limited intention to understand the subjective world of my participants as they underwent a common process which set them on a disruptive course with their employing organization.

Underlying this specific purpose, related to the management of wrongdoing, I was curious about the process whereby an individual begins to think independently of the social norms of their organisation. I wanted to study how an individual makes the choice to place themselves outside those prevailing norms, to 'undo' their prescribed identity (Butler, 1997a) and operate at the limits of the social.

3.2. Epistemology and ontology

Ontology is concerned with assumptions made about the form and nature of social reality and whether that reality exists independently of human understanding. In this study I have followed a critical realist position, that external reality has an existence independent of people's construction of it, although there is no possibility of gaining a single, perfectly correct or true account of it.

Epistemology defines what counts as knowledge, how we know things and how that knowledge is evaluated. I have taken a firmly interpretivist, rather than positivist, stance in this study.

3.2.1 Positivism versus interpretivism

Positivism posits an independently existing 'reality' and is committed to uncovering the best possible account of that reality, about which there can only be a single objectively true version: the project of positivist empirical science is to provide successively better approximations to this objective truth, via impartial observation of phenomena and their causal associations. Positivist research aims to produce generalizable findings which can provide testable predictive assumptions. Grounded in the assumptions and techniques of natural science, positivist paradigms applied to social science have struggled to deal with the complexity, ambiguity and processual nature of social realities.

By contrast, interpretivist epistemology aims to reach a provisional understanding of social processes, particularly of situated meaning-making. That the nature of facts, values and ultimately plural 'truths' are subjective and contingent on circumstance is a central tenet of this approach. Behind this epistemology is the ontological assumption that social reality, action and meaning, is composed of emergent, constantly evolving processes, produced by its inhabitants, which cannot be observed objectively. Therefore the epistemology which works for the natural sciences risks imposing inappropriate assumptions on social science data. The standpoint, or subjectivity, of both the actors studied and the researcher is recognised as co-constructing, rather than discovering, the provisional understanding which is the product of research in this paradigm. That said, interpretivist research can and does move from specific to generalized understandings, while investigating either individual or collective phenomena. The goal is to move from the study of the 'lay descriptions' of the actors themselves to increasingly technical and abstract theorized descriptions (Blaikie, 2010).

3.2.2 Abductive reasoning

Abduction provides method of scientific investigation and reasoning which is an alternative to deduction or induction. Deduction's starting point is a logical premise or *a priori* truth, from which necessary conclusions about specific facts can be drawn. Induction moves from specific empirical observation to generalizable, but probabilistic conclusions and is concerned with uncovering regularities which support hypotheses explaining what has been observed. Abduction begins with a set of observations (data) and infers the likeliest explanation for the observed phenomena.

Peirce (1965) has been credited with first identifying and defining abductive reasoning. He described the process of inference as first observing some very curious circumstance, then guessing that it was a case of a certain general rule and going on to adopt the inference as the best available explanation before moving on to test the theory further.

As this definition points to both the observation of data and the generation of a general rule, it has been argued that abduction is a version of induction. However, as Charmaz (2014) argues, it has distinct aims and methods of verification. Abduction may begin with the collection of empirical data, usually what is available, rather than systematically sampled, but moves on to the generation of best-guess, plausible explanations. 'General rules' here references what is normal and familiar, rather than statistically probable. Peirce offers a vivid example to illustrate the method: while travelling in Turkey he noticed four horsemen holding a canopy over a fifth man. Peirce concluded that the fifth man must be the governor of the province as only someone that important would be honoured in that way (Peirce, 1965). Walton (2001) breaks down the logic of Peirce's reasoning thus:

- D=a collection of data (*in this case, observing the 5 horsemen riding by*)
- H_1 = hypothesis explains D (H_1 =*the 5th man is very important*)
- No other H can explain D as well as H_1 does.

- Therefore H_1 is likely to be true.

This example illustrates how abductive reasoning is similar to everyday situated reasoning – we constantly make similar judgements of likelihood as we navigate our way through the world (Denzin, 2010). Peirce had to draw on his previous experience and understanding of Turkish protocol to make sense of what he saw and come to a pragmatic and plausible conclusion. Abductive conclusions do not have the finite quality of deductive inference – for instance Peirce’s ‘conclusion’ would be readily open to refutation if, round the next corner, he found a procession of invalids being similarly escorted. Clinical diagnosis, criminal detection and juries’ judgements obey the same provisional, best-guess rules of inference – making do with indeterminate data and embracing uncertainty. However, as Walton explains (2001) H_1 can be evaluated: even in everyday reasoning we can’t afford to accept any old theory. Pragmatically we need to make a cost-benefit analysis of the use-value of our chosen hypothesis. We must ask therefore: how decisively H_1 is better than its alternatives; how plausible (convincing) H_1 is; how thorough the search for alternative plausible H’s has been; how reliable the data is which we have assembled.

3.2.2.1 Abductive methodology in this study

Abductive methods are well adapted to the purposes of those branches of social sciences which aim to reach a relatively abstract understanding of situated action, where data are meanings and patterns of relating. Abduction is therefore an appropriate methodology for this project. I hope to generate plausible non-causal explanations for a set of observations of people facing evidence of wrongdoing. I anticipate forming inferences, testing them repeatedly, tacking back and fore as Charmaz (2014) advocates, against the data I collect to establish their capacity to capture and account for observed patterns. This process constitutes an attempt to build a middle-range theory, moving beyond description towards an explanatory scheme (Blaikie, 2010). The justification for accepting the emerging theory or account will depend on how credible and relevant the explanation appears to be.

Given there is an expectation that findings from this study will inform practice, its credibility can also be evaluated by whether it can generate plausible theory-practice links.

3.3. Social Constructionism:

Social constructionist theory has both ontological and epistemological aspects. It is argued that social reality, or that which we can know of it, is socially created rather than discovered. Not only can we not experience an unmediated world, but, as Giddens argues by a process of the double hermeneutic, our knowledge and understanding influence the construction of that reality:

“The findings of the social sciences very often enter constitutively into the world they describe”. (Giddens, 1984, p.20)

An example of this process in action is the influence of the concept of individualism: investment in the idea of the primary and autonomous individual shapes much research in social psychology and in turn impacts on institutional, legal, ethical and behavioural rulemaking. Once enacted via those processes, the existence of the autonomous individual tends to be confirmed. In contrast Foucault (1979) argued that the idea of the self is constituted out of and within power relationships.

Phenomena in the social world are represented in symbolic form, in a language, or system of shared signs and signifiers which may be verbal or visual. Language is therefore fundamental to our capacity to engage with social reality. It both constructs and constrains understanding (sense-making) and is performative. It is a form of social action in itself, particularly capable of forming and maintaining social identities.

Shared sense-making forms discourses, ‘systems of meaning that are a product of the social world’ (Hollway, 2013, p 21). These are bundles of theories about knowledge and power. Social constructionism, in contrast to positivist

epistemologies, does not consider that reality is, or can be, represented neutrally. Knowledge is inevitably tied to power since it constructs what Foucault calls '*the conditions of possibility*', within regimes of power (Foucault et al, 1991). Knowledge and power together constitute ideology, reflecting the economic relations of production which control access to material and non-material resources. Subjects who live within specific discourses are compellingly interpellated into accepting discursive ideas as natural, inevitable accounts of external reality – that which "*goes-without-saying*" (Barthes, 1972). Repeated patterns of language use become institutionalised and come to constitute the dominant version of objective reality. This epistemology therefore makes situated, language-using human relationships of central importance in the construction of knowledge.

The social constructionist paradigm has to address two theoretical issues to complete a definition of its epistemology: the stance taken on realist versus relativist ontology and the linked question of the existence of a knowing, autonomous subject.

3.3.1. Social constructionism and the realist versus relativist debate

Realist ontology argues for the existence of real-world objects apart from the human knower. In contrast, relativism argues for the existence of multiple, equally legitimate versions of reality. Social constructionism might appear to be a relativist doctrine therefore, sceptical about both the existence and knowability of objective truth. It has been criticised for making it hard to choose between versions of reality, for creating difficulties in dealing with entities such as diseases, which have an undeniable objective existence and with accounting for, or driving, change. However, social constructionism does not make anti-realist ontological assumptions. It is committed to a weakly relativist epistemology, which holds that objective reality cannot be accessed directly or perfectly even if facts are "*recalcitrant*" (Wengraf, 2001). Informants inevitably provide fallible and partial evidence about outer world dynamics while describing their lived lives (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2013):

*“We make our own history, but not under conditions of our own choosing”
(Chamberlayne et al, 2000, p.7).*

In practice few social constructivist studies follow a strongly relativist stance (Charmaz, 2014), favouring instead ‘subtle realism’. This is a realist ontology but subjectivist epistemology. Critical realism holds that knowledge can only be constructed from the knower’s perspective and that it represents, not reproduces, a phenomenon. All accounts of specific phenomena are not equally valid, but will be assessed on their plausibility, credibility and relevance (Hammersley, 2007). Methodological strategies such as purposive sampling, in depth and prolonged observations subject to standardised recording and analysis, checking of alternative hypotheses against fresh data, reflexivity recognised as co-constructed by researcher and informants are used to test this modified form of validity. Similarly, accounts are recognised as situated, i.e. constituted and endorsed within a specified culture, located in time and place, (Clarke et al, 2018; Giddens, 1984;) and so can lose their status as valid generalisations as their context shifts. Thus, under this critical realist perspective, knowledge embraces uncertainty, and its status is always partial and fallible

3.3.2 Social constructionism and the knowing subject.

The epistemology of social constructionism fundamentally rejects the essentialist idea of the ‘autonomous knowing individual’ who stands outside the social. If individual subjects are not information-processing rationalists, neither is it sufficient to view them as passively determined by sets of social-demographic variables, a weak version of social constructionism (Hollway, 2013). The solution lies in the notion of the ‘discursive subject’ which construes subjects as formed by discursive representations, constituted within socio-cultural domains (Frosh et al, 2003; Hollway, 2013). However, this formulation still leaves a difficulty in accounting for how and why a subject takes up a particular discursive position, endorsing hegemonic (dominant) options or taking up a counter-hegemonic position.

The turn to psychosocial studies makes subjects both social and psychological. Drawing on psychoanalytic understanding, particularly object relations theories, to account for individual differences, the assumption that the inner lives of individuals are also enculturated is not violated. Frosh et al (2003) argue that an active 'agentic' self, constructed out of unconscious identifications, equivalent to Butler's passionate attachment to dominant discourse (Butler, 1997a), can be recognised by listening for both the conscious and unconscious expression of social and psychic defences:

"This helps to provide a plausible narrative of why specific participants become embroiled in particular patterns of anxiety, producing their individualized cocktail of beliefs, behaviours and accounting practices abstracted from those available in the cultural pool" (Frosh et al, 2003, p.41).

Available identity positions are seen as shaped by a combination of social discourses and unique individual biography, in which the psychic and social are 'sutured' together (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008).

3.3.3. Appropriate methodologies for accessing subjectivities

Frosh and Baraitser (2008) argue that there are methodological parallels between reflexivity and transference and countertransference as tools for investigating subjectivities without recourse to the idea of the knowing subject. Frosh questions whether reflexivity would be better understood as transference rather than countertransference and expresses concern about the validity of using psychoanalytic technologies outside the strictly structured clinical situation. However, methodologically there is a shared acknowledgement of the mutual influence of researcher and researched in constructing meaning and of the need for the researcher to interrogate their own responses to the material they gather to engage with the agentic subject (Frosh, 2003; Gilmour & Kenny, 2015; Hollway & Froggett, 2013; Kenny, 2019).

3.4. Autobiography as the 'data' of this study

Quantitative and positivist research methodology has struggled to capture satisfactorily the complexity of whistleblowing, essentially an emerging and relational process. In contrast, whistleblowers' autobiographical accounts reflected the importance of temporality and connectedness in organising their response to identifying wrongdoing.

Narrative is the process at the core of social constructionism. While narratives provide a culturally shared framework for describing agency and identity, they are essentially relational since the story has to be articulated and heard in order to exist. The study of narrative and autobiography in particular, therefore provides a mechanism for observing how humans create and communicate meaning in their lives. (Bruner, 2004; Rustin, et al, 2000).

3.4.1 Autobiography

The interpretation of 'luminous cases', i.e telling examples, drawn from biographical research, allows the discovery of generalizable theories about situated experience (Rustin et al, 2000) through the study of the reflexive relationship between active subjects and social structures. Through studying autobiographical narratives, the influence of systemic issues on personal choice can therefore be explored. Although this project is rooted in hearing individual biographical narratives, my analytic focus was also on the *systemic* influences through which those narratives were constructed.

3.4.2 Biography and critical realism: choosing a comparative methodology

The 'recalcitrance of facts' highlighted by Wengraf (2001) as underpinning narrative inquiry, was also evident in the narratives I encountered in planning this study and in reflecting on my personal experience of organizations. Things happen in organizations, which are independent of how they are construed. As Clarke et al

(2018, p. 26) remarked, '*the social is relentlessly material*'. The focus of my interest therefore, the situated constructions of my participants, made subtle realism, the weaker form of social constructionism, the best ontological fit for this study. Wengraf has criticised the lack of balance in focus between the internal and external world in psychosocial studies and argued for a twin-track method which gives appropriate attention to external structural features of biographical accounts, the 'lived life' alongside analysis of the 'told story' (Wengraf, 2000).

The Biographical Narrative Interview Method ('BNIM' henceforth) (Wengraf, 2001) is designed to explore the "situated subjectivity" of participants, that is the complexities of their lived experience, taking into account their understanding of their inner and outer worlds and how these are mutually constituted. BNIM's structure follows explicitly social constructionist and critical realist ontology and epistemology. The purpose of BNIM's approach to narrative structure and expression is to grasp the subjectivity of the narrator. A complete narration is seen as consisting of sequences of events – 'one-thing-after-another'- laid out in temporal sequence. The things in these sequences can be actions, feelings or thoughts, both conscious and unconscious, the latter including concerns at the individual, social and cultural level. Tacit assumptions expressing relatively uncontested discourses will be conveyed outside conscious awareness in narratives.

Wengraf follows Bruner (2004) in seeing stories as inherently subversive, because they bring out tension between canonical versions of institutionalised reality and the unexpected and complicating events of individual narratives. Froggett and Chamberlayne (2004) demonstrated how readily the intersection between individual narrative and organizational stories can be examined using BNIM. Wengraf expects that both individual and collective subjectivities will be 'defended' in order not to know threatening things about their internal and external worlds (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2013). Material which is unconscious and non-narrative will contribute to illuminating such subjectivities. Non-narrative material is also registered and valued, but not explicitly elicited as the interview technique is

relentlessly narrative. Thus, I considered that the BNIM interview method would be a good fit for engaging with my participants.

In order to further facilitate awareness of external structures I opted to compare how my particular process of interest, responding to wrongdoing, would be played out across different institutional contexts

3.4.3. The 'full situation of inquiry': biography and cultural-level discourse.

To investigate the complexity of the 'full situation of inquiry' (Clarke et al, 2018) I wanted to examine discourses functioning at the *cultural* level. Whistleblowing has been an extraordinarily popular subject in commercial cinema over many decades. Studying the evolution of the portrayal of whistleblowing in film over historical time permitted investigation of the *genealogy* (Foucault et al, 1991) of discourses constituting the social identity of the whistleblower.

3.5. Systems-psychodynamic framework as both ontology and epistemology.

I wanted to avoid the assumption of either the existence of an autonomous knowing subject or fall into a reductive individual-social binary distinction. My leading framework of thinking and investigation is systems-psychodynamic. Its understanding of organizational functioning links micro-level individual phenomenological description of institutional experience to more generalizable concepts of macro-level social structure and function. Its ontology and epistemology avoid a dualistic reduction to either individualism or social determinism. Instances of individual behavior are construed as the outcome of a complex mix of personal history and internalized but collective perceptions, rules and values.

In addition to exploring how and why individuals choose specific courses of action faced with institutional wrongdoing, I wanted to understand more about how those 'collective perceptions' were formed and operated. Durkheim, and following him, post-modernist, constructivist thinkers such as Althusser (2008); Mary Douglas

(1986), Foucault et al (1991) and Raymond Williams (2015) proposed that society gives individuals structures to think with.

3.6. Analytic strategies

3.6.1 Grounded theory: a theory/methods package

Constructivist grounded theory ('GT 'henceforth) (Charmaz, 2014), is appropriate for my project's aims. Its methods provide "*systematic and flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories*" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1). As Charmaz states, it is a theory/methods package, combining concrete methodological procedures and assumptions about ontology and epistemology. Social reality is taken to be "multiple, processual and constructed" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). Charmaz describes her more interpretive version of grounded theory as applying abductive logic that is initially inductive, comparative, and emergent. Plausible suggestions about what is going on are gained abductively via interpretation and inferential leaps. Charmaz acknowledges that it is an appropriate method to combine with biographical data collection methods. Accordingly, I employed GT, to analyse data obtained from biographical interviews with individual participants and in order to develop theorised descriptions of processes.

3.6.2. Situational Analysis

I opted to use Situational analysis (SA henceforth) to analyse data in the film study. SA shares theoretical assumptions with GT, which it can be seen as extending, or as Clarke terms it, pushing it further round the interpretive turn (Clarke et al, 2018). The central difference is in the emphasis placed on social action and process found in GT and SA's focus on interpreting the 'full situation of inquiry'. Clarke places emphasis on the study of the *co-constituted* context, which includes a wide range of elements human and non-human, which will make the social features of a situation more visible and available for investigation. In line with its objectives, SA has been adapted to study a range of extant visual and verbal materials.

3.7. Methodology: summary

Social constructionist and critical realist epistemology and abductive methodology is a good fit for my study aims, which was conducted within a systems-psychodynamic framework. Recognising that individual experience is situated within discursive systems implies an acceptance of a critical realist ontology, which is also a good fit with the 'recalcitrant facts' of organizational systems.

I am interested to achieve an understanding of how and why individuals choose an identity position which runs counter to hegemonic discourse. In keeping with the idea of the double hermeneutic I needed a methodology capable of observing the complexity of an emergent process, a product of highly contextualised (situated) relationships. The study's findings are necessarily indeterminate and fallible, given the working assumption that experience and meaning is co-constituted. In intending to answer how and why questions about individual actions I aim to generate plausible explanations within a psychosocial framework. Those explanations in turn will generate hypotheses about useful focuses for consulting with individuals and organizations attempting to confront wrongdoing within their institutional system.

Chapter 4: Main Study methods

4.1. Outline of method

I interviewed 9 individuals who self-identified as whistleblowers or potential whistleblowers within their employing organization, to obtain a biographical narrative of how they arrived at the point of blowing the whistle. I also interviewed 2 individuals identified by two of my whistleblower participants as bystanders to the key events which prompted them to blow the whistle. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using constructivist grounded theory, to generate a theorized understanding of the process of choosing how to respond to organizational wrongdoing.

An exercise in collective reflexivity was conducted part-way through the process of analysing the data. The aim was to deepen my understanding of the emotional experience of my research encounters, which had become somewhat blocked at that point. That procedure and findings are described in Section 4.7.

4.1.2 *The sample*

I identified a sample of convenience, initially by circulating my 'flyer' (see Appendix 2) widely among my network of contacts working in organizational consultancy and by approaching closer colleagues directly. Subsequently I engaged in more purposive sampling, seeking out contacts with people working in organizational sectors which I wanted to ensure were represented. To achieve that aim I approached people within my professional and personal networks within the mental health, charitable and international development sectors.

4.1.2.1 *Procedure for identifying and making contact with participants*

4.1.2.1a. with whistleblowers

I asked my network of contacts for introductions to individuals who were known to have been in the past, or to be currently involved in, the process of whistleblowing. I also attended a number of academic and interest-group conferences focussed on whistleblowing

and approached individual attenders who self-identified as whistleblowers inviting them to consider participating in my study. I obtained contact details for individuals who had indicated willingness to consider participating and sent them my detailed information sheet (Appendix 2) and a copy of the consent form (Appendix 3) to consider signing. I arranged phone calls with each potential participant to talk over the procedure involved and answer any further questions they might have about their participation.

Once I had made contact with a named potential participant, I was impressed and grateful that almost all readily agreed to participate and had few further questions to ask. This was my introduction to the generosity and bravery shown by my participants. Only one person with whom I arranged an interview dropped out of the process, explaining that he had experienced a personal loss at the same time as becoming embroiled in a further whistleblowing episode.

In addition to these contacts achieved through professional and personal networks I asked for support in distributing my flyer more widely by approached the chair of a large whistleblower support network and an NGO established to support people working in public service who were concerned about wrongdoing they had witnessed. I received no response from the first of these organizations and my request stalled with the second because they were undergoing some restructuring at the time.

4.1.2.1b with bystanders

On completion of the interview, I asked each whistleblowing participant if they would consider putting me in contact with someone who was an actor within their main whistleblowing episode who had chosen not to collaborate actively in the exposing events. Most of my participants (7 out of 9) were intrigued by the request and began to reflect immediately on who they might approach. Several agreed to think about it further and contact me if they could see that they could facilitate an introduction. Eventually two of my whistleblowing participants generously approached a colleague or ex-colleague and obtained their consent for me to contact them. The two people thus identified did complete interviews.

Two whistleblowers refused my request immediately. One had deliberately and self-protectively severed all connections with colleagues in the workplace within which she had blown the whistle and was clear that she could not therefore meet my request. I agreed with a second participant that I would not ask for any such introduction as she had not yet decided how far she would pursue her whistleblowing actions and also, we had a mutual acquaintance who still worked in the organization.

4.1.2.2. Participant profiles

Table 1 (page 71-2) summarises the demographic profiles of the participants I recruited and an outline of their whistleblowing or bystanding narrative. The names and identities of participants have been disguised to protect their anonymity. Only generalised information about their employing organization and their role within it have been presented in the table. In the text, details have been disguised or withheld where possible, while preserving structural equivalence.

Table 1: Participants' profiles

Name	Gender	Whistleblower(Wb) /bystander(Bs)	Sector	Nature of wrongdoing	Internal report +outcome	External report +outcome	Remained in post?	Retaliation
Sandra	F	Wb	Health	Neglect of responsibility to provide adequate resources	Y: Failed	Y: to politicians; news media Success	Y	Disciplinary procedures
Beth	F	Wb	Health	Neglect of responsibility to provide adequate resources, patient and staff safety.	Y: failed	Y: CQC Failed	No	Workplace gaslighting; Open hostility and aggression
Ben	M	Wb	Health	Uncritical use of invasive interventions	Y: failed	Y: Royal College investigation; TV documentary Partial success	Partial – limitation in role	Disciplinary procedures; loss of valued role; Ostracised by colleagues
Fiona	F	Bs	Health	As Ben	n.a.	n.a	Partial change in role	No
Bev	F	Wb	Not-for-profit	Misuse of charitable funds and neglect of wellbeing of staff	Y: failed	N	No but found alternative work in the sector	Some ostracising by managers and removal of role functions
Andrea	F	Wb	Not-for-profit	Misuse of charitable funds bullying	Y:failed	N	No but found alternative work in the sector	Sacked for minor error; bullied and micro-managed

Table 1: Participants' profiles (continued)

Name	Gender	Whistleblower(Wb) /bystander(Bs)	Sector	Nature of wrongdoing	Internal report +outcome	External report +outcome	Remained in post?	Retaliation
Philip	M	Wb	Corporate	Misappropriate of money	Y: success	N: but the organization collapses	Found work outside organizational structures	Blamed and criticised by colleagues
Lia	F	Wb	Corporate	Neglect of responsibilities	Y: success	n.a.	Y, with enhanced status	Excluded and denigrated initially
Jeremy	M	Wb	Corporate	Bribery	Y:failed	Y: S.F.O; news media+ v ltd response over many years	N. Became a whistleblowing activist	Excluded; denigrated;
Tim	M	Bs	Corporate	As Jeremy	n.a.	n.a.	Retired – personal goals achieved	N
Trevor	M	Wb	Inter-governmental	Neglect of staff safety	Y: failed	Y: legal system, gained minor concessions	Retired	Blackballed from organization; blamed for failures

4.2. Interview procedure

4.2.1. Identifying an appropriate interview technique

I selected the Biographical Narrative Interview Method ('BNIM' henceforth) (Wengraf, 2016) as appropriate to my purpose, epistemology and methodology.

Although the data collected are stories, told through time, from the shifting perspectives of the individual informant, material about the institutional context within which the experiences narrated by the informant occurred can be read off:

“Indicating important things about the institution through the traces of its functioning left in the lived experience of the individual” (Wengraf, 2016).

This reading off provided a subjective version of reality. The assumption is made that there is a causal link between their subjective appraisal and subsequent choices and behaviour. There is no assumption within this methodology, that objectively determined features of an organizational system have been shown to cause their behavioural responses.

I was drawn to the method because of its emphasis on exploring the parallel narratives of what Wengraf terms 'the lived life', i.e the objective life-events and the 'told story'. The structure of the interview and the procedure for extracting parallel narratives enables a thoroughly psychosocial approach. Also, because of the method's emphasis on temporality, BNIM is well adapted to the study of the kind of longitudinal, gradually unfolding process which is the focus of this study.

4.2.2. The BNIM interview

The procedures described in this section summarise the method as set out in the Short Form of the BNIM Manual (Wengraf, 2016). A BNIM interview takes the form of an open-narrative interview, with very little overt structure, to allow interviewees

to determine their own form for what they choose to tell. However, interviewers are required to keep strictly to predictable procedures and interview style. This predictability enables a comparison between study participants' idiosyncratic narratives since they are delivered in response to identical interviewing strategies. The interviewer's approach is non-directive but actively listening.

4.2.2i. The 'SQUIN'

The interview begins with a carefully crafted single question aimed at inducing narrative ('SQUIN' henceforth) which is asked of each participant using identical wording. The SQUIN contains an invitation to tell the life-story, emphasising the push for narrative about events; and setting the time frame for the story:

The basic format for the question is as follows:

"I want you to tell me the story of your life, all the experiences and events which are important for you up to now. Start wherever you like. Please take the time you need.

I'll listen first, I won't interrupt. I will just take some notes for after you have finished telling me about your experiences".

This is the format for a 'whole-life' question. It can be adapted to ask for partial narratives focussed on a life-stage or an aspect of biography, such as professional career. The timeframe in a partial narrative is left as open as possible, to allow the interviewee to define the relevant period subjectively.

4.2.2.2 The interview procedure

The interview has two subsections separated by a short interval. Optionally, a third subsection can be added, conventionally some days or weeks after the main interview, in which more structured, follow-on questions can be asked. However, I did not use this third section with any participants.

4.2.2.2i. the first sub-session 'SS1'

The first sub-session is used to obtain the narrative of the overall story. The interviewer is directed to avoid shaping this initial presentation of the story by any intervention other than re-iterating the SQUIN and non-verbal signs of encouragement. Noticing what the interviewee does not mention is as relevant as recording what they do say. This sub-session ends when the interviewee firmly indicates that they have no more to tell. The interviewer notes key 'cue-phrases' which are used in sub-session 2 to cue the interviewee to provide detailed narratives about particular incidents

4.2.2.2iii the interlude

There follows a short break, typically lasting about 10 minutes during which the interviewer chooses cues to probe for more detailed narratives during the second sub-session. The interviewer selects cues which are relevant to their research question or seem to be emotionally significant judging from the interviewee's behaviour. The interviewer prepares to probe for more in-depth narratives using phrases which emphasise the located nature of the event. The interviewer might typically ask

"You said <X> happened. Do you remember that particular <incident/event/day>, how it all happened?"

4.2.2.2ivi. the second sub-session, 'SS2'

Here the interviewer encourages the interviewee to talk in greater depth about Particular Incident Narratives, or 'PINs'. The interviewee is encouraged to talk from *within* the experience of the event, with the level of emotional engagement as if they were re-living the experience, rather than talking *about* it, looking back from their present perspective. This is the aspect of the interview technique which can be considered most provocative. Participants are invited to disrupt their scripted and tacitly known accounts of experience. (Pangrazio, 2017). They are encouraged to remember, but in a different way.

PINs are explored in the order that they were mentioned in SS1, and the session ends with the last PIN identified during SS1, to ensure that the gestalt of the whole story, as the interviewee experienced it, is maintained, even if it does not necessarily follow a coherent timeline. Finally, once interviewees fall silent, they are asked if there is anything else they would like to add to make sure the interviewer has fully understood what was going on.

4.3. Preparing to use BNIM

I was given access to the then current BNIM manual (Wengraf, 2016) to learn the interview procedure. I then developed a SQUIN appropriate to my research questions (see section 3.3.1 below for details) and conducted two practice interviews to develop my interviewing style in keeping with the BNIM approach (see section 4.3.2).

4.3.1. Developing the SQUIN

I developed a partial SQUIN, since my research focussed relatively narrowly on a stage in my intended participants' working lives. I did, however, want to explore their whole-life narratives preceding their experience of organizational wrongdoing. As required by the procedure for gaining access to BNIM, I sent a preliminary draft of my SQUIN, together with my research questions to Dr Wengraf for feedback.

He advised modifying my SQUIN in line with BNIM principles to avoid language which reflected theories or assumptions informing my research questions which might not align with my participants' experiences and to emphasise that I am interested in their own lived experience. He also advised a slight variation for bystanders, while being careful not to use that identifying term, since it might not reflect the participant's own sense of their position in the organization.

The final approved version, which I used for every interview is shown below. The slight modification for bystanders is presented within brackets:

“As you know, I’m researching what people do when faced with wrongdoing within their organisation. So, can you please tell me the story of your life: up to when you started to sense (version for Bystanders = ...up to when you became aware that there were concerns...) that something was not right within your organisation and what happened after that, all the way through to now. I am interested in all those events and experiences that were important for you, personally.

I’ll listen first, I won’t interrupt. I’ll just take some notes for after you’ve finished telling me about your experiences. Please take your time and begin wherever you like.”

4.3.2. Conducting practice interviews

To ensure that my interview style was in line with BNIM principles and practice I conducted two practice interviews, the transcripts of which were reviewed by Dr Wengraf. Two female friends agreed to be interviewed, understanding that I was learning a research interview strategy. They were informed that part of the anonymised transcript of their interview would be reviewed by a supervisor who would focus on my interview style, not the content of their responses and that no further use would be made of their transcripts. With their consent I asked them about how they chose their career.

In the first practice interview I strayed into an exploratory approach, prompting my interviewee to reflect on feelings and meanings, therefore abandoning a narrative focus. Dr Wengraf advised me to tolerate my own uncertainty while pushing for narratives. I think that I had not yet made the transition from a therapeutic encounter enabling some self-understanding in my interlocutor, to a research interview which could capture my collaborator’s situated subjectivity. Therefore, in the second interview I followed closely the set format of BNIM questioning. Both I

and my interviewee were impressed by how she became immersed in the vivid recall of some events whose significance was not initially apparent once I pushed for a narrative detailed enough to evoke an emotionally loaded account. This was my introduction to the provocative quality of the BNIM procedure.

I noted how I felt intrusive, despite using the prescribed narrative-focused questioning and that I avoided pursuing some events offered as a topic by my interviewee. On reflection I think I may have been defensively avoiding hearing about difficult and intimate experiences. I found that after completing the interviews and transcripts I was intensely pre-occupied by the stories that I obtained from my practice interviewees. This intense pre-occupation was to be a repeated experience after almost all of my actual research interviews. The practice interviews helped me to anticipate this experience and ensure that I did not in future self-protectively modify my questioning.

4.4. Conducting the Interview

4.4.1. Choosing a venue to conduct the interview

Participants who had consented to be interviewed were invited to choose a venue in which they would feel comfortable to talk about topics which were likely to be personal and probably distressing. I offered a neutral consulting room space at Tavistock Consulting, to travel to somewhere at or near their own home or office or to find a suitable and convenient space which was none of these. Only one participant chose the neutral space of Tavistock Consulting. Four (3 whistleblowers and 1 bystander) chose to be interviewed in their current place of work. Three (2 whistleblowers and 1 bystander) chose public venues near their homes or work. One invited me to his home and two asked to be interviewed in the relatively relaxed but private space of my own consulting room.

For 3 participants a second interview was needed, to complete the in-depth exploration of extracted PINs. Interviews lasted between 119– 229 mins (mean duration=186 mins)

4.4.2. Recording the interview

Each interview was recorded on a Sony IC digital recorder. Recording began once the participant had asked questions they might have about the procedure and signed the consent form. Each recording began with my asking the SQUIN, was paused during the interlude and ended once the participant signalled that they had no more to add after the final PIN had been explored in SS2. The digital recordings were downloaded to my computer, which is password protected. The individual files were given a research code which fully anonymised the participants. The key to these codes was kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Before each interview I made written notes of my expectations, uncertainties and anxieties about the forthcoming interview. After each interview I wrote debriefing notes, recording my reflexive response to the experience of the interview, including my impressions of how the interviewee reacted to participating in the interview and my experience of them in the whole situation. I also noted material which seemed to have been emphasised and omitted. In line with constructivist epistemology, I bore in mind that interviews are performances that participants give for particular purposes (Gilmour & Kenny, 2015).

4.4.3. Transcribing the interview

The digitalised file, identified only by the research code was sent electronically to a professional transcribing service with its own policy on confidentiality. The service transcribed each file verbatim into a table in Word. A new row began with each change of speaker, so that the interviews were mapped as question and answer. The Word files were returned to me electronically. The service then destroyed their copies of the recordings and transcriptions. I listened to each recording while editing

the transcribed texts for errors. The transcriptions were saved identified by their research code on my computer.

4.5. Analysis

I opted to use grounded theory (GT henceforth) to analysis the interview data. Wengraf acknowledges that GT's constructivist epistemology is consistent with the aims of BNIM and can be a reasonable approach to analysing data obtained from an interview conducted using BNIM interviewing methodology (Wengraf, 2016) .

I used GT rather than BNIM's interpretive strategy for several reasons. This study is concerned with a narrative arc with a relatively fixed ending, namely the decision to report concerns or not. BNIM's future-blind technique for analysing data and its focus on sequences of choices, central to its interpretive strategy, is therefore neither possible nor particularly relevant for the study's aims. I was interested to explore the impact of a set of conscious and unconscious processes in which internal and external forces are continually intertwined to drive an unfolding narrative. My focus is therefore on the typical actions of actors with the aim of discovering generalizable propositions from the start of the analysis.

4.5.1. Compiling the timeline of the 'lived life'.

For each case, where possible, I extracted a skeleton timeline of the 'lived life' as directed by routine BNIM strategy..Wengraf calls this the hard biographical data:

"..the chronological sequence of the 'objective' historical facts about the person's life" (Wengraf, 2000, p. 145).

This charted key aspects of participants' personal history before they joined the organization in which they observed the wrongdoing, events leading up to identifying the wrongdoing, action they took in response and events in which they were involved which followed the exposure of the wrongdoing. This information

mainly emerged during SS1, but in some cases needed to be fleshed out by information obtained in SS2. The timelines obtained are presented at the beginning of each case formulation in Chapter 7.

Participants' timelines did not contain equivalent information for the following reasons: one participant was unwilling to disclose her history before early adulthood; the two bystanders made little or no reference to any pre-adult experiences; one was still considering whether to escalate her reporting of wrongdoing to an external authority and therefore did not have reporting events to narrate.

4.5.2. The coding process.

The purpose of coding is to take data (usually interview scripts as in this study) apart, to 'define and label' what is happening, in order to develop increasingly abstract and analytic accounts of processes to develop, if possible, an emergent theory. Coding '*generates the bones of the analysis*' for Charmaz (2014, p.113). Initial coding names each segment of data, then during focused coding the most significant codes are selected and integrated into increasingly abstract and analytical codes to compose categories

4.5.2.1 Initial coding

For initial coding I opted to code incidents, rather than line by line in the transcripts. Charmaz recommends that incident coding makes comparative analysis more possible (Charmaz, 2014, Chap 5). Therefore, I segmented transcripts into units, starting a fresh unit at the beginning of a new incident, defined by a change of situation, personnel or distinct event. I assigned gerunds to each unit, paying attention to participants' tacit meanings as well as their explicit statements. Charmaz recommends this as a useful heuristic device which enables actions and sequences to emerge having fractured the narrative. Table 2 shows an example of an initial

coding from one participant, Sandra's² interview, where she describes an argument with a colleague over room use:

Table 2: Sample of initial coding

Transcript	Initial code
she sort of laid into me is how I remember it. She sort of said, you know, that it was awful --	Being verbally attacked by the nurse
I mean I can't remember the words, but I do remember a feeling, that I'm being attacked in quite an aggressive way which actually led to me being quite anxious. So I ended up feeling quite anxious. And I found that when I was going into the clinic after that I actually had anxiety, I had acute anxiety.	Feeling constantly anxious because of the aggressive attack

4.5.2.2. Focused code selection

I derived focused codes by selecting initial codes which either occurred frequently or seemed to condense significant meanings.

Table 3 shows the focused codes which emerged from this part of the text of Sandra's interview (not all the initial codes which contributed to the focused codes are shown):

Table 3: Sample of focused codes

Initial codes	Focused codes
Being verbally attacked by the nurse	Being frustrated that she had to justify something quite reasonable
Feeling constantly anxious because of the aggressive attack	Feeling constantly anxious about aggressive atmospheres until she left that job

4.5.2.3. Defining categories for individual participants

For each transcript I then clustered focused codes into categories. Charmaz describes category development as the stage at which the data analysis moves from

² All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of participants.

description to a more abstract, theoretical level (Charmaz, 2014, p.180). To ensure that I did not impose pre-conceived conceptual notions on the data by selecting out only those codes which supported a hypothesis I had already formed, I took each focused code in turn and used it to form a new category or contribute to the definition and elaboration of an already existing category. I wrote extensive memos on each category, linking the definition to events in the sequential narrative, to the reflexive data written before and after the interviews and to extant concepts from the systems-psychodynamic framework, where relevant. Appendix 4 contains examples of memos elaborating two significant linked categories in Sandra's narrative.

Charmaz advocates paying attention to *in vivo* codes and using them to identify categories which characterise important aspects of a process (Charmaz, 2014, p. 190). Participants frequently use idiosyncratic turns of phrase to capture significant meanings, often using highly condensed and metaphoric language as signifiers to connote complex experiences. The terms may be culturally shared, discursive markers or unique to a participant but can give access to implicit meanings and can provide key sensitizing concepts. Consequently, I highlighted such terms where I was able to notice their occurrence. Because such codes when they are shared have a '*what-goes-without-saying*' quality (Barthes, 1972) they can easily be missed. Appendix 4 contains a telling example when Sandra reflected "*I just want to be treated like a human being*"

For some participants I developed cluster diagrams (Charmaz, 2014, p 187), as a way to map the relationships between categories to identify which processes were core elements in their journey towards responding to the wrongdoing they perceived. An example of an early stage in developing such a map, which reflects Philip's data is shown here:

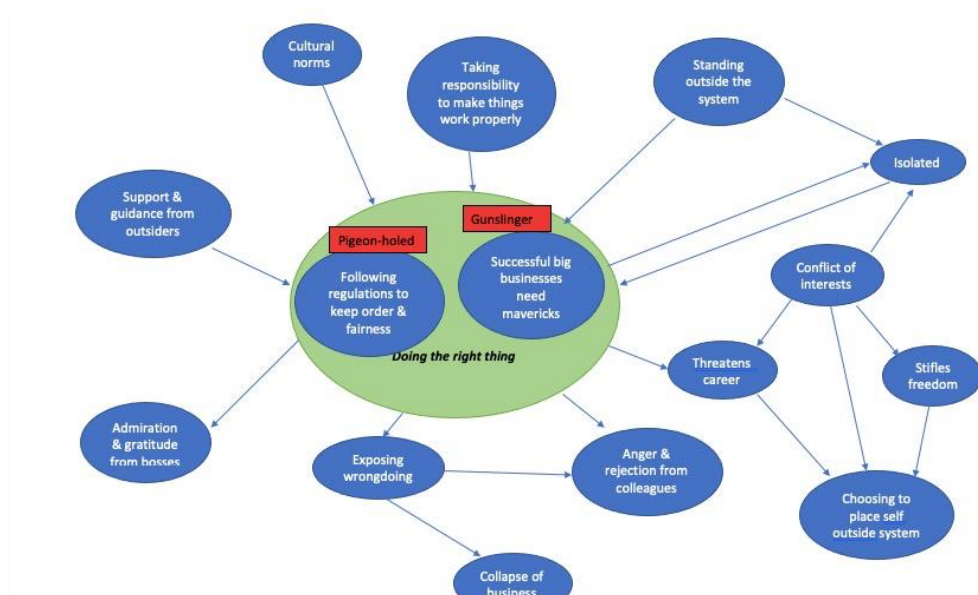


Figure 1: Example of a preliminary clustering of one case (Philip)

4.5.2.4 Extracting composite core categories

By using a constant comparative method, I constructed a set of core categories which spoke for my whole data set. I took all the categories listed for one individual as a set of potential core categories. I then compared the next individual participant's categories to the initial set, one by one, deciding whether it could either be used to elaborate an existing category or needed to be treated as a new category. In this way, the content and meaning of core categories were constantly refined whilst also giving space for individual differences. Extensive memos were constructed, elaborating the meaning of each composite category. Each participant's experience was compared to the existing descriptions, to further refine the description if relevant, or to trigger the opening of a new category.

Once a list of core categories had been defined, I generated a composite cluster diagram to map the relationship between the categories, paying particular attention to whether or not I had found pathways linking categories existing in the data. The

cluster diagram (see Figure 2, page 94) represented visually, the multiple alternative routes leading to reporting or remaining silent.

4.5.2.5 Developing abstract analytic concepts

Finally, I clustered the core categories into a set of abstract analytic concepts which explicate the processes involved in reacting to wrongdoing from within an employing organization.

4.6 The collective reflection procedure: Learning to tolerate bearing witness.

“The facts are known, but the story of suffering and evil and its affective meaning are denied and revealed abruptly for and by the gaze and the presence of the eyewitness”

(Ullman 2006, p. 185)

4.6.1. Rationale

As I collected, recorded and began to analyse my data I became aware of a visceral sense of hitting a brick wall. Each time I approached some material with the intention of reflecting on what might be going on beneath the surface of the extant narrative, I recoiled from the task and felt unable to think. This created an effective barrier to a deeper understanding of the processes I was researching. I wanted to understand what might have led to the building of the wall and also how to find at least a chink in it.

The social-constructionist epistemology of this study emphasises that reality is constructed and that I have co-constituted the material I am analysing. Every part of developing and conducting this study has contributed to that co-construction. Kenny et al (2019; 2020) argue that the process of interviewing a participant ‘fixes’ their identity as whistleblower. That has happened before I approached the formal analysis of the data. Also, in my epistemology there is a strand of critical realism which constantly worries at the subjectivity of this approach, reminding me of the existence of ‘the real’, the underlying so-called objective reality and the need to find

a place for that reality without simply raising questions about the ‘truth’ of what I have heard.

Emotion suffused the entire process of collecting and analysing the data. Anxious anticipation preceded each interview. I knew a varying amount about each participant before I met them: some were recruited in person, others through my professional or social network. In each case therefore I had some ideas about who I was going to meet before the interviews took place and wrote memos about those preconceptions. This provided me with data about my ‘personal’ countertransference (Casement, 1990). In the actual encounter I was almost invariably surprised by the unexpected. So, that preliminary work was helpful both in surfacing assumptions I might be holding about the identity of whistleblowers/bystanders and in clearing the way for listening to the participant with an open mind. During the interviews I attended consciously to what participants said, but also attempted to listen, in a state of reverie (Ogden, 1997) to how participants communicated their story, to understand more about what emotions they experienced during the events described and in their retelling in the interview. How the telling resonated with me provided ‘intelligence’ about the organization (Armstrong, 2004) which helped to form my understanding of their organization -in-the-mind. This part of the data collection was akin to another aspect of the countertransference – *“an instrument of research into the patient’s unconscious”* (Heimann, 1950, p. 81). I wrote memos to capture this data, as soon as possible after each interview, again after listening to the recording and later, on reading the verbatim transcript. I often found the participant’s narrative fragmented and incoherent during the interview, while I struggled to maintain the structure of the interview procedure, only to find that the written narrative seemed much more coherent. In retrospect I think that I was responding to the affect which suffused the told story, which had been ‘smoothed out’ (Alford, 2001, p. 40) when I attended only to the words. However, in some cases there was an opposite effect. For example, Andrea, who particularly valued her capacity to communicate, impressed me with her fluent and clear manner of telling her story, which masked the hesitancy and contradictions which were evident on the page. I also discussed each case in depth

with my supervisors, particularly to explore observations about the two aspects of countertransference hoping to make as much sense of the whole situation of inquiry as is possible in one-to-one interviews.

However, I still felt that I was facing a brick wall on the other side of which there was something potentially valuable. Yet I also began to feel stubbornly resistant to moving forward. Cooper's (2018) reflections on the experience of losing one's mind – of being unable to think - in the presence of projections, and the need to be emotionally open to new 'ugly facts' in order to change a fixed world view, the experience of what-goes-without-saying (Barthes, 1972) stimulated me to question these issues in my own approach. I wondered whether I was caught up in projections of which I wasn't conscious, and what ugly facts I might not be sufficiently emotionally open to noticing.

At this point several factors about the context of my research work began to preoccupy me. One was the conflict between realist and constructivist ontology which was surfacing in my struggle with my data. Some crude but persistent doubts circled in my thinking about whether the narratives I was working with were 'true' or was I caught in a spiral of subjectivity? Secondly, I became aware of the solitary and therefore, somewhat paradoxical individualism of my work. Despite the immensely helpful reflective stance of my supervisors, I felt the need of more of a community of practice, which might also provide the missing analytic third position (Ogden, 2004). The dialectic to be gained from intersubjectivity might enable me to find the elusive chink in the brick wall.

4.6.2 The paired reflexivity approach.

I was aware that a doctoral colleague was also dealing with some blind spots, although working on quite a different research question, using different methodology. We were, however, both working within the systems-psychodynamic framework. We decided therefore to explore the possibilities of a collective reflection exercise, as described in Gilmore and Kenny (2015). The method was

developed to challenge the assumption that self-reflexivity was necessarily an individual task and responsibility. They argue that such individualist assumptions have limited the scope for understanding organizations. The original study used the method to explore two organizational ethnographies involving participant observation. Our methodologies were different, both from the original study and from each other, but we were interested to test its application in such a different context. The authors note that the process, designed to explore emotional issues, was necessarily intimate. I and my colleague had both studied and worked together over several years and were familiar with each other's research and consultancy strategies, so we felt that we had developed sufficient mutual trust to test the method and bridge the differences in the material we were working on.

4.6.2.1. The method

A semi-structured interview was developed, following the format described in Gilmore and Kenny (2015) as closely as possible. We agreed that we gave each other permission to use the findings from the exercise as part of our theses and signed consent forms recording this agreement (see Appendix 6) The interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes per participant. The interview questions were grouped into two sections. The first part dealt with scene-setting, outlining the context and process of engaging with the systems involved. The second part explored the emotional experience of the research encounters. The full text of the questions is reproduced in Appendix 5.

We took turns to act as interviewer or interviewee. Following the guidance in Gilmore & Kenny, during the interview the interviewer avoided making direct eye-contact, while providing a 'containing' space – signalling attentive and receptive listening without engaging in discussion. Occasionally the interviewer asked clarifying questions or encouraged the interviewee to say more about an issue.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. We then met on a second occasion to listen jointly to the recordings. In that session we freely paused the recording to discuss what we had heard, including reflecting on moments of

apparent difficulty, signalled by, for instance, hesitancy, apparent contradictions, stopping short in the midst of explication.

4.6.2.2. Findings

We both found the experience challenging, because it did lead to confronting some 'ugly facts' and countertransference issues. I had found it particularly difficult to sort through projections, working out which I should take back, while recognising that others were 'not me' in such a direct sense. The process did help 'stray thoughts to become conscious' as Cooper (2018) describes and brought about some change in my thinking.

4.6.2.2i. Common concerns

Bearing witness

A core realization we shared was that we were concerned about bearing witness. Because our research focussed on very different topics, this concern took a somewhat different form for each. However, the common concern was to do justice to the experiences of our participants and ensure that our account of those experiences stayed experience-near (Geertz, 1973). We recognised that this stance had induced a kind of passivity. For myself this took the form of a reluctance to go beneath the surface of what I was told. Making an interpretation about the data, using the intelligence I gained through awareness of the countertransference felt impertinent, while simply hearing my participants' stories felt exploitative, as if I was extracting their story and using it for my own purposes.

However, reflecting on this question together led to a recognition that bearing witness, in the sense of listening intelligently, is an active and essentially relational process which does have transformative potential. Bearing witness, requires the listener to be in a state of reverie (Ogden, 1997) which can have a curative function, enabling what has been denied or dissociated, particularly the subject's suffering in the face of evil, to be recognised. Active listening requires the exercise of negative capability (Bion, 1970, p. 125) the receiver must remain other, to tolerate the

difficulty of not knowing, of being separate and different from the teller, and to hold back from imposing ready-made or omnipotent certainties upon an ambiguous and emotionally loaded situation (Bion, 1967). This recognition encouraged me to suspend what Bion, quoting Keats, calls 'irritable reaching after fact and reason', the reverse of negative capability (Bion, 1970, p.125). Bearing witness is not quintessentially about uncovering factual accuracy but about creating the possibility of moving away from denial.

This process also enables the full story to be released with a proper narrative arc – a beginning and end – particularly relevant in my study. This exploration helped me to see my encounters with participants as an exchange rather than an exploitation – their narrative exchanged for my attentiveness, which enabled a story with a shape to emerge.

Otherness

The experience of otherness was important to both of us, although with a different emphasis. My colleague's experience, reflecting the nature of his research topic, was expressed in spatial metaphors, such as 'distance', 'entering and leaving'. For me, the issue was about othering the organizations I heard about through my participants' narratives. They described how they had been othered and had positioned themselves as other through their whistleblowing. I found myself unthinkingly siding with my participants to construct their organizations as bad – in fact, more so than most of them were willing to do. Hearing about my colleague's efforts to find an entrance to the spaces he was studying surfaced a metaphor about brick walls as concrete barriers to understanding which helped me to see the inflexibility in my thinking.

Something that can't be let go of.

We each realised that there was a painful experience which underlay our struggle with blind spots. For my colleague homelessness was a recurring metaphor, which again linked closely to the spatial issues in his research topic. He expressed the feeling of living with ghosts. For me, I felt haunted and paralysed by shame. I felt

that I could not refuse the projective identification evoked by their powerful and painful stories. I continually wondered whether I would have found the same level of courage which they showed, which related to my personal countertransference. But attempting to disentangle projections was also confused in my mind with their reported experience of being let down which had been a tipping point in their narratives. I felt that refusing projections, identifying experiences as 'not me' might recapitulate that betrayal of trust. I also questioned whether I was also 'haunted' by the lost good selves (Stein, 2021a) within the organizations and in my own history which whistleblowing forcibly brings to our attention. However, as Ullmann notes, (Ullmann, 2006 p 196) describing her experience of observing border crossings in Israel's West Bank, bearing witness also enables a 'refusal to take part in the doer-done-to seesaw', which I recognised I was caught up in.

4.6.2.2ii. A difference

One striking difference was in the experience of the research encounter. My colleague reflected that he felt '*beguiled*' and '*toyed with*' during the process, while I repeatedly felt annihilated and unable to think. This was partly induced by the structure of my interview process but was also linked to my participants' evident need to have their story heard and accepted without question.

4.6.3 Paired reflexivity: Conclusion

This exercise did achieve some shift in the stuckness that I was experiencing. The shift would not have been possible without the dialectic present in the process of collective reflection with my colleague. The exercise highlighted similarities and differences, the recognition of which were transformative.

The core discovery was my uncertainty and ambivalence about bearing witness. The exercise helped me to understand that bearing witness was not a passive process and that it has transformative potential, just as we discovered for ourselves through our collective reflection. This relieved my guilt about whether there was something

exploitative in the interview process. It also reminded me that I was not chasing factual accuracy but an understanding of constructed subjectivity. Finally, the exercise encouraged me to think in a more nuanced way about the process of othering and the management of projective identifications, confronting the experience of shame and courage through linking my own history with the broken trust described in the participants' narratives.

The exercise taught me the transformative value of reverie. It creates a transitional space in which Winnicott's notion of play can happen (Winnicott, 1997), breaking down the artificial binary of reality/fantasy. The experience encouraged me to consider the implications of bearing witness for future consultancy practice.

Chapter 5: Analysis of whistleblower narratives.

5.1 Timelines capturing participants' 'lived experience'

An objectified account of key events in each participant's life was extracted from the interview data, largely from the first part, SS1, but supplemented where necessary to clarify sequences of events, from SS2. This data is presented in the boxes at the beginning of the analysis of each case, described in Chapter 7, which contains the findings from a second categorising of the initial codes.

5.2 Composite categories characterising whistleblowers' narratives.

5.2.1. Discovering the abstraction

Following the method described in Section 4.5.2.4. a set of core categories which reflected significant stages and processes in the unfolding narratives of whistleblowing participants was obtained. Although the method was designed to ensure that the meaning captured in all individual participants' categories contributed to the synthesised categories, not every participant's experiences were relevant to, or therefore contributed to, the definition of each specific composite category. The headings and a brief definition for each category are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Catalogue of composite core categories

Heading	Definition
Attitude to bystanders and bystanding	Actors construct an identity different to their own, for those who know about the wrongdoing but do not report
Being criticised or blamed	Actors are the targets for bullying and blaming from colleagues and authority figures
Being let down	Actors' Investment of trust (in person/ organization/ ideal) is betrayed
Being silenced by internal pressures	Personal values, character traits, affect and cognitive attributes hold actor back from speaking out
Being silenced from external pressures arising within the system	System conspires to deny actor a voice, either by refusing opportunity to speak or rendering their speech 'impossible'
Being valued or rejected as a person and/or a professional	Actors' perceptions of how much they were valued either as a person or for their professional skills
Commitment to task or domain and development of Organization-in-the-mind	Actor's investment in the organization's purpose and their ideas about their role in the organization
Conflict of interests	Conflict between the actor's interests and values and what they perceive to be the interests of the organization
Experiencing self as having agency	Actor's experience of self as free from discursive constraints
Accumulating facts/evidence	Actors actively seek evidence to support their concerns
Finding a voice	Process of gaining/regaining capacity to speak out
Gang functioning	Actors observe perverse collusion among others in the organization, including scapegoating
Perceiving the wrongdoing as systemic	Actors observe the wrongdoing as embedded in the system, at the level of organization/domain/culture
Identifying ethical codes	Actors make explicit the moral code(s) they endorse and compare them to what is prevalent in the organization
Period in liminal space	Actors find themselves located, in time or space, <i>in-between</i> what is familiar
Positioning of self as outsider or insider	Where actors are positioned relative to the boundaries of the organization or key subgroups within it
Receiving validation	Others, inside or outside the system, acknowledge the validity of actors' perceptions
Reconstructing self, post-whistleblowing	How actors adapt to the impact of speaking out on their circumstances and identity
Relationship to rules and regulations	Attitude, shaped by early experiences, to conforming to rules in general and to the organization's regulations
Templates from early experience:	Narratives of experiences from childhood growing up within family/culture and early experience of role, which construct behaviour in role and responses to wrongdoing
Tipping points	Moments when the convergence of internal and external factors make speaking out subjectively inevitable

Composite categories were then clustered together into groups on the basis of a possible overlap in meaning. This created a visual display of how the categories might combine into more abstract analytical processes or stages in the participants' journeys. The categories were repeatedly re-arranged before the arrangement which best illuminated the process emerged.

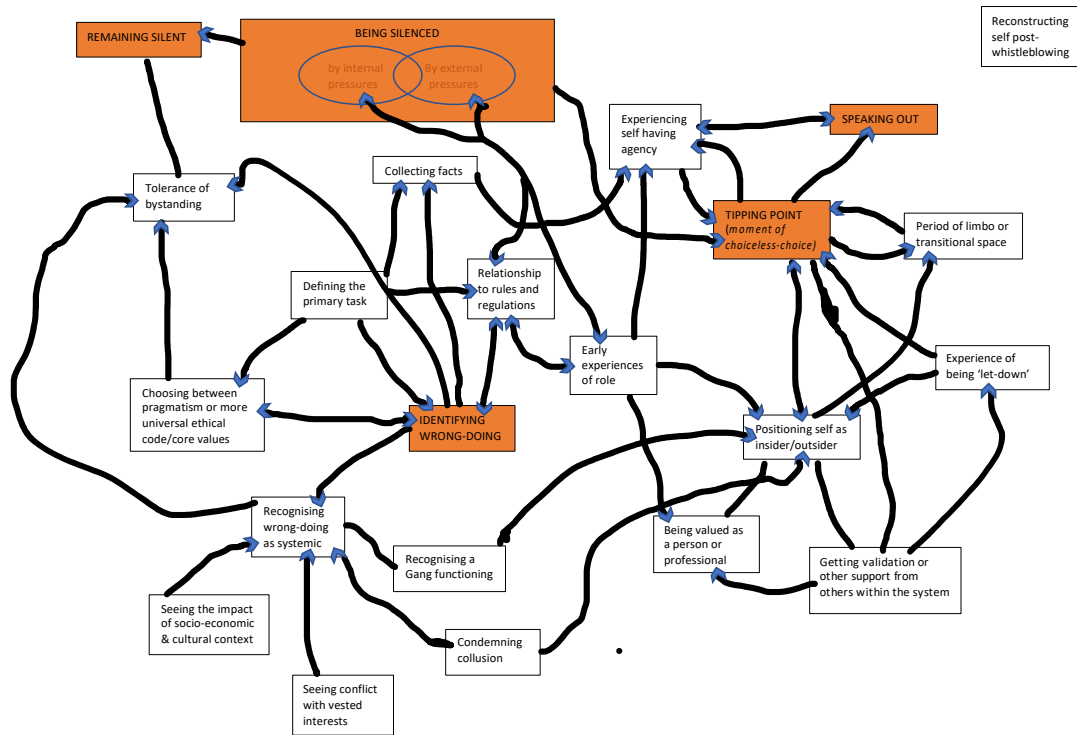


Figure 2: Cluster diagram

Starting from the cluster diagram shown as Figure 2 above, the complexity and multiplicity of the interconnections between categories initially felt overwhelming. Immersed as I had been in the individuality of each narrative during the coding process, it was hard to let go of the uniqueness of each participant's journey in order to be able to identify commonalities. Partly this was due to my uneasiness about not bearing witness sufficiently respectfully to each person's whole story. As I grouped and re-grouped the composite categories I was mindful of instances which seemed to be contradictory. For example, the experience of being let down crushed one participant's sense of purpose and identity, but spurred another on to speak out freely, since they had to abandon an idealizing illusion. The trial and error of the clustering process eventually focused my attention at a sufficiently abstract level to

capture processes which could convey general meaning as well as encompass individual variation.

The clustering selected as most useful is shown in Figure 3 below. Some single categories represented a temporal stage in the narrative. Other categories could be clustered into processes. A defining title was chosen to capture the commonality of each of these emergent clusterings. Figure 3 maps the abstracted processes and stages and connections between them. Arrows or 'spokes' were drawn to signify relationships between temporally locatable categories or abstracted concepts. Although the concepts represent stages in a process, the arrows are not intended to signify a linear causal relationship. Participants' narratives showed that the stages in the process were generally iterative, at least until a 'tipping point' had been passed. These processes are explored in the next section. The exegesis might imply that processes followed one after another, but this was not the case – participants continually tacked back and fore between positions

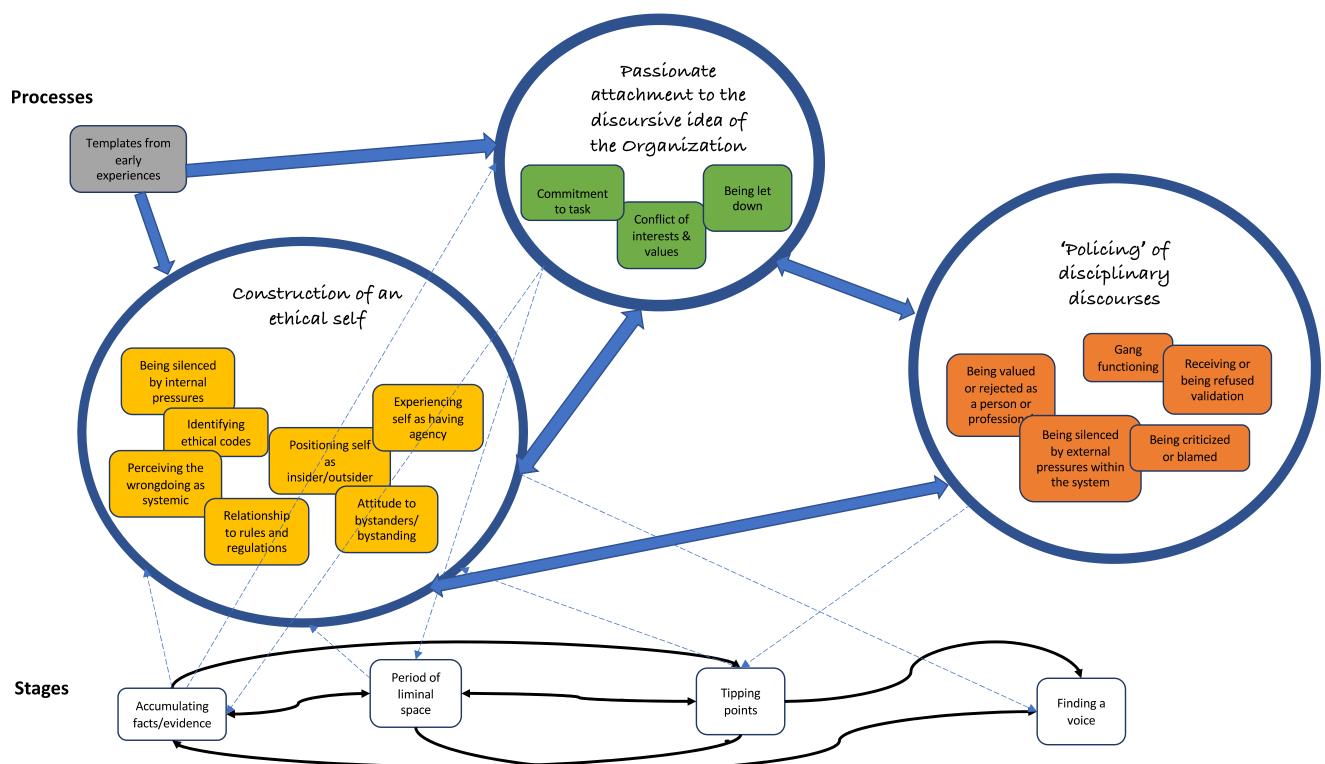


Figure 3: Abstracted analytic concepts: whistleblowers

5.2.2. Whistleblower analytic concepts

The meaning of each concept or single category will be outlined below and then illustrated with material from individual participants' narratives. The concept will then be related to extant themes in the literature. When a composite category is referenced, its title is shown in **bold** type. The dotted lines connecting stages and processes indicate common pathways followed by participants.

5.2.2.1 Stages

5.2.2.1i. Accumulating facts and evidence

Definition

All participants invested energy and hope in collecting evidence to support their beliefs about the occurrence of wrongdoing. This effort might precede or follow after the tipping point in their narrative when they realised they were inexorably committed to exposing the wrongdoing.

Case Examples

The evidence accumulated played an influential and constructive part in the immediate outcome in only Philip's case, although participants felt empowered to act once they had accumulated the evidence. For example, Lia felt empowered to 'barge' into a meeting to confront the Board of a family firm with information about malpractice to which she knew they had tried to turn a blind eye. However, usually, the information they presented was either dismissed or subverted, often to the astonishment of the participant. For example, the evidence about mismanagement of charitable funds that Andrea presented was ignored, but she was then dismissed for misfiling some receipts. Similarly, Sandra's letters documenting the risks entailed by the shortage of resources in a community health setting triggered an audit which led to a colleague being disciplined for mishandling some case notes. Despite this persistent dismissal by the system, participants held onto their faith in the value of

their accumulated evidence, while consciously knowing that the system would refuse to know.

Theoretical underpinning

Participants tried to bring information to the attention of authoritative people which they assumed those people would want to know. In doing this they were holding on to a mistaken belief that the issue was about truth or falsehood, when actually it was about value – whether something was good or bad, as generally the issue revolved around a wicked problem (Hyde, 2016). Bion (1958) has written extensively about the hatred for new ideas which groups have. He argues that groups will hold onto a lie as a defence against unsettling information for fear of the catastrophic change it might provoke. In his analysis of the drama of Oedipus, he reminds the reader that Tiresias, the bystander, counselled Oedipus not to seek out the truth for fear of the pain and disturbance it would cause. Oedipus, the truth-seeker is condemned for his arrogance and stupidity in persisting with his search (Bion, 1958). New ideas open up the possibility of transformation but are as likely to trigger resistance. Bion remarked that:

“An institution, a society of human beings may be unable to survive the birth pangs of an idea.....We seem to feel that the thing to do with a new-born idea is give it a good hard smack” (Bion, 2018, p.78)

Zizek (2004) commenting on Rumsfeld’s famous speech about what is known and unknown, reflected that those ‘unknown knowns’, the things we pretend not to know about, give a direct insight into the dark side of core public values. These participants posed an ‘arrogant’ threat to their organizations’ will to live within a lie and encouraged them towards a psychic retreat in which corrupt behaviour could flourish (Long, 2008; Steiner, 1993).

5.2.2.1ii Period of liminal space

Definition

There were moments when participants were particularly aware of feeling separated, in time and space, from their usual social context and being in transition. These moments were periods of intense experience in which participants underwent some change.

Case Examples

Philip described his isolation in a hotel room in a foreign country while he waited for the senior team to decide whether to act on the information he had given them. Sandra described a long, dissociated walk home during which she accepted in her own mind that she no longer shared the values of her idealized organization. Jeremy described a sleepless night as his '*Gethsemane*', (a classic liminal space) during which he decided to go ahead with reporting the corruption he had uncovered and then a second experience of sharing information with his ally in the transit area of an airport; Lia's exclusion from the Board meeting put her in limbo and freed her to take action in uncovering corruption. Beth felt permanently marginalized within the residential unit, which was itself marginalized, physically and culturally from the rest of the NHS Trust. When she was literally swept out of the kitchen by a hostile colleague this placed her in limbo.

Participants apparently used these periods to appraise the moral choices available to them since they generally emerged with a heightened sense of their own agency. This development was perhaps linked to their detachment from situated experience. For some participants these moments preceded the marshalling of evidence (Sandra, Andrea), while for others (Philip, Jeremy) they were a tipping point after which they decided to use the evidence they already had to report.

Theoretical underpinning

These periods of liminality mapped out in time and/or space moments of freedom from interpellation, where they could not readily be 'hailed' by the social norms of

the organization to which they belonged. Such moments could be seen as rites of passage, where the individual occupies a space where something creative can happen (Turner, 1995) However, the space in such rituals is still defined by the boundaries of the social and the individual in the space has

*“a relation to the norm which is neither that of simple acceptance or refusal”
(Butler, 2000, p.33)*

As Weiskopf and Willmott (2013) emphasise, there is no assumption that this liminality is occupied by an autonomous self, but rather that these participants begin to explore possibilities by questioning the demands of the organization. Analysing Daniel Ellsberg’s path to leaking the Pentagon Papers, they describe this process taking place in an area of ‘*undecidability*’, following Derrida. They describe the area lying between the generalities of prevailing norms and the singularity of the subject’s unique situation from which they emerge to constitute themselves as a *parrhesiastes*.

This liminality bears some resemblance to Winnicott’s (1997) idea of transitional space. He thought of such spaces as giving individuals a safe place to develop a stable sense of self and sort out a relationship between themselves and the world as they differentiate *me* from *not-me*. The playing which takes place within transitional space allows the subject to creatively mix fantasy and reality without being hemmed in by what is realistic or rule bound. Winnicott’s ideas on the function of transitional space illuminate how an infant individuates from a state of total dependency, just as an adult learns to give an account of themselves, appropriating and revising norms within a social context (Butler, 2005). The liminality which these participants experienced was not necessarily the safe or containing space that Winnicott described but did provide a space in which they differentiated themselves from their ‘passionate attachment’ to their external reality and emerged with a clearer sense of the possible. This has some overlap with Foucault’s ideas about how to take care of the self, which creates the possibility of *parrhesia* (Foucault & Pearson, 2001).

5.2.2.1iii Tipping points

Definition

A tipping point was reached, for most participants, in the moment when some personally essential rule about how to live properly was transgressed. Most of them after the tipping point felt that they faced a 'choiceless choice' (Alford, 2001).

Case Examples

The journey towards a tipping point was commonly an iterative process. Participants described grappling with interpellation, trying out ways to adapt existing schemas to deal with discrepant experiences, but struggling with cognitive dissonance and confusion. Sandra was reluctant to abandon her idea that the prestigious hospital who employed her was committed to the best interests of their child patients. Being treated demeaningly when she thought she was fighting to protect the vulnerable forced her to restructure her beliefs about the organization. Jeremy tried hard to make sense of and compensate for puzzling working practices until the number of "red flags" he had accumulated were too numerous to ignore.

The lead up to a tipping point for some exemplified the messiness of ethical reasoning, as they oscillated between allegiance to a moral imperative or to a more consequentialist code. Bev constantly made efforts to assimilate even quite evident wrongdoing - "*it's just what he's like*" until the unfair treatment of a junior administrator, which breached an absolute code for her, converged with a more pragmatic realization that the wrongdoing threatened the viability of the service.

Trevor, for whom using his '*dirty mind*' to ferret out wrongdoing was a core part of his identity, had no tipping point, possibly because he had a permanently fixed idea about what was right, so he was not motivated to accommodate his approach or assimilate new information into his existing schema. The tipping point could be entirely personal: Lia's tipping point was being treated with disdain by the Board, which she experienced as an assault on her identity.

Theoretical underpinnings

Participants' experiences leading up to a tipping point which preceded their dissent and transformation of their relationship to the organization are reminiscent of Piaget's account of children's cognitive development (Piaget, 1971). He argued that children cycle through phases of adaptation, in which they use assimilation and accommodation to adjust to new information until disequilibrium occurs, when they are forced to develop new schemas to make sense of the world. Alford reported that many of his informants felt they encountered 'choiceless choice' (Alford, 2001, p 40) when their character and values propelled them to whistleblow to avoid the blow to their narcissism which conforming to the corruption in the organization would entail. The tipping point for my participants seemed less a question of making a choice, but more of being forced into a transformative state, in which, experiencing freedom from "*a vexed relationship with a set of norms*" (Butler, 2000 p. 30), they became able to construct new possibilities for their self. As their 'passionate attachment' to the discourse within the organization was loosened, they turned to an alternative passionate attachment, to a *parrhesiastic* discourse. Alford argued that, as humans have a drive for wholeness, orchestrated by their ego-ideal, whistleblowers' actions amount to 'narcissism moralized'. Therefore, both Butler and Alford are arguing that the motivation to address a lack, which was evident in my participants' narratives, is an important driver for development.

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5.2.2.1iv. Finding a voice

Definition

In this stage are captured the final steps, effective or not, which resulted in participants reporting their concerns about wrongdoing they had witnessed to a figure of authority who they reasonably expected to take action to correct the wrongdoing. The person receiving their report may have been internal or external to their organization. (see Table 1 for details of this process in each individual case). Not all participants pushed their reporting to a point where their hearer was compelled to make a response. Some, but not all participants were subjected, sometimes for years, to strategies which denied them a voice.

Case examples

Finding a voice to speak out was the culmination of a lengthy and recursive process, in which the stages of **accumulating evidence, periods of liminality** and **tipping points** played their parts. While it might be a culmination, the recursive process continued, as participants reprised some stages repeatedly. There was considerable variation in the way in which participants eventually reached the point of speaking out. Philip felt reluctant and doubtful throughout the process, feeling *'pigeon-holed'* in an isolated hotel room, far from the razzmatazz of the *"gun-slinging"* world he was reporting on; Jeremy described a sense that his actions were fitting, like a *'key in the lock'* which went with a feeling of congruence: *"you just do it because you do it"*. Sandra spoke of *'having a complete change in her world view'* after her plea to be treated as a human being. Beth felt that there was no other possible direction to go in after her experience of being severely and repeatedly let down and brutally victimised. Despite her self-doubts, Andrea was eventually able to connect with a *"stuff you"* position which had helped her to survive assaults on her self-worth in the past. Bev was relieved to be able to pass the baton onto others in the organization who intended to blow the whistle, rather than have to pursue her own reporting.

Theoretical underpinnings

The experiences summarized above and in the passage on **being silenced by external pressures**, (see Section 5.2.2.2iii) demonstrate that neither the path towards speaking out about wrongdoing, nor the form of that eventual speaking out were uniform. Whistleblowers are commonly represented categorically, as heroic and deserving or vilified traitors (Alford, 2001; Brown, 2008; Grant, 2004). These representations reflect prevalent discourses and can be shown to change over time and culture (DiSalvo & Negri, 2016; Lule, 2001; MacCarthy, 2020; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hunt, 2012). They also tend to be constructed as passive victims (Kenny, 2018). These participants' narratives portrayed how they were active subjects, passionately involved in acts of self-constitution, while also being formed within subtle, and not so subtle matrices of control within dominant discourses (Kenny, 2018; Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013). The unique course of each narrative reflects a complex interplay

between participants' earlier experiences and structures within the systems that they encountered.

However, as Kenny describes, (2018, 2020) Judith Butler's performative ontology (Butler, 1997a; 1997b) gives a good account of how they were defined within their organizations as valid or impossible subjects. What they had to say was ruled out of the 'domain of the sayable' and increasingly they became defined as non-subjects, who used 'impossible speech' and were de-realized by non-recognition. They described experiencing periods of confusion and self-doubt. But most regained a sense of a possible self through finding a voice, employing 'fearless speech', to claim an identity as a *parrhesiastes* within a different 'practice of truth' (Foucault & Pearson, 2001; Luxon, 2008; Kenny et al, 2020). Some showed a willingness to take on a wounding identity, using a public demonstration of their vulnerability in order to expose the dominant hegemony and press for change (Bargu, 2017; Butler, 2016; 2020).

5.2.2.2. Processes

5.2.2.2i Templates from early experience – growing up within family (single category)

Definition

Most participants offered telling narratives about their family and childhood, which showed how they formed attachments, roles they assumed in the family and how they responded to perceived wrongdoing during their earlier life.

Case examples

The narratives illuminated their object relations, i.e., their view of self & other in relation. Some (Philip, Sandra) explained their place within the family and then made links with how their self was constructed in relation to the external world. Others did not describe their individual role within the family but had a strong sense of self as members of a united family system facing the world. Ethnicity, class and ideology (religious/political affiliation) contributed importantly to how they construed the

external world. For these participants, moral beliefs and norms, explicit and implicit were constructed within the family

These ideals and experiences, brought from childhood, contributed sensitizing constructs, expressed as in vivo codes, such as: *'waifs & strays'* *'vulnerable people'*, *"St George in shining armour"* *"having a dirty mind"*. These condensed signifiers guided emotional and behavioural responses to witnessing wrongdoing. They can be seen as expressing valencies to take up roles within a system or in relation to its basic assumptions. Two participants saw their valency to challenge wrong, which developed through childhood, as a conscious commitment and core part of their idea of self. For example, Lia idealised her grandfather but described how he set up his children to quarrel and compete within the family, creating envy and failed dependency. This experience taught her the need to fight for justice despite affectionate attachments. This guided her response when she uncovered wrongdoing within a family firm, with an unavailable head, who had left the 'children' to run riot, quarrel and struggle with envy.

These early experiences were also important in **positioning themselves as insider/outsider**. Several grew up closely attached to a family with a strong identity (Philip, Jeremy, Lia, Ben, Bev) which was not necessarily reliable or available to help them negotiate the external world (Philip here too, Sandra, Trevor). In the case of Philip and Sandra they were also required take on a protective or caring role early.

Theoretical underpinnings

Butler described the contents of the psyche as "congealed layers of past experience" which colour the response of the subject to the social. (Butler, 2005). Learning independence of thought and behaviour during childhood apparently loosened these participants' attachment to subjection to dominant discourses within the organization. Such experiences predisposed them to take on 'abject' identities outside the "domain of the sayable". Strong attachment to family did however, in some cases link to loyalty, prolonging their willingness to embrace 'injurious' terms before enacting dissent (Lia, Sandra)

5.2.2.2ii Passionate attachment to the discursive idea of the organization

Definition

Individuals want and need to belong in relationships with others in order to construct themselves as a subject, i.e. build a sense of who they are in a particular context. These participants described joining their organization, learning about its formal rules and informal culture, ('the way we do things around here') and working out how they might fill the role to which they thought they had been assigned.

Contributing categories with case examples

Participants refined their understanding of the primary task of the organization and in the process adjusted their **commitment to task**. Some participants seemed to have found their role in an organization almost by chance and were relatively indifferent to the organization's task (Philip, Lia, Trevor) while others saw their place there as an achievement their whole career trajectory had pointed towards (Sandra, Ben, Beth, Bev, Andrea). For these participants their work was more a vocation than a job and expressed a commitment to a system-domain (Bain, 1998) rather than a specific organization. This commitment for one participant was so profound that she recognised that she felt merged with her role – she reflected that she had found it hard to maintain a healthy boundary between her work and the rest of her daily life.

Each participant described a dawning awareness that the task of the organization or their role within it was somehow contested (Hoggett, 2006). For example, Philip thought his role was to oversee financial probity in his organization but came to realise that instead he was expected to engage in creative accounting to cover up financial irregularities. Jeremy thought he had been employed to deliver a complex logistics project in a timely and cost-effective fashion but discovered that the project was incidental to the transfer of substantial public funds to the private purses of the ruling royal family.

However, for some, a core part of their identity, whatever context they were in, was to question or challenge the status quo, which was therefore always part of their

'existential' task (Lawrence, 1985). Trevor described this aspect of himself as '*having a dirty mind*', while Lia cheerfully remarked that she had always been a whistleblower. These participants therefore were not apparently assuming that identity in order to preserve their speakability or refuse an identity as an abject self (Kenny, 2018)

Participants described experiencing a **conflict of interests and/or values** between their personal interests or values and those of the organization as well as recognising that those interests might be in conflict with their vision of the primary task. Several recognised the organization's drive to perpetuate its own survival at the expense of the interests of its clients. Some spoke angrily of 'vested interests', which, by being hidden allowed corrupt practices to flourish. One participant described assuming the persona of '*St George in shining armour*', fighting the dragon of vested interests. However, it was possible to achieve a nuanced reconciliation. A doctor working in specialized acute medicine regarded highly technical surgical interventions as valuable processes sometimes put to a wrong purpose. He could thus retain allegiance to his profession's aims and achievements, while holding vested interests guilty for how those aims were perverted.

All participants experienced **being let down**, where an investment of trust failed them. Where they had placed trust varied: for some it was in a professional identity, for example as a doctor or carer, (Sandra, Ben, Beth) or in an idealized individual, for example an esteemed CEO, or in an organisation or code of practice –Philip lost his love for the '*gunslinging*' norms of his industry, while Bev lost faith in the strength of due process to protect vulnerable staff. Each had invested a degree of trust in an external object - that it could be depended on to nurture their development and well-being. Events led them to observe a significant betrayal of what they considered was right which was at least tolerated by those in authority. They described experiencing, whether gradually or abruptly, a sense of catastrophic betrayal of trust and disenchantment accompanied in some cases by a sense of shame or confusion. Some of these experiences amounted to a sense of moral injury (Greenberg et al, 2020; Shay, 2014). What had been a peaceful collaboration turned

into a battle and eventual withdrawal of the 'passionate attachment' which underlay their identification with the organization.

Theoretical underpinnings.

Joining an organization, crossing its boundary, involves taking on the identity as a member of that organization. Staff will arrive with some ideas about who they are, how to do the job and what matters in life. However, in order to function effectively and belong, they must open themselves to be interpellated (hailed) by the discourses prevailing within the organization, what Foucault called the regimes of truth and of practice (Kenny, 2012; Thornburrow & Brown, 2009). This process was demonstrated by the participants' **commitment to task**. Thus, they subordinated themselves to and constitute themselves within the power embodied in the authority structures, formal and informal within the system. The drive to build attachment relationships, formed out of an infant's physical dependency is a precursor of survival and then binds the individual to the social, the origin of what Bion calls the groupishness inherent in all humans (Bion, 1961 p. 131). Butler (1997a; 1997b) emphasises that this attachment, which she calls 'passionate' is filled with affect and is part of psychic life, although the subject which emerges is nevertheless socially constructed.

Subjects' sense of identity is strongly intertwined with their investment of trust in the organization (Driver, 2015). Identification with an organisation is achieved in part by exchanging projections with the organization (Petriglieri & Stein, 2012). These participants all experienced a breakdown in trust, felt they were **let down** and most, but not all, felt shame and confusion.

Identification will always be ambivalent, a mixture of idealization and resistance. As Butler argues, individuals embrace subjugation to prevailing discourses to avoid becoming an unrecognised, non-subject, (Kenny, 2012), even if, through that attachment, they are

*“led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially”
(Butler 1997a, p. 104)*

The possibility of dissent therefore arises from a failure of identification in which trust is disrupted (Driver, 2015). These participants, experiencing **conflicts in values**, became conscious of their withdrawal of identification and trust. This opened a gap which created the possibility of resistance to dominant discourses, even at the risk of becoming object, non-subjects (Kenny, 2018).

5.2.2.2iii ‘Policing’ of disciplinary discourses

Definition

This process describes strategies an organization uses to re-inforce compliance in a rebellious staff member. An organization maintains control overtly over what happens within it by policing its boundaries and its staff, with rules and regulations, mission statements, policies and ‘requisite structures’ (Jaques, 1955; Western, 2017) sufficient to manage authority and other kinds of relationships. It also maintains the dominant discourse implicitly via the regimes of knowledge and practice which construct how to be a subject within the organization. The overt and implicit norms are of course intertwined and co-constructed. The person raising concerns about wrongdoing poses a threat to the integrity of the organization and must be subjected to disciplinary measures.

Contributing categories with case examples

Participants recalled that **being valued** or its converse, **being rejected** made a big impact on their willingness to find an identity as a member of their organization. For some, their experiences while growing up made being valued and therefore belonging highly salient. For example, Philip found it hard to take up a position which contradicted the values and ethics of the oil business, because he had so much relished the feeling of belonging and was wounded by the critical response of his colleagues. Similarly, Andrea and Beth constantly questioned whether they had the necessary personal or professional skills to do their jobs, consciously sought re-

assurance and were devastated when it was withheld. Sandra reported that she had always been someone who *'toed the line'* and would never have chosen not to but found being increasingly defined as a troublemaker hard to tolerate. However, being valued by the organization could be an ambiguous experience: both Beth and Lia felt that they were publicly valued for their professional skills, but at the same time exploited, so that the valuing was purely instrumental, without affect.

Being valued and relied on by junior colleagues while being dismissed by those in authority, as both Trevor & Lia were, did not encourage their allegiance to the organization, even if it did encourage their commitment to the task.

Jeremy however, was confident of his personal and professional skills in the military context and received validation for them until his father's crisis. He was conscious that he was no longer valued professionally but this didn't prompt him to question his own estimate of his skills. Although he aimed to do the best job he could in the circumstances, his allegiance and sense of identity remained with the military.

Being **criticised and blamed** for things going wrong was an almost universal experience. As they verbalised disquiet and tried to raise concerns, participants were routinely subjected to a variety of attacks designed to exclude them from 'norms of recognition' (Kenny, 2018). Often the attacks focused on issues which were marginal to the concerns being raised and had the quality of being 'trumped up': Ben's competence in following safeguarding practice was questioned and used to justify his suspension from his role; Andrea was sacked for misfiling some documents; Sandra was reprimanded for asking a question about resources at a public meeting; Trevor was accused of a minor breach of protocol at an event which he did not even attend. Sandra, Beth and Ben and Andrea all reflected that they felt bullied. Scapegoating was part of that experience: they were identified as the source of the organization's ills and extruded in various publicly visible ways, possibly in order to serve as a painful warning to other staff. As with the experience of **being valued or rejected**, participants varied in their willingness to internalise these attacks and reframe their identities.

Participants were **silenced by external pressures within the system**, which operated to deny them a voice. Some strategies were relatively straight-forward instructions to keep silent. Sandra, Ben and Beth, all three working in health care although at different levels of seniority, reported being '*told off*' in ways which they found infantilizing, for actions which called attention to the wrongdoing. They were also told not to talk to 'outsiders', as this represented a betrayal, although the boundary between who counted as inside and outside could be drawn variously tightly (Andrade, 2015).

While those strategies amounted to simple censorship, other strategies were more insidious as they threatened participants' sense of self. Some (Ben, Beth) were gossiped about (Teo & Caspersz, 2011) or subjected to workplace gaslighting, (Beth, Sandra) where they were manipulated, marginalized or invalidated so that they could no longer trust their own judgment. Lia felt she had to protect herself from being '*butchered*'. Sandra was puzzled to learn she had been labelled a 'troublemaker'. Interestingly, Trevor used the same term to describe himself, although for him it was a badge of pride. Others found their efforts to relate and communicate were blocked, to the point that they felt like a non-person. Several described simply being blanked when they tried to initiate a conversation, (Sandra, Ben, Lia); a shocked colleague reported to Ben that when his opinion was voiced in a meeting, a senior colleague retorted that "*that Ben can just fuck off*"; Ben felt that anything he said became merely "*faffing around*" and "*noises off*"; emails and phone calls were routinely not responded to; Andrea described previously close colleagues sent to discipline her for voicing concerns turned into '*robots*' who would not make eye-contact or answer her questions. Sandra, trying to reclaim her status as a person, exclaimed in a disciplinary meeting that she "*just wanted to be treated like a human-being*".

Several participants spoke of finding a **gang operating** in the organization, other staff colluding together or complying with senior figures to carry out the strategies described above. For example, both Sandra and Ben described colleagues stopping

talking to them –not even responding to a morning greeting – and they were aware that they were being gossiped about and discredited. Beth witnessed the process among the unit staff led by a senior nurse but also experienced the same collusive approach from senior managers outside the unit. Andrea was aware, during the meeting in which she was sacked, of a gang of other senior staff watching from the sidelines, surrounded by intimidated junior staff. It seemed to these participants that a significant part of the system ‘closed ranks’, colluding to retaliate against them for raising concerns.

Both Lia and Bev saw their management boards functioning as a gang. In Lia’s case they were a set of peers, colluding to turn a blind eye to the widespread corruption in the family firm. She felt that this kind of collusive loyalty also pervaded the whole culture as the code of *Omertà*. Bev felt that board members, having been appointed for being ‘yes-men’ were helplessly drawn into a collusive relationship with a corrupt leader. Philip described how his boss encouraged anti-task behaviour in the staff, pressurizing them to collude with minor infringements of rules and conform to a rather aggressively hearty culture.

Theoretical underpinnings

The organization, needing to maintain a coherent identity, will ‘police’ the boundaries of that identity by monitoring conformity to important aspects of its dominant discourse (Kenny, 2010). Kenny describes how the ‘dark side’ of this process, operates by denying recognition to subjects who fail to conform, who become ‘abject’ in Butler’s terminology (Butler, 1997a). As she points out, a bounded domain of abject beings is needed in order to clearly define the valued self. Participants described being on the receiving end of a range of tactics, disciplinary practices, summarised above, which turned them into abject beings within their organization as they tried to raise concerns.

Some of those tactics amounted to bullying or scapegoating, particularly when a gang seemed to be functioning. Stein and Pinto (2011), in analysing the collapse of Enron argue that ‘ganging’ played an active part in that process. Gangs get into a

'malignant huddle' to disown and exclude awareness of weakness or vulnerability (Canham, 2002). Staff attempting to draw attention to wrongdoing challenge those defenses and must be excluded if they can't be silenced. Bullying and scapegoating can be understood as an attempt to get rid of the unwanted, disowned or 'bad' parts of the self (or, in this case the organization) which are projected into a victim who is then subjected to aggressive attacks (Waddell, 1998; 2007). Waddell (2007, p.190) describes '*insubordination and appearing different(..is..) a fatal combination*' in creating an apt target for such attacks. Organizations shape their identity through projections passed between leaders and staff (Petriglieri & Stein, 2012). Stein and Pinto (2011) describe the gang as 'glued together' by these projections, in perverse opposition to change and development, or 'transformation' in Butler's terminology (Butler, 1997a). They note that the ganging function is the antithesis of the norms of Bion's work-group mentality. Those participants who were bullied or scapegoated by a gang were turned into abject subjects, containers for split off and denied parts of their organizations. Their capacity to withstand those attacks and refuse to internalize those projections was supported or not by experiences in their early development (Waddell, 2007).

5.2.2.2iv Construction of an ethical self

Definition

People making decisions about what to do when faced with evidence of wrongdoing within their organization have to define their ethical position in relation to how they live their daily lives (Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013). In the course of doing that they 'craft' an idea of themselves, which incorporates the choices they make and their understanding of their organization's moral codes, while being constrained and constructed by the dominant discourse.

Contributing categories with case examples

Several participants' **relationship to rules and regulations** was evidently shaped by early experiences. Ben and Jeremy recall how issues were hotly debated over the family dinner table and independence of thought celebrated. However, as adults

they reported divergent attitudes to rules: while in some respects Jeremy experienced them as a safe haven, Ben retained a deep suspicion that rules and regulations can empower abusive behaviour and encourage people to abandon their core values rather than behave ethically. His strong belief in the value of teamwork might therefore appear paradoxical, but what he appreciated was working with an informal 'network' composed of like-minded others, rather than in a structured team.

Both Trevor and Lia described being reluctant to follow rules from school days onwards and would flout rules if they disagreed with them. Lia considered that rules create stuckness and conceal corruption and passive acceptance of wrong. Although Trevor was proud of his non-conformist stance and principled behaviour, he recognised that this stance was not productive and that he had been justifiably criticised repeatedly for acting outside his role.

In contrast, Sandra was open about her drive to 'toe the line' and do what is expected of her, an ethic which she developed in childhood, taking responsibility for her younger siblings. But then she welcomed the autonomy and freedom from overt rules which she gained in aspects of her work. Bev had, throughout her working life, invested trust in rules and regulations as a pathway to achieve fairness and protect workers' rights. This was partly driven, however, by her reluctance to be a 'tall poppy'.

Despite these variable attitudes to rules and regulations, Jeremy, Sandra Philip Beth and Bev all tried, with limited success, to use rules and regulations to expose the wrongdoing they witnessed.

Participants reflected explicitly about either their own **ethical code** or the morality dominant in their organization. Some who offered thoughts on their personal ethical code were evidently consequentialists, placing value on outcomes regardless of means, while others, as deontologists, were committed to imperatives, regardless of outcome: Jeremy was clear about his commitment to religiously informed

principles, as a basis for distinguishing right and wrong while Bev and Beth were both focused pragmatically on achieving fair outcomes for clients of their respective services by whatever means available. However, as previously noted, as most people do, participants made ethical choices through a mixture of consequential and deontological reasoning: while Ben felt an imperative to protect *'waifs and strays'* that came his way, he was prepared to use any means that achieved the best outcome for the child.

Participants actively appraised the morality of the system they were part of: Sandra reflected that *"something not nice is happening here"*; Philip described his competitive milieu as *"a dog-eats-dog, gunslinging sort of world"*, which he enjoyed the excitement of, pragmatically supported the need for, yet also disapproved of; Bev regarded the status quo in the two troubled organizations she worked in as self-interestedly resistant to change and was puzzled by her own compliance with such morally dubious systems.

Most participants perceived the **wrongdoing to be embedded within the system** rather than the fault of a corrupt individual, even if a single perpetrator could be identified. When they saw the actions of a particular individual as the proximal cause of the wrongdoing, they regarded the system as having created the conditions which made it possible. Philip could see that the *'gun-slinging'* greed of the oil industry legitimated the individual greed of his boss; Bev held senior figures in the charities she worked for personally accountable for mismanagement but acknowledged that the charitable sector was structured in a way which gave free rein to such excesses; Ben saw the wrongdoing as both created by and the responsibility of the medical profession to solve, in contrast to Sandra who located it more narrowly in her employing organization, seeing it as an aberrant example which allowed her to retain faith in the medical profession as a whole. Beth also saw wrongdoing as embedded in whole system: staff were unhappy and atmosphere *'strange'*, but she attributed this to systemic failures of containment which allowed poor performance and abusive behaviours to go unchallenged. Lia thought the cultural endorsement of *omertà*, the code of silence and resistance to interference with illegal activities of

insiders, created the context for tolerating widespread wrongdoing within the family firm who employed her.

Positioning themselves as insiders or outsiders concerned all the participants. Most began as committed insiders, keen to do a good job for the firm, (true for Jeremy, Sandra, Ben, Beth, Bev, Andrea). Jeremy Sandra and Beth initially regarded the institution as benign and worthy of respect, and preserved that view for some time, in the face of contradictory evidence, by separating the institution from the more immediately experienced organization.

Philip's positioning from the start was more ambiguous: he valued his professional identity as an accountant and so retained a sense of being partially an outsider in his employing organization from the outset. Ben's position was also ambiguous. Generally, he felt both part of and different from mainstream society and his networks of like-minded others, with whom he was closely identified perhaps represented transitional objects which enabled him to belong and not belong to external organizations.

Trevor and Lia both claimed an identity as a whistleblower from a young age, irrespective of the role they occupied, which placed them as perpetual outsiders. Their satisfaction with how junior staff were attached to them may represent the closest they would want to come to assuming an insider status. Lia spoke of being viciously loyal to her boss however, which represented a proxy or partial investment in an insider position.

As their awareness of wrongdoing developed, so did their unease about belonging to a system of which they were also critical. The move to assume an outsider position was experienced as both isolating and freeing. It was more readily tolerated by some than others. Beth was enormously relieved when she finally accepted that she would never be properly accepted within her organization. Philip found it distressing and alienating to be recognised as an outsider, which seemed clearly linked to his childhood history. Others resolved the sense of exclusion or alienation by joining an

alternative domain, frequently that of other whistleblowers. Bev, having left her role as a paid employee continued to work voluntarily to maintain her commitment to her clients while dissociating herself from the corrupt organizations.

Some participants described an **internal voice which silenced them**: Andrea spoke of being crippled by self-doubt for much of her adult life which made it hard to voice her concerns and led her to fear being “*ripped to shreds*” if she did speak out; she and Sandra both felt that complaining would be a betrayal of their own professionalism, and Sandra also prided herself on her resilience, so was reluctant to label what was happening as personally unmanageable; Bev felt that she never wanted to be ‘*a tall poppy*’ and recognised she always wanted to placate rather than challenge.

Some reported feeling confused, uncertain and doubting their own reasoning capacity as they observed wrongdoing, which made it harder to speak out about their concerns. For Beth and Andrea this appears to be a result of workplace gaslighting, as mentioned above, but was experienced internally. Interestingly Bev also reported uncertainty but was clear that it was a collective experience – “*we all wondered...*” – and was consequently less distressed by it.

A feature of participants’ experience, generally but not exclusively occurring once they passed a **tipping point**, was gaining a **sense of agency**. One route to gaining a sense of agency or potency, taken by Sandra and Philip, was through refreshing their commitment to their view of their primary task, particularly if they were rolling back from a more compliant and therefore compromised relationship with the organization. Thus, agency was gained through resisting interpellation and taking up a role as a *parrhesiastes*.

Trevor authorized his self to have agency from childhood which seemed linked to his permanent outsider self-position. Lia was also insistent on her own agency/autonomy. Like Trevor, she accepted her constant outsider status as an important part of her identity. Her ‘vicious loyalty’ doesn’t contradict this since she

perceived herself choosing that loyalty autonomously. Conversely, neither Bev nor Andrea described seeking a sense of agency, possibly because they were both averse to being tall poppies.

Finally, participants' **attitude to bystanders and bystanding** contributed to their capacity to speak out about their concerns. Generally, participants were quite tolerant and uncritical of those who remained silent. While they felt they had little option, knowing what they know, to speak out, they accepted that others would share that knowledge but do nothing.

Sandra's colleagues resigned and advised her to follow suit but at that point she thought she had the necessary resilience to fight it out. Philip's colleagues shrugged off dodgy dealing as just part of the world they operated in, but he could not do that because of his allegiance to his professional identity as an accountant. Ben knew he had a valency to ally with "*waifs and strays*" and "*jump up and down*" about their wellbeing but implicitly recognised that as a personal trait which others don't share. He also located responsibility for wrongdoing in the system rather than in individuals. Beth expressed empathy with bystanders, understanding that they were trapped within a destructive system which was hard to escape. Lia expressed empathy for those junior staff who were exploited by corrupt individuals but were forced by circumstance and the code of *omertà* to accept their situation.

Jeremy's series of '*knight in shining armour*' stories indicated that he anticipated others would usually be bystanders, while constructing himself as an ethical figure across different contexts, not only that in which he blew the whistle.

Some instances of bystanding did evoke a contemptuous response. Trevor routinely felt contempt for those who chose conformity over principle, labelling all such behaviour as collusion. However, bystanders who were perceived to collude to serve their own interests were condemned even by those, such as Sandra and Ben, who were otherwise tolerant of bystanding.

Theoretical underpinnings

Participants who spoke out were engaged in a process of “crafting” an ethical self (Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013, p. 473), by questioning and dissenting from established custom and practice within their organizations. This was sometimes an actively chosen process, sometimes forced upon them by the processes which ‘policed’ the disciplinary discourses, or “prescriptive ensembles” as Foucault described them (Foucault & Pearson, 2001). By refusing to comply with injustice or corruption which infringed their own ethical sense, causing them in some cases, moral injury, (Shay, 2014) they gained a sense of independence and freedom. Their passionate attachment to a system which had become, through various means, injurious to themselves, gave way to a passionate attachment to a *parrhesiastic* identity as a speaker of truth, having “internalise(d) the “*parrhesiastic struggle*” (Foucault & Pearson, 2001, p.133).

5.3. Summary

Describing the process in this way is misleading as it suggests that the process was linear, coherent, intentional and heroic. These participants’ narratives showed that mostly the process was none of those things. Each followed a unique course through the complexities of the experiences out of which was constructed their particular ethical self. They continually moved back and fore across the limits of recognizability within their organization, (Kenny et al, 2020) while struggling with the difficulty of adapting to a context which threatened moral injury. Some were distressed and reluctant to assume the identity of a whistleblower and suffered much from the retaliation directed at them. A willingness to display their vulnerability, accepting their exposure to controlling and retaliatory strategies (Butler, 2016, 2020) helped to compose their ethical self. Others were readily able to assimilate an outsider identity, which had been part of their sense of self since childhood.

Even if engaging with parrhesia involves the freedom to think for themselves, this is not to suggest that they become, by speaking out, an autonomous individual. This, according to Foucault, is a discursive construct as much as any other idea of

selfhood (Foucault & Pearson, 2001). Instead, as their variable attitudes to bystanders demonstrates, their new ethical self was constituted in relation to the others who compose their social world. Those others, who were bystanders, were defined by them, in their turn as object beings in order to define the limits of the speakable (Kenny, 2018).

Chapter 6: Bystanders' narratives

"The cost of survival will, I suspect, always be the perpetuation of our discontents"

(Armstrong, 2005 p. 68)

6.1. Bystander analytic concepts

As detailed in Section **4.1.2.1b**, each whistleblower was asked if they would nominate a colleague who had been party to the events which led up to their whistleblowing. Jeremy and Ben kindly facilitated contact with pertinent bystanders who agreed to be interviewed. Their demographic information is shown in Table 1 in Section 4.1.2.2.

They were interviewed using the procedure described in Section **4.4.** and their narratives were analysed using the same procedures described in Sections **4.5,** except that their two sets of categories were first combined to derive a set of composite categories which were then further compared to the twenty-one listed in Table 4. In some cases, the bystander categories merged with a category already present in the whistleblowers' table, even if the category's meaning was somewhat nuanced for them. In other cases, a new category was formed. Some whistleblower categories were not found in the bystander data. The overlaps are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Composite bystander categories compared to whistleblower categories

Heading	Definition	Shared with whistleblowers Yes/no
Stages		
Accumulating facts/evidence	Actors actively seek evidence to explore the concerns raised	Yes – although ‘support’ for whistleblowers becomes ‘explore’ here
Period in liminal space	Actors find themselves located, in time or space, <i>in-between</i> what is familiar	Yes
Tipping points	Moments when the convergence of internal and external factors make remaining silent subjectively inevitable	Yes – although the outcome here is remaining silent
Choice to remain silent	Actors commit to not speaking out	No
Processes		
Templates from early experience:	Narratives of experiences from childhood growing up within family/culture and early experience of role, which construct behaviour in role and responses to wrongdoing	Bystanders limited reflection to earlier professional experience
Passionate attachment to the discursive idea of the organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to task or domain and development of Organization-in-the-mind 	Actor’s investment in the organization’s purpose and their ideas about their role in the organization	Yes
‘Policing’ of disciplinary discourses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being valued or rejected as a person and/or a professional • Gang functioning • Criticism or blame • System sealing over. 	Actors’ perceptions of how much they were valued either as a person or for their professional skills Actors observe perverse collusion among others in the organization, including scapegoating Colleagues and authority figures criticise and blame each other, but bystanders are not targets The system behaves as if the whistleblowing had not happened	Yes Yes No No

Heading	Definition	Shared with whistleblowers Yes/no
<p>Construction of an ethical self</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning self as insider/outsider • Relationship to rules and regulations • Perceiving the wrongdoing as systemic • Attitude to whistleblowers/whistleblowing 	<p>Where actors are positioned relative to the boundaries of the organization or key subgroups within it</p> <p>Attitude, shaped by early experiences, to conforming to rules in general and to the organization’s regulations</p> <p>Actors observe the wrongdoing as embedded in the system, at the level of organization/domain/culture</p> <p>Actors construct an identity different to their own, for those who know about the wrongdoing and raise concerns</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No – but a mirror image of whistleblowers’ attitudes</p>

Table 5 (continued)

As with reporting the whistleblowing data, the meaning of each concept or single category will be outlined below and then illustrated with material from individual participants’ narratives. The bystanders’ material will then be compared analytically to that of the whistleblowers. When a composite category is referenced, its title is shown in **bold** type. The adjusted map of the connections between the abstracted concepts, which is equivalent to that shown in Chapter 5 appears below:

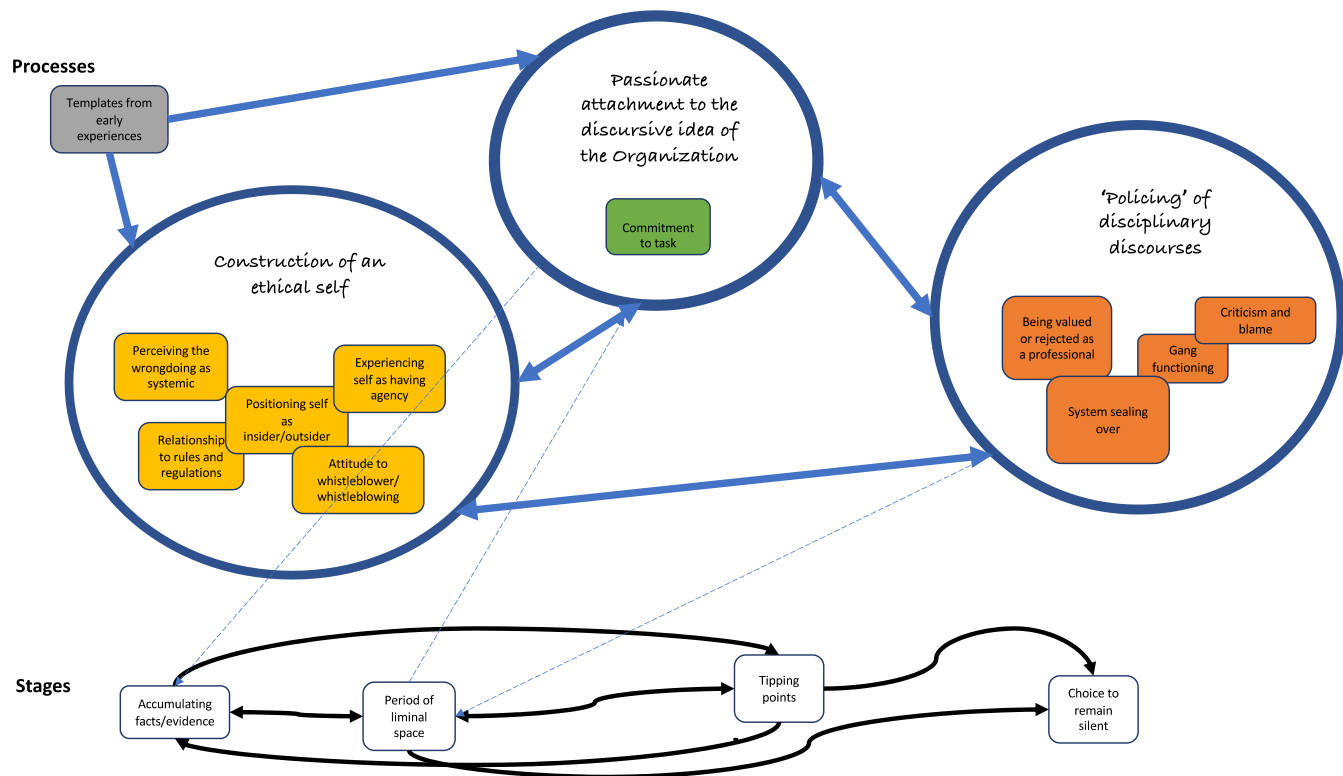


Figure 4: Bystander abstracted analytic categories

6.1.1. Stages

6.1.1i. Accumulating evidence

Definition

Once they became aware that concerns had been expressed, bystander participants made some effort to establish whether there was a basis for concern, but what they uncovered did not play a significant role in determining their subsequent behaviour.

Case examples

Tim made some covert efforts to find out about previous contentious events but was careful not to show any special interest in them. This cautious approach was perhaps a barrier to gaining a moral consensus with other interested colleagues. Fiona learned, through contact with national professional interest groups about alternative patterns of practice and discovered that practice in her hospital was at odds with what happened elsewhere but decided to attribute those differences to greater severity of presentations in the patients treated by her service.

Comparison with whistleblowers

While accumulating evidence was empowering for whistleblowers, the bystanders' stance was unchanged by what they learned. Their approach seemed to echo Tiresias, the classical bystander: neither had any arrogance attached to their learning (Bion, 1958) but wanted to investigate details in order to avoid the discomfort of dealing with the implications of what they discovered. Fiona also used a confirmation bias, interpreting new information she gained from colleagues in other organizations, to confirm her existing beliefs. Such biases are notoriously difficult to modify in organizational settings (Kahneman et al, 2011).

6.1.1ii Period in liminal space

Definition

Both participants spent some time separated from their usual working context and felt that they were in a period of transition, removed from the troubled context, but anticipating a return. These were not periods of intense experience or change for them.

Case examples

After Jeremy had exposed the financial corruption behind the project he and Tim were employed to deliver, Tim was sent for some months to an outlying unit. Fiona found that parts of the service which were being investigated had been temporarily closed, so she worked outside the team dealing only with out-patients. Both experienced these periods as peaceful and a welcome respite from the turmoil caused by the whistleblowing.

Comparison with whistleblowers

While many of the whistleblowers used liminality to free themselves from interpellation by the system, the bystanders used it only to mark time. For them it was not a space of 'undecidability' (Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013) or a transitional space associated with self-development.

6.1.1iii Tipping points

Definition

A tipping point was reached, when participants encountered a challenge to a personally essential rule about how to live properly. For the bystander participants these were moments when they were led to re-consider their priorities.

Case examples

Neither bystander experienced a particularly clear-cut tipping point but decided at some point to distance themselves from the conflict. Tim did come close to a tipping point in his airport encounter with Jeremy, which notably took place in a transitional space, when he learnt about the circumstances which led to his friend so riskily speaking out. Jeremy gave him permission to be a bystander, to do nothing and to distance himself from the events involved in the whistleblowing. He had a second tipping point when he had an intimidating encounter with a senior member of the ruling family and stepped back from challenging her. He recognised this was out of keeping with his usual behaviour but reflected a pragmatic decision not to risk his physical safety and to ensure he could further his private aims in taking on the work. Fiona realised that her usual strategy of compartmentalising had broken down when she found her distress associated with the whistleblowing events seeping into her personal life. The realisation persuaded her to ask to be moved away of her role.

Comparison with whistleblowers

Most whistleblowers, after the **tipping point** felt that they faced a 'choiceless choice' (Alford, 2001). The bystanders' experience of a tipping point was more diffuse and also lacked the iterative quality which was common for the whistleblowers. Fiona did try to accommodate her practice to align her emerging sense of something amiss in the service with her high professional standards. Eventually her defensive strategy of "*compartmentalising*" failed. Both bystanders distanced themselves from the events of the whistleblowing, while continuing with their primary task. In taking this resolution to their dilemma they were not so much turning a blind eye or engaging in a psychic retreat (Steiner, 1993) as attempting to remain loyal to their primary task.

6.1.1iv Choice to remain silent

Definition

Participants reached a decision not to become involved in the whistleblowing process.

Case examples

Both described being puzzled about what was happening. Tim described a gradually emerging awareness of something wrong in the system. He had been given an outline of events by Jeremy in their airport encounter, but he became aware that as well as financial corruption there was also wide-spread nepotism, which disrupted the project's progress. Following his tipping points, he made a choice, to hold onto his employment and avoid literally '*being sent packing*', until he had financed building himself a holiday home. He also appraised what he observed through the lens of cultural relativism. Fiona shared a sense of gradually building apprehension that there was something amiss systemically but tried to stay focused on her part of the task and not question what other clinical strategies were being employed within the team. She increasingly recognised the need for "*grey-scale*" to be tolerated within the system and that treatment choices were necessarily often based on opinion instead of, as she would have preferred, scientific evidence. In her clinical work she avoided enhancing splits between families and the treating doctors and when she had to give evidence to the review, she tried hard to present a balanced view.

Comparison with whistleblowers

Remaining with their 'puzzlement' and stance as dispassionate observers, enabled them to postpone recognising that they had opted to be a bystander. Their awareness of complexity and nuance in the system also dissuaded them from making a firm judgment about whether what they observed amounted to wrongdoing. Their progress through the stages outlined above was as iterative as that of the whistleblowers, so that there was no single point when they chose to remain silent. Rather, as Blenkinsopp and Edwards (2008) make clear, their sense-

making involved keeping two questions continually under review: ‘is there wrongdoing going on here?’ and ‘am I called on to take action?’. Although their answers to these two questions were finally similar, their sense-making scanned different considerations. Both reached a position of acquiescence, associated, as Blenkinsopp and Edwards point out, with the emotion of resignation rather than anger or fear. Also, they both had more positive ‘pro-social’ reasons for remaining silent, given their determination to do the best job they could in the circumstances.

6.1.2. Processes

6.1.2i Templates from earlier (professional) experience

Definition

Participants provided narratives about their earlier professional development which had shaped their approach to their current roles. Despite the wording of the SQUIN explicitly encouraging narratives from their ‘*whole lives*’, neither offered any account of their childhood or family life.

Case examples

Fiona described her effortless achievement of her professional ambitions and her early reliance on clear-cut evidence-led protocols to guide her clinical work. Taking a post in a large and prestigious medical institution forced her to adjust her idea of her place in the system. Having been a “*tall poppy*” throughout her education and training, she found she was now placed somewhere in the middle, inexperienced and marginal. She welcomed this change however and described a parallel intellectual journey away from expecting her clinical experience to fit into predictable models. Instead, she learnt to recognise that nuance and opinion must have a role in practice and to tolerate what she called “*the greyscale*” in clinical situations. She found she had to make some significant emotional adaptations to function with satisfaction within the system but valued what she had learnt. This echoed her colleague, Ben’s respect for cutting-edge science, but kept in its place.

Tim did not elaborate on his sense of himself as a person-in-role but had a clear idea of his limited place in the organisation and what his skills could offer the system

However, they both reflected on how the experience they had accumulated thus far shaped their approach to their roles. Fiona's lack of experience persuaded her to accept the status quo until she accumulated more diverse experience. She reflected that she had generally learnt values and commitment by observing colleagues, which reinforced that tendency towards affirmation. By contrast Tim described how his depth of experience led him to adopt a pragmatic and relativist ethical stance which encouraged him to accept the status quo.

Comparison with whistleblowers

Unlike their whistleblowing colleagues neither bystander was inclined to describe their pre-professional lives. This is in keeping with their detached stance towards the wrongdoing they observed. While the whistleblowers readily offered a narrative of their whole lives and did not question the relevance of describing growing up within their families, the bystanders did not seem to see their journey towards the resolution they chose as similarly embedded in their whole history. Their professional histories predisposed them both to remain within the 'domain of the sayable' (Kenny, 2018), Fiona because she wanted to continue to learn by example from her peers and Tim because he wanted to exercise his skills within the context in which they could be constituted as useful.

6.1.2ii. Passionate attachment to the discursive idea of the organization

Definition

These bystander participants described joining their organization, learning about its formal rules and informal culture, and working out how they might fill the role to which they thought they had been assigned. However, both described an attachment to their task and professional identity without expressing a close identification with the organization in which they carried out that task.

Contributing categories with case examples

Both bystanders described a **commitment to task** in which they were narrowly focused on their allocated roles. They both described barely seeing or understanding the bigger picture of the organization's task, instead compartmentalising their efforts and loyalty, preferring to ignore the complex dynamics of the wider organization. They invested energy in the exercise of their professionalism while understanding that their work facilitated the work of others to deliver an outcome, rather than deliver the outcome itself. Tim's job was to plan a project which others would deliver. Fiona thought of her role as 'translating' between families of sick children and the highly technical medical system to facilitate their engagement. Further, the authority structure within which her role was located meant that she was answerable to members of her own profession of psychology, rather than to the medical hierarchy within whose remit the wrongdoing occurred.

Neither mentioned experiencing a **conflict of values** or an experience of **being let down** within the system.

Comparison with whistleblowers

These bystanders apparently invested less trust and less of their identity in belonging to their specific organization, so were less likely to experience a conflict of values or sense of betrayal, an essential aspect of being let down. Their relationship to the wider organization resembled the 'boarding house state of mind' described by Stokes (2015, p. 230), in which responsibility for the overall good of the organization is delegated upwards, while individual staff can be busy with their part of the task. Stokes identifies this state of mind as a defence against potentially disturbing situations, the use of which allows the professional to get on with their work efficiently. This can be seen in both bystanders' focus on their task and refusal to be drawn into anti-task basic assumption behaviour.

6.1.2iii Policing of disciplinary discourses

Definition

An organization maintains control overtly over what happens within it via intertwined and co-constructed overt rules and implicit norms. Concern being raised about wrongdoing poses a threat to the integrity of the organization and must be subjected to disciplinary measures. Bystanders observed the implementation of those measures, consciously and unconsciously, even while affirming their admittedly partial subjection to the discourse.

Contributing categories with case examples

Although both reported some frustration about their **professional efforts not being valued** they tolerated this devaluing as part of the way that the system functioned and found covert ways to work around the difficulties this presented. Fiona wondered whether she should have fought harder to have the contribution that psychology could make to a positive outcome recognised but felt that she was not well-placed to make a difference. Neither felt personally devalued.

Neither experienced **criticism or blame** directly although they did observe those who raised concerns being targeted. Fiona described how, in the midst of the crisis, there was a great deal of *“mudslinging and splitting”*, in which the organization, divided against itself, tried to blame some and exonerate other parts. After the crisis she noticed that people outside the team were keen to split her from her former colleagues and recruit her to identify malpractice. She was reluctant to join in with that process as she was motivated to maintain a *“balanced”* perspective.

Both were aware of a **gang functioning** within the system. Tim noticed how the team of senior managers colluded to make Jeremy’s working life difficult and was sympathetic to the harsh experience it would have been for him. Fiona observed medical staff uniting to silence alternative viewpoints. However, they both felt that their work was not closely affected by those activities.

Both described the system collectively **sealing over** recollection of the events surrounding the whistleblowing, finding ways to deny that the crisis had occurred

(McGlashan & Levy, 2019), minimise reputational damage and return to the status-quo-ante. Fiona recalled that the suspended consultant physician at the centre of the controversy returned to work without any formal mention of his absence and that her junior colleague soon began to raise in supervision the same familiar issues she had struggled with herself. Tim noted that large monetary bribes were no longer being paid, but that bribery called by a different name and less blatant, was still rife. He knew that the UK Bribery Act of 2010 had outlawed some practices that had been standard and recognised that it had made some impact on both the size and overt nature of bribery. But he did not expect the Act to abolish the activity because it was so entrenched in both local and global cultures.

Comparison with whistleblowers

No whistleblower described this defensive **sealing over**, possibly because they rarely remained in a position to observe the context in which they had raised concerns. McGlashan and Levy (2019, p. 5) describe this process occurring among a staff team in a therapeutic community as a '*defensive collusion*' operating under basic assumption pairing (baP) mentality: the team join together to hope that a magical transformation has occurred, sealing off any effort to address underlying causes. Both bystanders, with their commitment to the task rather than the system, had little valency for that basic assumption behaviour.

6.1.2iv Construction of an ethical self.

Definition

People making decisions about what to do when faced with evidence of wrongdoing within their organization 'craft' an ethical identity for themselves which incorporates the choices they make and their understanding of their organization's moral codes. Positioning themselves in relation to the whistleblower and their actions is an essential part of that construction.

Contributing categories with case examples

Both bystanders used the phrase “*too low in the food-chain*” to describe how they **positioned themselves** within their organization and as a rationale for not challenging the wrongdoing. Both thereby cast themselves as rule-takers not rule-makers. While this disenfranchised them to some extent, it also freed them to focus on delivering a best-possible professional outcome within their limited area of functioning. This positioning also informed their **relationship to rules and regulations**. Being low in the food-chain reflected their sense of being a somewhat detached part of a much larger system within which they had little influence. Tim commented that his long service in the army had accustomed him to tolerate the infringements of his civil rights and that he therefore did not expect to exercise personal choice about whether to comply with regulations, even if he objected to their content.

They both **perceived the wrongdoing as systemic**. Tim was emphatic that bribery and nepotism were culturally normative across much of the Middle East and Asia and that it was inappropriate to make judgments based on moral codes imported from a different context. Fiona reflected that the health care system is generally hierarchical and that it is additionally hard to challenge the authority or practice of world-renowned Consultants.

In keeping with how they positioned themselves within the organization, both bystanders seemed inclined to distance themselves from the whistleblowing act. Tim’s **attitude to the whistleblower** was nuanced: as a friend he was there to ‘*watch his back*’, but maintained a more reserved professional relationship, implying that he made independent choices and was comfortable with distancing himself from Jeremy’s actions as they had agreed he should in their airport meeting. Fiona did not mention Ben, the actual whistleblower, or describe any particular incidents which involved him individually. She also did not spontaneously mention the TV documentary which exposed the problematic prevailing clinical practice to public view. When asked directly, she described feeling critical of the programme’s lack of ‘*balance*’.

Comparison to whistleblowers.

Unlike the whistleblowers neither bystander authorised themselves to dissent. As described above, their silence was acquiescent. They were not constituted as abject beings, their speech remained possible, and they continued to be recognised within the dominant discourses of their organizations. Did they embrace ‘terms injurious to themselves’? It would seem not, since their sense-making constructed the events they observed in shades of grey (Blenkinsopp & Edwards, 2008, p. 183). They seem to have had no interest in fearless speech, or in a *parrhesiastic* search for truth. However, Foucault accepted that any of ‘the truths we tell ourselves’ are no more than workable fictions (Simpson, 2012). It is arguable that these bystanders did engage in a search for truth, but that the search led them to an affirmation, rather than transformation of the dominant discourse. There was no evidence in either of the ‘narcissism moralized’ which Alford (2001) described. In fact, with their recognition of complexity and nuance and drive to get on with the job, they seemed to have taken up a depressive position, accepting their need to engage collaboratively with others (Stokes, 2015, p.228).

However, the sealing over which both described following the crises triggered by the whistleblowing, showed the dark side of affirmation – the opportunity to discover novel selves or social configurations abandoned.

Chapter 7: Organization-in-the-mind explored

7.1. Introduction

The analysis of the participants' narratives conducted so far gave me an understanding of the processes and stages involved in the events surrounding the whistleblowing incidents. I discovered how iterative the course of events was. I also noted how individual and variable the narrative course was, although evidently co-constructed between the person and their organizational world. This observation led me to be curious about how factors within the person, the organizational system and the context within which they and the organization were embedded, might engage with each other. At this point the questions David Armstrong identifies as helpful in understanding group mentality in organizational functioning came to mind:

“Why these experiences in this setting, here and now: what is this...revealing about the organization as a whole-its challenges and dilemmas, the nature of what it does, the ways it is structured, its relatedness to context?” (Armstrong, 2005, p. 101)

So far, my analysis had focused on uncovering underlying processes which moved the participants through a particular crisis in their working lives. My approach had focused on commonalities and the narrative structure, emphasising movement through time (Alford, 2007). In order to explore the dynamics of the relationships between person, system and context I needed to flatten this time perspective to focus attention on how those factors were “inextricably enmeshed” within a system (Long, 2016). This led me to the ideas of Susan Long and colleagues, about a framework for studying and delivering transforming experience in organizations, the Transforming Experience Framework (‘TEF’ henceforth) for short. (Long, 2016)

7.2. Summarizing the Transforming Experience Framework

In the opening lines to her introduction to the book, Long highlights how central decisions are to social interactions and to the formation of a work organization as a whole:

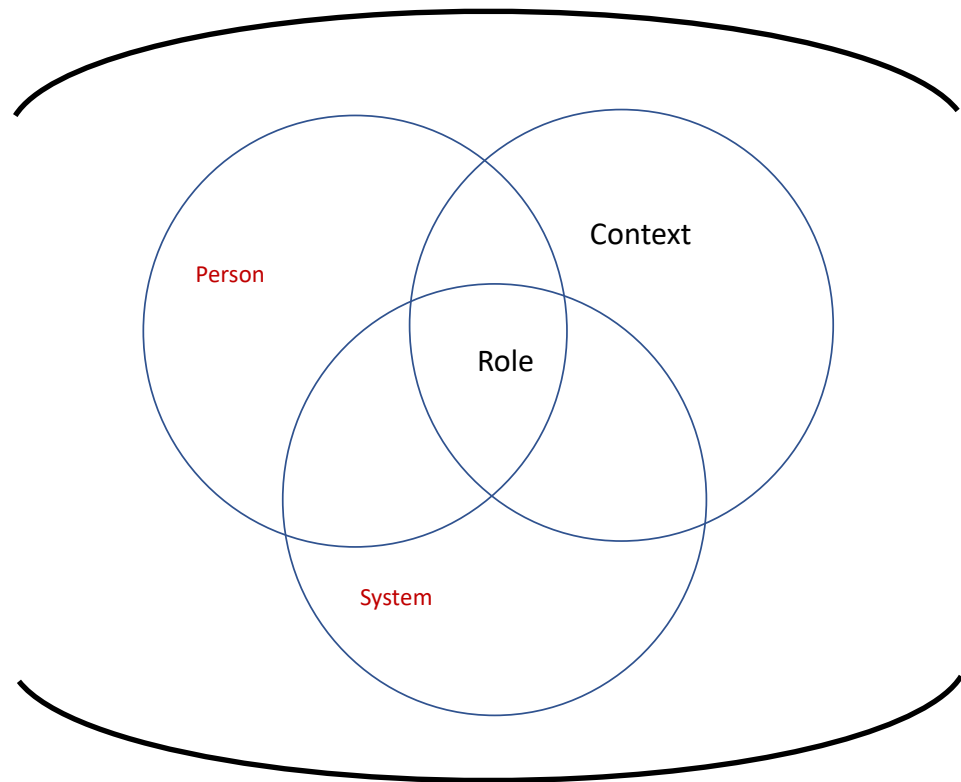
“Organisation is a social structure of interacting roles making decisions and taking action from those decisions” (Long, 2016 p. 1).

The analysis set out in Chapter 5 above demonstrates how the unfolding narrative in a whistleblowing incident is composed of innumerable conscious and unconscious decisions, constantly revisited as person and situation are mutually constituted. This supported the idea that exploring my data using the TEF would be a fertile exercise.

The idea of role is at the core of the TEF. Simply put, a role is a position within an organisation, occupied by an individual and defined by the tasks allocated to it within the system. However, in the TEF it is emphasised that roles are filled by persons, who have particular ideas about what the role means, who interact with others – clients, colleagues, managers – who also have ideas about that role and therefore expectations of the person in role. Despite the different vocabulary, the TEF clearly shares an ontology with Judith Butler’s performative theory of selfhood and power. Although ‘persons’ have an important place in the TEF, the framework neither privileges the individual over the context, nor locates intentionality in an autonomous self. Long states that *“personhood is essential to a system and the system is essential to the person”* (Long, 2016, p.4), but emphasises that the social precedes the individual, so the framework is looking from the “outside in”.

In the TEF there are four domains, arenas, of experience: of being a person; of being in a system; of being in a context and the experience of connectedness with deeply held values or profound purpose –called ‘source’ in the framework. Roles are defined within an inter-related mesh of these experiences, at the point where they intersect. Figure 4 illustrates this intersectionality.

Connectedness
with deeply held
values



*Adapted from
Long et al (2016)

Figure 5 Role as the point of intersection of domains of experience

Within the framework, personhood is conceptualised as a continuous developmental journey during which an identity is constructed, skills are acquired, and values adopted, all drawing on constructs that exist in the context. Long sees development driven by desire, reflecting Bion's view that we are 'hopelessly committed to development' (Bion, 1961). The organizational system is comprised of rules and cultural patterns which are designed to achieve a purpose. The relationship between a person and the system is governed by their allocated role within it. Context is straightforwardly defined as "*the environment within which a social system occurs*", which might be for instance historical or economic (Long, 2016, p.9). The 'source' or deeper purpose reflects pervasive cultural or spiritual values which may operate at a conscious or unconscious level according to Long. Conceptually there is some overlap here with Foucault's ideas about the archaeology of discourses. However, for the purposes of this study I have conflated context and source.

Role is at the centre of the framework. The person in a role fills it according to their personal valencies, formed from their history of taking up roles throughout their

development – in their family, schooling, previous career. Those experiences colour, rather than determine how they take up a role, through “congealed layers of experience” (Butler, 2005). A person will have an idea about what their role is, but the expectations and ideas that others, including a generalised Other, have about the role exerts a powerful push and pull on the actions which can occur within a role. Thus, individuals are interpellated to perform in role as they are ‘hailed’ by the system, context and their personal history.

7.3. The organization in the mind

David Armstrong’s development of the idea of organization in the mind is central to how role can be thought about in the TEF. He argues that in consulting to organizations, attention paid to the emotional experiences, conveyed in behaviour and reported can provide much intelligence about the functioning of the organization, as he argues in Chapter 7. (Armstrong, 2005) As outlined above, in Section 2.9, he argues that the mental image a person holds of their organization is a mixture of *in*-actments, whereby the external organization activates the person-in-role’s internal repertoire of responses for managing emotions, so that they resonate to prevailing dynamics and *en*-actments, whereby the person externalises, projects, their own anxieties provoked by the nature of the task, into the organization. He argues that there is a shadow side to every organization and intelligence about that can be read off from the person’s organization in the mind. Dreams provide ‘available narratives’, (Armstrong, 2005, p. 64) containers for meanings constructed within the system, but through which emotional experiences are formulated. No participant in this study shared a dream during their interview, but their biographical narratives, especially their PINs (‘particular incident narrative’) made available the emotional meanings contained in their organization in the mind.

In this part of the study I have used the concept of the organization-in-the mind as a way of describing and summarizing the impingement of system and context, as defined here, on the person who occupies a role. The components of the TEF are interrelated, co-constructed, and therefore overlap. This is particularly true of the organization-in-the-mind, which is a complex integration of sense-making, introjections and defensive projections.

7.4. Procedure for recategorizing the data.

In order to test whether the TEF could help me make sense of the multiple categories my grounded theory coding process had generated I attempted to map those composite categories onto the framework shown in Figure 5. The attempt was at best partially successful. At the lower level of abstraction, not only did some categories seem to fit everywhere and nowhere, but I also felt that it did not advance the project of understanding how factors within the person, organizational system and context might engage with each other. I felt that there was a meaningful correspondence between the more abstracted analytic concepts and the TEF

Consequently, I decided to return to my initial extracted codes and recategorize them according to whether they referenced: person; role; system and/or context. Scrutinizing the contents of the codes which clustered under each reference, I identified material which was relevant to extant theoretical systems-psychodynamic constructs. How these constructs mapped into the TEF is shown in Figure 5.

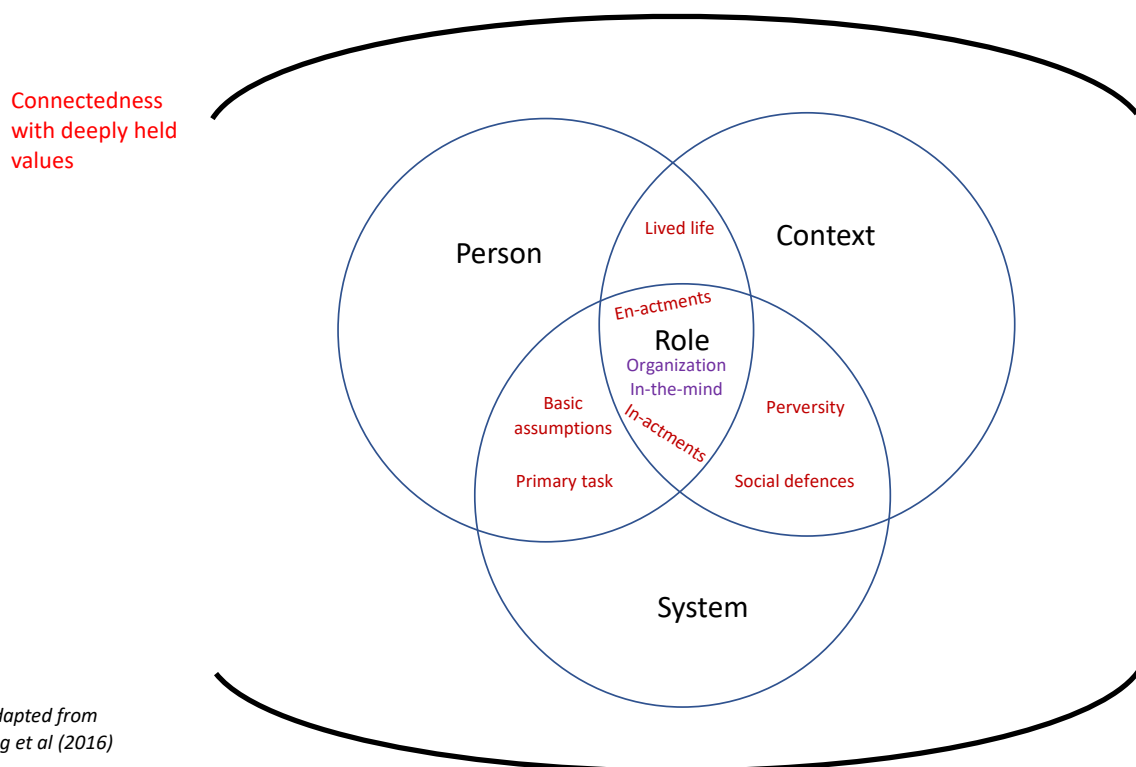


Figure 6: TEF framework with systemic concepts inserted.

In line with the argument underlying Long's concept of the TEF, where organization is defined as a social structure of interacting roles, I aimed to explore how material which spoke to each aspect of the framework might resonate in the way that my participants represented the organizations in which they worked. I hoped to go some way towards capturing how whistleblowing is a co-constructed psycho-social process and to surface some of "the complexities and ambiguities of [..my participants..] experience" (Kenny, 2019, p.4). This led me to develop a template to structure case formulations for each participant. I drew on inter-related constructs from within systems-psychodynamic theorizing, which are iteratively related and necessarily overlapping, given they are drawn from a common theoretical pool.

The template is set out in Table 6 below. Each individual case formulation drew on the recategorized data to populate the constructs within the template. The resulting formulations are presented in the following section. Cases are grouped by sector (Health,/Not-for-profit/Corporate/Intergovernmental). Bystander formulations follow directly after the whistleblower with whom they are paired. All the data about the organization-in-the-mind was additionally compiled into a single document to aid comparisons and is shown in Appendix 7

Table 6: Structure of case formulations within the T E F

Section	Description
The 'lived life'	The chronology or sequence of key events in a participant's life, 'the flow of 'objective' events and actions' (Wengraf 2001, p.259). The chronology is compiled from information provided mainly in SS1, the first part of the BNIM interview, but supplemented or clarified if necessary, by material emerging in SS2. The information is objectified: it contains only statements which an independent observer could have provided without access to the subjective experience of the actor
CONTEXT \situated system	The environment within which a given system occurs or is situated (Long (2016, p.9.) This includes historical sociocultural, political and economic features. Prevalent discourses and structures of feeling (Williams, 2015) which reflexively construct and are constructed by those features also contribute to define the context. The system is constrained and produced by its context
SYSTEM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The primary task</i> <li>• <i>Social defences:</i> <li>• <i>Prevalent basic assumptions</i> <li>• <i>Evidence of perversity</i> 	<p>The organization, or in some cases the domain, within which the wrongdoing is situated</p> <p>The work which needs to get done to justify the organization's survival but contested and constructed within a context (Hoggett, 2006)</p> <p>Defences shared within the organization to manage the threats arising from its enterprise, converted into energy used in the service of the task. What is being defended against (the threat) and the form that the defensive behaviours take are described.</p> <p>Configurations of mental activity and functioning, collectively employed by the group to express and defend against the uprush of unmanageable feeling evoked by the task and group membership. Group members may behave as if they all shared the same unconscious assumption, although individuals will have a valency to act on particular assumptions as will organizations with particular authority structures and tasks. Basic assumptions both reflect and construct social defences.</p> <p>A 'perverse state of mind' existing within an organization, or system-domain may be associated with wrongdoing and reflect defences operating at a societal level. Long's typology of 'deadly sins' (Long, 2008) is used to explicate the relationships between context, system and wrongdoing.</p>

Table 6 (continued)

Section	Description
PERSON	How the participant describes their earlier life, childhood and family life, career choices and development, before joining the organization in which the wrongdoing occurred. Including reflections on sense of Self, Subjecthood, principles, personal ideology.
PERSON-IN-ROLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>En-actments</i> <li>• <i>In-actments</i> 	<p>How an individual fills a role within a system</p> <p>How the participant projects their own emotions, contributed to by their personal history but provoked by the nature of the task, into the organization, expressed by their valency for taking up a particular role within the organization and operating in basic assumption functioning</p> <p>How the organization, driven by its conception of its primary task and defences employed to manage associated emotions, activates the person-in-role's internal repertoire of responses, which resonate with prevailing dynamics</p>
Taken together, these comprise the Organization-in-the-Mind which form the subjective context for the identification and response to wrongdoing - the participant's constituted subjectivity	
Key moments in the process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tipping point</i> <li>• <i>Being let down</i> <li>• <i>Positioning self in relation to the organization</i> <li>• <i>Finding a voice</i> 	<p>Categories selected as particularly significant in characterising the Journey</p> <p>Moments when the convergence of internal and external factors make speaking out subjectively inevitable</p> <p>The experience of finding trust invested in person, organization or ideal betrayed</p> <p>The experience of positioning self as an outsider/insider relative to the organization or significant subgroups within it.</p> <p>How participants are denied a voice/rendered unrecognizable and then, where relevant, find a voice and (re-)claim recognizable subjectivity</p>

7.5. Case formulations.

7.5.1. Health sector

7.5.1.1. Sandra Case formulation

'Lived life'

- Oldest child of busy parents.
- Takes on responsibility for protecting and caring for younger siblings with a variety of health problems while still at school.
- Academically able and hard working at school, where she takes up positions of responsibility.
- Becomes a junior doctor, achieves respect and affection by supporting colleagues
- Becomes a consultant paediatrician but conflict with a junior colleague prompts her to look for another job.
- Takes a job as a community paediatrician in a prestigious NHS Trust in an inner-city borough
- The service is increasingly under-resourced and unable to meet commitments
- The team make their concerns about the service known to senior managers but this does not lead to change.
- Managers label her a 'troublemaker'.
- Takes out a grievance complaining of being bullied and repeats concerns about the impact of the cuts on the quality of service.
- Begins periods of sick leave.
- Appeals against findings from the grievance hearing for misrepresenting her case.
- Locum Dr misses evidence of severe physical abuse to a toddler who subsequently dies.
- Investigations into the death uncover systematic under-resourcing of the service.
- Sandra's evidence proves that the provider organisations knew about and tried to cover up the evidence about risks entailed by that under-resourcing.
- Her grievance is upheld. She refuses a pay off or to sign an NDA.
- Returns to her original job, although now contracted to a different NHS Trust

7.5.1.1i. Context

During this era the restructuring of welfare provision had created a 'marketised' (Cooper & Lousada, 2005) relationship between providers and their clients. Clients became 'customers' and providers contracted to supply time-limited and closely performance-managed services. Cooper and Lousada remark that '*anxious regulation*' and "*the logic of proceduralism*" had replaced trust in professional acumen, values and relationships. Welfare systems developed a distrust of the idea that relations of dependency could foster the well-being of clients. Professional autonomy was restricted for good or ill. While scandals arising from

unrestrained malpractice could thus be prevented, the creativity of dedicated and highly skilled practitioners was stifled.

7.5.1.1ii. System

Primary task:

Sandra intended to devote her working life as a paediatrician *‘to making the world a better place’* and to protecting vulnerable children:

“I’m very task-focused but the task is actually protecting the child”.

She thought that part of her role as safeguarding lead was *‘to spot things that were wrong and sort them out’*. However, as the events described above unfolded, she perceived that the NHS Trust put corporate interests – preserving their prestigious reputation and a lucrative contract – before the interests of the children who were clients of the service.

Social defences:

The service, based in a deprived inner-city area, was intended to keep children safe and promote their well-being. A prestigious agency was contracted to provide the service and there were complex procedures in place for monitoring its clients. However, when Sandra started work the service saw very few actual children. Once she and her colleagues established appropriate structures, they were expected to take on more tasks and an ever-expanding caseload, yet with reduced funding. There was considerable investment in the appearance of all-encompassing care. Despite this, the culture within the service was characterised by constant conflict, verbal aggression and bullying.

The service had recently been re-designed following a highly publicised murder of a child under its care. The focus on image rather than substance and the level of aggression within the system may reflect an effort to deny that carers can be cruel or neglectful and that the impact of poverty and deprivation can be intractable.

Basic assumptions

Sandra attempted to hold onto work-group mentality, at first working hard with her team to build up an excellent service and then struggling to remain task- focused as she experienced escalating levels of hostility from management.

In keeping with the supposed nature of the primary task, the basic assumption of dependency was active. Sandra willingly took up a leadership role to protect both the children in her care and the more junior staff in the team. She anticipated, in turn, depending on her prestigious employing Trust to support her and the interests of the work. However, despite the pervasive audit culture she reflected that

“when you are in the community you’re by yourself more...you are more independent so actually sort of maintain your own high standards, not have people watching over you”.

Subsequently fight/flight basic assumptions, continually present in the culture of the service, surfaced: she hovered uncertainly between compliance and resistance to the status quo, while the system variously tried to attack her credibility or deny her a voice, marginalise her and her efforts to draw attention to the failure to manage risk

Evidence of perversity

The perverse dynamics governing the management of the service showed characteristics of both PRIDE and SLOTH.

The Trust had won the contract to deliver a service which was somewhat outside its core business as a specialist acute hospital– indicating an arrogant faith in its omnipotent capabilities. Both partners to the contract (NHS and Local Authority) risked public shame if there was a repeated failure to protect children in their care, yet the contractual marketisation of the service increased the risk that the quality of care might be compromised by financial considerations.

Sandra was pleased to take the job because she trusted the organisation to deliver an excellent service, yet her team's workload was ever-increasing, with dwindling resources. Also she found that the connection with the acute Trust was tenuous- she rarely received supervision from senior clinicians and did indeed need to function with a high degree of autonomy. Punitive audits replaced appropriate professional supervision. In these ways both the borough and the Trust neglected and abused the service, ironically reflecting the experiences of many of their child clients. Long (2008) suggests that systemic neglect can act as a perverse defence against shame and other challenges to pride.

Evidence of a collusive pseudo-reality began to accumulate. For example, she attended a public meeting and questioned a misleading account of services presented there, for which she was strongly reprimanded and left feeling "*that I had let the side down*". Sandra began to gather evidence about activity and failed policy promises. Her reports of an increasingly overburdened and therefore risky service were denied by both hierarchies.

She was treated with contempt and labelled a troublemaker for her efforts to focus attention on the facts she accumulated. In one meeting she was shocked to be called a rude name by a manager. The report of her grievance hearing misrepresented the case she had carefully set out. Performance management and audit, designed to '*bring professionals to heel*' (Cooper & Lousada, 2005) led to instrumental relationships rather than ones freighted with mutual concern and respect. Sandra exclaimed in a meeting with managers that she "*just wanted to be treated like a human-being*"

7.5.1.1iii. Person

From an early age, caring for her younger siblings she found herself "*standing up for... vulnerable others*" and identifying with neglected children – she wondered whether she was "*a bit neglected myself, as a child*" as her pre-occupied parents relied on her capability. She considered she grew up obedient, well-behaved and always "*toe-ed the line*", questioning whether this was driven by "*needing to be liked*". Because her parents argued a lot, she hated conflict and made a point of bringing people together in her leadership style. However, she had faith in her own resilience and as an adult was extremely self-reliant,

finding it hard to ask for support. To manage her own stress, from schooldays onwards she immersed herself in hard work.

7.5.1.1iv. Person-In-Role

En-actment:

Sandra perceived that her role was to identify problems and sort them out, in the interests of protecting the children of the borough. To do this she willingly took up a leadership role, in which she offered protection, support, “*bringing people together*”. She recognised that she had to be quite autonomous because of the nature of community paediatric work. Her valency to be self-reliant, shoulder responsibilities beyond the norm and hatred of conflict prompted her to tolerate mounting demands without protest.

I met Sandra at the site of the events in this narrative, where she had returned to work since the resolution of her conflict with her employers. I was struck by her stoicism and resilience

In-actment:

The Trust and borough colluded to deny the reality of the task assigned to the service by investing in aggressive regulation and ignoring evidence of risk. Corporate interest in keeping costs to a minimum and preserving reputation replaced concern for children’s well-being. For many months Sandra trusted the benign intent of her employing organisation, shared pride in its reputation for competence and tolerated its neglect. She felt that she had “*let the side down*” in presenting a more realistic version of reality and was distressed to be scapegoated as a troublemaker, despite efforts to be conciliatory.

Organization-in-the-mind

Her organization-in-the-mind had begun as a benign system which would take care of her and the children it served supremely competently. As events unfolded, the organization turned into an unavailable and neglectful parent. Her role was to uncomplainingly shoulder responsibility beyond what was appropriate without adequate support.

7.5.1.1v. Key moments in the whistleblowing process

Tipping point

Her tipping point was refusing, when asked, to retract her concerns in a hearing and knowing it would be fraudulent to do so. This followed her solitary, rather dissociated walk one evening, in which she recognized the moral injury this sequence of events had caused her.

Being let down

She reported feeling constantly puzzled as she tried to reconcile her trust in the institution and her profession with her lived experience. Finally, she was overwhelmed by the feeling of being let down and losing trust in the integrity of her revered employer, a senior member of her profession, and the power of evidence and fact to cut through denial:

“I started to realise the system was quite corrupt. All the things which I thought might happen in a fair world had been thrown upside down”.

I found her narrative hard to follow during the interview as she constantly tacked between data from her internal world, relating to a sense of deeply personal betrayal by the system and her anger at the corruption and failures in the external world which had contributed to the death of the toddler. This overlap between internal and external betrayals was perhaps responsible for my difficulty in finding a linear narrative.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the system

Once she placed herself outside the system, her cognitive confusion faded and she was able to reflect that *“something not nice is happening here”*. Reluctantly accepting support from a series of outside agencies, she felt more able to render herself vulnerable within the system, refusing to be conciliatory and positioning herself as Other. She insisted that she simply wanted to return to her original job: her investment in the phenomenal task (Lawrence, 1985) had held out against the corrupting influence of the perverse system

Finding a voice

Systems invested in turning a blind eye to reality repeatedly denied her a voice. In the process her speech became defined as 'impossible' (Kenny, 2018). Her utterances were defined as troublemaking. Her immediate colleague who had decided to collude with managers blanked her:

“it was awful to be working with someone who stopped talking to me and appears to hate me”.

Emails were ignored or responded to slowly. She realised she was being ganged up against

With the support and encouragement of an MP and a journalist and her husband, she accepted her role as a whistleblower. However, she said that her world view had changed. Although she retained trust in her own skills and confidence that people in trouble would seek her out, she now accepted that corruption could be found anywhere and saw her old self as hopelessly naïve.

7.5.1.2. Beth Case Formulation

Beth was not willing to speak about her early life except if it was directly relevant to her working experience. She was also the only participant with whom I abandoned the two-part structure of the interview since I felt that it would be insensitive and inappropriate to interrupt her very painful narrative, which she was absorbed in telling. I felt particularly aware that this was her story, which she might gain some relief from telling in her own way, and that it was only secondarily 'my' interview.

Lived life

- In her teenage years she experiences difficulties
- She cares for her grandmother who has dementia. She values the experience and feels that her care had been skilful.
- After university she works in the commercial sector but does not find the work rewarding
- In her early thirties she begins to work in care contexts.
- Works as a therapy assistant in a rehabilitation unit for people with neurological deficits provided by a large mental health Trust with an excellent reputation.
- Resigns after about one year.
- Writes to senior managers detailing concerns about the quality of care in the unit.
- When her report does not lead to change, she raises the same concerns with the CQC.
- Does not receive a response from the CQC after 2 years.
- Contacts them to investigate why they have not responded to her.

7.5.1.2i. Context

Services supporting people with enduring disabilities were swept up in welfare reforms which marketized the relationship between the state and provider organizations. Relationships of long-term dependency were no longer tolerated as the recipients of care were defined as customers capable of agentic choice (Cooper & Dartington, 2004). From 2008, government austerity led to cuts to welfare funding. Services for people with severe and enduring disabilities, needing long-term care were particularly vulnerable to such cuts.

7.5.1.2ii. System

Primary task:

When she took the job, she thought that residents in the unit were there to build skills in living independently in the community. However, she found that residents had very diverse needs. Some had lived for many years in long-stay institutions while other, generally much younger, people were recovering from recent severe illnesses or injuries and might exhibit risky and challenging behaviour. Residents were nevertheless all treated similarly. She remarked:

“I thought there would be actual rehabilitation going on, but it was very much a dumping ground”.

The unit was physically distant from other parts of the larger service, was rarely visited by other professionals and starved of therapeutic resources. She acknowledged that the primary task might be contested:

“nurses obviously have a lot to do and you get someone coming in who on the surface is coming in to do nice things with glitter when they’ve got a difficult job and they can be sometimes not very supportive”

However, her observations suggest that the unit provided ‘warehousing’ rather than the ‘horticultural’ alternative she had expected. (Cooper & Dartington, 2004)

Social defences:

Although residents had different histories, they were all extremely vulnerable and would have required considerable therapeutic investment to increase their independence. However, this was hard to acknowledge since long-term high dependency needs do not fit the ethos of current welfare provision (Cooper & Lousada, 2005). In the process of denying this uncomfortable reality, the system in the unit therefore provided nothing more than basic containment. Paradoxically the unit institutionalised its residents further by denying their dependency needs:

"I could see that they weren't getting what they needed...actual genuine care-taking though was ...looked down on ..like you'd been sucked in by these people and they were the enemy ...trying to be clever and get things from you and you had to be smarter than them and outwit them"

Vulnerability was met with coercion, neglect and contempt. A more caring nurse who sent a man who had taken an overdose to A&E was:

"bullied and mocked for doing so and asked if they'd be breastfeeding him next"

A resident experiencing a psychotic episode covered himself with excrement, but a group of nurses rejected his plea for help:

"...they stood around him. Well, he looked really sad, and they just said all these things to him about, like in a circle, about how disgusting and dirty he was"

Beth described residents being subject to physical and verbal abuse constantly, as she was herself on occasion:

"the cook of the unit, she had been quite aggressive to me since I started The first time I met her she physically swept me out of the kitchen and screamed at me, like she used her broom to push me out of the kitchen"

Basic assumptions:

The staff team and managers, in an effort to deny the dependency needs of the residents were operating within the fight/flight basic assumption, either ignoring such substantial needs or meeting demands with aggression. There was a lack of daily management, training or supervision, *"so many things were allowed to go there, because there wasn't really anyone watching"*. This absence of requisite structures or containment allowed collective paranoid thinking to flourish (Western; Jaques,1956):

“everyone was kind of frightened all the time. They were very suspicious of one another, or they’d fear being blamed. I heard a lot within the first few weeks about it being a blame culture”

Evidence of perversity:

Primarily, the system’s deadly sin was WRATH, but with elements of SLOTH, reflecting the neglect and do-nothing principle dominating the care approach. Long (2008) cited the abusive acculturation of army trainees to exemplify a system dominated by wrath. Beth’s description of the rehabilitation unit had many of the features of Deepcut barracks: the residents were ‘othered’, seen as the enemy, to be dehumanized and vilified. Staff who tried to resist that process also had to be vilified as containers for feared feelings – of vulnerability and dependence. The wider organization used denial, turning a blind eye to what was happening. Beth raised her concerns repeatedly with senior managers and clinical supervisors who seemed to avoid investing resources in the unit which was looking after some of the most disabled people in the system. Yet they were mindful of maintaining their reputation and quality ratings, so she would be “*wheeled out*” to impress visitors. Some acknowledged her concerns but did nothing to address them. Others, including her immediate manager claimed that her criticisms arose from her inexperience or emotional instability:

“Everybody tells you it’s not that bad, it’s okay, or much more aggressively there’s something wrong with you. It’s not us, it’s not this place, it’s you that something wrong with or you’re crazy, there’s nothing wrong. It’s all in your imagination”

Finally, Beth described a moment when “*the penny dropped*” when she watched her manager dissuade a resident who has been sexually assaulted by another resident from reporting what had happened:

“(He) undermined her confidence in what she knew was right, making her feel that she’d done something wrong. I couldn’t believe what he was doing, and I couldn’t believe I’d allowed him to do a similar thing to me all year long”

She described how well-meaning staff were “ground down” after a time and recruited into the ethic of loyalty, of which she too felt the pull:

“It had the flavour of an abusive family. It had that kind of dynamic that you don’t talk about things outside of the family, you’re kind of betraying people if you do.”

Thus, the staff team were bound into a powerful bullying gang. New staff were either recruited or scapegoated and subjected to ‘work-place gaslighting’ (Ni, 2020).

7.5.1.2iii. Person

Beth shared only limited information about her earlier history. She was excited to get the job in the unit as a start to her chosen career in care work. She felt that her commitment and enthusiasm led her to invest too much of herself in the work, being “unboundaried” and neglecting her own well-being. She disclosed that her experiences in the unit pushed her to the edge of experiencing mental health difficulties.

7.5.1.2iv. Person-In-Role

En-actment

Beth tried to make up for the deficits in care and perhaps also for residents’ personal impairments which were a barrier to their independence. She was given little supervision or support and was even expected to pay for resources herself. Eventually she saw that the task was impossible:

“I foolishly thought I could provide that in that type of environment without any support, and that was a mistake, because you can’t take on that kind of responsibility for the wellbeing of so many people without experience and without support. It’s just not a healthy thing to try and do,”

In-actment

She internalised the refusal of dependency in the ethos of the unit and for some months felt puzzled and confused as she tried to make sense of how the residents’ evident severe

impairments could be managed with such limited resources. Similarly she tried to manage independently, without the training, supervision and support she needed:

“I’m actually quite ashamed of this because I didn’t say anything at the time. It’s just really hard to explain how there’s this brainwashing that goes on that you don’t talk”

Although she remembered feeling confused, essentially her idea of the primary task and what she witnessed happening in the unit were so at odds that she had no doubts about the ethical tone of what she observed. Her confusion was associated with her effort to make sense of how people who could act with such brutality should opt to work in that environment.

Organization-in-the-mind

Her organization-in-the-mind therefore was an isolated and neglected system, occupied by abandoned residents left vulnerable to abuse and aggression. She felt merged with the clients and responsible for addressing all their unmet needs, while having to tolerate having none of her own needs met.

I felt very moved and affected by her story. It was chilling, even frightening in parts. I identified strongly with the experiences she described and questioned what I would have done in her situation, feeling uncertain that I would have faced it with as much courage.

7.5.1.2v. Key moments in the process

Tipping points:

The repeated experiences of being let down cumulatively proved to her that the unit was not a safe place. Her tipping point came when she observed her manager gaslighting a resident to cover up a rape and recognised the parallels in his treatment of her.

Being let down:

Her enthusiasm for the task was let down from the start, when she saw the unit as a dumping ground and most of her colleagues as abusive rather than caring. Supervisors who did nothing in response to the concerns she raised and the inaction in response to her

formal internal reporting added to this sense. Finally, she turned to the CQC, feeling relieved that she could hand over her responsibility to an appropriate figure. This proved to be her final and most disillusioning experience of being let down.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the system

She only found her voice once she accepted that she was an outsider in this system:

“I got a lot more firm after that because I realized no, I wasn’t going to have any friends there, I wasn’t going to be popular there, let’s just get on with what we’re doing”.

Finding a voice:

Beth tried to report her concerns to various senior figures who either suggested she misperceived things due to her inexperience or acknowledged her concerns but did nothing. When she finally received an induction, she spoke out, in a *parrhesiastic* moment, to the CEO, describing the lack of essential training and support, but was met with “*a tight-lipped response*”. Her manager told her that her speaking out had undermined the work of others:

“there was no interest in really fixing any of the things. There was a great interest in me just being very quiet from then on”

She did not want to use her own experience to make her case and did not want to take her concerns to law or the media, fearing how vulnerable this could make her:

“Whenever I brought anything up about patient stuff, they tried to make it that I was a disgruntled employee that was sort of out to get something better for myself”

“I also knew how the system works in this countrythat for most people that’s a pointless, expensive, life ruining option I didn’t want to go down”

Beth spoke with great clarity and fluency, despite mentioning that she had rarely told anyone this story.

7.5.1.3a. Ben Case formulation

'Lived life'

- Grows up in an affluent liberal Jewish family
- Trains as a Doctor in a teaching hospital with a strong physical sports tradition: campaigns against student rugby tour of apartheid South Africa.
- Works in Africa after qualifying as a paediatrician.
- On return works in a deprived inner-city area. Exposes a medical colleague's unsafe practice in paediatrics but loses his job as a result.
- With colleagues, succeeds in changing Home Office policy on placing asylum-seeking children and families in detention centres.
- Works in an acute specialist children's hospital as a senior generalist paediatrician.
- Becomes aware, as safeguarding lead in the hospital, of children undergoing invasive and disabling treatments by highly specialist physicians.
- Establishes that this is recognised as a problem nationally and tries to alert senior managers
- Two external, expert reviews confirm there is a problem but findings are rejected by management
- He is suspended from his safeguarding role for several months for a minor infringement of safeguarding protocol.
- He is cleared of wrongdoing but the hospital keeps him suspended, querying his competency.
- Liaises with an external expert, to arrange a TV documentary which investigated the negative impact of the treatment strategies. Hospital lawyers try to prevent it being screened
- Takes several months sick leave
- The hospital starts a process of change in the specialist department, following pressure from the Royal College.
- He returns to work in a role which allowed him to draw teams of professionals together to work on complex cases.
- The new safeguarding lead refuses to speak to him and he is prevented from liaising with external professionals.
- TV documentary is screened about 1 year after Ben's interview

7.5.1.3ai. Context

Traditionally medical hegemony, vested in senior specialist clinicians has gone unchallenged. However, a series of high-profile scandals, such as the Bristol Royal Infirmary, (Kewell, 2006; Faunce 2004) and Alder Hey stockpiling of body parts, highlighted the cultural difficulty in requiring senior clinicians to submit to routine governance and creating the possibility of

change. Since the Duty of Candour became a legal requirement in 2014, staff are enjoined to report concerns, but it has led to very few successful challenges.:

7.5.1.3aii. System

Primary task:

As a 'generalist' paediatrician Ben saw his task as safeguarding the rights of the child. In order to achieve the best outcomes for the child, he thought that cutting-edge academic research needs to be combined with a whole system's approach. Communication to facilitate networking across disciplines is at the core of the work in his view, to ensure the child's best interests are kept in mind. He considered that specialist services operating in isolation cannot keep a child safe, particularly if their power goes unchallenged.

The Trust however, were motivated to protect corporate interests, to preserve their prestigious reputation and, in the marketized purchaser-provider healthcare economy, to protect their financial viability.

Social defences:

Ben suggested that specialist services do not want to acknowledge the messiness and complexity of the lives of the children they deal with:

“you don't really want to meet more of the.... tribal unwashed with their aches and pains because that's not really what you signed up for.”

or believe that the most advanced science will not be able to fix what is wrong. Specialist institutions are reluctant therefore to recognise the need to collaborate and communicate with the system around the child.

The institution defends itself from recognising those uncomfortable realities by its investment in highly medicalised, interventionist care, relying on surgery, pharmacology and unfalsifiable paradigms, ie if something doesn't work, then simply do more of the same. Similarly, he described pathologizing of normal variation and overdiagnosis of rare disorders:

“hens’ teeth probably do exist, but isn’t that odd, that we are walking over carpets of the bloody things?”

Ben pointed to a full-scale psychic retreat where the institution protected itself by holding a paranoid position when their approach was criticised:

“...within this ivory tower, this group of doctors explain that the whole world hates them and is out to get them,”

. The “club culture” will deny wrong-doing and focus on apportioning responsibility rather than preventing harm. He reflected that *“it takes a village to abuse a child”*.

“if you have done the wrong healthcare, thenit’s a legal requirement for you to explain this to the person you have done it to. That of course involves having the insight to recognize that you have got it wrong in the first place”.

Basic assumptions:

In keeping with most medical settings, the basic assumption of Dependency was prevalent. Every part of the care system, including the family, was encouraged to rely on the specialists:

“the families for the most part will cling to the medical explanation”.

While healthy dependency creates functional trust, Ben saw this assumption as legitimising *“continuing to treat the child as a victim”*.

However, basic assumption Meness was also evident in the senior specialists’ belief that they somehow owned the cases in their care: *“...there’s this idea, if you farm, you don’t take stuff out of other people’s fields”*. The opposite pole of that assumption, ba Oneness (Cano, 1998) involves a merging of self-interest with the general good. Ben campaigned for joined-up, multi-disciplinary care, with constant open communication across the system, reflecting baO which he found in other teams but not in this specialism.

Evidence of perversity

The perverse dynamic of PRIDE was evident. Senior clinicians showed narcissistic satisfaction in their reputation as leaders in their field and dismissed other opinions, even from acknowledged external experts external. Ben described it as a club or tribal culture, invested in *“whatever was currently fashionable”* in high-tech, invasive treatments and contemptuous of other opinions and of the patients and their families.

Reviews were commissioned which were critical of the treatment provided, but the hospital simply ignored unwelcome findings. He parodied their typical response: *“Thankyou very much old chap, we’ll be fine”*. Ben discovered that nationally, clinicians in the relevant field knew there was a significant problem, but a culture of bystanding and silence prevented an open challenge to the wrongdoing. Only experts who could be relied on to collude were chosen to comment on negative findings. Meanwhile those not willing to collude were scapegoated and extruded:

“they started up with sort of chit, chit, chit, gossip, gossip, and backstabbing”

Ben considered the culture was bullying and abusive, and that self-interest, concern for reputation and financial interests shaped the provision of care. He felt that a previous highly publicised case involving a safeguarding failure had also left the hospital traumatised and defensive. This culture inexorably led to poor clinical outcomes.

7.5.1.3aiii. Person

He described he and his family being both insiders and outsiders, so he grew up with *“some sort of sense of difference, of not quite belonging” particularly to major institutions*. As an adult, he felt he had always rejected rules and regulations in favour of individual responsibility to question and dissent where necessary. Challenging his medical school’s involvement with apartheid South Africa taught him *“..what happens when you poke a stick at something you object to”*. Further protest activities followed a similar pattern: after identifying wrong-doing, he would seek out alliances outside the system to check his perspective and strengthen the power to advocate for change. This process would also give

him a valued network of friends, recognising that without that support he could be vulnerable to being constructed simply as an outsider. In particular he recognised his recurring pattern:

“I get to the point where I have found a little group of my waifs and strays who were getting done over by the way the system is setup”.

7.5.1.3aiv. Person-In-Role

En-actment:

He was keen to work in such a prestigious organisation, which made use of the best advances in medical science. As a generalist he aimed to create a network of care around the child,

“My task, at the tax-payer’s expense...was to sort out some of the nonsense going on...this dangerous bit of ..a shining light of children’s healthcare”

Then he *“jumps up and down”* until change is achieved. Thus, there is a synchrony between the objects of his concern – the waifs and strays -, his own uncertain position as an insider/outsider and his efforts to reverse their exclusion. When we met for the interview I expected to meet a quite formal or conventional figure, as a senior medical consultant, so I was surprised by his rather waif-like appearance, which proved to be useful intelligence about how he positions himself in the system. He describes himself as able to *“...faff around as a sort of noises off”*.

In-actment:

Despite his best efforts to create a networked, multi-disciplinary system of care for each child, the system was organised to preserve its ‘ivory tower’ status. It did not liaise with local services once it received a referral. The contracting system led to disputes about *“whose child is it?”*, rather than primary concern with the child’s welfare. In Ben’s view a joined-up, bio-psycho-social approach would have challenged Consultants’ power-base and freedom to pursue their own interests. He constantly struggled against this refusal of a networking approach.

Organization-in-the mind

His organization-in-the mind therefore was a tribal culture, content to exist in an ivory tower, which it was his duty to constantly challenge from the position of a semi-outsider. The image of Don Quixote was constantly in my mind during his narrative. It was therefore unsurprising when he ascribed that persona, somewhat bitterly to himself.

7.5.1.3av. Key moments in the process

There were no marked ***tipping points*** or moment of choiceless choice for Ben. Nor did he feel ***let down*** by a valued institutional or professional system.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

From early adulthood he invested trust in individual responsibility rather than systems, rules and regulations:

“you should accept people's autonomy to ...take responsibility for themselves rather than making more and more rules and regulations., it didn't really strike me that people would behave differently whether or not there were more policemen, (other) than just get caught and hit on the head more often”

This confrontation with specialist physicians was his fourth experience of *parrhesia*, speaking truth to power at some risk to himself. There was no revolutionary moment, instead a continuation of his profoundly held commitment to challenging injustice. He acknowledged his valency for jumping to the protection of defenceless outsiders (*'waifs and strays'*) while making himself vulnerable. This could suggest a retreat from relatedness and denial of the existence of the group (Steiner,1973) However, from his early family life he had learnt to negotiate an ambiguous insider/outsider status which helped him to tolerate the risk of being marginalised or scapegoated as he was adept at building alliances with other similarly marginalised individuals, creating a new community in which to belong.

He only revealed the extent of the personal attacks and how distressed he was by being ostracised in the final part of the interview. Generally his manner of speech was ironic,

elusive and somehow impersonal, in keeping with his belief that systemic corruption was to blame.

I noticed my impulse, at the end of the interview, to enable him to make empowering and supportive connections. Later I realised that perhaps I was attempting to help him to replace the alliances he had lost through his *parrhesia*.

Finding a voice

However, his efforts to voice his concern were systematically framed as impossible speech, as he was both silenced and scapegoated. He observed how gossip and back-biting was rife in order to gang-up against someone with unpopular views. Now that process was directed at him. A colleague reported that a senior clinician had remarked in a multi-disciplinary meeting *“That Ben, he can just fuck off”*. He said *“they nobbled me, put me in an HR process (for the safeguarding incident), so that shut me up”*. He said:

“the work became impossible because of what was essentially social exclusion. They simply said ‘you can’t play with us anymore, go and sit over there”.

His experience had been profoundly destructive. He was defined as an abject, unrecognizable subject (Kenny, 2018) once he as a person, rather than the principles he advocated, was targeted

He was permanently removed from his safeguarding role, which crucially involved communicating widely across the network of care and was forbidden to connect with external colleagues to manage complex cases. The new safeguarding lead entirely refused to talk to him. Being defined as an outsider was less distressing than being blocked from creating and using alliances in the interests of the children’s welfare: *“I don’t think anyone asked me a single question for a whole year”*. His facilitation of the TV documentary was the voice he found.

7.5.1.3b Fiona Case formulation (bystander)

'Lived life'

- Has a successful academic path through school and university, easily achieving her career ambition to work as a psychologist
- Works as a clinical psychologist for a decade in one acute paediatric hospital, attached to several different specialist teams
- One service she is attached to is abruptly suspended while the team's practice is investigated.
- Gives a 'balanced' account to the investigating team
- Decides to leave the team although agrees to work on an internal review.
- Observes some changes in practice being introduced,
- Hears about the problems which had prompted the investigation resurfacing.
- TV documentary about the problems in the service's practice is screened many months after the investigation

Fiona was employed as the psychologist for the team in which the events, to which she was a bystander, described in Ben's case took place.

7.5.1.3bi Context

The context is the same as that described in Ben's case.

7.5.1.3bii. System

Primary task

Fiona considered that she, and the hospital as a specialist resource, was there to treat highly complex cases which local services had not been able to help. She observed clinicians, seeing themselves as a last resort, feeling that *"we must hold on to these people and we must try and help them"*. However, that heroic intention could lead clinicians to forget *"that there's a little kid sitting in the middle of all of this"*. Consequently, physicians would address the medical issues for which their expertise was world-renowned while distressed and anxious families became an irritating distraction from the real task:

"these clinicians' confidence in their own clinical skill perhaps blind-sighted them to the fact that it may not have been in the children's best interest"

Communication with the families was outsourced to her, the psychologist. The child patient could be treated as a part-object, reminiscent of Menzies Lyth's (1988) observations of the nursing system. She thought the team's purpose was to treat the whole child but the parameters of her role were firmly set by the eminent Consultant and his team. Her limited task was to "*translate*" between the team and the families, to integrate the families' needs with the medical interventions:

"they wanted referrals to come over to me, so that they didn't have to deal with that stuff - 'I'm going to put it over there, she can deal with it, so that I can get on and look after tummies'"

As a newly qualified practitioner, she accepted that "*one person from down the food chain asking questions... is perhaps unlikely to effect a change*":

there is a distinct pecking order within the medical system.....I became quite acutely aware of power and how powerconfirms authority"

She also witnessed the Trust working to limit reputational damage and maintain its reputation as a centre of excellence.

Social defences:

Fiona shared with Ben the sense that clinicians in specialist services were reluctant to engage with the complexities of the lives of their young patients – believing that it is possible and appropriate just to get on with "*looking after tummies*". To defend against recognising that complexity and need for holistic care, communication with patients and families was compartmentalised and largely left to psychology to execute, clinical decisions were presented in black and white terms although in practice much decision-making was "*greyscale*" opinion.

Basic assumptions:

Fiona described operating within the assumption of Dependency, recognising both her relative ignorance as a newly qualified professional and also the reality of a powerful

hierarchy. She worked within the parameters set by the Consultants and was relieved that they carried responsibility for dealing with complaints. She appreciated the freedom of not being responsible for implementing decisions arising from the review:

“(that) allows me to be in the position of compassion for those being questioned and challenged”.

However, she described a system caught up in fight/flight assumptions. Endemic failures in communication led to splitting between staff and patients:

“when this went wrong, and the family will then be in a state of absolute distress and dismay and the ward had positioned the family as being problematic because they were upset, because they were refusing, because they weren't playing”

She often felt trapped in this dilemma:

“.. with the family sitting in front of me and knowing that splitting between the team would be an entirely unhelpful thing to do. But equally not wanting to lie and collude and cover up for something that someone had done”

The system responded to criticism, before and during the investigations by being “guarded” and trying to shift blame.

Evidence of perversity:

Fiona’s account of the system indicated the dynamic of PRIDE, but she emphasised the good intentions of key figures. Her perception of the system was nuanced – she aimed to give a “balanced” account, She thought most Consultants were not arrogant so much as confident in their own skills. However, one Consultant scorned her advice out of pride in his own judgment:

“I got laughed at and told ‘whatever – it went fine without those recommendations didn't it?’..... That felt very dismissive of both my professional opinion and what the family was saying was important to them”

Systemically she noted efforts to deny reality for instrumental purposes, by cover-ups:

there was a lot of concern about protecting the reputation of the Trust. Although the team and the Trust very much wanted to make sure things were done better, nobody wanted to look like they had egg on their face..... the Trust were probably caught between those two places, wanting to make it better, but not wanting to tell you we had done anything wrong

and by blaming and splitting:

“it felt very defensive or it felt blame was being passed. ‘Well, this didn't happen, and we didn't do that, and I said it was because they didn't do this’. It all got a bit mudslinging”

Finally, she reflected about collusion, by herself and others. She depicted a system functioning in the grip of unthought knowns (Bollas, 1987), where wrongdoing became invisible. She felt that over long periods professional standards were being transgressed but that nothing could be done about it:

“I colluded to an extent, unwittingly perhaps, but still. Butas to why I did and what made it difficult to bring about a change that wasn't invited in a system that didn't want change”.

“so much of it just happened on auto-pilot and had for so many years. I have forgotten to question some of it. I just got on with it”.

7.5.1.3biii. Person

Fiona was ambitious, partly to please her parents. She saw herself as very focussed, highly organised, clear-thinking, quite concrete and preferring clear cut goals:

I like it when things are more certain. I like it when it's greater clarity, when there are procedures to be followed and we know what we're doing.

Having achieved her professional qualification, she discovered she became “*a small fish in a bigger pond*” but welcomed the chance to learn her professional role gradually. She started out intending to *provide “clear evidence-base well thought-through formulated interventions”*. However, while training she realised that the patient had to be the main focus, not her ideas and skills: “*I said, ‘I’m not the star of the show here’*”. Implicitly, she saw how the “*world-expert*” Consultants, by putting their own pre-occupations centre-stage, failed their patients and families.

During the investigations she felt very anxious. She was determined to present a balanced view of the strengths and weaknesses of the team’s practice. Yet she was aware of considerable pent-up anger and frustration which she was longing to discharge but needed to keep to herself:

“..... trying to detach from the emotion I felt, because if I had actually just had the rant I felt like having, I don’t think it would've been productive, helpful, or honest or accurate”.

She found her husband’s support gave her space to express a less impartial view:

“I was selfish in those conversations. When I was at work, I was thinking about context, relationships. At home I was like, well, how is this impacting on me, on my life and my wellbeing”.

I experienced Fiona during the interview as quite reserved and even guarded, despite her openness about the emotional and intellectual turmoil she experienced during the whistleblowing process. She was unwilling to recount particular incidents (PINs) in concrete or vivid detail, which is perhaps why I had a sense of her being guarded. Vivid recall of such painful events may have risked resurrecting the emotional turmoil which she, as a person who valued focussed, clear-cut and concrete goals had no wish to revisit.

7.5.1.3biv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

Fiona tried to maintain her professional integrity, struggling to find a balance between her own clinical judgment and what the team required of her:

I got on and did what I could do, but should I have done, or should I have said,....' No, I can't take those referrals'..... Is that being a bit over-precious? I can only take certain referrals. Or do I need to be what the team needs me to be? I found it a very difficult balance to strike.

She agonised over whether her commitment to meeting the team's expectations had led her to collude in failing patients and families.

In-actments:

The team required her to contain the difficulties which followed from needing to work holistically with patients and families, while also keeping to her relatively powerless place in the pecking order.

She felt that her relationship with the team had become "too staid"

"I wanted new eyes to be able to come in to see what I had become habituated to and to offer the team a difference, which I don't think they could take from me and I don't think I was able to give"

Although she stepped away from these dilemmas by leaving the team, she continued to question whether she had failed the team or the patients.

Organization-in-the-mind

Fiona's organization-in-the-mind therefore was a team full of good intentions, whose failure to communicate, confidence in their own position and defensive response to criticism led them to do harm to patients. Her own powerless position prevented her from mounting an effective challenge to harmful practice.

7.5.1.3bv. Key moments In the process

Tipping point

She realised that the dilemmas she had been struggling with had invaded her whole existence, which was uncharacteristic of her usually focussed and clear-thinking self:

“I had not been able to switch off from work for the whole weekend. When I go home, work is work, home is home and I'm exquisitely good at switching off and leaving it behind. I've always been very boundaried. This had been seeping and weeping and just creeping over everything everywhere”

She decided then that she had to distance herself to protect hers' and her family's well-being.

Being let-down.

She felt that perhaps her own professionalism had let her down in not empowering her sufficiently to challenge poor practice but she felt well supported by the psychology discipline.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

Her attachment to the team, although warm, was ambivalent. Her primary attachment was to her professional identity as a psychologist. This attachment prompted her to step away from the troubled team and the way that her professional practice was compromised within it, rather than blow the whistle on its poor practice. When the team was shut-down and later with the screening of the TV documentary she was pleased that much-needed change might finally happen, terrified that she would be held culpable too (*“tarred with the same brush”*) and distressed by the thought that she had colluded in wrongdoing.

Finding a voice:

Psychology was only ever paid *“lip-service”* to:

“they talked about psychology very loud. My voice in the team didn't feel very loud, didn't feel particularly responded to”

She felt dis-empowered and marginal in her place low down in the *“food-chain”*. Her interventions could be laughingly dismissed. She found covert ways to work around this silencing in order to maintain her professional integrity but ultimately remained silenced.

7.5.2 The Not-for-profit Sector

7.5.2.1. Bev Case Formulation

'Lived Life'

- Raised in a politically active family
- Works in the civil service and quickly becomes a trade-union representative
- Appointed to management roles
- She and her department are transferred to the private sector
- Takes voluntary redundancy after some years
- Volunteers in charitable sector for 3 years
- Employed as a manager in a medium-sized charity ('A') working with refugees
- Tries unsuccessfully to alert 'A's board to the impact of the CEO's mismanagement
- 'A' goes into liquidation.
- Takes a management role in another medium-sized charity ('B') in a similar field
- Resigns from 'B' after a year having failed to change perceived mismanagement
- Takes a part-time frontline post in a small charity
- Decides not to pursue her intention to blow the whistle externally because another employee had already done so.

7.5.2.1i. Context

The UK government formally adopted a 'hostile environment' policy towards refugees in 2012, which curtailed refugees' access to UK housing, welfare and education. Thus, these charities in principle opposed national policy and its associated culture war which encouraged a collective belief that UK society could be swamped by a tide of 'other'-migrants claiming refugee status.

Distinctions between public, private and not-for-profit sectors have blurred in recent years (Dartington, 2010). The majority of A & B's funding came from contracts with national and local government. Support for refugees has been outsourced to private and charitable suppliers of services, so that the value-led ethic characteristic of charitable enterprises has now been largely replaced by market-led concerns. The state of mind of the senior figures in 'A' and 'B' is an expression of that cultural shift. The association between marketized relationships and individualism has been much discussed (Cooper and Lousada, 2005; Dartington, 2010; Hirschhorn, 2018).

7.5.2.1ii. System

Primary task

Bev worked in two charities, with a similar mission and similar systemic problems. Her idea of the primary task was clear: to support and fight for the rights of refugees, who she saw as “underdogs”, victims of injustice:

“that really sort of spurs me on to do things for people, because I just think how can they treat them like this? It’s just outrageous”.

Her idea of primary task in not-for-profit organizations was values-led and altruistic. She spoke eloquently about what such organizations need to achieve their goals— professionalism, training, appropriate boundaries, attention to staff well-being - but her motivation was always correcting injustice.

However, in both charities she observed the CEOs and board members having a different agenda:

“sometimes people don’t always go into work for charities for the reasons that you think they might..... It was all about power and control for some people and something about needing to save people and needing to, I think feed something in themselves”.

She felt that senior figures could neglect requisite structures within the organizations while pursuing their covert task so that the charities’ ‘*survival as itself*’ (Dartington, 1998) was threatened. It led to instability in ‘B’ and ‘A’'s collapse:

“He didn’t take any notice of the boring stuff that makes an organization run.....You have to have some structure to run effectively”

Social defences

The management style of senior figures in both charities defended against recognising how cruelty and deprivation, fuelled by indifference, self-interest and a reluctance to share resources with outsiders, impacted clients and staff. The CEOs and board members ignored

what the organization required to ensure its survival, by neglecting and exploiting their staff who were denied training, care for their work-life balance or access to transparent communication with management. In 'B' the altruism of the staff was exploited ruthlessly while senior figures looked after their own interests:

“people being told they can't go on training and then the manager goes on the training.. The manager's going out for away days and just leaving the office unmanned with nobody who's being given any authority to make decisions”

“(The Chair).. stayed in very expensive hotels, wined and dined people...., When (staff) go with clients to claim asylum they leave here at 6 o'clock in the morning and they get back at 9 o'clock at night. They're allowed a meal deal if you're lucky..., there's this two-tier system going on”.

As a result, committed and competent staff resigned constantly, fleeing from the organizations in a way which strangely echoed their clients' flight from their own countries.

Basic assumptions

Bev operated diligently in work mentality. But she also showed the ba(Pairing) which Dartington (1998) has argued is characteristic of stakeholders in not-for-profit, values-led organizations, where staff pair with a strongly held value in the hope of giving birth to social justice. However, there appears to have been a battle between those stakeholders (staff, funders) committed to ba(Oneness) hoping for a universal and oceanic merging for the good of all and ba(Meness) where individualistic concerns are triumphantly legitimated (Cano, 1998).

Evidence of perversity

Senior figures displayed the sin of GREED, viewing funding and the labour of staff as exploitable commodities while retaining power and control: staff were denied access to information, particularly about budgets:

“they didn't want us to have budgets, because that means that we'll have a bit more autonomy and we can see where our money is being spent and we can actually challenge something”.

There is an evident parallel with corrupt financial firms' belief in the fantasmic object – ‘the fairy tale goose which lays the golden egg’ (Tuckett quoted in Long,2008, p.83) that funders will keep contracting with the charity. In charity A the funding dried up, in charity B staff left in droves. Long (2008, p 77). argues that in such organizations there is a struggle between individuals and the social system, where greed and its obverse, generosity – in this case in funders and staff, are locked in a struggle for control of the ‘body politic’

In order for staff and funders to hold onto their basic trust in the goodness of the organization's project, they had to practice denial:

“I was very trusting of [CEO of 'A'] for a long time, do you know what I mean? Because I really believed all his rubbish, and it wasn't until I became a manager that I saw how he could be”.

Staff in ‘B’ were forbidden to speak to staff who had left, staff who had protested were coerced into collusion:

“ [an existing senior manage] has had such bad experience herself in the organization she's just accepted it and just now capitulates and colludes with the CEO and the chair”

Bev described negligence in both management boards, whose sin of SLOTH enabled the toxic greed of the CEOs, having been recruited as accomplices:

“He would seek people out to be board members and he would think like that's somebody I can manipulate, I'll get them on the board

They don't even really understand, what responsibilities they have in terms of governance and things. I really don't think they know. I think they were just picked by (the Chair) as just yes people”.

7.5.2.1iii. Person

Early in her working life Bev learnt to challenge senior figures in her role as a union rep. She preferred to act as a peacemaker and rely on rules, policies and agreed procedures to negotiate workable solutions, admitting that she felt “*on the back foot*” if such structures were ignored.

Yet she saw herself as “*sort of in the middle.....I've always been a very average sort of person*”. She was not ambitious and tried to avoid taking on managerial roles. She experienced no need to rebel as her parents had been “*laid back*” with her and acknowledged that she was inclined to try to please and fit in. She also recalled another possible influence on her eventual choice about whistleblowing: her father, who taught her to value justice, was in the habit of making ineffectual protests:

“I'd say to my mum, he's been writing again. He would just write ramblings about his thought, views on the world and stuff. He was always writing to the Queen or MPs or parliament. He would get these letters back, 'thank you for your comments and it's been noted' and like just saying, 'yeah okay’”.

7.5.2.1iv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

Bev was intent on doing her job professionally, drawing on requisite structures and open, direct communication to achieve the intended outcomes. She found it hard to give up her trust in the good intentions of senior figures, in keeping with her preference for negotiating workable compromises and fitting in rather than rebelling. Eventually, exasperated by having managerial responsibilities with no authority and recognising that no effort to change ‘B’ would be effective, she resigned:

“I decided I was going to leave because I thought I can't change it internally. I'm not making a difference and I cannot collude with the status quo..... the more that you stay in an organization like that, the more that you become part of the problem, because you're a single voice and you're not getting heard”

However, despite judging her own behaviour as “weird”, she continued to work for B, as she had for A after A's collapse. Her altruistic pairing with her values and commitment to achieving justice for her clients may account for this: “*you just did it because it needs to be done*”.

I interviewed her at her new workplace - a tiny resource centre for women with no recourse to public funds in which she was the only worker. The interview was occasionally interrupted by clients urgently seeking some advice. Bev allowed the interruptions but managed them in a firm but kindly manner. Her story reflects this ambivalence about protecting her own boundaries.

In-actments:

In keeping with the market forces controlling the not-for-profit sector and the individualistic, narcissistic states of mind of the senior figures, both organizations operated to gratify personal ambitions. Perhaps unconsciously re-enacting the neglect and cruelty experienced by their client group which they were set up to repair, they ruthlessly exploited staff and funding sources to achieve those ends.

Organization-in-the-mind

Bev's organization-in-the-mind therefore was pretending to be idealistic and altruistic, dedicated to rescuing displaced and persecuted people but was neglecting that task and staff distress. So Bev felt driven to compensate.

7.5.2.1v. Key moments in the process

Tipping point.

She hesitated to decide whether to report 'B' to the Charity Commission, partly because she was concerned that her ineffectual protests might exacerbate the persecution of remaining

staff. She was relieved to hear that someone else with better access to financial data than her was intending to whistleblow. This hesitancy was in keeping with her sense of herself as someone who wanted to fit in, find compromises and follow rules. Also, possibly her observation as a child, of her father's ineffectual protests led her to doubt that she could make a positive impact on the wrongdoing.

Being let down:

Bitter experience of losing her trust in the CEO of 'A' shaped Bev's awareness of how senior figures in charities could be driven by the desire for power and control, rather than by altruism. Her experience in 'A' sensitized her to recognise a similar corruption of task in 'B'. She was still distressed and angry about being let down by trusted figures. She was generously open with me about how painful this episode had been, reflecting a core belief of hers, that open communication, badly lacking in 'A' and 'B', was an essential tool to get the job done.

I sensed that she felt guilty about leaving 'B' and that opting for her current organization – where she could not be let down as she only had herself to rely on as a resource – allowed her to make reparation.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

She remained an insider by keeping in close and supportive contact with staff after she left, recognising that they shared a continuing commitment to the task which had been distorted by the senior figures

Finding a voice:

In both charities she was increasingly excluded from executive discussions and decision making. In 'B' she avoided telling the CEO about activity which supported the task, as she anticipated it would be forbidden. She hoped to raise concerns during her exit interview in 'B' by talking openly to a board member but instead the CEO conducted the interview, insisting on asking closed questions, thus policing what was 'sayable'. This effectively silenced Bev. Eventually, recognising her efforts were ineffectual she left 'B' but was unprepared to jeopardise the well-being of remaining staff by whistleblowing.

7.5.2.2. Andrea Case formulation

'Lived life'

- Grows up in Brussels in an affluent family with parents working in international affairs
- Is involved in a number of activities promoting social justice at school
- After university pursues a career in international development (ID)
- In her first job in ID, ('C') she accidentally uncovers financial mismanagement and is sacked for allegedly misfiling a document
- Leaves a job in another ID charity ('D') because of persistent bullying by a new boss
- Takes a period of sick leave and writes to the Chair to report the bullying
- Subsequently works successfully in ID, for a decade.

7.5.2.2i. Context

The focus of international development, at least when it originates in Western countries and is directed at 'the global South, has shifted away from meeting immediate material needs towards concern for sustainable interventions and greater sensitivity towards cultural difference.

7.5.2.2 ii. System

Primary task

Throughout her career in ID Andrea aimed to support social justice and facilitate communication to level up opportunity globally:

"that sense of injustice. How can we get all this information and actually all these other people don't, access to education, things like that and opportunities."

Thus, her idea of primary task, (like Bev, who also worked in the charitable sector), was particularly values-led and her intended outcome was equality of opportunity. Her sense of task was linked to the domain of ID, not to a particular organization (Bains, 1998). However, she thought the possibility of making a permanent difference in the domain was limited. She accepted that resources were finite. Cultural barriers also prevented ID making a significant difference to entrenched practices given the continual tension between supposedly

universal ethical standards – *It's so easy to be very western and white and we know best*” - and respect for cultural diversity. Finding a means to communicate was of the essence:

“it's not okay to beat your child because you think that they'd been possessed. Actually this is the kind of belief that continues for generations..... We did it through pictures like cartoons and images of beating children..... It had to be done in ...the local language and ...in a very sensitive way”

A professional approach required at least some acceptance of the status quo:

“as a professional, you keep your mouth shut, and you do your best in the circumstances”

But requisite structures such as financial accountability, in her opinion, were needed, to make best use of finite resources:

“are we reporting to the donors? There was no story there about the money (in 'C'). Like why wouldn't you keep track of the money? And actually, I'm in charge of these projects, so I need to understand the money part of it”

Senior figures in both 'C' and 'D' seemed not to share her idea of the primary task. In 'C' she was uncertain what the task was:

“I was doing so well. I was building relationships with all our projectsand it was a real slap in the face..... Something like 'you shouldn't be entering into communications with them.’”

In 'D', the discrepancy was clearer. The bullying CEO was concerned about the survival of the charity at any cost:

“He was about getting the money in. He was very turning it into a business. He was big on making money and doing these marketing drives to get money in. I think the work that I was doing didn't really fit into that”

Social Defences

Although the mission statement of both 'C' and 'D' specified the promotion of communication across economic and cultural divides, they appear to be defending against recognising the difficulty in establishing such communication. In 'C' Andrea noticed that expensive material goods were given away to communities needing to develop communication, while actual communication was apparently forbidden. In 'D' she was chastised for developing collaborative networks with agencies who might compete for funding. Also, 'D's CEO replaced previously well-functioning structures with bullying command and control email communication. Under his aegis many staff left or were too stressed to work.

Basic assumptions

Andrea showed pairing with strongly held values, characteristic of not-for-profit organizations according to Dartington (1998). However, staff were generally operating under ba(fight/flight): she and her colleagues in both organizations found their managers "scary" and "brutal" and tried to avoid conflict in order to keep their jobs until they were sacked or fled.). Arguably the internal dynamics of the system was re-enacting the dilemma that it had to navigate in carrying out its normative task: how to communicate about difference, particularly if that included attitudes to appalling cruelty or abject deprivation.

Evidence of perversity

In 'C' many staff thought there was something "dodgy" going on but were uncertain exactly what.

In 'D':

"It was all about control. It was about moulding the organisation his way. It was about proving himself...it was about opulence and stature"

In both contexts Andrea described behaviour in keeping with the sin of WRATH pervading the system. Managers were experienced as "scary", "brutal" and "ruthless". They appeared to defend themselves and the system against vulnerability by making Andrea the container for feared feelings. She experienced herself as the victim of humiliation, bullying and scapegoating. In 'C' she was sacked for faulty administration and in 'D' 'relentlessly bullied'

and accused of lying, for trying to collaborate rather than compete. The CEO of 'D' had migrated to the UK from an ex-colonial African state which still struggled to confront possession beliefs and practices and was unlikely to welcome her nuanced ideas about collaborative cultural change. In both organizations the denial of reality and perversion of the normative task of communication was evident. Andrea's refusal to be recruited as an accomplice provoked aggressive behaviour. She saw evidence of collusion in 'D':

"three or four people just stayed with him, and they were safe people. They were Yes men"

7.5.2.2 iii. Person

She was somewhat ashamed, from childhood on, of her privileged social situation. Characteristically, she was rather disparaging of her good intentions:

"it was quite selfish of me to go and work where I worked because actually, I was making myself feel better because I was feeling like I was doing something positive and good"

Her parents encouraged her to feel able to take on any challenge, but at school she got the message that she was only expected to "scrape by". She decided to take a "stuff you, you're not going to tell me that I'm rubbish" attitude, which drove her to succeed and subsequently to stand up to unfairness during her career. But in the face of criticism or uncertainty she questioned and blamed herself. Of her treatment in 'C' she said:

"I thought it was totally unfair, but then I still thought that I'd done something wrong".

She described constantly struggling with this ambivalence, which left her confused at key moments:

“[my] self-doubt probably was evident and that probably didn’t help me in a lot of situations, so even though maybe the situation was not right or unfair because I have all that self-doubt, all those feelings were mixed up. I’ve always been very confused”.

At other moments she described openly expressing her frustration and anger, particularly at ‘D’s CEO. She speculated that both the anger and the cognitive confusion might have been defensive:

“maybe I didn’t want to know that I was rubbish, so maybe I got angry because I thought that it was unfair”.

Self-doubt and uncertainty prevented her from pushing through her intention to take ‘D’s CEO to court after she blew the whistle internally on his bullying. She knew that he would “rip her to bits” and she felt:

“if you’re going to do this, you need to be really strong and I was just a gibbering wreck.”

Andrea presented as a confident and thoughtful person who was keen to reflect on choices she had made about exposing wrong-doing. During the interview, I experienced her as having a decisive understanding of her story, which seemed at odds with these disclosures about her vulnerability. Her skilled communication style distracted me from the uncertainties and self-doubt she described, which were more evident in the transcribed interview text. There her narrative, beneath the surface, seemed incoherent, enacting the confusion she had described experiencing under stress.

7.5.2.2 iv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

Like Bev, Andrea was focussed on doing the best possible job for the vulnerable and disadvantaged clients of the various agencies for whom she worked. She was proud of her ability to communicate across cultures and draw people to work well together. She also

valued and was sustained by the close and enduring relationships she built with colleagues. She wanted proper procedures in place to achieve intended outcomes, in pursuit of which she could be fiercely stubborn, “*like a dog with a bone*”. She was critical of those who did not share her work ethic:

“either you work like crazy and work really well and you’re passionate about what you’re doing or you’re working the system”.

However, she wondered whether her passionate commitment led her to try too hard and take things too personally. At the end of the interview she apologised for being unable to remember details clearly but remarked that she had found the interview very cathartic.

In-actments:

senior figures in ‘C’ and ‘D’ appeared to have perverted the task of their respective organizations and needed a scapegoat to support the denial of that reality. Andrea’s vulnerability to self-doubt gave her a valency to absorb split off and projected anxiety that something ‘*rubbishy*’ was happening.

Organization-in-the-mind

Andrea’s organization-in-the-mind was both idealistic and corrupted. In her role in ID she thought she should achieve communication and mutual understanding in the most adverse circumstances. But she felt she lacked the personal strength to challenge people ‘working the system’ who unfairly subverted those goals.

7.5.2.2v. Key moments in the process

Tipping point

When she realised that ‘D’s CEO intended to “*get rid of*” staff who resisted him using the organization to enhance his status she realised that her dogged efforts to confront his lies, item by item were not succeeding. But she became seriously depressed and took sick leave. She was relieved to learn later that many staff had shared her experience, but in the short term she could only limit his destructive impact on her own well-being by resigning and whistleblowing about the bullying to the Chair.

Being let down:

Her idealism and trust in the possibility of making a difference was undermined by experiences of brutal unfairness in ID enterprises. She was discouraged to learn that despite numerous concerns being raised about the behaviour of 'D's' CEO there was a delay before he was removed and that he continued to work in ID.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

The senior figures in 'C' and 'D' attempted to define her as an outsider and a scapegoat. When she was sacked from 'C' a normally friendly colleague "*turned into a robot, it was really bizarre. Then I got escorted out*".

But she remained an insider of a sort by maintaining close relationships with colleagues who confirmed that they too found the managers scary and work in the organization unsettling and stressful.

Finding a voice:

Both external and internal factors silenced her. Senior figures refused to allow her a voice. But she recognised that her tendency to blame and criticise herself undermined her capacity to speak out. In a couple of instances previously communicative people "*turned into robots*" while telling her she was sacked, thus making any speech of hers impossible. She felt that her tendency to vent anger and frustration disrupted her career, since she thought that remaining silent, tolerating frustrations, to achieve task aims was part of being professional in the ID domain. She was unwilling to use her vulnerability to expose the wrongdoing. However at times she did find a voice, drawing on the '*stuff you*' attitude learnt in her school days. She demanded fair treatment in 'C' while being dismissed, by getting into '*survival mode*', in which she could suspend her critical inner voice. In a similar mind-set she wrote to raise concerns about the bullying in 'D'.

7.5.3. Corporate Sector

7.5.3.1. Philip case formulation

“Lived life”

- Grows up in initially affluent family
- Father becomes ill and dies when Philip age 11, leaving the family less affluent
- Mother relies on Philip for help and support as his older brothers are absent.
- Changes school and struggles to fit in socially and academically in his new school. Failing to get into university, he works hard to train as an accountancy.
- Works in the oil industry as an accountant for some decades.
- Blows the whistle, on large-scale fraudulent use of expenses of a highly successful senior executive, reporting to the Board, by travelling to a remote setting in Canada
- The executive is sacked and Philip praised for his whistleblowing
- However, the company goes bust without the executive’s skill in brokering deals.
- Staff in the organization blame Philip for this.
- The executive dies shortly after his fraud is exposed.
- Is involved in making his colleagues redundant and then is himself made redundant.
- Finds work briefly in a more congenial organization.
- Decides to work as an independent consultant, remaining on the outside of organizational systems until retirement.

7.5.3.1i. Context

The oil industry needed globalization to operate. Commercial enterprise in the 1980s generally held a phantasy of endless expansion under the sway of neo-liberal market forces: Thatcher declared “*there is no society*” (quoted in Long, 2016, p 43). Globalization encouraged ethical relativism – one man’s bribe was another man’s legitimate expense.

7.5.3.1ii. System

Primary task:

Philip saw himself as belonging to two systems – that of professional accountancy and that of the Oil industry. In his view, these two systems worked in very different ways, holding to different, sometimes conflicting principles. He considered that the primary task of a professional accountant is to provide clients with impartial fact and advice, while the primary task of an organization in the oil industry is to compete globally making deals to supply oil.

Social defences:

He had an excited attachment to the norms of the oil company who employed him, commenting:

“It’s a dog-eat-dog gunslinging sort of world”, full of “cowboy Stetson stuff”.

The important people in the organization were the “*Big hitters*” who travelled the world, doing deals, often employing at best pragmatic ethics.

The organization and the wider domain of the energy industry were defending against recognizing that resources are finite and the need to collaborate rather than compete. Philip could see something destructive in the competitive norms. This being the 1980s, there would have been less awareness of the fragility of the ecosystem which was being ruthlessly exploited. What his deadly imagery refers to instead is the limitation on endless profit – unless the big hitters pull in the deals the organization will go out of business. He describes manic activity, extravagance and lack of clear rules which act as a defence against recognizing the phantasy of omnipotence underlying that behaviour.

Basic assumptions:

The basic assumption of *Meness* (baM) pervaded the organization, particularly embodied in the excitable and narcissistic big hitters who could grab resources, perks and status markers at will, without having to consider the value for the group of their fancy cars and first-class air-travel, who could not bear to be bested, even in light-hearted party games.

Evidence of perversity

He offered much evidence for the corrupt perversity of the organisation, its deadly sin being GREED; He described considerable pressure, internal and external, to collude with the greed and rehearses denial of its impact to himself.

“some people thought that I was to blame and didn’t understand. They were not wrong. Not wrong! It did emasculate the chances of that business growing,

succeeding. Life is not cartoons, people are not black and white, they are a mix of all sorts of things.”

The main perpetrator of the fraud held others in the company under his influence and Philip lived constantly with a “physical fear” of the fraudster. Yet the fraudster, exactly like the Parmalat chief described by Long (2008, p.69) could be extremely generous, even if the generosity was applied to corrupt. His boss arranged a lavish surprise birthday party for him, although it meant he would submit his accounts late:

“We spent the afternoon there getting slaughtered. This was his style. He loved surprising people and you would feel quite honoured..to be recognised and thankyou”

7.5.3.1iii. Person

As a boy he often got up to mischief with his friends, eg scrumping apples, setting fire to newspaper, which he saw as ‘*what boys naturally do*’ in order to learn about life. But his father ‘*had a strong moral compass*’ and taught N to own up to wrongdoing when his mischief caused damage and to follow rules

After his father’s death he had to support his mother, ‘*doing the right thing*’ at the expense of his own well-being and future prospects. He also found he was an outsider at school. Through hard work and self-sacrifice he achieved a social position but this re-inforced his sense of himself as an outsider in privileged society.

In his early adult years he relished freedom and mobility in his working life as it represented the antithesis to the rule-bound hard work he had experienced since his father’s death.

From the start of our encounter, I felt that Philip wanted me to witness his success and secure place in the world. At the same time, I sensed some mild contempt for my supposedly privileged and somewhat naïve position as an academic without practical experience.

7.5.3.1iv. Person-In-Role

En-actment:

He was there to “*icker*” - to insist that Big Hitters follow rules, eg fill in expense forms

But his acceptance of that role was ambivalent: it felt like surrendering his sense of agency:

“...you are now aware that if you make a fuss about this(i.e. fiddling expenses) you could lose your job and if you don’t make a fuss about it..and the auditors turn up, its not just your job it’s your career. And this was put on a plate in front of me. I did not ask for it, I was given the plate and it was down to me.”

In-actment

He was continually pulled towards the manic excitement of the perverse system, relishing the fancy company car and ‘*carpet up the wall*’. He could be lured away from his accounts by the Big Hitter’s promise of a birthday party for him.

Organization-in-the-mind

His organization-in-the-mind therefore, was unconstrained and aggressive, within which it was his job to impose rules and limits and to look out for the common good.

7.5.3.1v. Key moments in the process

Tipping point:

His moment of realisation of wrongdoing and transition took place outside his familiar physical and social space, at a social event in India. He emphasised the conjunction between the familiar and unfamiliar – his host was Indian, but his daughters attended a prestigious English public school. Despite tolerating culturally relative ethical norms he identified there was something wrong in principle.

Being let down:

He was ambivalently invested in high status markers – enjoying his access to them but sensing that there was something hollow and anti-task in their appeal. His experience in

India showed him how those markers, and the *'gun-slinging'* style were associated with corruption.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

He resolved his ambivalence by positioning himself, reluctantly recapitulating his childhood experience, once more as an outsider in order to blow the whistle. Perhaps the link in his mind between freedom and outsider status made this more tolerable. He sought practical and emotional support, but from sources external to the organization to validate his position. In order to blow the whistle, he entered and was kept *'pigeon-holed'* in a transitional space in Canada. Positioning himself as an outsider enabled him to exercise agency, although only briefly.

Finding a voice

"Ickering" after facts and evidence was very much within his self-ascribed role within the organization. He could find a voice within his professional discourse, although his *"ickering"* was continually constructed as impossible speech by his boss who showed contempt for his rule-bound behaviour.

When the interview was finished, he spontaneously expressed fury with vested interests and their capacity to exploit unknowing victims. I was at first puzzled by his outburst, but on reflection, I think he was showing me how he had resolved the dilemma he faced in his confrontation with wrongdoing. Having secured a reliable place in the world, achieved legitimately, through his own efforts, (not by privilege, as he seemed to suspect I had) he had constructed an ethical self and therefore felt empowered to take an unambiguous stance on greedy exploitation.

7.5.3.2. Lia Case formulation

'Lived life'

- Grows up in a small Mediterranean country in a large and close-knit family. The grandfather was a high-ranking politician in government until her early adult years.
- Becomes a senior figure in the country's diplomatic service.
- Resigns when she is demoted after her grandfather's party was replaced in government.
- Develops a career in HR in global corporations
- Takes a job in a large family-owned commercial firm, establishing HR systems.
- Uncovers and reports entrenched wrongdoing
- The board tries to ignore her report and silence her.
- Collects hard evidence to present to the board
- Persuades the CEO and board to accept her evidence and retain her skills to bring about change in the organisation.

7.5.3.2i. Context

The firm is a large-scale enterprise in an economy dominated by small-and-medium enterprises (SME). Although the country is a growth economy, politically and socially it remains conservative, with structures of feeling (Williams, 2015) emphasising tradition, family values and loyalty.

7.5.3.2ii. System

Primary task

The successful family-owned, and long-established firm imported consumer goods. The professional senior management and other staff had been in post for decades and were loyal to the firm, which was experienced as like a family. While its overt task was to make money and survive, its sentient task seemed to be to preserve the livelihoods of its employees as this was a large employer in a relatively small economy.

Lia's given task was to develop adequate HR systems: the firm perceived a need for change as it struggled to retain talented new recruits. She had skills in "*shaking things up hard, and quickly*" and perceived herself as hired to come in "*torneod-ing*" and "*bulldozing*", to initiate change. Her task therefore was at odds with the company's covert intention to continue in the way it always had.

Social defences

The firm's structures and practices seemed designed to maintain the belief that the organization was functioning well, like a benign family, with no need to be concerned about people management, relying on tradition and loyalty to carry it through. It had become moribund but was in a state of denial about what was happening below its surface. In her first conversation a colleague said, "*Welcome to hell*" and Lia quickly realised that all was not well:

"These are people that have grown up together, built the company together andthe company is like stale water, it needs an injection of fresh water at every level to be able to turn things around because unfortunately it's become very incestuous.....it had reached a stage where so many things lay beneath the surface that if you touched it, it was going to destabilize the status quo"

She felt that a "*culture of impunity*" had grown up over decades. When concerns were raised, nothing changed. This converged with the prevalent culture of '*Omertà*' which prescribes unquestioning loyalty to the family:

"It's not in our culture to speak up..... It's very ArabOmertà, and you don't speak because I don't want to jeopardize my position, saving face, pride, reputation"

Basic assumptions

Ba(Dependency) appeared to be the prevalent assumption where the firm's family-like stability was trusted to contain dysfunctional behaviour. Work-group functioning was not much in evidence, at least among senior management, who were incapable of making decisions effectively. Affiliation was valued over competence. However, Lia uncovered wrongdoing in middle-management which indicated ba(Pairing) was also prevalent. Employees collaborated to defraud the firm and senior managers turned a blind eye, much as siblings might collude to hide delinquency from the parental gaze.

Evidence of perversion:

Lia discovered a series of corrupt practices. One manager exercised a “*reign of terror*”. In a parody of leadership, he micromanaged staff while sexually harassing female staff including stalking them out of working hours. Staff, afraid of losing their jobs, were:

“scared to speak up because they were convinced that management would support the bad guys, which they did”

She also uncovered large-scale pilfering, and a network of swinging parties run on the firm’s computer. She discovered that senior managers had received reports about all of this wrongdoing but “*they had no appetite to investigate*”.

In Susan Long’s typology the senior managers’ sin was SLOTH. By turning a blind eye to the abuses of power and theft, they maintained their own secure and inert positions. One manager, warning her to do nothing, expressed how collectively they were trying to avoid catastrophic change. He said:

“People are going to use you, be careful, you won’t be able to cope. It’s like a Pandora’s box. Don’t open it”

Here the wrongdoing itself involved perversion, particularly striking in a sexually conservative and tight-knit society. But also managers’ responses indicated a perverse system. The well-being of the enterprise was jeopardised by their self-interested negligence, to which they sought to recruit Lia and the intimidated junior staff. The management board were in denial about problems which they knew about but attempted to ignore.

7.5.3.2iii. Person

She opened the interview by stating that “*I have absolutely no problem standing up and speaking, being a whistleblower*”. Her family, including her eminent grandfather, valued their strong sense of fairness and willingness to actively oppose injustice. From schooldays

onwards her self-respect was vested in rebelling against convention if her principles required it: However, she also felt burdened by the demands of holding this ethical position:

“whilst I’m grateful for this upbringing it’s also been very difficult, because you’re in a situation where you sense that things are not just. You don’t just gloss over them, you dig immediately. you can never turn a blind eye to anything”

She recognised that her independence of thought also created barriers to belonging:

“we were always taught to stand on our own two feet, to think with our own heads, never to follow, never to be goats, which meant, we never followed the crowd”

I experienced her as a bewildering mix of high energy and intense focus, but that she was also detached.

She acknowledged that she has few really close friendships: *“I didn’t have the clique, I never thrived in a clique”*. Although her close and extensive family provided her with sustaining support, she and her children experienced bullying and she often felt pushed aside in her career as a punishment for her independence. However:

“there’s no price tag on self-respect” and I walk out of these halls with my head held high. I will always be able to look people in the eye.”

I got a clear sense of her idea of herself – a powerful, highly organised, highly principled person, yet repeatedly treated unfairly. Her forthright speaking out has provoked antagonism and retaliation, which she resents but is also wounded by.

7.5.3.2iv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

She considered she had been hired to shake things up in the firm and was intent on using her skills to set up systems which she knew were lacking. Her past experience told her that

she might need to ‘*bulldoze*’ through reforms and that her change agenda might not win her allies. However, she thought of herself as always “*viciously loyal*” to the people who hired her and to the task she was employed to perform. Her habitual independence, refusal to follow the crowd, meant that she was undeterred by the lack of support from the management board. But she was disturbed by the lack of contact and involvement from the CEO, leaving her to work without active authorisation from above. However, once she had engineered the dismissal of the stalker she did gain authorisation from below. Junior staff saw her as a hero and began to support her efforts to investigate and challenge wrongdoing:

“They couldn’t believe that I managed to get him out of the picture. So when they saw that it was becoming a reality, then they started coming one by one”.

She provided others with a voice:

so they realized they have a voice and some people actually believing them

In-actments:

Senior managers were intent on maintaining the status quo, even at the cost of overlooking dysfunctional behaviour which undermined the firm’s overt primary task. Lia arrived as an outsider threatening their perverse compromise. So they ganged up against her to avoid listening to the information she brought about wide-scale corruption in the system. She was particularly hurt that they recruited the CEO to their point of view. She felt “*butchered*” by this response.

Organization-in-the-mind

Her organization-in-the-mind was therefore a stagnant pond which she was employed to stir up, undamming the blockages, to allow fresh water to run through. She was nearly drowned during her efforts but, by holding firmly to her independent moral compass, she achieved her aims.

7.5.3.2v. Key moments in the process

Tipping point:

As with other serial whistleblowers (Ben, Trevor) there was no key moment when she moved from uncertainty to a position of choiceless choice. She thought that she might experience opposition as she had been hired to instigate change. Instead, she uncovered multiple examples of corruption about which she had no uncertainty. She expressed absolute commitment to challenging injustice at whatever personal cost:

“I ripped into [the CEO] and I couldn’t give a shit who he was. I just thought, you know what if I lose my job, I lose my job, but I’m not going to stay in a company that literally goes against everything I believe in”

Being let down

Lia felt let down by the CEO. Initially she was disappointed with his unavailability. Then she felt ‘humiliated’ and “heartbroken” by him supporting senior managers’ efforts to silence her. That she was so affected by this experience of failed dependency seems to contrast with her asserted independence. However, her manager in the civil service had also let her down, demoting and humiliated her and there are echoes of her relationship with her absent but powerful grandfather. She describes him setting up his children to fight bitterly among themselves about how to implement inheritance arrangements.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

Her life-long motivation not to be a ‘goat’ and willingness to stand outside a clique equipped her to tolerate being an outsider. She could not imagine compromising to belong:

“you work in a group and you don’t have your own personal convictions. I just find it really off putting. I find it sad that people can live life like that”

Her personal isolation became much more visible at this point. There was little room for other people in her narrative: close personal attachments were not referenced and she rarely reflected on others’ states of mind except to acknowledge her difference.

Finding a voice

As an outsider she threatened the sentient system. Realised her capacity to effect change, the management board responded by ganging together to silence her, particularly by defining her speech as impossible: Firstly *“they built a wall around (me)”*, accusing her of *‘barging into meetings’* where she had no legitimate role and breaking protocol.

“they basically turned the tables on me, and then I got a barrage of “you were rash, you were brash”. Emails from the CEO saying that I’m impulsive, saying that I need to curb my tongue”.

She also charged them with scapegoating her:

“You guys..... you’ve just left me alone. I said, I’m 100% alone. I told him you’ve thrown me to the wolves and you’re eating me alive”

Once she had accumulated enough evidence, she had no difficulty in finding a voice.

7.5.3.3a. Jeremy Case formulation

Lived life

- Grows up in an affluent family with a long history of military connections, including his father and siblings, always intending to join the army himself
- Begins his schooling in a conventional “*boys own*” prep school
- Moves to state schools for his secondary education for family financial reasons, finding he had to learn how to fit in to a different cultural environment
- Joins the army in a technical branch and rises rapidly through the officer ranks
- In his 30s his father is convicted for taking bribes. His parents were ‘broken’ by these events
- Undertakes Special Forces training
- Realising his father’s history was ‘career-limiting’ for him, he leaves the army
- Works as a consultant in telecoms for a decade
- Takes a contract in a Gulf State, project-managing the installation of a telecoms system
- Discovers payment of large-scale bribes to the Gulf State royal family, with the collusion of the MoD
- Returns to the UK and blows the whistle by sharing information with the press and SFO after MoD indicate they do not intend to take action.

7.5.3.3ai. Context

In recent decades there has been a history of highly public scandals connecting the UK government to Gulf State governments in arms dealing scandals. The UK Bribery Act 2010, outlawed such exchanges in international commerce. Meanwhile the Gulf State’s control over oil prices was becoming more precarious. Also both democratic and fundamentalist discourses increasingly contest the right of an absolute monarchy to rule.

7.5.3.3aii. System

There are two pertinent systems in this narrative: the Army/MoD and the Gulf State Royal Family. The index wrongdoing took place in a context where MoD and Army personnel collaborated with the Gulf State royal family.

- The Army

Primary task

Although Jeremy served in a number of war zones, he never referred to the nature of the Army's task in warfare, the part it must play in fighting and killing. He belonged to a branch which provided technical, logistical support to fighting units. As in banking and other corporate enterprises (Armstrong, 2005), Jeremy perceived the fighting parts of the Army's system as dismissive of technical support services and in denial about the increasing significance of skills such as his in modern warfare.

Social defences

The modern Army defends itself against recognising the potentially brutal and uncontrolled aspects and impact of the exercise of aggression. When aggression is split off and denied, there is a risk of denigration, bullying and scapegoating (Long, 2008; Thornborrow & Brown, 2009). Jeremy variously described the Army system as *'hierarchical', rigidly attached to tradition, snobbish and nepotistical', a "jealous mistress", willing to scapegoat individuals to protect powerful interests*. Thus he identified both splitting and denial as prevalent defensive behaviours.

Basic assumptions

Bion specified that the Army would be dominated by fight/flight (baF) assumptive behaviour. Jeremy's descriptions of rigid and *'vengeful'* behaviour, coupled with turning a blind eye to unfairness illuminate those processes in action.

- Gulf State Royal family

Primary task

The royal family, as an autocratic monarchy works to maintain its power, in order to rule over and protect the Gulf State, to maintain its internal stability and defend it against its enemies. However, the family has also been viewed as maximising its personal wealth and status.

Social defences

The family can be seen as defending itself against challenges to the legitimacy of its absolute rule. It is vulnerable to challenges from Islamic fundamentalists and from envious and

competitive neighbours and other tribal families. What is being denied therefore is the questionable legitimacy and vulnerability of their power and the shame associated with defeat

Jeremy describes lavish lifestyles and effort to maintain “face” – socially recognised status and dignity (CIA, 1994) and to control activity at all levels of society. There is nepotism in appointments to government positions and family members hold key corporate posts.

Basic assumptions

Jeremy was focused on the project he was contracted to deliver and was therefore mostly operating in work-group mentality but was puzzled and frustrated to find that progress was minimal. However he discovered evidence of basic assumption pairing (baP), between royal family and corporate officials to maintain the appearance of working at the project, or a magical belief that their collusion would produce a fully formed telecoms system without any further activity on anyone’s part.

Evidence of perversity

Several deadly sins are relevant here: primarily the Gulf State government demonstrated perverse PRIDE. Long (2008) describes in her example drawn from investment banking, a “machismo culture of one-upmanship” evident here in the Gulf State’s desire to acquire the biggest and best telecoms system, without having a clear idea of what they might use it for. Jeremy sees both the Army and the Gulf State system as operating what SL calls “collusive pseudo-reality”, colluding to prevent anyone noticing, as he remarked: “*the Emperor has got no clothes. Once it’s out of the bag, everyone knows the Emperor has got no clothes*”. Collusion was rife in how this contract was delivered. There was indifference to the value to the Gulf State population or the British taxpayer of the cost of the project. Those who questioned the system were shamed and treated with contempt – Jeremy describes efforts to demean his work and expose him as incompetent.

7.5.3.3aiii. Person

He recalled being an active adventurous child, often “*out of place*” and therefore often in trouble. His family had a strong commitment to traditional structures – Army and religion,

which he shared: “*you just do it because you do it*” But the family also fostered independence of mind and encouraged debate and a refusal to comply with routine expectations. This same ambivalence about compliance with norms enabled him repeatedly to bend circumstances to fit his own interests -e.g he established a rugby team in his soccer-playing secondary school. He described a series of incidents featuring himself as “*St George in shining armour*”, where he stepped in to rescue people in trouble, commenting that he always felt he had to “*get stuck in*” and that he “*can’t not take a stand*”. In each of these incidents he typically behaved against normative expectations.

I noticed how mesmerising Jeremy’s narrative was. Its excitement, uncertainty and heroic moments absorbed me entirely. On reflection I realised that it followed the classic narrative structure: situation; trouble, resolution and development which Alford (2001; 2007) has noted in most whistleblower stories. There was a ‘Boy’s Own’ quality to the narrative which perhaps made it more manageable, even familiar for Jeremy – that even in such extreme circumstances he could hope to find ‘*the right kit*’.

7.5.3.3aiv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

He considered his role in the Gulf State project was “*to do what’s needed*”, and to use his expertise, since he was appointed because of “*having the right kit*”. He always found exercising his “*know-how*” enjoyable and the Gulf State job allowed him to reprise his role as St George in shining armour. He invested considerable trust in the familiarity of the military hierarchy and of universal values while also being prepared to take up a leadership position, stepping outside conventional norms to rescue the troubled project.

In-actments:

he attempted to follow rational principles in developing a project plan but found it increasingly puzzling as he came up against evidence that the way-we-do-things-around-here (Douglas, 1986) did not follow any principles or procedures he was familiar with. Appearance was valued above substance. The system’s rigid hierarchy deprived him of the agency which had been central to his success in other contexts. He noted how hard it was to think clearly until he took a holiday away from the Gulf.

Organization-in-the-mind

His organization-in-the-mind therefore was a troubled system which he, with his particular expertise had been hired to rescue. But he came to understand that in its own eyes the system was not troubled. Instead the perverse collusion between the contractors and the royal family was nicely balanced to achieve maintenance of 'face' rather than build a telecoms system. His efforts to draw attention to reality necessarily failed.

7.5.3.3a v. Key moments in the process.

Tipping point:

Jeremy's characteristic independent, questioning stance, which had previously enabled him to gain agency in unfamiliar or challenging situations created uncertainty which eventually tipped over into suspicion. His "*gut instinct*" began to "*raise red flags*". He sought to accumulate evidence, but realised that 'facts' were irrelevant in this system in which appearance and reality were uncoupled. Finally when he understood exactly how the corruption was being perpetrated he described this as fitting "*the key in the door*". After that point his reference point became his traditional values – eg justice, integrity – finally rejecting a more relativist acceptance of cultural difference.

Being let down:

He was let down in one way by the illusory nature of the project he had invested energy and obtained identity from. Secondly, he prized traditional values and familiar norms (eg his relish of the Boys Own boarding school) and therefore confidently sought support with managing his uncertainties from trusted figures within a known hierarchy. Being let down by those figures crystallized his suspicion into certainty and opposition. This experience arguably recapitulated the events surrounding his father's downfall in which he saw both his father and the Army behaving in untrustworthy ways.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

During his "*Gethsemane moment*" like Jesus, he isolated himself from his social world to review his moral choices, matching his options to his sense of his enduring self. Gethsemane is a very potent metaphor: he anticipated that others would stay with him (bearing witness)

but found that in reality he faced his 'choiceless choice' alone. Searching for the internal strength to help him overcome the 'gang' he prepared for his professional crucifixion. In that moment, in reality the space of one night, he like Jesus, was in the grip of the basic assumption: fight/flight, which was in conflict with his work group mentality, by then focussed on the task of enforcing justice and integrity.

Thereafter he abandoned his effort to orientate to Gulf State norms/values and decisively positioned himself outside the organization. Assuming this outsider status freed him to challenge the hegemonic and corrupted discourse. Resisting interpellation in this way and taking up his own agency, he could become active on his own terms.

Finding a voice

As he raised questions and tried to present the 'facts' as he saw them, the system united to undermine his credibility and define him as failing and troublesome. By opening himself to risk he regained a voice to protest. His Gethsemane moment enabled him to engage in Foucault's (1991) process of 'care for the self' which creates the *parrhesiast* who has confidently found their own truth.

7.5.3.3b. Tim Case Formulation (bystander)

'Lived life'

- Has a 40 year career in the Army, in postings around the world, mainly working on communication systems.
- Becomes close friends with Jeremy (whistleblower) during military service, although he chooses not to serve under Jeremy's command.
- Retires in 2009
- In 2011, takes up a contract in the Gulf State, working under Jeremy, building a large communications system.
- After 2 months of Tim starting work Jeremy blows the whistle on large-scale bribery and returns to the UK
- Jeremy and Tim meet in an airport and agree that Tim represents himself as knowing nothing about the whistleblowing
- Tim remains working on the project in the Gulf State for 2 more years before returning to the UK.

Tim was employed to manage the project described in Jeremy's case. He was a bystander to Jeremy's whistleblowing.

7.5.3.3bi. Context

The context is the same as described in Jeremy's case. However, Tim placed more emphasis than Jeremy on the presence of a *"culture of fear"* in the Gulf State. He also emphasised the universal acceptance of the practice of bribery in corporate culture, unchanged in essence following the UK Bribery Act (2009).

7.5.3.3bii. System

Primary task

Tim was very clear about the normative task he had contracted for. His job was to plan and deliver a communications system. However, both he and his employers had diverse other tasks in mind. For his part he was working there:

"firstly to be Jeremy's wingman. And secondly ...financial reasons ..., either one or t'other of those, was going to be my exit strategy".

Jeremy encouraged him to deny all knowledge of his whistleblowing activities in order to keep himself safe. Tim's professionalism ensured that he worked hard to achieve the successful roll-out of the project although his other aims defined the limits of his investment in the task. His employers were a complex mix of UK government agencies, multinational corporations and the Gulf State government. He considered that each of these agencies was committed to maintaining prestige, power and financial gain. The project was a means to those ends, rather than an end in itself.

Social defences

Tim observed that there was no real idea within the system about the practical function of the project or drive to see it completed in a timely fashion. By implication what was being defended against was the recognition that the project was intended to secure status and wealth for the parties involved. He discovered that previous project managers had lacked the skills or experience to deliver the work. Jeremy's skills exactly matched what was required but that created difficulties:

"the way Jeremy was trying to run the program, did not necessarily accord with the way that they felt it needed to be run he went into the job very clear I have got to deliver a ten billion program.....Jeremy's a very difficult person because of that knowledge, to be able to hoodwink"

A variety of strategies were used to maintain that defence. An autocratic hierarchy was enforced:

"..... it's not a place that you would want to be saying things that are counter to the general policy of the company or even to question the way the company does its business because you will be on the plane out.... And if you have committed a social sin to boot, then you will be in Chop-Chop Square and you will have a public beating as well as getting deported"

Employees were not allowed access to information, such as budgets and manpower planning that they needed to understand how the project was visualised:

[A Gulf State manager] *does not take a holistic, approach. He far prefers to see 'I got that bit, understand that bit, now sort me out with the next bit'.....things were being done off the back of a fag packet".*

Employees could not develop a sense of agency because the work was guided by the whim of senior figures.

Basic assumptions

Tim functioned in work-group mentality most of the time. He was determined to deliver a professional product and side-stepped the defensive behaviour described above pragmatically, keeping a sharp focus on the needs of the task. That focus also acted as a defence against the threat and complexity contained in the context. His more personal aims also guided the choices he made. As Jeremy did, he noted pairing assumptions between the Gulf State functionaries and what he called "*UK plc*" - that the project would get completed without due process and that the bribery would magically not be noticed.

Evidence of perversity

Tim was warned by Jeremy that something corrupt was going on and he witnessed the gap between what was needed to complete the project and what happened on the ground. He perceived that GREED, which he saw as culturally normative, underlay the course of events: "*their need almost to ensure that they've got a bit of a bargain*". However, he emphasised that bribery, euphemistically called 'facilitation fees' was culturally normative, not only in the Gulf State, but universally in corporate culture:

"the facilitation fee has been endemic in Arabic culture for time immemorial, in exactly the same way as it is in the Far East..... UK plc, it's always been very good at dressing it up. In the old days, Christmas time, we used to give everybody a bottle of whisky, it's the scale of it..... dear old Rolls Royce has just been found out for doing it in six or seven countries. And so all of the big boys are doing it"

He suggested that arrogance, a proxy for PRIDE here, had dictated how openly the bribery had been conducted:

“the cardinal sin is don’t get caught and [the multi-national corporation] were very public about it, And I think that’s a degree of arrogance. They knew the law [UK Bribery Act, 2009] had been brought in, they essentially flouted both the letter and the spirit of it”

He identified several features of perverse practice. He knew that UK military personnel had colluded in rejecting Jeremy’s evidence, labelling it an *“internal company problem”*. He was aware that individuals in the system had formed a powerful clique, which *“ganged up against”* Jeremy. Jeremy’s predecessors reported meetings with senior figures were *“like going into the lion’s den”*. He also detected a denial of reality, since if there was no formal budget for the project *“there must be some creative accounting going on”*

7.5.3.3biii. Person

I was apprehensive before meeting Tim that I might re-open a traumatic or possibly shameful episode for someone who had managed to forget or come to terms with past events or that my questioning could be experienced as implied criticism. However, as the interview progressed, I realised that I had projected those concerns into the situation. Instead Tim was relaxed, and emotionally contained. He offered no information about his childhood and life before joining the Army. He occasionally lapsed into the present-tense describing events which were still vivid to him but generally using the past-tense and speaking from a spectator’s external perspective, he seemed detached, conveying the impression that these events were just one job among many, which he had undertaken without much personal commitment. In turn, I did not find myself immersed in the story that I heard, re-running it in my mind involuntarily in subsequent days as I did with most of the other narratives I heard.

Tim was pragmatically willing to adapt to most circumstances in order to get the job done. He described how his long history of working in cultures with ethics and norms different to his own meant that he was unsurprised by the existence of systematic bribery, only surprised by its scale in this instance and the failure to make any effort to conceal it. In

contrast, he accounted for Jeremy's whistleblowing as driven by personal factors which he did not share:

"he has got a strong ethical moral code, partly because of his upbringing and partly because of his father, and the trouble he got into"

He also felt that due to his long military service he could tolerate restrictions to personal freedom:

"you accept a loss of certain of your civil rights. As a result of signing on for the Queen, you probably cope with this a little bit better".

It was ingrained in him that he must not be *"forthright"*, as he would be in the UK, but must accept *"the idea of face and don't embarrass, don't shout, don't lose your temper"*.

7.5.3.3biv. Person-In-Role

En-actments:

He worked diligently to complete his contracted task despite its *'upside down'* character. He considered he was *"far enough down the food chain"* not to be involved in any of the confrontations about corruption. He positioned himself deliberately as dealing with a known unknown (Bollas, 1987; Zizek, 2004)

"did I know that it was going on in the company before I went there? No, I didn't. Did I have half an inkling that it was probably going on? Yes, I did. Did I question it closely to find out? No, I didn't".

His work-group mentality, arguably operating as a defence, an ethically ambiguous stance and his understanding of bribery as a near universal phenomenon allowed him to be a bystander to the whistleblowing drama.

In-actments:

The culture of intimidation and enforced compliance created malleable employees. He described being publicly humiliated by the HR director when he made a routine request:

it's one of the strange things she is allowed to raise her voice, you are not allowed to raise your voice, because she is the princess.

"it is autocratic and they don't actually need an excuse to put you in gaol and it gets somewhat unpleasant there".

Organization-in-the-mind

Tim's organization-in-the-mind therefore was of a familiar if unpleasantly authoritarian system which he could survive only by filling his allocated role pragmatically and taking care not to 'know' about anything above him in the pecking order.

7.5.3.3bv. Key moments in the process***Tipping point:***

As a bystander, predictably there was no clear tipping point for Tim. However, he met Jeremy as he fled to the UK, in the transitional space of an airport lounge, when Jeremy advised him to deny that he knew anything about Jeremy's actions. That enabled him to remain a bystander while preserving their friendship.

Being let down:

Tim's long experience of operating under different ethical systems and acceptance of the loss of his civil rights meant that his experience matched his expectations. There was no breaking of trust, either with his employers or with Jeremy, who took pains to guard his welfare.

Positioning self in relation to the organization

Tim's pragmatic perspective and focused goals positioned him as a permanent outsider in this system. After Jeremy's whistleblowing, he was 'sent to Coventry' and exiled to an

outlying venue in the Gulf State. Subsequently he described himself as “*rehabilitated*” so that he returned to work on the main project. However, he remained psychologically distanced, keeping his personal exit strategy in mind.

Finding a voice:

Although he disapproved of the Gulf State methods of running a project he had no interest in voicing criticism. He is therefore the only case in the series who experienced no emotional difficulty with being silenced. He chose to remain silent in order to accomplish his personal goals.

7.5.4 Intergovernmental Sector

7.5.4.1. Trevor Case formulation

“Lived life”

- Grows up in London. His mother is active in local politics in his childhood
- Feels treated unfairly by a teacher in Primary School, so arranges be moved out of his class
- Attends a local grammar school against his parents’ preferences.
- Becomes increasingly disaffected from the school’s culture, eventually attending school only when he chooses.
- Begins training as an architect but leaves after organising a student protest about the School’s policies
- Works on contracts for an inter-governmental peace-keeping agency.
- Resigns over a disagreement about an aspect of the agency’s policy.
- Works as an administrator for the agency in North America, where he becomes chronically sick.
- Organises a grass-roots protest after discovering that the premises may have sick building syndrome.
- While observing elections in Africa, his warnings about irregularities are ignored.
- Pursues litigation against the agency and the national government related to the ‘sick building’ and his own employment rights.
- Discovers that he has been effectively black-balled by the agency.
- Retires
- Wins some changes to rights of agency employees

7.5.4.1i. Context

The agency’s explicit mission is to maintain international peace and security, promote friendly relations between nations, support international co-operation in solving international economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian problems, and encourage respect for human rights. However, how global governance can be managed in an increasingly globalized and competitive world, where alliances between nation-states are more fluid is controversial

7.5.4.1ii. System

Primary task

Being a troublemaker was a core part of Trevor’s identity and he gave several instances, across different organisations, of calling out wrongdoing:

“it’s difficult not to say when I think things are wrong. I’ve always been a bit surprised when other people didn’t do that”.

An eminent politician for whom he worked told him that he had a good eye for flaws in arguments:

“..I had a “dirty mind”. I could see things not going the way they were supposed to, and I always have felt, it's my duty to say something. If you see things that are wrong, you know, it's your duty to draw attention to them so they can be put right”.

Therefore, in his own mind his task, whatever work he took on, was also to call attention to wrongdoing. He held a series of different contracts with the intergovernmental agency, whose function, he thought, was to establish systems to enhance the quality of life of the world’s poorest populations and ensure peace and stability across the world.

Social defences:

The agency was set up as an ‘association’ (Long, 2008) to be a benign unifying force in global affairs and therefore to defend against the destructive effects of rivalry and domination between (sibling) states. However, what was apparently being denied was that equality of representation did not guarantee equality of power and influence, that local rather than universal principles and interests might have enduring impact, and that the agency might give umbrella protection to a mix of good and bad people and practices :

“You think you're working for [the agency] - It is good - the people in [it] are good. I have to say in the first full time [agency] job that I got, I met the first person I've ever met who I consider to be total evil,”

This denial was enabled by a lack of transparency and accountability built into the constitution of the agency:

“the [agency] is outside all law. It has an agreement with every country that it works in that basically the laws don’t apply to it”

This makes it hard for any staff member to call the agency to account or to blow the whistle, internally or externally. Employees have no legal status in host countries:

“the [National] government appealed against my right to bring the case, claiming that I wasn’t a person because I worked for the [agency]”.

The agency’s ironic capacity to invoke impunity rules to protect itself stifled exposure and protest about wrongdoing under its auspices.

“the [Director] was entitled to fire me on health grounds without giving any reason because the rules say that the [Director] can”

Furthermore workers who raised unwelcome concerns would never be re-hired and Trevor found that appeal structures could be *“ignored, flouted, or simply put on hold”*.

Basic assumptions

The public rhetoric of the agency is clearly invested in an oceanic assumption of ba(Oneness) in keeping with a sense of global responsibility. But Trevor described the agency operating, in contrast, under ba(Meness) protecting its own interests and survival by ruthlessly stifling internal opposition and making itself externally unaccountable.

Evidence of perversity

The structure of the agency was designed to defend against the envious destructiveness of rivalry and the drive to dominate. However, its functioning showed perverse PRIDE in its arrogance and refusal to accept that anything outside itself has value. Its mechanisms for avoiding accountability showed highly organised self-deception and protection of its own interests at the expense of the global well-being it was established to promote. In Bion’s terms these structures, which refused open relationships and learning, could be seen as rivalrous attacks on linking designed to secure its own overarching supremacy. Others were engaged as accomplices, invited to collude:

“It’s the buying off of people who are not just allies or potential allies that have specialist knowledge by making them an offer that they can’t refuse…….They were breaking their own rules in order to buy a better reputation”

And on the other hand, the agency could also be bought:

“if the World Bank was telling him that this is what we’re doing …he wasn’t going to question it”

The spirit of co-operation emphasised in the agency’s original charter assumed that its members would accept that self-sacrifice for the greater good might be required of them. Member states had to tolerate a more hierarchical relationship with the agency. In the contemporary world, the agency, faced with a question of how to enforce its governance, has to appeal to members’ self-interest in negotiating authority. This shift in dynamics poses an external threat to its omnipotence, echoed by the internal threat posed by staff claiming their right to hold the agency to account.

7.5.4.1iii. Person

Trevor saw himself as a perpetual outsider. Even at school he placed himself on the margins:

“I was kind of making judgments on other people’s performance, ……but it’s like I wasn’t part of it and ……I went through secondary school feeling totally invisible”

His mother was active in local politics and seems to have encouraged him to challenge authority by himself, even in primary school. He repeatedly refused to play by the rules of institutions he was part of, ‘making trouble’ whenever he identified wrongdoing. As an adult he deployed his ‘dirty mind’ to highlight activity which he thought was discriminatory to disadvantaged groups. Despite having some pride in these attributes and recognising that “*I was always an outsider*” he also saw its drawbacks. Speaking about his career struggles in the agency he reflected:

“I wasn’t one of their friends because they worked out early on that I wasn’t a natural ally that I was not going to side with them politically.they had people that if the organisation was handing out money, they would rather it handed the money to.”

Although he was encouraged by grass-roots support from colleagues, he grieved that ideals he worked towards frequently failed, leaving him feeling *“cut off without a leg to stand on”* and *“punished for life”*

I wondered whether this narrative reflected Alford’s (2001) ‘narcissistic altruism’, or whether, in order to make sense of repeated rejections and efforts to silence his oppositional voice, he had defensively constructed others as unethical beings to rescue himself from an abject identity.

7.5.4.1iv. Person-In-Role

En-actment:

In whichever role he was employed (policy development; interpreter; election observer) he worked both to promote the interests of the socially excluded and disadvantaged and felt compelled to call out wrongdoing. He approached the external world, from primary school onwards, with high ideals and expectations but continually found himself disenchanted by the pragmatism of organisations which, in his view, put expedience above fairness.

I first met Trevor at a seminar where he made pertinent points about the lack of accountability of international organisations, in a rather unemotional, objective manner and without referring to his individual experience. When we met for the research interview, at first he gave me only factual information, making no links between the events in his professional and personal life. I felt that he wanted to impress on me, as he had at the seminar, that he was telling a dispassionate narrative whose facts could not be disputed. However, during the second part of the interview specific events are explored in greater depth. Then his resentment of and disgust with the machinery of the agency became powerfully evident while constructing himself as a valuable commodity with many desirable skills, who had valiantly refused to compromise his moral standards.

In-actment:

He perceived organizations with whom he was in conflict acting pragmatically, in their own best interests, to preserve their own future in a precarious context. They paid lip-service to collective ideals while turning a blind eye to venal motivations or refusing to recognise that their universal principles may not be applicable or of interest in local circumstances. Staff were coerced to conform, a pressure he strongly resisted

Organization-in-the-mind

Trevor's organization-in-the-mind, was therefore a coldly calculating and hypocritical organization which would willingly sacrifice right to preserve its own reputation and future. He saw his role in this system as a solitary *parrhesiast* - no consistent allies were mentioned - at whatever cost to his personal well-being.

7.5.4.1v. Key moments in the process***Tipping point:***

There was no obvious tipping point for Trevor, as there was not for the other serial whistleblower, Ben. Trevor described being constantly vigilant about hypocrisy and wrongdoing and found his expectations confirmed repeatedly.

Being let down:

He described how "*dream jobs*" often disintegrated around him. These experiences were sometimes related to the idealism with which he entered a new role believing he would be able to achieve something considerable, only to discover a system fraught with mundane limitations. At other times he was aware that his insistence on operating by his own rules and judgmental attitude did not make him "*a natural ally*". He also described how supporters had often melted away or negotiated compromises, lacking his persistence in pursuing his cause.

Positioning self in relation to the boundaries of the organization

He habitually positioned himself as an outsider, which he valued since it gave him freedom for *parrhesia*. But, at some level he also experienced this outsider status as being "*punished for life*".

Finding a voice:

He described the agency's several mechanisms for turning an internal critic into a non-person with no voice in the external world:

"the retaliation that exists within the agency which is structured, it's not just random, is utterly brilliant"

"I gave the report (as an election monitor) saying if you go ahead there will be Civil War, and they used this to criticize me.'Oh', they would say 'you're not here to do this. This is not your job. We only want you to give figures. You don't tell us about the organization'...."

He perceived himself as a scapegoat, treated harshly and then cast out to protect the organization from his *"malign influence"* and deter others from troublemaking.

His life-long treasured identity as a troublemaker authorised him to find a voice. However, during the research interview he seemed to welcome someone listening attentively to his story and taking his account seriously. Whilst in his history he had repeatedly refused to be silenced, this interview, particularly as it is not structured as a conversation, perhaps gave him an experience of having his voice really heard.

Chapter 8: Whistleblowers in film

“Nobody knows if whistleblowing is nurture or nature”

(Katharine Gun³, 2019)

8.1. Introduction

Individuals connect to and make sense of culturally available canonical stories, whether presented as fact or fiction. Such canonical stories can be found in folktales, legends and myths, but also in more contemporary forms, in news items, fiction and popular film. Their narratives set out accounts of how life can or should be lived, shaped iteratively by cultural norms and linguistic forms which in turn structure and are structured by events and how those events are experienced and evaluated.

Popular cinema has long been fascinated by the figure of the whistleblower. There are numerous lists of ‘the X best films about whistleblowers’⁴ Films about whistleblowing therefore provide an invaluable archive of shifting constructions across historical time and context. I chose to study the situated development, or in Foucault’s terms genealogy, of discursive representations of whistleblowers at a cultural level by examining how they have been portrayed in popular cinema across decades.

8.2. Culture, ideology and film

Althusser (2008) argued that culture, along with other aspects of state machinery, such as education, religion and the family, interpellates subjects, always-already, into ideology, so that they come to believe that what happens is natural and inevitable. Barthes (1972)

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/sep/22/katharine-gun-whistleblower-iraq-official-secrets-film-keira-knightley>

⁴ E.g. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/gallery/21-best-movies-whistleblowers-578755/1-on-the-waterfront-1954>

proposed that any mundane object, such as a soap advert, child's toy or wrestling match was available for mythologising, to promote the sense that what is seen is "what-goes-without-saying" Both writers therefore take a profoundly pessimistic view of the conservatism of culture.

People recognise typicalities in fictions, testing the portrayal of character and causation against their own experience, to make sense of their world and learn about the boundaries of possible experience legitimized within shared culture. Mark Stein (2005) pointed out that such typicalities can also inform psychoanalytic thinking about complex and painful human dilemmas. Thus, fictional representations promote thinking about the relationship between social processes and individual experience. Through encouraging emotional identification with protagonists, the audience are taught how to behave appropriately (Rustin, 2000; Wright, 1977).

Film has been identified as a powerful source for the construction and reproduction of discourse (Barthes,1972; Denzin, 1991; Mulvey, 2009). Because in film, '*the glamorous impersonates the ordinary*,' (Mulvey, 2009, p. 18). audiences are encouraged to identify with the main characters and by recognizing similarity and difference, unconsciously internalize new ego-ideals. Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) argued that film titillated audiences, and through creating unsatisfied longings, pacified and stultified them, thereby binding them more firmly into conformity to dominant ideology. Mulvey, however, argued that Horkheimer and Adorno overlooked the diversity and conflict that exist within culture. She, in line with later Foucault (Foucault & Pearson,2001) and Butler (2016) sees potential for autonomy in conscious life and the willed occupation of a vulnerable identity. Hall similarly (1973) argues for the possibility of opposition to dominant discourse via negotiated readings of images, including in film, and the deliberate ironic appropriation of othered identities.

8.3. Representations of whistleblowing through time

Whistleblowing has not provoked a uniform response historically and across cultures (Di Salvo & Negro, 2016; Vandekerckhove, et al., 2014). The moral value of some acts are

bitterly contested, (Sauter & Kendall, 2011) and the whistleblower may be either condemned or lauded. Culturally shared narratives contained in myths, stories and dramas inform consumers including potential whistleblowers about the ethical value of events, and the fate of those who blow the whistle or turn a blind eye.

News stories rarely promote radical dissent, constructing narratives out of a stock of familiar myths, in order to engage their audience in an essentially conservative process (Handley & Rutigliano, 2012; Lule, 2001). When newspapers report whistleblowing they use a similar stock of canonical myths (DiSalvo & Negro, 2016; Lezard, 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hunt, 2012)

Fictional narratives down through the centuries have frequently rehearsed the drama of the powerless courageously challenging wrongdoing by the powerful. The same story, Sophocles' *Antigone* (Butler, 2000; Contu, 2014; Shamsie, 2017) and Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, (Miller, 1977) for example, may be repeatedly adapted and revised to speak to contemporary audiences.

Mr Smith goes to Washington released in 1939 is generally identified as the first whistleblowing film. Thereafter at least one significant film in which the plot hinges on speaking truth to power was made in each decade. Lists citing the 'best' whistleblowing films show interest has accelerated so that there has been a spate of films made in the last two decades featuring whistleblowers. A recent article in the Wall Street Journal, noting this trend, remarked "*Want to know where pop culture is right now? Just whistle*" (Gamerman, 2019). In these films whistleblowers are generally constructed as heroes of their times. The process of speaking truth to power has been intertwined with their social and political context, so that the films therefore persuade their audience that the ethical drama they are watching has that ideologically driven, always-already, goes-without-saying quality.

8.4. Method

I scanned the internet for lists of "Best whistleblower films" to compile a comprehensive list of films with some box-office standing on the theme. I sampled lists which began in 1939

with *Mr Smith goes to Washington*, and ended with *Official Secrets*, made in 2019.

Continuing to sample such lists until no new films were named resulted in a combined list of thirty one films. Only English-language films were included. From the combined list I eventually selected eight films to ensure that different decades, sectors and gender of whistleblower were represented. Only UK and North American locations were represented. The full list of analysed films is shown in Table 7:

I used Situational Analysis (SA henceforth) (Clarke et al, 2018) to analyse data in the film study because it shares with Foucault a focus on how situated subjects are constituted out of contingently-related, culturally-imposed elements or practices, which define conditions of possibility. Because of its emphasis on interpreting the co-constituted context, a range of elements human and non-human can be included in the analysis, which make the social features of a situation more available for investigation. Particularly useful for my purposes here and in line with its constructivist objectives, SA has been used to study a range of extant visual and verbal materials.

8.4.1. Method for initial analysis

Initially I analysed three films, "*Mr Smith goes to Washington*", 1939 "*Rumpole of the Bailey and the Official Secrets*" (1987) and "*Snowden*" (2016). I deconstructed the films' narratives to characterise the portrayal of the whistleblowing act. I gathered information about historical events and critical responses contemporary to the release of the film to establish a context. These two sources of data allowed me to examine the relationship between discursive concepts which constructed the subject of the whistleblower through time.

I first coded each film, scene by scene using a scene change to define a unit for coding, a process parallel to that described in section 4.5.2.1. Initial coding assigned gerunds to each scene, as Charmaz recommends, as a useful heuristic device to explore actions and sequences while the narrative is fractured. I then derived a set of focused codes, increasingly abstracted categories of action and relationship.

I next mapped all the human and non-human elements in the narrative, exploring the relationships between them, repeatedly connecting elements to a single key element or

concept in a series of messy maps. An example, reflecting the analysis of *Snowden*, is shown below in Figure 7. I then derived positional maps of discursive positions along axes of concern and controversy, to illustrate dominant and marginalized or impossible positions (Clarke, et al., 2018). Examples, derived from the analyses of *Mr Smith goes to Washington*, *Rumpole of the Bailey* and *Snowden* are shown in Appendix 10.

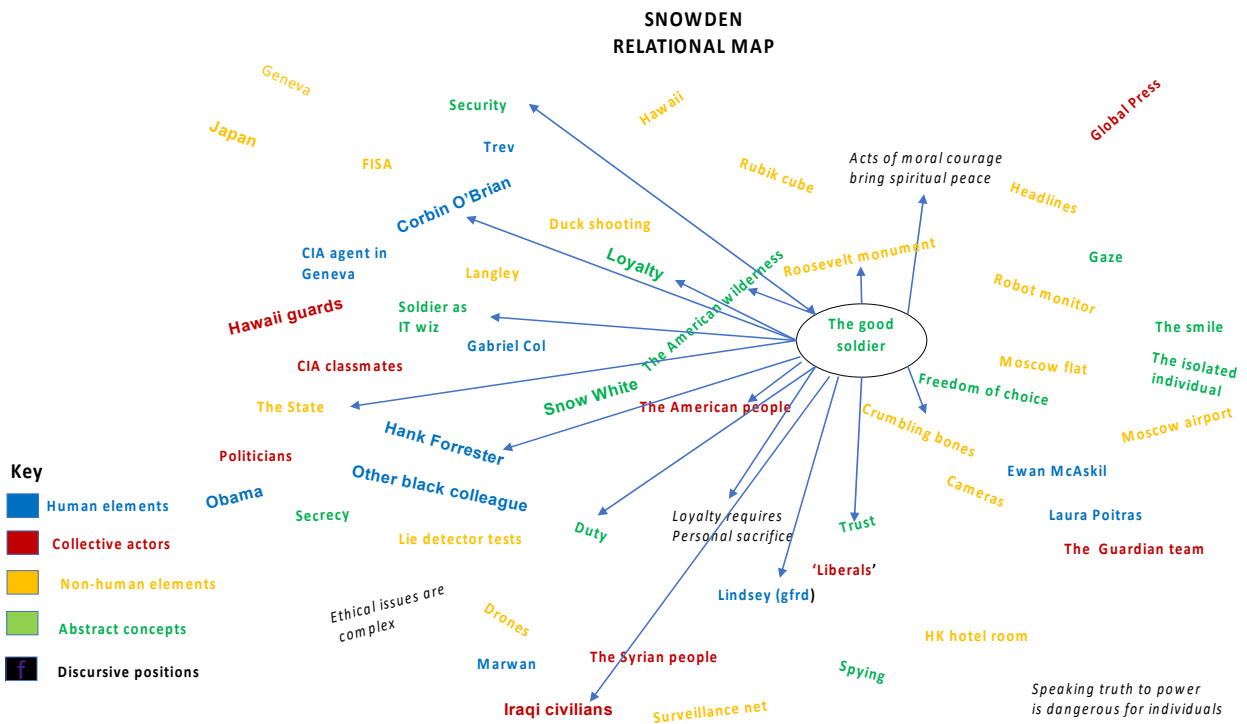


Figure 7: Example of a messy map

The findings from the analysis of these first three films was reported in full in MacCarthy (2020). The paper is included here as Appendix 10

8.4.2. Method for further analyses

Subsequently I selected 5 further films, as shown in Table 7 to explore how similar discursive positions and conceptual categories played out in films made in intervening decades – in the 1950s and 1970s – and when the whistleblower was a woman.

Table 7: Films included in the analysis

Criteria for selection	Title of film	Year of release
Initial sample	<i>Mr Smith goes to Washington</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0031679/	1939
	<i>Rumpole of the Bailey and the Official Secrets</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0691377/	1987
	<i>Snowden</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3774114/	2016
Films featuring male whistleblowers	<i>On the Waterfront</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047296/	1954
	<i>Serpico</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0070666/	1973
Films featuring women whistleblowers	<i>Silkwood</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086312/	1983
	<i>The Whistleblower</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0896872/	2010
	<i>Official Secrets</i> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5431890/	2019

8.5. Findings

8.5.1. Summary of initial sample findings

The narratives in the three films followed similar trajectories: there is a struggle between good and evil. The whistleblower is represented as a heroic but alienated or marginalized figure, confronting a collusive and corrupt establishment. The act of whistleblowing creates a crisis which poses a threat and a challenge to dominant power by demanding change. The dénouement may show some adjustment to the status quo but never ends well for the whistleblower, who, in these three examples is annihilated and/or made an outcast.

The figure of the whistleblowers in *Mr Smith* and in *Snowden* closely exemplify Foucault's *parrhesiast*, as their 'fearless speech', showed the five defining characteristics: frankness; truth; danger; criticism and duty. The ethical status of the main whistleblower in *Rumpole* was equivocal, as his disclosure was covert and manipulative rather than frank, but the underlying implication about the duty to speak truth to power was the same. Although the dominant order defined them as unrecognizable subjects and their speech as impossible, by refusing to be silenced they created the possibility for a new order.

There were, however, significant discursive differences between the narratives which reflected contextual differences. The dramas enacted contemporary concerns about the nature of the social contract.

The positional dimensions extracted from the analysis of the initial sample and the similarities and differences found across all five of the analyzed films are shown in the table below

Conceptual Category	Mr Smith (1939)	On the Waterfront (1954)	Serpico (1973)	Rumpole (1987)	Snowdon (2016)
<i>Political context</i>	US hesitating to enter WW2 in opposition to America First's position of self-interest	Cold War era of anti-communist/anti-organized labour sentiment and McCarthy trials	Rise of the counter-culture and Watergate; conformity with convention seen as suspect.	Thatcherism: neo-liberalism+ authoritarian state control; rising social inequalities	Globalised and networked world, where traditional allegiances are fractured
<i>Nature of the wrong-doing</i>	Greed	Hegemonic control + greed	Greed	Hegemonic control	Making power unaccountable
<i>Characteristics of the 'gang'</i>	Corrupt capitalists	Union bosses	Professional clique	Class cliques	Machinery of the State gone rogue
<i>Innocence of the whistleblower</i>	Innocence lost	Innocence lost and regained	Innocence lost	No change	Innocence lost and re-gained
<i>Insider/outsider status of the whistleblower</i>	Outsider → Insider	Insider → Outsider	Insider → Outsider	Remains outsider	Insider → Outsider
<i>Character of the Press</i>	Rowdy and cynical bystanders	Not featured	Useful mechanism	Amoral gossips	Heroic guardians of the truth, challenging hegemonic power
<i>Outcome</i>	Moral system endorsed, through the sacrifice of the whistleblower	Salvation of the whistleblower leads him into the arms of Capitalism	Whistleblower forces system into superficial change but at cost of social annihilation	System of power held in the hands of privilege rolls on; defeat of whistleblower	System forced into minor change; whistleblower finds personal salvation but at cost of social annihilation .

Table 8: Comparison of key conceptual categories between films: men as whistleblowers

The nature of the wrongdoing and the basis on which the gangs were formed had a synergy and varied between contexts. Mr Smith and Snowden began with an innocent attachment to the values and rules of the system, of which they were disabused by events, and which led to a shift in attachment to their institution. Mr Smith learns to use the rules to gain a voice, while Snowden finds his voice through insisting on his Foucaultian autonomous freedom (Milchman & Rosenberg, 2010). Those disparate pathways reflect a significant change in the discourse of power between decades. The cynical whistleblower in *Rumpole* represents an intermediate case, perhaps reflecting the turbulent and transitional nature of the political and social context at the time.

The representation of the role of the Press has evolved, arguably in step with the loss of faith in traditional institutionalized means of holding power to account. While in *Mr Smith* and *Rumpole*, the Press is portrayed as collusive and amoral, in *Snowden* they become heroic guardians of truth.

8.5.2. Additional films featuring male whistleblowers

I analysed two further films featuring whistleblowing men. Detailed accounts of the narrative of each film can be found in Appendix 8.

8.5.2.1. On the Waterfront (released 1954)

8.5.2.1i. Historical context

The trade union ran a closed shop which controlled the hiring of labour on docks in the US. In the Cold War era hostility to unions mounted because they were associated in the public mind with communism. The dockers' ('longshoremen') union had a reputation for wide-scale bribery in operating a closed-shop. These politically motivated rumours may not have been justified, (Critchley, 2003) but stoked 'red scare' fears.

Kazan the film's director, to save his career, informed on colleagues to the House Un-American Activities Committee ('HUAC'), which was investigating alleged communist influence in the film industry. *On the Waterfront* was made subsequently, apparently to vindicate the morality of his anti-communist stance, as the film implies that Union power equates with mindless subjection to mob rule. Allegedly his favourite scene was when Terry, watched by the dockers, confronts the mob boss and repudiates the boss's charge that he was ratting on his friends – he says 'I was ratting on myself'

8.5.2.1ii. Plot

A dockworker (acted by Marlon Brando) had been an up-and-coming boxer until he was bribed to throw a fight. When two longshoremen are murdered to stop them testifying about mob control of the Union and the waterfront, Terry is persuaded to testify himself by a priest and a girl he falls in love with. When his brother is murdered as retribution he fights the mob boss. Although he is physically defeated, he wins a moral victory as the other longshoremen rebel *en masse* against the mob's control. Terry leads them towards the capitalist boss in the final scene

8.5.2.1iii. Contemporary reactions to the film

The film was a great box office and critical success, lauded for its naturalism, great acting and cathartic narrative.

However, Kazan's testimony to the HUAC, continued to be held against him, and to some extent this film (Barthes, 1972). The narrative invites the audience to associate Kazan's own whistleblowing to the HUAC with Brando's heroic, Christ-like *parrhesia*. When Kazan was awarded a life-time achievement Oscar in 1999 the audience refused to applaud.

8.5.2.1iv. Analysis

Terry begins with the persona of a 'bum' who uneasily colludes with the corrupt 'gang'. He implies verbally and non-verbally, that he is good-for-nothing and that he may as well go along with the wrongdoing as he has nothing inside himself to offer as an alternative. However, a pivotal scene shows him tenderly caring for his loft full

of pigeons, which are later murdered as retaliation for his 'stool-pigeon' actions. His growing attachment to the girl and through her to the priest, plus his horror at the murders, enable him to move from abject and corrupt dependency to *parrhesia*. He finds his voice, at first in court and then as he confronts the mob-gang. Guilt, love and the drive to make reparation give him the courage to challenge the gang and step away from the many discursive pressures which have hailed him to act as a craven follower. A tipping point in this process was his refusal to continue to turn a blind eye to his brother's exploitation of his boxing career.

The audience are encouraged to identify with Terry by the powerfully charismatic performance of Brando. The drama is played out as a battle for his soul between the morally good individualism of the Priest and the girl and the corruption of the collective gang – not only the Union-mob but also the neighbourhood who collude in their subjection out of fear of destitution. Kazan was pre-occupied throughout his life by being positioned as a child of Turkish-Greek immigrants, a perpetual outsider, longing to belong and struggling to free himself from inherited attitudes (Carlet, 2010). The girl is represented as a deracinated outsider – she was sent out of the neighbourhood to be educated – who therefore can be a catalyst to provoke Terry into independence of mind.

Barthes (1972) read off a different ideology from the narrative however. He noted how the state, in the shape of the legal system was constructed as a haven against exploitation and corruption. And in the heavily mythologised final scene, Terry, by this time constructed as a crucified, Christ-like figure, leads the workers away from the power of the Union, one source of corrupt control, into the arms of the capitalist boss thus justifying and naturalising the subordination of workers to owners.

8.5.2.2. *Serpico* (released 1973)

8.5.2.2i. Historical context

The film portrays wide-spread corruption in the New York police and complaisance and inertia in senior politicians and administrators about the corruption. *Serpico's*

passionate letter to the Village Voice (Serpico, 1975) argues for the realism of the portrait and the continuing indifference to the situation among the police and wider public. The film was released as the Senate investigated the Watergate scandal but allowed Nixon to go unpunished. Serpico points out that the police could legitimately protest about unfairness if they, the little men, are punished for corruption in public life while Nixon's impunity undermined faith in the US justice system.

8.5.2.2ii. Plot

This is a dramatized account of actual events leading up to Serpico, (acted by Al Pacino) a New York City cop, blowing the whistle on police corruption and testifying to the Knapp Commission. He refuses to take bribes, unlike most of his colleagues. His efforts to raise concerns with superiors have no effect. Eventually he takes the story to the New York Times, which prompts the Commission to investigate but, the film implies his whistleblowing also leads to him being abandoned to be shot in a drug arrest. After recovering he resigns from the police and moves to Europe.

8.5.2.2iii. Contemporary reactions to the film

It had been difficult to produce the film because there was a reluctance to show images of police corruption. However, it was a critical and commercial success, particularly because of Pacino's compelling performance and because it was thought to touch a cultural nerve. Apparently in Europe it was less successful because European audiences thought the level of corruption was implausible, while American audiences accepted its realism. Some police were angered by its suggestion that Serpico was the only honest cop in the force, while the more honest factions in the police were concerned that such a devastating story of martyrdom would discourage others from coming forward. Surprisingly the Village Voice, (Sarris, 1973) the mouthpiece of alternative culture at the time, was also critical of the film's '*special pleading for an alternative lifestyle*' and described the portrayal of Serpico as a '*facile figure of the counter-culture at war with the sell-out middle class*'. The review sneers at how he yearns to be free, calling him Diogenes – interestingly Foucault's first example of a *parrhesiastes*.

8.5.2.2iv. Analysis

The film casts him as an increasingly deviant and isolated outsider, moving away from the interpellation of his cultural and professional norms. The values learnt within his family were in conflict with the norms he was hailed by in his new profession. The real Serpico published a bitter letter in response to the negative review in the Voice. In the letter he describes the naturalization of corruption vividly:

*“you become exposed to a certain way of life and you start doing things that way and after a while you start thinking that’s the right way to do it”
(Serpico, 1975).*

This experience is enacted in early scenes. But as he risks everything to fulfil his duty to criticize it is made very clear that he is punished for his *parrhesia*: he loses companionship, intimacy and very nearly loses his life. He is shown constructing an ethical identity for himself while his context renders him a non-person. His bitterness at the end of the film as he rejects the police identity he had craved is palpable. In his letter he is angrily critical of the classic ‘American epic’ which dupes its audience into believing that good triumphs:

“...everyone has swallowed this crap – we haven’t been saved from anything...the villain is not destroyed...there isn’t any man on a white horse”.



By implication he therefore shares Horkheimer and Adorno’s view (2002). that film pacifies and stultifies an audience, persuading them to conform to dominant ideology and finds the film of his life is no exception.

8.5.3. Films featuring women whistleblowers

I analysed three films featuring whistleblowing women, all dramatizations of true stories. Detailed accounts of the narrative of each film can be found in Appendix 8

Table 9 represents the similarities and differences between these films mapped along the same axes as the analysis of the films featuring men as whistleblowers.

Table 9: Comparison of key conceptual categories between films: Women as whistleblowers

Conceptual Category	<i>Silkwood (1983)</i>	<i>The Whistleblower (2010)</i>	<i>Official Secrets (2019)</i>
<i>Political context for the film</i>	Decline of nuclear industry & trade union power	Questioning of the value of peacekeeping; challenges to UN unaccountability;	Populism dismissive of government accountable to its electorate
<i>Nature of the wrong-doing</i>	Selfish gain	Making power unaccountable	Hegemonic control
<i>Characteristics of the 'gang'</i>	Corrupt capitalists	Brutal misogyny	Machinery of the State gone rogue
<i>Innocence of the whistleblower</i>	Innocence lost	No change	Innocence lost
<i>Insider/outsider status of the whistleblower</i>	Insider  Outsider	Remains outsider	Insider  Outsider
<i>Character of the Press</i>	Helpful but exploitative	Neutral	Heroic guardians of the truth, challenging hegemonic power
<i>Outcome</i>	Minor changes to safety procedures and accountability; death and destruction of whistleblower's reputation	Power remains in the hands of privilege; whistleblower socially excluded	System forced into minor concession; whistleblower 'rescued' but subsequent social exclusion.

8.5.3.1. *Silkwood (released 1983)*

8.5.3.1i. Historical context

By the late 1970s the nuclear industry in the US was in decline for a complex set of reasons, including escalating safety regulations and demand for the industry to be more publicly accountable. No new nuclear reactors had been built since 1978.

Political opposition to the nuclear industry was also mounting (Del Sesto, 1979).

Women's participation in the union movement, previously rare, began to rise in the 1970's at the same time that political and legal pressures mounted to limit union power.

The actual Karen Silkwood became a union activist, raising concerns about plant safety. She died in 1974. Her family successfully sued the company because of the high levels of radiation found in her body after death.

8.5.3.1ii. Plot

The film is based on a true story. In *Silkwood* the eponymous heroine works at a plutonium processing plant in the US. When she begins to raise concerns about the effects of radiation on workers in the plant, she is purposefully contaminated, psychologically harassed and ostracised by her community. When she testifies to the Atomic Energy Commission and then takes her concerns to investigative journalists there is a suggestion that she is murdered to prevent her from exposing worker safety violations.

8.5.3.1iii. Contemporary reactions to the film

This film was a box office success, possibly because it was framed as a political thriller, the events are narrated to create considerable suspense and actors were major stars. The audience is invited to anticipate that Karen's activism places her in jeopardy.

Critics also approved of the film. However, more than one praised it for not getting overly involved with the political issues, but remaining with the human drama. One critic (Ebert, 1983) in summing up the dramatic trajectory of Karen's narrative unwittingly identifies her as a *parrhesiastes*.

"the movie is the story of how she begins to stand out, how she becomes an individual, thinks for herself and is punished for her freedom.....[she] made those people mad simply because she told the truth as she saw it and did what she thought was right".

8.5.3.1iv. Analysis

The film is a relatively early representation of an independent woman challenging the system, but, Karen is presented from the opening scenes as a morally ambiguous and marginal figure, who is failing in her maternal role and is at odds with small-town American ideals. Although initially she is well integrated with her workmates and has no emotional attachment to her work, witnessing the assaults on the well-being of friends awakens a more thoughtful awareness which in turn begins the process of making her an outsider in the system. She tries to find allies in the trade union but finds their involvement in her case is driven by self-interest. Eventually she accepts support from journalists, but they are represented somewhat ambiguously as pursuing a sensational story rather than concerned for its victims (the actual events of the film took place about two years after the Watergate exposé). Her boyfriend forces her to choose between their relationship and her activism. As she is further alienated from her community she becomes increasingly contaminated by radiation. Metaphorically, there is a suggestion that this internal contamination may also be her political awakening and activism for which she is duly punished. The contemporary reviewer quoted above captures how closely the film represents Karen as a *parrhesiastes*.

8.5.3.2. *The Whistleblower* (released 2010)

8.5.3.2i. Historical context

The most recent war in the Balkans ended in 1995. In its three-year duration there were many atrocities committed, including the mass rape of tens of thousands of women. A fragile peace was then maintained by NATO and UN peacekeeping forces. A report by Amnesty International in 2004 reported that those forces were responsible for the rapid growth of sexual slavery in Kosovo and Bosnia and the UN acknowledged that “*peacekeepers have come to be seen as part of the problem in trafficking rather than the solution*” (Traynor, 2004). However, these devastating admissions must be set against a more general questioning of the function of peacekeeping. From the beginning of this century the UN acknowledge that their

resources have been overstretched and need to focus more on developing viable transition strategies.

Finally, the UN has repeatedly been taken to task for its lack of accountability. People in its employ have diplomatic immunity and unfair and retaliatory employment practices cannot be challenged.

The actual events shown in the film took place in the late 90's and early 2002s, but the film was made and released several years later, because it was hard to obtain funding. On its release in 2010 the UN Secretary General was obliged to arrange a screening and pledge action. However, the sexual trafficking and exploitation of women world-wide, reported as 2 million in the film, has now doubled to 4.8 million in 2020. The firm of contractors which employed Bolkovac and the main perpetrators dropped their appeal against Bolkovac's claim in 2003, because they had been awarded a US State Department contract to police Iraq. (Vulliamy, 2012)

8.5.3.2ii. The plot

The Whistleblower is a dramatized account of the actual experiences of Kathryn Bolkovac, a Nebraska cop who worked with the peacekeeping force in post-war Bosnia and blew the whistle on the UN for covering up a sex trafficking scandal. She won compensation for her unfair dismissal because her whistleblowing was judged to be a protected disclosure.

8.5.3.2iii. Contemporary reactions to the film

Critics panned the film for a 'literal-minded' approach to the material and violence they considered 'exploitative' and suggested the depiction of violence would simply shock fans into numbness claiming the brutality shown was gratuitous. However, the filmmaker said, "*it was a day at the beach compared to what happened in real life*" and Bolkovac said the violence was toned down to secure an audience. It was also accused of giving a one-dimensional portrayal of the perpetrators, omitting to explain the "*erosion of morality that led to this point*".

8.5.3.2iv. Analysis

The film could be considered part of the Nordic noir genre. The suspense is intense, enhanced by documentary style hand-held cameras and the deep gloom and bleak settings of crime scenes outside UN premises. This parallel works to direct viewers' attention, even if unconsciously, to the tension between the apparently law-abiding light-filled surface of the peacekeeping mission and the murder, misogyny and rape, concealed beneath that surface, while also conveying the veracity of what is depicted. The horror of the crimes perpetrated, the collusion of peacekeeping personnel and complacency of the system are slowly revealed.

It is very much a film dominated by women, it was directed by a woman, has a female hero, exclusively female victims and a key powerful rescuing figure in the UN hierarchy is also female. However, Kathryn enters a masculine world, hard-drinking and sexist. She has to be tough to negotiate this world. She is presented as impressive but, unlike the women in the other two films analysed here, as masculinized. This plausibly empowers her to survive in such a hypermasculine world. She is always dressed in androgenous uniform and is shown attempting to push men around, physically and psychologically. She is accused of being married to her job and not being the maternal type.

It is striking that critics were repelled by the violence and wanted to find an explanation for the corruption of the men involved. The film treats the brutality of the men portrayed and the moral failings of the UN mercilessly, which seems to have been unbearable to witness, inducing a 'collective myopia' (Mannion et al, 2018).

8.5.3.3. *Official Secrets (released 2019)*

8.5.3.3i. Historical context

The film portrays events which happened sixteen years previously. However, in recapitulating those past events, the film is speaking to issues which were current in 2019 and remain so. Gun commented in an interview on the release of the film, that she wants people to see "that accountability is key". The film shows how the activity

of one institution of state, GCHQ, was undermining institutions of representative government, parliament and the judiciary. It has been argued (Bright, 2019) that the events of 2003 foreshadowed the rise of populist politics which in 2019 was sidelining such institutions and was dismissive of accountability. On the other hand, the film was made after the leaks by Snowden and Assange, so that public attitudes to such 'underdog heroes' trying to speak truth to power has become more informed and more ambivalent (Bradshaw, 2019).

8.5.3.3ii. Plot

Official Secrets is the story of a British whistleblower, Katharine Gun, employed as a translator in GCHQ, who leaked information to the press about an illegal NSA spy operation designed to push the UN Security Council into sanctioning the US-UK 2003 invasion of Iraq. Her hope that her leak would prevent that invasion was misplaced as the war started within weeks of the publication of the incriminating email. She was charged with a breach of the Official Secrets Act, but the charges were dropped at the start of the trial. The film makes clear that this was designed to prevent the legality of the invasion being tested in court.

8.5.3.3iii. Contemporary reactions to the film

Critics attacked it for being dull and simplistic: one commented that it was "spatchcocked by earnestness" and another that it was "hard to make a drama out of a girl photocopying an email". The filmmakers acknowledged that they strove for accuracy above dramatic tension. However, other commentators (Husseini, 2019) reflected that these reactions show that audiences were unable to recognise the contemporary relevance of the events portrayed because of the consensus that the Iraq war was bad and that the public were misled, as if those were problems which could not recur.

8.5.3.3iv. Analysis

Katharine's ordinariness, hesitancy and vulnerability is emphasised from the start – despite the choice of a high profile and glamorous star to play her. It is striking that Daniel Ellsberg hailed her actions as "the most important and courageous leak I have

ever seen” because of the great personal risk she took in order to tell the truth. Her ordinariness serves to highlight the *parrhesiastic* courage with which she spoke out. The way that her story is (un-)dramatized in the film suggests that the intention was to communicate Katharine’s own emphasis on accountability and the need for each of us to “*think very hard where your responsibility lies*” (Adams, 2019). Although there is little effort to explore what led her to take such a remarkable step, the film does hint at how she might have a valency for independence of thought and action, showing her willingness to position herself outside prevalent discourse, by her diligence, her childhood spent outside the UK and her marriage to someone of such marginal status.

However, the heroic roles in the film’s narrative are given to the (male) journalists and lawyer. The journalists are vivid figures, funny, exciting, cynical but lovable rogues, shown taking risks with their careers, while the (male) lawyer in the final scene owns the role of the one who is seen directly speaking truth to power as he censures the Director of Public Prosecutions for moral cowardice.

8.5.3.4. Conclusion: women whistleblowers as unsung heroes

In all three films the ordinariness of the whistleblowing women is emphasised: they are ordinary people who do extra-ordinary things – not a theme marked in the male films where the exceptionalness of the central figures is highlighted from the start.

The women are represented as at least to some extent marginalised, having either outright failed in traditional roles as wives and mothers, (*Silkwood, The Whistleblower*) or as married to someone who is themselves marginalised – Katharine Gun is advised by her lawyers that her husband is best kept out of the public gaze since he is an asylum seeker. These aberrations of traditional roles are plot levers and offered as an important trigger to their whistleblowing activities, as they are increasingly marginalised. They emerge into ethico-political subjects only after they have shaken off the pull towards settled domesticity

They are guided, facilitated or rescued by men who enable their whistleblowing. Perhaps the most emphatic example of this is in *Official Secrets*, where the film ends with the male lawyer occupying the position of right triumphing over might, as he faces down the DPP.

The women all meet a sticky end as they are seen to be annihilated either physically (*Silkwood*, and similarly in the *Constant Gardener (2005)*, a fictional representation of a female whistleblower) or socially (*The Whistleblower*; *Official Secrets*).

They are powerless to create effective change : *Silkwood* was destroyed, and her evidence with her; the UN staff who colluded in the sex trafficking in Bosnia and Kosovo went unpunished and the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women has doubled from two million cases quoted in the film to an estimated 4.8 million in 2020; Katharine Gun did not stop the Iraq War – and indeed Snowden’s leaks showed how NSA continued to operate using similar tactics outside the law in 2013.

It is argued that films which feature a woman as the main character are less available as fantasy. In these three films the *ordinary* is not impersonated as the glamorous and so they do little to engage their audience to identify positively with the main characters and consequently internalize new ego-ideals. Even if we are now offered more images of powerful and self-determining women, Mulvey comments that still these images are inclined to define women as ‘not men’ and that successful alternatives to a doomed identification with a phallic and narcissistic version of masculinity are hard to find (Mulvey, 2009, p. 18), a pattern to which these three films do approximately conform.

8.5.4. Conclusion

These films do titillate their audience with the excitement of the heroic figure fighting corruption. The heroic disobedience (Fromm, 1981) of the whistleblower invites identification with an ego-ideal who nobly imagines change and using their

fearless speech, risks all to defeat the old order and bring in the new. But alongside the titillation is a warning – that the whistleblower risks annihilation. That comes in several guises – physical, social or, arguably in the case of Terry on the waterfront, moral. Each of the heroes render themselves abject, unrecognisable subjects within the dominant discourse. The narrative depicts the *parrhesiastic* journey towards the discovery of an authentic and personal truth, which connects them to their ethical self. Although sometimes it is dealt with cursorily the depiction has the mythic qualities which Westerns use (Wright, 1977) to emphasise the heroic quality of the struggle between good and evil. However, the annihilation to which each is subject leaves them as abject subjects. There is little or no reassuring change for the better. The powerful system survives virtually unchanged. This theme, which was discovered in my initial close analysis recurred consistently through the decades and between genders, although the whistleblowers in the two films from the most recent decade were shown as risking only social marginalization without threat to their physical well-being.

Each whistleblower is shown in opening sequences as at least compliant, if not entirely passionately attached, to their role in the system to which they belong. As they begin as conformists but assume a charismatic and self-determining identity, the audience is encouraged to identify with their fate. Ultimately the narratives deter dissent.

Despite the uniformity of plot structure, the nature of the corruption and how they find a voice enact contemporary concerns. The trend towards identifying the Press as our contemporary 'knights on a white horse', an epic trope dismissed by Serpico as a cynical deceit, is continued in the most recent film. It seems that we need them to call power to account as the machinery of representative government suffers from deafness or myopia (Mannion et al, 2018) and the individual voice of the whistleblower is shown as easily silenced.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

In this chapter I shall draw together the findings from both analyses I applied to the data. Firstly, I shall summarise findings about the narrative pathway which emerged from the first grounded theory analysis. Then I shall summarise findings which emerged from the re-analysis of the data in line with domains of experience which compose the Transforming Experience Framework ('TEF' henceforth). I shall summarise my findings about the experience of receiving the narratives and then address each domain in turn. I shall link those findings where appropriate to the results of the study of films featuring whistleblowers set out in Chapter 8. I locate the findings in relevant literature throughout.

9.1. The narrative pathway

In this section I shall summarise the findings which contributed to the development of the model shown in Figures 3 and 4

Initially the wealth of data I obtained from the interviews and from the first iteration of the coding process felt formless and overwhelming. However, by trying out different clusterings of the composite categories derived from the coding process, the analytic model shown in Figures 3 and 4 emerged. As the connecting arrows show, most of the relationships between the more abstract elements in the model were reciprocal. Participants described continually retracing experiences in their journey towards speaking out or remaining silent.

The first distinction that emerged from the constant re-clustering was that some of the composite categories represented temporal stages, while the majority described cognitive and emotional processes. Those process categories were grouped into still more abstracted categories to capture the whole experience of being constructed as a whistleblower or bystander and of constructing organizational behaviour as wrongdoing. Those higher order abstract concepts reflected theoretical constructs in

the extant literature. What follows is an account of the key feature of each main category or abstracted construct.

9.1.1. Whistleblowers' narratives

9.1.1.1. Stages

Participants invested energy in compiling evidence. While it was part of their sense-making process, they experienced the organization as generally indifferent to their findings. A period of liminal space was freeing for whistleblowers, associated with discovering a sense of agency and loosening their passionate attachment to the organization. Tipping points usually involved a transgression of some rule essential to them about how to live well. The transgression did not arise out of a voluntary choice and pushed them towards taking an ethical stand that had more to do with being than doing. Eventually finding a voice was a slow, often painful process, full of setbacks.

9.1.1.2. Processes

Passionate attachments to the idea of their organization and the drive to join and belong formed part of their identity. Their commitment to task, not necessarily the same task as the organization was committed to, varied over time. Several made efforts to nuance the conflict of interests and values as they became more evident. Being let down fractured trust. Dissent emerged as trust was lost and identification withdrawn.

The categories defining the 'policing' concept express how compliance was maintained by the organization, to preserve and protect its integrity and coherent identity. Allegiance to an alternative, commonly professional, discourse, with a different set of norms aided participants in resisting the interpellation and formulating their dissent.

Crafting an idea of an ethical self involved a process of gradual detachment from the organization's dominant discourse and discovery of attachment to a new *parrhesiastic* identity.

9.1.2. Bystanders

Although they shared most of the stages and processes with the whistleblowers, the meaning of the individual categories for the small group of bystanders interviewed showed some significant differences

9.1.2.1. Stages

Accumulated facts were used to support avoidance. Liminal space was used for respite rather than transformation. Tipping points cued adjustments of personal priorities and distancing from the controversy, which processes therefore sustained their loyalty to their primary task. They both observed the absence or malfunction of structures which might have ensured accountability. But neither felt a sense of duty to risk their own well-being in speaking out. They exemplified Ceva and Bocchiola's (2019) imperfect but flexible case: having appraised the likely consequences of raising concerns, the balance in these non-ideal circumstances did not impose on them a moral duty to act.

9.1.2.2. Processes

Puzzlement, which whistleblowers also experienced, was used as a defence against a push towards dissent. Their sense-making persuaded them that they were not called on to take action. Neither explored their earlier history during the interview, leading me to hypothesise that the events comprising the whistleblowing were not embedded in their narrative of their auto-biography. Their reflections about the ethical status of what they observed were largely consequentialist, focusing on rules and actions without seeming to register whether the events called into question the virtue of their identity.

They were predisposed to remain within the domain of the sayable and had no interest in developing a *parrhesiastic* identity. One mechanism supporting that was their attachment to task rather than their organization, which they perceived as being in conflict with task, but legitimated by cultural norms. In this way they could support their detachment with a 'boarding-house' state of mind (Stokes, 2015) and operate like Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucrats. They perceived that they could have little impact on what happened in the organization, for good or ill, because of their low status in the food-chain.

They observed a sealing-over process which locked the wrongdoing into the organization's system. Their affirmatory stance on the dominant discourse entailed that they would, at least for the moment, play no part in changing that discourse.

9.2 The Transforming Experience Framework

9.2.1. The 'lived life' compared to the life as told story

*"we may propose that things happen, but that things always happen,
mediated by phantasy to a greater or lesser extent"*

(Cooper & Lousada, 2005, p.136)

In compiling the 'lived life' for each case I stripped out, as far as possible, the personal meaning and emotion from participants' accounts, aiming to reduce their account to an objective sequence of events, such as any external dispassionate observer could have provided (Wengraf, 2001). The resulting sequence of events plus the information provided under 'Context' taken together produce the only available evidence about 'the real' which my research method could provide. In the critical realist and constructivist epistemology which I have used events are accepted as determinate, while their narrative structure – "who's been doing what to whom" (Cooper & Lousada, 2005) is indeterminate. Capturing objectifiable features of the sequence of events provided a context for the subjectively told narrative, without which the emotional significance of the events described would have been hard to

ground. Wengraf argues that without the objectified account, the analysis cannot get beyond a naive recycling of the story as told (Wengraf, 2000).

Narrative structure generally has a chronology, a beginning, middle and end. The beginning sets out a dilemma concerning 'trouble' (Bruner, 2004) arising from a breach of cultural legitimacy, the middle contains the journey through the conflict caused and the end describes the resolution, when either a new order is ushered in or the status quo is re-established. A plot is constructed when events are represented as causally connected (Alford, 2007). Crossley (2000) argues that individuals are driven to reconfigure their narratives to gain a sense of order, meaningfulness, and coherent identity to manage the emotional impact of traumatic experiences. Part of that coherence is obtained from (re-)gaining a sense of moral agency and relationship to the self which allows discovery of a virtuous existence (Levy, 2004; Weaver, 2006). The events which comprised the whistleblowers' narratives were certainly traumatic enough to prompt such a reconfiguration. The sequencing of events through time and the causal relationship between events together construct meaning and restore ontological security (Alford, 2007). When identity is at risk, narration constructs a version of a life ready for public consumption (Froggett & Chamberlayne, 2004). These processes were evident in the participants' narratives.

Although the first part of the BNIM interview process was intended to elicit the bare bones of participants' narratives, most participants told their stories suffused with feeling from the start, mixing accounts of events with explanation, conjecture and descriptions of their emotional responses. Listening to their stories I sensed that the structure of the narrative was already established. As Crossley argues (2000), I was witnessing participants' efforts to impose structure on their flow of experience. Following the BNIM structure, returning to selected incidents to obtain PINs – narratives with greater emotional depth - in SS2, the second part of the interview, often felt like going over ground already covered. Commonly participants introduced an incident and then spontaneously described it in vivid and emotional detail and made temporal and causal connections with other events. Some

participants acknowledged that they had told the story many times informally, or formally in the course of investigations or litigation, while others reflected that this was the first time they had put the whole sequence of events together. However, there was no consistent difference between how these different participants organised their narratives. Only one participant, Trevor, provided an apparently unemotional account in the first part of the interview but by the final stages of the story he too seemed fully emotionally engaged with the telling. It seems likely therefore that the participants in this study were emotionally primed to produce coherent narratives which contained orderly sequences of causally related events because their traumatic experiences had posed a risk to their identities. Despite very limited interventions on my part, several participants spontaneously remarked that they had found the process of telling their story cathartic. In this, albeit limited, way the interview was both provocative (Pangrazio, 2017) and transformative (Cooper et al, 2019).

The narrative arc of the whistleblowers' stories had a common form, which was the drama of the emergence of the *parrhesiastic* subject, although the content of the stories was highly variable and contained many iterative loops. The common form in the stories was this:

- ⇒ a person-in-role, through en-actments and in-actments, faces a dilemma about practices in their employing organization which breach the teller's sense of cultural legitimacy.
- ⇒ the teller gradually discovers an individual, agentic 'self' and differentiates that self from their given role, empowering acts of parrhesia.
- ⇒ Their efforts to address the breach of cultural legitimacy, using fearless speech, cause conflict and in many cases, retaliation.
- ⇒ the resolution or dénouement registers the transformation (or lack of) in both the teller and their organization.

There was a striking similarity in the form of their stories, including their discovery of their own agency, which roughly corresponded to believing that their own intentions, as drivers to action, created the possibility of freedom from 'trouble'. This narrative form echoed closely the narratives in those whistleblowing films I analysed which dated from the 1970's onwards. Bruner (2004) argues that stories are drawn from canonical forms. Currently this form reflects a dominant individualistic discourse which locates responsibility firmly within a constructed, separate individual. That earlier films (*Mr Smith, On the Waterfront*) and one made at a time of particular turmoil and social change (*Rumpole*) require the hero to internalise and conform to the rules of the hegemony highlights the culturally specific and discursive nature of the form of these narratives. Our current culturally recognisable form for such narratives is perspectival and privileges the drama of the autonomous individual, while covertly acknowledging how that individual is trapped within political structures (*Snowden, Official Secrets*).

The narrative arc of the bystanders' stories contained the first step, recognition of a dilemma, but was then concerned with how the teller accommodated to that breach of legitimacy, including a conscious recognition and acceptance of their lack of agency in their circumstances. They demonstrated the utilitarian calculus which Ceva and Bocchiola (2020) acknowledge occurs in most non-ideal circumstances and absolve the actors from failing a moral duty. The dénouement in their stories involved acquiescence without transformation.

While the interviews were taking place, I frequently felt bewildered and as if I were literally losing the plot but was then surprised by the coherence of the text when I studied the transcripts. The sense I have made of this experience is that I resonated to the emotion of the told story, which was very apparent in the room during the interview, but which was then 'smoothed out' in the transcribed text. Methodologically it is concerning that the text then became much more something which belonged to me rather than the teller (Alford, 2001).

I felt drawn to believe the accounts I heard, leading me to feel indignant with and to demonize the organizations. Sims (2005) argues that this is a commonly occurring feature of constructing a coherent self-narrative for people faced with others' problem behaviour. Another way of thinking about this experience is that I was internalizing participants' projections. I noticed that in some cases I felt less tolerant of the organizations described than the participant, which suggests that what I had introjected were split off parts of the organization-as-object, which the participant was struggling to preserve as a good object.

However, I think that at times I also lost my hold on constructivist epistemology and was confusing belief and objective truth. Bruner wisely remarks that 'a rousing tale of a life is not necessarily a right account' (Bruner, 2004, p 694). Conducting the paired reflexive exercise described in Section 4.6 reset my epistemological stance, enabling me to take up a more nuanced perspective on the organizations and refocus on process, recognising that my research is intended to be more 'revelatory' than interpretive (Cooper & Lousada, 2005, p 143). The study design could yield only limited independently verifiable data, so that developing alternative constructions about the organizations described by the participants was neither feasible nor valid

9.2.2. Context.

"The instituted community blocks personal curiosity, organizes public memory and heroically imposes certainty on uncertainty"

(Mary Douglas, 1986, p.102)

The context defined by Long, as part of the TEF, is "*the environment within which a social system occurs*" (Long, 2016, p. 9). For the purposes of understanding organizational dynamics, a system's environment is composed of historically locatable structures which constitute physical, political, economic and social relationships. Discourses of knowledge and practice constitute and are constituted by members of a society occupying a specific environment. Thus an important feature of context is the "*naturalization of its own arbitrariness*" (Bourdieu 1977,

p.164), whereby cultural norms are constructed as common sense, and resistance becomes so much harder to articulate because unconscious processes are involved.

Currently the world order is a 'market civilization' (Gill, 2003) characterised by globalized regimes of accumulation and marketization which reinforce the power of transnational capital. These structures provide the context for ideologies of neo-liberalism and individualism to flourish. Globalized neo-liberalism has undermined governance practices which previously policed justice or equality of opportunity, replacing them with populist politics and the logic of maximizing the circulation of commodities in the free market. Knafo and Lo Bosco (2017) argue that these factors also facilitate a culture of perversion.

Public accountability may be defined as an essential moral duty (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019) but previously requisite structures created work environments within which staff could trust each other to work together, use their capabilities to satisfy themselves and enable the organization to succeed (Jaques, 1989). Power structures which would have provided containment in a previous era no longer have the required potency. Also, such structures, in a networked and globalized world are more likely to impede the agility of the organization to respond to market forces. The challenge and excitement of creating novel systems may require the defeat of outmoded rules and structures. However, becoming self-authorising is dangerously seductive, particularly in the face of success. It makes possible the corrupt uses of power (Ludwig & Longenecker, 1993) and the fetishization of boundaries at the cost of losing sight of the value and purpose of the enterprise (Hirschhorn, 2018).

Each of my participants occupied a context where globalization and marketization were issues. Those factors created a framework in which corruption of values and contestation of task became possible. Similarly, in this context the legitimacy of requisite structures was undermined. (Jaques, 1989) Participants and their colleagues were left with fewer systemic protections against exploitation and inadequate governance. Arguably in such contexts, responsibility for dissent and

resistance is necessarily located in individuals whose 'care for the self' enables them to take up *parrhesia*.

Each whistleblowing participant in this study moved through a series of stages towards a *parrhesiastic* identity. At some risk to themselves they employed exceptional measures to draw attention to wrongdoing in the hope that the wrongdoing would be corrected. Avoidance of harm and complicity motivated each of them, so, in combination with their personal risk, their actions took them beyond the ordinary duty to ensure their organization's well-being and into the justification of last resort or '*extrema ratio*' (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2020). However, their accounts are laden with the search for a relationship with a virtuous self, concerned more with being than doing (Levy, 2004).

The contexts for both Lia and Jeremy were apparently highly conservative, and hierarchies of power and authority were rigidly enforced. However, the challenge of the 'market civilization' was still active in their narratives. In Lia's case the firm had hired her to bring about change as the code of *omertà* was no longer able to ensure a loyal workforce in a competitive market and the code had led to stagnation rather than security. In Jeremy's case the absolute rulers of the Gulf State were actually functioning, as Tim neatly expressed it, as '*Gulf-state plc*' in a highly competitive and globalized market. Arbitrarily imposed structures did not create trust or efficiency.

The context for the analysed films played a significant role in whether and when the film could be produced, in the response of the critics and public and in defining the course of the narrative. Both Mr Smith and Terry in *On the Waterfront* are (re)-incorporated into dominant hegemonic power structures which their whistleblowing supports. The more recent films, from *Serpico* onwards question whether counter-cultural *parrhesia* by a lone individual has the capacity to be transformative.

9.2.3. System

“Working culture in a workplace eats policy for breakfast”

(Lee Jasper, University of Greenwich, 17 Sept 2016)

9.2.3.1. Primary task

The seductively simple definition of primary task as the work which needs to get done to justify the organization’s survival fails to acknowledge that there is usually little consensus within organizations about the exact nature of the primary task (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Hoggett, 2006; Hyde, 2016). Armstrong and Rustin (2015) warn that the task is not a context-free phenomenon nor a given but is contested and constructed. Lawrence’s (1985) distinction between normative, existential and phenomenal levels of definition of task helpfully describes the weapons with which the contest is fought but does not explain the dynamics of contestation. Kenny (2019, p.46) argues that it is a fantasy that there are particular fixed versions of normative ideals and that as they are repeatedly performed, they are subject to subtle alterations and contingencies. However, the prevalent discourse might represent the ideal as immutable. My analysis of participants’ experiences indicated that the primary task was contested in every case, and that corruption had taken over one version of the task. However, the details of what was contested and whether or not the contest erupted into whistleblowing varied greatly.

Disputes about the nature of the task may arise when there are changes in the context in which the system operates to which it must adapt to survive, and which may in turn lead to variable definitions about what is the common good (Hoggett, 2006). My analysis indicated that the market civilization, the context in which the events described took place, constructed the dominant primary task of the organization, against which my participants struggled to keep their commitment to their version of the primary task alive.

An organization may need to make choices about what it should focus on and there may be considerable ambivalence about the choices. Those who hold power to determine the strategic direction of the organization may have competing ideas

about that direction. Even while excitedly pursuing new ideas or success, they may also mourn the loss of the abandoned or submerged task. coming perversely to idealise or fetishize the new and attack the old (Hirschhorn, 1999; 2018; Kenny, 2019, p. 42; Stein, 2021a). Management and workers may have competing ideas about the task. Communication which does not flow freely between levels of authority, opens up the possibility of splits and projections, idealization and blame (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Krantz & Gilmore, 1990). Hoggett (2006) argues that containing the ambivalence in the system, about welfare work in particular, is part of the emotional labour of front-line staff. However, contestation does not necessarily lead to corruption. Fotaki & Hyde (2014) describe how organizations develop blind spots and escalate commitment to a doomed strategy. That behaviour may be dysfunctional, not in the best interests of the organization or its customers, but it does not necessarily lead to perverse or corrupt behaviour without the presence of the additional features outlined in Long's analysis of perverse organizations. Perversion creeps in when workers are dehumanized, excitement and seduction creates a pseudo-vitality (Long, 2008) and/or what was good becomes an object of hatred and attack while something bad is promoted and fetishized (Stein, 2021a; 2021b)

The whistleblowers in my study, with Trevor as one possible exception, were passionately attached to their idea of the primary task of the domain or organization they worked for. As they became more aware of how their interests and values conflicted with their employer's idea of primary task, and were subjected to disciplinary policing for voicing concerns, they made efforts to adapt. 'Street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky, 2010; Mannion et al, 2018), and other front-line workers find covert ways to work around such contested visions to maintain their sense of purpose, loyalty to primary task and job satisfaction. Some participants reported that pattern, while others used various cognitive biases to try to reframe the moral character of the organization. These efforts reflected a battle between an effort to re-set their moral compass and a pull towards subversion. When efforts at accommodation failed and the ensuing disequilibrium tipped over into moral injury, the processes involved in constructing an ethical self eventually led to

whistleblowing in most participants. Their actions were usually gestures of last resort, amounting to civil disobedience. Their actions can be read as performative demonstrations, which had some chance of destabilizing prevailing norms of virtue.

Experiences during participants' growing-up contributed to constructing their response to this contestation. For some their allegiance to a professional identity provided an idea of primary task which competed with the normative task of the organization. Trevor's passionate attachment to the task of calling out wrongdoing whatever the context sets him apart from the other whistleblowers in the study as there was no ambivalence or effort to accommodate in his narrative.

Participants' narratives suggested that organizational dynamics became increasingly perverse, as the whistleblowers voiced their concerns more openly. Their 'policing' strategies became more rigid and controlling and the gap between image, contained in mission statements and other public relations exercises, and reality seemed to widen as the instrumental quality of relationships and purposes became more apparent. The whistleblowers' cherished tasks were variously denied (Ben, Sandra, Andrea), neglected (Bev, Beth, Lia) or instrumentalized for personal gain (Jeremy, Philip, Trevor, Andrea).

The two acquiescent bystanders in the study both worked within a circumscribed definition of task. Although they recognised that the primary task of the system as a whole was contested they held to a limited and manageable definition of their own task which, like street-level bureaucrats, enabled them to negotiate sufficient purpose and satisfaction without challenging the system's idealization of itself. Ceva and Bocchiola (2019; 2020) would not see this either as a failure of ethical duty on their part, or as a challenge to the 'general' normative duty to promote public accountability. Instead, operating as consequentialists and in non-ideal circumstances, they pragmatically balanced considerations of loyalty with an evaluation of the likelihood of their actions having any corrective impact.

9.2.3.2. *Social defences*

Organizations adopt social defences to manage collectively anxieties which arise from its shared enterprise, in order to get the work done (Jaques, 1955; Menzies Lyth, 1988). The primary task shapes the nature of the anxiety by evoking unwonted and uncontrollable emotions such as fear of annihilation, envy, hope, greed and aggression which threaten to overwhelm the organization or its people (Hoggett, 2015; Stein, 2000). Hirschhorn (2018) argued that an organization functioning without the usual structures is particularly likely to rely on perverse behaviours to defend against existential threat. Winnicott (1949) minutely described how intolerable the endless demands of dependency can be. Participants daily working lives required them to engage with disturbing experiences of intractable suffering, aided by their commitment to task. Vanishing organizations, legitimated by the context of marketized civilization and lacking structures which could contain the experiences (Cooper & Dartington, 2004) refuse that kind of intimate connection and dependency.

Social defences contain emotional threats associated with the work but become dysfunctional when they no longer provide containment. Instead those defences become anti-task, support perverse practices (Long, 2008), stifle change (Bain, 1998) and are implicated in organizational wrongdoing. Defensive mechanisms of splitting, projection and denial are implicated in corporate corruption, bullying and scapegoating, wilful neglect and escalating commitment (Fotaki & Hyde, 2014; Long, 2008; Stein & Pinto, 2011; Waddell, 1998).

Denial in the face of experiences the organization does not want to know about and the turning of a blind eye to wrongdoing normalizes corruption, protects the corporate image (Pope & Burnes, 2013) and enables a collective psychic retreat (Steiner, 1993). The whistleblower, or 'lamplighter' as Serpico preferred to be called, specifically challenges denial by revealing wrongdoing to the public gaze and exposing the gap between image and reality. The 'unthought knowns' (Bollas, 1987), whose implications are unbearable for the system, then force their way into the

consciousness of reluctant thinkers (Bion, 1970). The participants in this study were not in a state of denial about the complexity, suffering, chaos, scarce resources and difference which they witnessed as part of their everyday experience. The version of the primary task to which they were passionately committed enabled them to make sense of and tolerate those experiences. That commitment however transgressed the norms of speakability within the system which the alternative version of the contested task defined and therefore provoked retaliation. By voicing their dissent and concerns the whistleblowers challenged institutional defences and had to be split off and silenced.

The organizations retaliated against the whistleblowers, whom they constructed as bad objects. Hoping to rid themselves of awareness of unmanageable and uncontained affects, they variously bullied, scapegoated, ganged up against and attempted to silence the owner of the dissenting voice. Stein (2021a) has argued that the organization sees its lost good self in the retaliated-against whistleblower. Similarly, Hirschhorn (1999) suggested that the suppressed, forgotten-about version of contested task, in having to be mourned becomes hateful. Kenny (2019) has argued that when society as a whole lauds whistleblowers as heroes and constructs them as tragic but exceptional characters while allowing this retaliation, wider society is complicit with the censorship of *parrhesia* which might usher in a recognition of the contingency of taken-for-granted norms and the possibility of a different definition of virtue.

The bystanders in the study were as aware as the whistleblowers of the contested nature of the task but managed their acquiescence in different ways. Fiona was, to some extent, a compassionate observer of dysfunctional practice, adapting her role to accommodate both her own and the contested version of the task. The idea of 'greyscale' and balance was central to her sense of how she wanted to develop her practice and she carried this integrative, depressive position thinking into her relationships with the system. Tim used gallows humour to dissociate from the compromises he participated in, to meet his personal goals and maintain his

professionalism. His boarding-house state of mind (Stokes, 2015) defended him against the toxic qualities of the social defences he was surrounded by.

In the earlier whistleblowing films, (*Mr Smith, On the waterfront*) by implication the whistleblower and organization share a vision of what the task is supposed to be. The corruption was depicted as overt: as audience we are shown the gang in the organization conniving at their wrongdoing. Their knowing corruption forms part of the trouble out of which the heroic parrhesiastes emerges. In those films the power-holding organization was not living within the lie. However, in *Snowden* and *Official Secrets* the government organizations have an idea of task which conflicts with that of the whistleblower. Repeatedly, the only principle referenced by the voices of authority in these later films is loyalty and a consequentialist ethic. As Zizek (2004) puts it in discussing Donald Rumsfeld's stance on what can be known about the Abu Ghraib atrocities, the task is perversely defended to avoid exposing what lies hidden beneath public values

9.2.3.3. Basic assumptions

Bion (1961) argued that the basic assumptions he identified are collectively employed by groups to express and defend against the uprush of unmetabolised feeling that the shared task and group membership evoke. They co-exist with surface, rational, commitment to the work task, but frequently act in opposition to development as well as to contain unmanageable feelings. Group members may behave in the moment as if they all shared the same unconscious assumption, although individuals will have a 'valency', a tendency to act on particular assumptions and position themselves in relation to the prevailing assumption. Similarly, specific assumptions will be more likely to emerge in organizations with various authority structures and tasks and within specific cultures. As basic assumptions contribute to the formation of social defences, they may support the work of the organization, but can generate 'anti-task' behaviours which tip over from poor performance into outright wrongdoing. Different assumptions may be more likely come to the fore in the presence of particular forms of perversity (Long, 2008).

Tracing the operation of basic assumptions through my participants' narratives I found that they seemed likely to stand out against prevailing assumptions, particularly struggling to hold onto work-group mentality despite internal and external pressure to act into an assumption. The whistleblowers' refusal of otherwise shared assumptions positioned them as outsiders, abject subjects whose speech was rendered impossible, since the subtle matrices of control which basic assumption mentality exercises on members of a group contribute to the construction of a viable subject. For some participants their personal histories had evidently contributed to this valency.

In the systems described by this specific set of whistleblowers, baM particularly implicated with the denial of separateness and difference and baF with enactment of triumph and revenge, were prevalent and associated with perverse states of mind, notably greed, envy and wrath. Each basic assumption mentality has the capacity to work as a functional or dysfunctional defence. Consequently I also found examples where baD was sometimes a functional defence and sometimes dysfunctionally associated with pride. Similarly, sometimes baP was associated with constructive collaboration and sometimes with neglect and sloth.

BaM has been commonly linked to networked structures with few mechanisms to support accountability (Lawrence et al, 1996). Individuals within such 'cultures of narcissism' (Long, 2008, p 31) become self-authorising and behave as if they can do without the group, or that there is no group. Whistleblowers as they moved to assume the identity of a *parrhesiastes* become notably self-authorising and therefore in that way perhaps represent the light side of a culture of narcissism.

Both bystanders, in common with the whistleblowers, explicitly tried to hold to work-group mentality. However, Fiona and the whistleblowing Sandra and Beth, whose organizational contexts were similar, were both prepared to function within baD, perceiving that mentality as a good fit for the nature of the work. Tim was particularly motivated to position himself physically and emotionally outside

prevalent system dynamics and was very conscious of and frustrated by the pairing (baP) which disrupted the completion of his project.

9.2.3.4. Evidence of perversity

Long's five indicators of a 'perverse state of mind' existing within an organization, are generated out of defences operating at a societal level (2008, p.15). She argues that organizations employing these defences pursue their own interests without concern for legal or moral consequences.

She distinguishes five emotional states associated with perversity, each reflecting a traditional deadly sin: pride, greed, envy, sloth and neglect, wrath. This is not an explanatory typology, but rather a way to describe different combinations of unconsciously held structures and dynamics to explicate the relationships between context, system and wrongdoing. I explored whether these summarizing labels might reveal something further about that triangular relationship.

There is an important caveat to be made about conclusions drawn from this study: Given the study methods I could not verify evidence for the indicators of perversity within each organization found in the narratives of my participants and spelt out in their case formulations. I had little access to independent accounts to verify their observations of organizational dynamics. However, the process of extracting a relatively objective, stripped down account of their 'lived lives' from their narrative gave compelling accounts of perverse behaviour. They described: narcissistic aims; reality-distorting disavowal and denial; retaliation designed to coerce compliance; ganging behaviour in staff recruited as accomplices; and cycles of corrupt practice. Splitting and projection was also rife: they often experienced themselves as defined as a hateful object which could legitimately be bullied, demeaned, scapegoated and ostracised (Stein, 2021b; Waddell,1998; 2007).

In each case the features of the market civilization which composed the context of the organizations (neoliberalism, commodity logic, rhetoric of individualism,

marketized social relations) evidently contributed to the construction of the perverse and corrupt systems, but this context was uniform across all cases. Structures supporting accountability were either lacking or were enforced rigidly in an audit culture where monitoring stood in for containing and authoritative leadership.

Although subjectively it was not hard to assign one or more deadly sin to characterise the perverse functioning in each system, I did not find a consistent correspondence between an assigned sin and system domain, contested task or what was being defended against. The exercise of assigning a sin helped to synthesise the context, system and corrupt behaviour into typicalities (Rustin,2000) and contributed to emotional sense-making in each case. The process did not generate further explanatory hypotheses. However, it was not designed for that purpose and nor could this small and unrepresentative sample have validly tested such hypotheses. What the exercise did demonstrate is that the emotional states and behaviours comprising the 'sinful' and perverse states of mind ,summarized by the labels, can arise in any sector and the associated defensive behaviours take a similar form, whatever emotional state prevails.

The bystanders' narratives also reflected the operation of the indicators of perversity and again subjectively it was easy to characterise the perverse practices described as examples of one or more sins. However, both found a way to frame the behaviour they described to minimize the sinful qualities of perpetrators' behaviour. Fiona emphasised their good intentions and both considered the behaviour culturally normative.

Although the narratives of all the analysed films vividly used the indicators of perversity in action to compose the drama, the two most recent films represented the motivations of the perpetrators of wrongdoing more ambiguously. *Snowden* and *Official Secrets* left the audience in no doubt that a blind eye had been turned to the excesses of the surveillance system and the corrupt uses to which it had been put. However, the perpetrators in both films rhetorically argued for a consequentialist

ethic, where the moral interests of the State justified immoral means to achieve the State's ends. The actions of both Snowden and Katherine Gun exemplify Ceva and Bochiola's (2019, 2020) acts of last resort, morally justified as civil disobedience, explicitly designed as care of the self as well as of the other and an effort to shift the definition of virtue (Bok, 1984; Delmas, 2015; Levy, 2006)

9.2.3. Person

Personhood is conceptualised within the TEF and in this study, as a continuous developmental journey during which an identity is constructed, skills are acquired and values adopted, by drawing on constructs that exist already in the context where the development takes place. Thus, a person is conceptualised as constituted within and having no prior existence outside a network of social relationships. However, the person will carry into their adult life '*congealed layers of past experience*' (Butler, 2005) internalized images of which will be projected into their current relationships, including in their work life (Hirschhorn, 1999; Roberts & Bazalgette, 2016).

Early attachment experiences create working mental models which provide adults with a template for building relationships (Bowlby, 1973). I was surprised by the willingness of my participants to reflect on, as the interview protocol invited them to do, their whole life. They generously shared stories from their childhood and family lives which commonly illuminated the quality of their attachment styles. As already described in Section 5.2.2.2i above, several described attachment patterns in their families of origin which prepared them to take up positions as outsiders in the system. How they negotiated the painful experience of being let down, when trust was fractured, could also be linked to early attachment experiences. Those who were more willing to parade their vulnerability to mark their resistance (Bargu, 2017; Butler, 2016; 2020b) tended to describe more secure early attachments.

Generally, participants constructed narratives which made sense of how they were able to tolerate the vicissitudes of taking on the identity of a *parrhesiastes*. Alford

(2001, p.89) described his informants as motivated by the dread of having to live with a self they despised. He thought they were therefore compelled, through experiencing 'choiceless choice', to search out a virtuous way of being, which involved care for the self and the other. They demonstrated their struggles at a conscious and unconscious level with being hailed by the system and their plotlines contained many iterations and moments of 'undecidability' (Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013). The process of constructing an ethical self (see Section 5.2.2.2iv above) involved a continual revisiting of their relationship to dominant discourses and tolerating a newly constructed identity as an impossible and abject being. In keeping with Kenny's experience with her informants, (2019), most participants did not construct their self as autonomous or heroic, even if they sought to (re-)gain a sense of agency. Most construed their actions as fulfilling the ordinary duty of belonging to an organization, by aiming to encourage it to function as the best version of itself, as well as avoiding being complicit in any wrongdoing. Only the failure of required systems of accountability led to their actions of last resort (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019).

The narratives in the analysed films, by contrast perhaps inevitably, because of the commercial need to 'titillate' audiences, did construct the whistleblowers as heroic and the drama was composed as the story of an autonomous and de-racinated individual. Curiously the message in all the films, no matter which historical context they belonged to, reflected Horkheimer & Adorno's (2002) suspicion that the intention was to bind audiences into dominant ideology, as the stories end uniformly with the whistleblowers' annihilation. This uniformity of outcome was not reflected in my participants' stories. Although all the central characters were victims of retaliation, some were able to maintain a place in the system while pushing back against corrupt practices and maintain a sense of self as a virtuous being.

The bystanders were not inclined to reflect on their earlier life, despite the interview protocol giving them the same encouragement to talk about their whole life that was given to the whistleblowers. It seems possible that they were less inclined to engage in a sense-making process because, unlike the whistleblowers, they had not

experienced a crisis which threatened the coherence of their identity. For them the troubling dilemma did not constitute a breach of cultural legitimacy, since they perceived the problematic behaviour as conforming to cultural norms – not ones they personally admired but did accept as prevalent.

9.2.4. The organization in the mind (person-in-role)

“You’re a hugely influential role model now to so many youngsters, wield that power more carefully” (Piers Morgan to Stormzy, Twitter, Dec 2019)

“The kid asked me a question and I replied truthfully. Nothing wrong with that” (Stormzy to Piers Morgan)⁵.

My use of the concept of the organization-in-the-mind was an attempt to represent and link the affective aspects of participants’ experiences at the micro- and macro-level . Using material drawn from their narratives which spoke to how they constructed a viable sense of self out of available norms, the organization-in-the-mind provided a means to organise and conceptualise what I learnt about the *psyche* in these “ek-static subjects” (Kenny, 2019, p.37).

As I reviewed the ideas my participants held about their role in their organization, I considered whether I could legitimately paraphrase Winnicott’s famous remark (Winnicott, 1960, n.4) about the existence of an infant: “there is no such thing as a whistleblower”. Winnicott intended to highlight that even conceptualizing an infant required a concept of the whole relational situation, which included both the infant and its caregiver, to be held in mind. The mutually constitutive quality of participants’ relationships with their employer was similarly evident at every turn in their narratives and was especially evident in the material I condensed into and labelled as their organization-in-the-mind (see Appendix 7 for a compilation of the data relating to their organization-in-the-mind)

⁵ Stormzy told a primary school class that “Boris Johnson is a very bad man” which led to this twitter exchange.

Taking their stories as a whole it was clear that being a whistleblower or bystander involved taking up a specific role within a specific organization. Indeed, Ceva and Bocchiola (2020, p. 3) define organizations as “systems of embodied, interrelated rule-governed roles” and insist that the duty to blow a whistle is rooted in the obligations that a role-holder acquires when they join an organization, which entail holding their fellow members to account. The role of whistleblower was as relational as any other within the organization and required a structure within which the role could be constituted and therefore be seen and heard, as much as it contributed to constituting the organization. The singularity of the whistleblower, their existence ‘at the limits of the social’ from which they ‘haunt’ the organization has been emphasised (Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011). Yet, liminal as they might be in role, they remained both an insider and an outsider. Some, but not all participants did leave their organization eventually, but their move into liminal space and towards the margins of the organization took place before that. The dynamics of their role in the organization, the en-actments and in-actments which created the person-in-role provide an answer to the obvious question: why did they not just leave?

For most of my participants, even Trevor, the self-defined career troublemaker, they experienced a falling out of love with their organization and/or their role within it. That process was triggered, although iteratively, as the contested nature of the task became more apparent to them and combined with their lack of valency for the prevailing basic assumptions and other defensive patterns. Accumulating ‘facts’ and efforts to accommodate to normative practices were part of the process of participants defining for themselves the boundary of the ethical. However, both fact and value are discursively constructed and will shift rapidly in response to wider contextual issues, particularly if the problems the organization has to manage are wicked and therefore concerned more with what is good or bad rather than true or false (Hyde, 2016; MacIntyre, 1981). The pervasive experience of being let down, particularly when it led to a radical loss of trust, prompted these whistleblowers to move towards a liminal position from which they could take up the role of a *parrhesiastes*. That role, however, remained a part of and was shaped by the situation as a whole (Kenny, 2019; Kenny et al, 2020).

Comparing their accounts, I realised that the whistleblowers positioned themselves within their errant organization as a rescuer. Two versions of the rescuer role were enacted: either they sacrificed their own interests and well-being, or they entered a quasi-battlefield as a knight in shining armour (somewhat rusty in the case of Ben in his Don Quixote persona). As an act of loyalty (Andrade, 2015), they aimed to rescue the organization, from its wrongdoing and reconnect it to (in the whistleblower's eyes) its ethically correct primary task. In either version of the rescuer role the whistleblowers intended, using civil disobedience in gestures of last resort, to open up the possibility of radical transformations of social norms, exactly as Antigone, the original whistleblower had intended by her actions (Butler, 2000, Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019; MacIntyre, 1981).

Karpman's idea of the drama triangle (Cooper & Lousada, 2005; Karpman, 2007;) emphasised the reciprocal nature of transactions between actors in conflict. He argued that reciprocal roles were shared between three positions: rescuer, persecutor and victim. The reciprocity between roles and their shifting assignment within a system in his model usefully illuminate the co-constitution of whistleblower and organization. The whistleblower's efforts to right a wrong construct the organization as a persecutor. But at the same time, by drawing attention to wrongdoing, they become persecutor in their turn, as they pose a threat to the organization's reputation and eventually to its survival in its current form (Andrade, 2015; Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011). Near and Miceli (1985) hypothesised that the balance of power and dependency between whistleblower and system would determine the outcome of the whistleblowing event. The organization may then define itself as a victim of the 'dirty rat' whistleblower, and by attacking the lost good parts of itself) can justify the retaliation which frequently follows, perversely creating a victim out of the supposed persecutor (Stein, 2021b). The whistleblower, having satisfactorily constructed an ethical identity for themselves can reject the abject (and victim) subjectification, reframing their actions as ethical dissent and reclaiming a place as a viable subject in a hopefully changed discourse (Kenny, 2018; 2019; Kenny et al, 2020). I found that some whistleblowers, seemingly by virtue of their

earlier attachment experiences, were more willing than others to use the vulnerability entailed in their victim status to try to achieve change. As Kenny (2018) points out, whistleblowers move back and fore across the boundaries of the sayable just as their identities as rescuer, persecutor and victim are constantly revised.

Neither bystander had any valency for the rescuer role, despite both perceiving their employing organization as a persecutor functioning with a corrupted task. Both tolerated their roles as victims, in the sense intended by the drama triangle, partly perhaps because both saw the system as immutable, as well as considering their role within it as without substantial power – *“too far down the food chain”*.

Compared to the participants’ narratives, those in the films were relatively unnuanced and static: the corrupt organization held most of the power to persecute, while the marginalized but heroic whistleblowers were constructed as helpless victims with little capacity to take up the rescuer role. In the more recent films however, news media were constructed as rescuers. They feature as the knight in shining armour version of that role, fulfilling a moral duty as defenders of accountability, appropriately in an era where power to call to account has been devolved away from formal structures, down to the ‘micropolitical’ level (Mansbach, 2011).

Finally, returning to my experiences which surfaced during the reflexive exercise, I think that the person-in-role that I have been during this research work has resembled that of the bystanders. Although it was extremely helpful to recognise, as a result of the exercise, that bearing witness is an active role with transformative capacity, I experienced myself somewhat as a helpless victim, annihilated by the whistleblowers’ need to tell their whole story. Contu (2014) argues that whistleblowers ‘haunt’ their organizations with their revelations. I felt similarly haunted, partly directly by their revelations about wrongdoing and partly by my uncertainty about my own capacity to construct an ethical self. I wonder now whether it is my own, and the organizations’ lost good self (Stein, 2021a) which is responsible for that haunting.

Chapter 10: Discussion

In this chapter, in summarising the findings I shall explore their implications for addressing the questions, set out in Section 1.8, that I posed in conducting this study. Then I shall review the limitations of the research design and implications for further research.

While exploring the three questions, it is important to recall that the journey defined in participants' narratives and represented in the figures and theorized models discussed below was constantly iterative, even as it unfolded over time. It is tempting to begin to think in causal terms about the processes described. What was demonstrated was a complex co-constructed process, which is not readily captured by tracing linear causal connections. As substantial independent evidence about the organizations' functioning was not collected, this further prohibits speculation about causal links. However, in a small way, the research procedure gave participants space and a process which provoked reflection and some newfound perspectives. These were explored using grounded theory in order to build a middle-range theory about how people within a specific set of norms, faced with organizational wrongdoing construct meaning and make choices about ethical practice.

10.1. Addressing my research questions

10.1.1. What systemic factors are associated with the occurrence of whistleblowing in an organization?

In each participant's case, the nature of the primary task was contested between the participant and their organization. The conflict created by that contestation provided the ground over which the whistleblowing events were enacted. A difference of view about the nature of task is not enough in itself however, to provoke whistleblowing. The whistleblowers perceived the alternative version of the task to be associated with wrongdoing and described perverse functioning, in keeping with the indicators defined by Long (2008), which supported the organization's enactment of the preferred version of task. They also experienced retaliation, in keeping with the

perverse pact identified by Ruth Stein (2005), in which the reversal of good and bad objects and hatred of the previously admired, lost object is enacted in triumph or revenge (Stein, 2021a; 2021b). They observed the expression of emotional states of mind, such as pride, envy, greed and aggression. These emotions were associated with a culture of perversion, in which defences characterised by organised self-deception, such as turning a blind eye to abuse and exploitation, dehumanizing of colleagues and stakeholders, pseudo-vitality and fetishizing of commercial gain or renown were enacted. Collusion such as ganging was rife. Basic assumption functioning in keeping with the contested task and supporting the denial of facts which contradicted defensive illusions was also evidenced in the whistleblowers' descriptions.

The organizations defined a viable subject in terms which supported the dominant discourse and marginalised the whistleblower. Not only were they directly silenced – 'told off' for expressing proscribed views, but also what they said was defined as 'impossible speech' (Butler, 1997b; Kenny, 2018) and they became unrecognizable subjects. On the whole these experiences radicalised the whistleblowers, pushing them further towards the marginals of the organization, where they created a new *parrhesiastic* identity for themselves. These processes contributed to the in-actments which defined the organization-in-the-mind of the whistleblower person-in-role, both before and after they raised their concerns.

10.1.2. What factors influence individual choice to whistleblow or remain silent in the face of perceived organizational wrongdoing?

Most whistleblower participants readily identified early experiences of occupying roles within the family and wider society which seemed to them to be of a piece with their whistleblowing. The quality of their attachment to those roles appeared to be reflected in how they negotiated their attachment to their organization, joining, investing loyalty and shaping their identity. Their willingness to accept an outsider position and adopt a *parrhesiastic* identity also seemed to be linked to those early attachment patterns.

As described above, contested ideas of task were important in the process of divesting themselves of their passionate attachment to the organization. Having no valency for prevalent basic assumption behaviour, which routinely enacted the dominant version of task also contributed to their availability for assuming an outsider status. Several maintained a sense of purpose and positive identity through their allegiance to an alternative, professional discourse and set of norms, or by separating their idea of the organization from their idea of the system domain (Bain, 1998).

Being let down fractured trust and disrupted whistleblowers' efforts to nuance conflicted values and interests in order to accommodate to experiences which they were struggling to perceive as culturally legitimate. Once those efforts failed, they were exposed to a greater risk of moral injury from experiences now perceived as ethically compromising. I characterised this process as falling out of love with their organization.

In order to construct an ethical self (see Section 5.2.2.2iv) they searched for an identity where the ethical basis was composed of a way of being-in-action, recognisably part of Foucault's (2008/2012) care of the self (Levy, 2006). By that stage, neither deontic nor consequentialist principles provided adequate guidance.

Examining their enactments within their organization-in-the-mind revealed that they had generally taken on the role of rescuer. There were two versions of this role: either they were self-sacrificing or a knight in shining armour. In either version they may have been acting from a position as an excluded and abject subject, but their rescuing efforts had features which define *parrhesiastic* fearless speech, namely frankness, truth, danger, criticism and duty. However, those taking up the self-sacrificing role tended to display their vulnerability in order to speak their truths, combining rescuer and victim, while the methods of the more confrontative knights in shining armour perhaps more closely resembled those of Diogenes.

Bystanders were apparently equally aware of the contested nature of the task as whistleblowers. However, they were particularly attached to work-group mentality which was also linked to their allegiance to an alternative professional discourse. Those allegiances helped them to compartmentalise and pragmatically acquiesce in prevailing discourses. They perceived themselves as relatively powerless to influence how the system worked and so were willing to behave like street-level bureaucrats to get their work done, without being motivated to rescue.

10.1.3. How do wider cultural norms, including system domain defences contribute to the construction of appropriate responses to organizational wrongdoing?

Dominant discourses both constrain and construct the context within which a system functions. Regimes of practice, which operate as instruments of social control as well as guidance, define cultural legitimacy. The process of interpellation summons individuals into conformity at the same time as persuading them, via the apparatus of ideology, that there is no alternative to the way things are (Althusser, 2008). Cultural norms also define what is considered moral and how transgressions should be identified and appropriately punished (Weiskopf & Willmott, 2013). This means that whistleblowers must resist the pull of interpellation, in order to see possible alternatives to what has been naturalized and to tolerate being defined as transgressive while themselves drawing attention to transgression. Within workplaces, stories, gossip, jokes and judgments about micro-behaviours all operate to re-inforce discursive regimes (Gabriel, 1991; Kenny, 2010; Teo & Caspersz, 2011). However, in the wider culture other artefacts such as news media and films are also expressing and shaping normative assumptions.

The organizations and systems within which participants worked in this study were embedded in the market civilization (Gill, 2003) which tends to refuse dependency. This has been characterised as creating a culture of 'perversion' (Knafo and Lo Bosco, 2017) or of 'complicity' (Kenny, 2019). Responsibility for governance and ethical choice is discursively located in the isolated individual, who is socially constructed as autonomous. But in reality, as their narratives make clear, they were subject to

monitoring and micro-management strategies which have replaced fully authorised structures of authority.

In these perverse organizations the corrupt quality of their practices was rendered more invisible still, more normalized, by the specifics of perverse defences which dominated organizational behaviour, the denial of difference between image and reality, (Perry, 1998) collusion and splitting off of their dissenting voices, all designed to coerce them into compliance if not complicity.

Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) argued that the culture industry, particularly popular cinema, tells its audience what to think. The analysis of the series of whistleblower films indicated that contemporary audiences were invited to think, in culturally normative idioms, that an individual should only rebel against wrongdoing if they can tolerate physical or social annihilation. Although the whistleblowers in the films were constructed as heroes, albeit flawed, they all seemed to require a rescuer to bring their alarm-calls to public attention. In the earlier films (*Mr Smith, On the Waterfront*) they were rescued, even if in a damaged state, and re-incorporated into society by the love of a good woman. In the two most recent films (*Snowden, Official Secrets*) the rescuer, who brought not them, but their message, to life, was the news media, an appropriate source of power in a neoliberal discourse which is dismissive of traditional structures of authority.

10.2 Limitations of the research design

There are a number of limitations which are grouped under sample size, data collection strategy and drawing legitimate inferences.

10.2.1. Sample size

In keeping with a study using an exclusively qualitative methodology, the number of participants was small. This was particularly true of the sample of bystanders.

However I chose to stop data collection at the point when I thought I had reached

saturation as the interview process with whistleblowers seemed to yield no fresh material (Charmaz, 2014, p. 213). Both the epistemology and the analytic strategies ruled out generalizing from a sample which was not designed to be representative. Each case was approached as a coherent system in itself, in which the object of study was the system in action and the relationships between identified aspects within that system.

10.2.2. Data collection

The data in the main study were subjective narratives, from which information was read off about the organizational system. It was constantly tempting to think about the participants' accounts of their organizations as providing objective facts, rather than the highly subjective narratives they actually were. However, the interview procedure provoked participants into reflection and in some cases, newfound perspectives. There was no external documentation available about most of the cases, so I avoided searching out that information, even when it was available for some cases, in order to keep my approach consistent.

However, following my critical realist epistemology, and bearing in mind the recalcitrance of facts, I attempted to objectify the accounts I heard by compiling the 'lived life' and researching the social and political context of the events described. The design allowed comparison between cases, as they had an experience in common, namely facing wrongdoing in their organization, while the context varied across sectors.

10.2.3. Finding legitimate inferences

I read off 'intelligence' about the system from participants' organization-in-the-mind, which is not to be confused with objective fact. This is a legitimate interpretive strategy in organizational consultancy (Armstrong, 2005). Given my interpretive methodology and aspiration to develop a middle-range theory, I regarded this 'intelligence' as material for forming working hypotheses. While in clinical or

consultation work, those hypotheses could be tested by offering interpretations, in a research context the working hypotheses are tested and extended by observing the play of similar emerging factors in fresh cases. However, the findings cannot be regarded as more than suggestive proposals. In line with abductive reasoning, they represent a best guess explanatory account of what has been observed. The findings can be evaluated by how credible and relevant the explanation appears to be and by whether it can generate plausible theory-practice links. Further research could now check the explanations offered among different samples or explore the phenomena identified with different methodology (see Section 10.2.4 below).

The concepts drawn from systems-psychodynamic thinking are inter-related in a complex and overlapping way. My reliance on the organization-in-the-mind was an attempt to synthesise those concepts coherently. The material presented in the case studies in Section 7.5 demonstrate that overlap. However, as has been argued elsewhere (Frosh et al, 2003; Hoggett, 2015; Hollway & Froggett, 2013) the systems-psychodynamic framework provides a coherent theoretical framework to address the complex and iterative co-constitution of social phenomena without privileging either the psyche or the social. The complexity of the whistleblowing process requires a research approach which can provide a processual account (Near & Miceli, 1985), particularly in order to avoid constructing the whistleblower as a solitary actor or absolving the community from collective responsibility (Kenny, 2019)

My thinking about the operation of perversity in organizations has been heavily influenced by Long's account (Long, 2008, pp.15-43) of the perverse state of mind. Her powerful analysis emphasises the aspects of narcissistic denial of difference in perversity. A somewhat overlooked aspect of perversion in her analysis is how affective attachments to good and bad objects, reversed with the resultant hatred for lost good objects might be enacted within organizations (Stein, 2021a; 2021b). In consequence, the process of retaliation, such a significant part of the whistleblowing process remains under-theorized and somewhat neglected in this study. However, as my method only explored participants' subjective experiences, I could legitimately reflect on their response to retaliation, but not on the dynamics which produced

those in-actments. Similarly, the positive aspects of the perverse state of mind emphasised by Chasseguel-Smirgel (1989) and Knafo and Lo Bosco (2017), associated with rule-breaking and creativity have been somewhat overlooked by Long (2008) and also therefore in this study. Although that dynamic was present in the stories of both Philip (see Section 7.5.3.1) and Ben (see Section 7.5.1.3a) the creativity and innovation which was corrupted nevertheless took place within the context of systems with traditional structures and hierarchies. It would be interesting to explore the dynamics of whistleblowing in organizations truly functioning beyond 'BART' (Hirschhorn, 2018).

Did I find only what I expected to find? I think that my findings are in line with extant theories, which are likely to have shaped my thinking as I worked through the data. Grounded theory fractures the data and re-constructs it by coding and categorising surfaced phenomena. Factors which emerged from that coding and categorising could best be made sense of with reference to extant theories. However, I believe that the composite categories which contributed to the most abstracted concepts illuminate how those abstractions work in everyday experience across a range of contexts.

10.2.4. Implications for further research

Extending the study of bystanders using this methodology, pairing them with their whistleblower, to include those who were quiescent as well as acquiescent (Blenkinsopp & Edwards, 2008) would substantially enhance understanding of the decision to remain silent and by contrast, the decision to speak out.

Another useful next step would be to explore at least some of the same processes within uniform organizational contexts. This would allow the usefulness of the explanatory account to be tested as well as affording the opportunity to consider individual variation, having controlled for situation.

Similarly, specific issues could be explored with more convergent research strategies such as Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour. It would be interesting to operationalize and map the emergence of virtue ethics-based moral judgements and practices in keeping with Foucault's (2008/2012) care of the self (Levy, 2006). Consistencies between adult attachment patterns (Rholes & Simpson, 2004) and other components, such as contestation of task or the response to being let down, have emerged as significant components of the process and merit further investigation.

The courage to listen has been identified as an essential part of the whistleblowing process (Blenkinsopp & Edwards, 2008; Catlaw et al 2014; Vandekerckhove & Langenberg, 2012) and as part of the ordinary duty of organizational members to entrench public accountability (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019) but has not been subject to much qualitative investigation. Studying how managers come to make choices about their response to alerts to wrongdoing could yield insights which would enhance coaching and consultancy practice.

Chapter 11: Implications for practice.

The findings from this study have implications for informing policy and organizational development, and for consulting to troubled individuals and organizations which are struggling with dilemmas around wrongdoing.

11.1. Policy and organizational development

Policy and strategy are often developed as if fact, reason and certainty were the only possible features of a good product. People holding onto this belief evade the recognition that they entail value-laden judgments and are necessarily infused with emotion (Cooper & Lousada, 2005; Hyde, 2016;). For example, recent UK government statements repeatedly claim to be 'led by the science' in their management of the Covid-19 epidemic, hoping thereby to side-step questions of value and project certainty and belief that their decision-making is necessarily right (as opposed to wrong) rather than good or bad (Nuffield, 2021). Here 'science' is being used discursively to naturalize the arbitrary and close down discussion of questions of ethical value.

Additionally, as anti-essentialism is currently the favoured epistemology, achieving a consensus about wrong-doing, with the accusation of 'fake news' readily to hand, is harder. Without a firm ethical foundation, whistleblowing continues to be seen as a pariah or extreme activity, which is not supported institutionally (Ceva & Bocchiola, 2019; Faunce, 2004). The threat to the probity of public life of this epistemological and ethical uncertainty is exemplified by the careers of Trump (Butler, 2020a) or Berlusconi (Sementelli, 2009). The seductive excitement of innovation and creativity in a neoliberal world which is hostile to old containing structures (Hirschhorn, 2018) and enables the dark side of success – the 'Bathsheba syndrome', i.e. ethical violations by previously principled leaders, (Ludwig and Lonnenecker, 1993) also re-inforce the pull towards cultures of complicity (Kenny, 2019, p.4). As both deontic and consequentialist principles have been recognised as culture laden (MacIntyre, 1981) an alternative principle on which to base ethical judgements is needed.

Foucault's account of *parrhesia* (Foucault & Pearson, 2001) and of care of the self (Foucault, 2008/2012) together provide a possible different basis for ethical behaviour, without losing the sense of the inevitably social nature of selfhood or agency. Foucault argued that following extant moral codes, inevitably defined by dominant discourse, was less important than the relationship the individual developed with themselves. For Foucault, as a virtue ethicist, this is not an essentialist self, waiting to be discovered, but is created out of a set of culturally constructed dispositions and motivations (Levy, 2004). Good governance and the articulation of the 'good' in context require community members to have courage both to identify and speak about the truth and the capacity to listen well to other truth-speakers (Catlaw et al, 2014). Government of self thus legitimates the government of others.

The findings from my study highlight the complex interplay between individuals' passionate attachment to what they judge to be the task of the organization and its value and the dominant discourse which promotes belief in the value of quite different tasks. Whistleblowers alert organizations to important information, not necessarily about fact, but about its values and how they can be hijacked. Hyde (2016) argues that conflicts about value arise particularly when the issues are 'wicked'. I would add that my findings demonstrate they arise still more markedly when the contested task has been perverted and re-inforced by toxic defensive strategies. Cooper and Lousada (2005) argue that efforts to construct a division between reason and emotion represent an attack on linking and obstruct thought and development. Interventions aiming to achieve good, that is functional, strategic development need therefore to encourage the recognition of the emotional and value-laden nature of what is decided.

11.2. Obstacles to effective consultation

Organizations and key figures within them can be deaf or blind to the whistles or lit lamps which are intended to raise the alarm, as they were in this study. The system may also have become increasingly rigid and inflexible, 'doubling down' on their perverse defences in response to competitive pressures, the seduction of success or criticism. Those who raise concerns may have been rendered non-subjects and their speech defined as impossible or been silenced by more overt retaliatory actions. Those processes attack both the visibility and meaningfulness of the problems addressed and protect those in authority from the need to be transparent and

accountable. These whistleblowing participants who were been let down or victimised disinvested trust in their organization. A consultant faced with an organization engaging in a psychic retreat (Long, 2008; Steiner, 1973) must find a way to enable an organization struggling with wrongdoing to see and listen before taking action.

11.3. Culture change

When wrongdoing has been successfully exposed, there is frequently a call for ‘culture change’. This has been particularly true following the series of concerning exposures about malpractice in the NHS and more recently in the London Metropolitan Police. Mannion et al, (2018) comments that this is frequently a recipe for doing nothing as it is difficult to translate into practical action. Alternatively, the system may defensively point to a ‘rotten apple’ or ‘bad-un’, in order to deny the need for systemic change.

11.4. Consultation and coaching strategies

What I have learnt from this research is that interventions need to be holistic, in the sense of linking feeling and thought, and working collaboratively with experiences at an individual and systemic level. The primary need in working with a system struggling with wrongdoing and perversity is to make that which is unbearable and hidden by the contested task, bearable. Without that groundwork, a system can remain stuck in a toxic psychic retreat, or, if the context makes that possible, rid itself of the problem by ‘throwing the dead cat over the wall’ (Hyde & Thomas, 2002).

From the paired reflexive exercise, I learnt the active value of listening, bearing witness – of tolerating the difficulty of not knowing, of being separate and different from the person telling their story. Bearing witness has been used as a social process to “create a community ready to hear” (Ullman, 2006). In acute hospital settings particularly, it has been used effectively in Schwartz rounds⁶. Catlaw et al, advocating for the significance of listening as well as speaking in creating a functioning public administration argued that:

⁶ <https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/our-programmes/schwartz-rounds>

“Truth-telling in public becomes a kind of story-telling before an audience, whose members know how to take care of themselves” (Catlaw et al, 2014, p.214).

The process enabled me to understand how I might gather ‘intelligence’ about the system without demeaning the individual narrative. As a technique it has much potential for reversing psychic retreats. In other settings, such as refugee camps, where residents are struggling to recover from witnessing and in some cases directly experiencing extremes of wrongdoing, narrative-based interventions, particularly when delivered to a community have greatly aided recovery at an individual and collective level (Cooper et al, 2019)

Business ethics are taught, in business schools (Morrell, 2004) and in other professional contexts (Faunce, 2004; Faunce & Jefferys, 2007), but have tended to rely on didactic teaching of deontic principles and rules without basing that on evidence that students can apply what they have learnt in practice (Faunce et al, 2004; Levine, 2005; Morrell, 2004). Using virtue ethics as the preferred foundation is a promising approach, where the focus is on the agent, rather than (deontic) actions or (consequentialist) social consequences. Virtue ethics still accepts that the self is *‘inevitably social, embedded in our relationships with others’* (Catlaw, 2014, p.199) and that the process of developing moral agency in an individual is no less radically social, since agency is viewed as an artifact of a set of relationships (Weaver, 2006). It also allows for a specific definition of the *telos*, or purpose of the organization, which produces a coherent “life narrative” shared by the whole community of practice (Faunce, 2004, p. 47). Shared narratives, social modelling, the discursive language of praise and blame and formal teaching all have a role in distinguishing virtue from vice.

Faunce et al (2004) propose a formal programme of teaching and training in medical education, aimed at encouraging whistleblowing as a routine duty, based on developing the habit of ‘practicing with conscience’. Morrell (2004) provides examples of how socratic dialogue can be used as a technique for developing more nuanced ethical thinking. His strategy aims to shift students’ reliance away from conventional deontic and utilitarian reasoning and towards

awareness of internalized beliefs which recognise how virtuous actions are defined, within relationships with others.

Hirschhorn (1999) emphasised the destabilising effect of not sufficiently mourning the ambivalently lost primary task. Once the muted or abandoned version of the task has been surfaced, then he proposes that the feelings attached to that version must be worked through to neutralise their dysfunctional impact. Although she was referring to an individual clinical case of extreme perversity, Knafo (2015) described the pact which developed between speaker and listener which enabled them to abandon their perverse attachment in favour of engagement with real relationships. The iterative nature of the stories I listened to point to the need for working through to be thorough. The bystanders' stories showed that they would have much to contribute to the process of collecting 'intelligence' about the organization and to working through what has been lost.

Taken together, these strategies have the potential to convert narcissistic choice, whether in leaders or whistleblowers, into acknowledged and shared responsibility.

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Appendix 1: Ethics



03 March 2016

Dear Brigid

Project Title:	Bystanders and whistleblowers: a study of the systemic forces driving the journey from denial to action in the face of wrong-doing within organisations
Principal Investigator:	Judith Bell
Researcher:	Brigid MacCarthy
Reference Number:	UREC 1516 21

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC **on Wednesday 18th November 2015**.

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee’s response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents:

<http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-to-Approved-Ethics-App-150115.doc>

Any adverse events that occur in connection with this research project must be reported immediately to UREC.



Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Locations agreed with participants	Dr Judith Bell

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

<i>Document</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>
UREC application form	2.0	08 February 2016
Participant information sheet	2.0	08 February 2016
Consent form	2.0	08 February 2016
Recruitment advert	2.0	08 February 2016
Interview topic guide	1.0	02 November 2015
Statement on legal limits to confidentiality	1.0	08 February 2016

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice in Research](#) is adhered to.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research study is conducted in compliance with the consent given by the ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,



Rosalind Eccles
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)

UREC Servicing Officer

Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Flyer and letter to participants

Invitation to participate in a research project about organizational responses to wrong-doing.

Bystanders and whistleblowers: a study of the systemic forces driving the journey from denial to action in the face of wrong-doing in organizations.

I am an organizational consultant, researching the question of how individual staff decide how to react when they perceive that wrong-doing is happening in the organization within which they work. I am particularly interested in what it is about the organization's system that influences an individual's decision to blow the whistle or remain silent. I think it is likely that arriving at a decision will have involved something of a journey and so I am also interested in how the stages in that journey have been experienced by each individual.

If you have observed wrong-doing in your organization, whether you still work there or have already moved on, and are willing to participate, I would like to meet you and explain more about what would be involved.

From the information gathered I hope to build a theory about what aspects of the system in an organization create the need to whistleblow and on that basis, I hope to develop guidelines for policy-makers and consultants to influence the design of whistleblowing policies and procedures. In future I hope that such procedures will challenge cultures where wrong-doing is condoned and trigger change at a systemic level, instead of focusing narrowly on the behaviour of individual staff.

About me:

I am an independent organizational consultant and coach, working with teams and individuals in both the public and private sector. I am currently undertaking the Professional Doctorate in Consultation and the Organisation, attached to Tavistock Consulting which is part of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and in conjunction with the University of East London. The doctorate requirements include 3 years of supervised professional practice and conducting a substantial research project to investigate issues of relevance to organizational consultancy. This research project is part of the requirements of the doctorate.

What your participation would involve:

I have in mind a number of topics that I would like I to explore in the interview. I plan to ask each participant to describe how the organization in which the whistleblowing incident took place worked, how you became aware that there was wrong-doing happening and how you decided how to respond to what you observed. I will also ask you to tell me about your previous working history. However, I hope that if you do decide to participate, you will be willing to take the conversation in directions that seem most significant to you.

Each interview will be recorded on a digital voice-recorder and then be transcribed and analysed in depth to help me to construct a richer understanding of the systemic processes involved in responding to wrong-doing.

I will do my utmost to ensure that the interview does not become too distressing or disturbing. Should participants find the interview process distressing, they may terminate it at any point, complete it at a later date, or withdraw entirely. I can provide information and guidance about how to find support or help from specialist organizations who work with whistleblowers, or from organizational consultants, coaches or psychotherapists, as participants might prefer.

How your confidentiality will be protected:

Participants' confidentiality will be rigorously protected and your identity will be disguised so that you would not be identifiable in any reports based on this research. However, because my sample will

be small there will be a limit to the extent that total anonymity can be guaranteed. Further, if I am compelled to disclose information for legal reasons, I must act in accordance with legal requirements. Although I would have to breach my commitment to protecting your confidentiality in these circumstances, I would inform you of this before I take any further action. All information and data collected during this project will be destroyed after 5 years.

No organization will have direct access to the data or findings. Senior academic staff who provide me with supervision and guidance may read fully anonymised accounts of interview material during the analysis and reporting of the study, but will not have access to information by which they could identify participants. The results of this research will be reported in my doctoral thesis and in academic journals and conference presentations, but again, the identities of participants will be heavily disguised. Once I have completed the project I will also provide you with a summary of my findings and a progress report on how the findings have been disseminated to professional groups and policy makers.

Location

The interview will take place in a quiet and private location of your choice – either in a venue convenient and acceptable to you, near or in your current place of work or home, or in consulting rooms in Tavistock Consulting, 94 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BE. You will be reimbursed in full for any travel and subsistence expenses incurred through your participation.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this and for considering contributing to this research project. If you are willing to participate, I would be grateful if you would contact me by phone ([0208 938 2584: Tavistock Consulting](tel:02089382584)) or email (BMaccarthy@tavistockconsulting.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Brigid MacCarthy
Organizational Consultant and Doctoral Student
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.

Appendix 3: Consent Form

University of East London
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust,
120 Belsize Lane, London NW£ 5BA

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

You have been asked to participate in a study about your experience of a whistleblowing incident at work. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study. If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Catherine Fieulleateau, Research Integrity and Ethics Manager,
Graduate School, EB 1.43
University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD
(Telephone: 020 8223 6683, Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk).**

Project Title:

Bystanders and whistleblowers: a study of the systemic forces driving the journey from denial to action in the face of wrongdoing in organizations.

The Principal Investigator:

Brigid MacCarthy
Phone: 0208 938 2584 (Tavistock Consulting office)
Email: BMaccarthy@tavistockconsulting.co.uk

Description of the Project:

The research will investigate what influences how individual staff decide how to react when they perceive that wrongdoing is happening in the organization within which they work. I am particularly interested in what perceived aspects of the organization's system have impacted on an individual's decision to blow the whistle or remain silent.

After analyzing published materials such as newspaper articles, public inquiry reports and biographical accounts, to explore current ideas about what is an appropriate response to wrongdoing, I plan to interview a number of people who have blown the whistle in a range of different working contexts. I intend to explore with them, using an open-ended and flexible approach in interviewing them about their understanding of the stages in their journey towards taking action and what they perceived were key factors in their own working lives and the operation of their employing organization that decided them to take action in that way. Then I shall conduct similar interviews with people working in the same organizations who decided to remain silent.

From the information gathered I hope to build a theory about what aspects of the system in an organization create the need to whistleblow. From that I hope to develop guidelines for policy-makers and consultants to influence the design of whistleblowing policies and procedures. In future I hope that such procedures will challenge cultures where wrongdoing is condoned and trigger change at a systemic level, instead of focusing narrowly on the behaviour of individual staff.

About me:

I am an independent organizational consultant and coach, working with teams and individuals in both the public and private sector. I am currently undertaking the Professional Doctorate in Consultation and the Organisation, attached to Tavistock Consulting which is part of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and in conjunction with the University of East London. The doctorate requirements include 3 years of supervised professional practice and the conduct of a substantial research project to investigate issues of relevance to organizational consultancy. This research project is part of the requirements of the doctorate.

What your participation would involve:

I plan to interview each participant, in a private location of their choosing, asking open-ended questions, covering a number of topics related to their working experience. Although I have a list of topics in mind to discuss, I hope that each participant will be prepared to take the conversation in directions which seem most significant to them.

I shall ask participants to describe how the organization in which the whistleblowing incident took place worked, how they became aware that there was wrongdoing happening and how they decided how to respond to what they had observed. I will also ask participants to tell me about their previous working history.

Each interview will be recorded on a digital voice-recorder. It will then be transcribed and analyzed in depth to extract key ideas participants hold about how their organizations worked and how they decided to respond to what they experienced. Extracts of the transcribed interviews will be reviewed by my supervisor(s) for the purposes of establishing the validity of my analyses. However, this reviewer will have no knowledge of the identity of individual participants.

I will do my utmost to ensure that the interview does not become too distressing or disturbing. Should participants find the interview process distressing, they may terminate it at any point, complete it at a later date, or withdraw entirely. If a participant does decide to withdraw, all paper and electronic records, containing personal identifying information and any interview data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be destroyed entirely.

At the end of the interview I shall offer a time for debriefing and to gather feedback about the interview process from participants. As part of that process I shall provide information sheets containing contact details for relevant organizations and guidance about how to find support, help or legal advice from specialist organizations which work with whistleblowers, or from organizational consultants, coaches or psychotherapists, as participants might prefer.

How your confidentiality will be protected:

Participants' confidentiality will be rigorously protected (see below for the steps taken to secure the confidentiality of information collected) and their identities will be disguised as far as possible in any reports based on this research. Because my sample will be small there will be a limit to the extent that total anonymity can be guaranteed. Further, if participants disclose information that leads me to believe that they themselves or anyone else, including children and vulnerable adults is at risk of imminent harm or abuse, I am obliged to report this to the relevant authorities. If I am compelled to disclose information for legal proceedings I must act in accordance with legal requirements. Although I shall have to breach my commitment to protecting participants' confidentiality in either of these circumstances, participants will be informed of this before I take any further action.

Interview audio recordings and transcriptions will be labeled only by a code. I will be the only person who could link the code to a specific participant. A paper version of the key to the code will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. An electronic version will be saved on a password-protected and encrypted file to which only I will have access. All paper documents relating to each interview will be anonymized, coded and held in a locked filing cabinet, separate from where the key to the code will be stored.

No organization will have direct access to the data or findings. Senior academic staff who provide me with supervision and guidance may read fully anonymised accounts of interview material during the analysis and reporting of the study, but will not have access to information from which they could identify participants. The results of this research will be reported in my doctoral thesis and in academic journals and conference presentations, but again, the identities of participants will be heavily disguised. To achieve this, all biographical details which are not relevant to the research

question will be changed. So for example, a participant's age, sex and geographical location might be changed. Once I have completed the project I will also provide you with a summary of my findings and a progress report on how the findings have been disseminated to professional groups and policy makers.

All information and data collected during this project will be held for no more than 5 years. Thereafter, all primary data will be destroyed, by securely erasing computer files and shredding paper materials.

Location

The interview will take place in a quiet and private location of your choice – either in a venue convenient and acceptable to you, near or in your current place of work or home, or in consulting rooms in Tavistock Consulting, 94 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BE.

Remuneration

You will be reimbursed in full for any travel and subsistence expenses incurred in order to participate in this study.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during the interview. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

Thank you for considering contributing to this research project. If you are willing to participate, I would be grateful if you would sign the attached Consent Form and return it to me in the envelope provided.

Yours sincerely,

Brigid MacCarthy
Organizational consultant and Doctoral Student
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants.

Bystanders and whistleblowers: a study of the systemic forces driving the journey from denial to action in the face of wrongdoing in organizations.

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential, within the limits of legal requirements. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the programme has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. All paper and electronic versions of personal information and data collected up to the point at which I choose to withdraw will be destroyed.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

BRIGID MacCARTHY.....

Investigator's Signature

.....

Date:

Appendix 4 Sample memos

Memos elaborating linked categories derived from Sandra's transcript

1. Avoiding conflict if possible

She is clear that she hates arguments and conflict and will go a long way to avoid them. There is some awareness that others might be quite sceptical of this – that she has been given an identity of ringleader and troublemaker. Both of these labels are not congruent with her sense of who she is. She attributes her aversion to conflict to the antagonistic relationship of her parents who argued a lot while she was growing up.

Ordinarily she will be conciliatory and also avoidant (not necessarily the same thing).

- She buried herself in academic work at school to avoid awareness of parental arguments;
- Attempts at compromise and helpful suggestions during her battle with school nurse; Conflicts make her anxious.

She is clear about her usual coping strategies: conciliation; bury self in work; just move on if nothing else works.

But she agrees to something which she doesn't really expect to make a difference to her plight after whistleblowing: after leaving her job in ...X...abruptly (ie moving on) she was determined to stay put, but this left her having to rely on conciliatory tactics to survive and reconcile her determination to stay with feeling the target of a great deal of hostility and antagonism.

2. Standing up to protect vulnerable others against hostility or aggression

This primary drive seems to have begun in her childhood, as part of her functioning as a parental child, trying to protect her vulnerable sibs and shield them from quarrelling parents. But her father is perhaps included in her category of 'vulnerable' as he grew up without parents. Both vulnerable and hostility/aggression needs defining carefully:

Vulnerable = an individual not well placed to defend themselves. Several events reflect this involving child, or adult colleague; usually junior to herself, but can be a peer or even senior.

Victim = someone disempowered or not being adequately looked after or cared about.

Hostility/aggression: = bullying; being made to do something wasn't equipped to do echoing what happened to the locum who misdiagnosed severe child abuse; e.g. clinic receptionist bullying the man with the wrong appt; herself being told 'just to get on with it' by management. This amounts to people treating others inhumanely (she blurts out in a grievance hearing: "*I just want to be treated like a human being*") – i.e. as an object, linking to Susan Long's concept of perversity in organizations and to underlying factors which predispose care systems to be in grip of 'Borderline Welfare'

This ethic is closely associated with her sense of the nature of the Primary Task : as a paediatrician, putting children's interests first. She feels loyalty to both the task and its objects. Death of the severely abused child was therefore the final straw. By then she had understood that ...Employing Trust...was motivated to turn blind eye to short-comings of the service for corporate/commercial reasons –Trust then becomes the abandoning Mother. She was enraged/shocked to notice that the baby's death had become incidental during the post-crisis investigations.

Loyalty to the primary task comes into conflict with her need to avoid conflict if possible and to be well-behaved and toe the line. She was willing to be compliant and very hard working – to make the best of difficult conditions in order to achieve the aims of the primary task as she perceived it to be – and she assumed her professional (paediatrician) colleagues would see it the same way.

In a battle between these opposing motivations, her commitment to the protection of the vulnerable wins out and drives her to increasingly oppositional behaviour. She can reconcile this perhaps because she is remaining loyal to the primary task – she remains well-behaved and toeing the line because she

has shifted her referent to the more abstract (disembodied) principles of the primary task as opposed to the actual organisation, or even her profession. – She can justify ‘fighting her corner to keep her job’ because this preserves her loyalty to the phenomenal primary task.

Although she is willing to see herself as vulnerable at different points, she can’t stand up for herself unless/until the Primary task is threatened, or she can see that vulnerable others’ interests are threatened.

Appendix 5. Protocol for paired reflexivity exercise. June 21

Format

Semi -structured interview lasting approximately 40 minutes per participant. The interview is recorded and will be transcribed for further discussion when listening jointly to the recording. During the interview the interviewer is required to avoid direct eye-contact, while providing a ‘containing’ space – signalling attentive and receptive listening without engaging in discussion. The interviewer at times encourages the interviewee to explore an issue further by highlighting apparent connections between reflections.

Interview: Section 1 (scene setting)

1. Can you describe your research project
2. Tell me about the organization(s) you worked with and the nature of your encounters with them e.g – where you met with them, how long you spent in their company, whether you spent time with individuals or whole groups/teams
3. How did you get access to that/those organizations?
4. Did you offer them any work or help in exchange for their participation in your project?

Interview: Section 2 (your experience of the encounter)

1. Can you describe moments of emotional intensity you experienced during the research.
2. Can you talk about your emotional responses to the people you studied
3. Describe participants’ responses to being studied.

Appendix 6: Consent for paired reflexivity exercise.

University of East London
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust,
120 Belsize Lane, London NW£ 5BA

Consent to Participate in a Research Study **UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants: **Paired reflexivity exercise**

I have the read the relevant paper relating to the above exercise* in which I have agreed to collaborate. The nature and purposes of the research is clear to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details of the exercise with Brigid MacCarthy, my fellow collaborator. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been mutually agreed.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential, within the limits of legal requirements. Only the researchers involved in the study, i.e. myself and Brigid MacCarthy, will have access to the data and the right to retain it for future academic purposes.

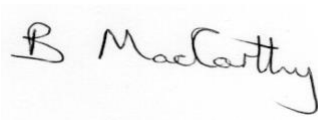
I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. All paper and electronic versions of personal information and data collected up to the point at which I choose to withdraw will be destroyed.

Participant's Name: ROBERT FITZPATRICK

Participant's Signature: 

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS): BRIGID MacCARTHY

Investigator's Signature: 

Date: 13th Oct 2021

*Gilmore, S & Kenny, K. (2015) Work worlds colliding: self-reflexivity, power and emotion in organizational ethnography. *Human Relations* 68(1) 55-78.

Appendix 7: Compilation of organization in the mind data

Health

Sandra's organization-in-the-mind had begun as a benign system which would take care of her and the children it served supremely competently. As events unfolded, the organization turned into an unavailable and neglectful parent. Her role was to uncomplainingly shoulder responsibility beyond what was appropriate without adequate support.

Beth's organization-in-the-mind therefore was an isolated and neglected system, occupied by abandoned residents left vulnerable to abuse and aggression. She felt merged with the clients and responsible for addressing all their unmet needs, while having to tolerate having none of her own needs met.

Ben's organization-in-the-mind therefore was a tribal culture, content to exist in an ivory tower, which it was his duty to constantly challenge from the position of a semi-outsider. The image of Don Quixote was constantly in my mind during his narrative. It was therefore unsurprising when he ascribed that persona, somewhat bitterly to himself.

Fiona's organization-in-the-mind therefore was a team full of good intentions, whose failure to communicate, confidence in their own position and defensive response to criticism led them to do harm to patients. Her own powerless position prevented her from mounting an effective challenge to harmful practice.

Not for profit

Bev's organization-in-the-mind therefore was pretending to be idealistic and altruistic, dedicated to rescuing displaced and persecuted people but was neglecting that task and staff distress. So Bev felt driven to compensate.

Andrea's organization-in-the-mind was both idealistic and corrupted. In her role in ID she thought she should achieve communication and mutual understanding in the most adverse circumstances. But she felt she lacked the personal strength to challenge people 'working the system' who unfairly subverted those goals.

Corporate

Philip's organization-in-the-mind therefore, was unconstrained and aggressive, within which it was his job to impose rules and limits and to look out for the common good.

Lia's organization-in-the-mind was therefore a stagnant pond which she was employed to stir up, undamming the blockages, to allow fresh water to run through. She was nearly metaphorically drowned during her efforts but, by holding firmly to her independent moral compass, she achieved her aims.

Jeremy's organization-in-the-mind therefore was a troubled system which he, with his particular expertise had been hired to rescue. But he came to understand that in its own eyes the system was not troubled. Instead the perverse collusion between the contractors and the royal family was nicely balanced to achieve maintenance of 'face' rather than build a telecoms system. His efforts to draw attention to reality necessarily failed.

Tim's organization-in-the-mind therefore was of a familiar if unpleasantly authoritarian system which he could survive only by filling his allocated role pragmatically and taking care not to 'know' about anything above him in the pecking order.

Intergovernmental

Trevor's organization-in-the-mind, was therefore a coldly calculating and hypocritical organization which would willingly sacrifice right to preserve its own reputation and future. He saw his role in this system as a solitary *parrhesiast* - no consistent allies were mentioned - at whatever cost to his personal well-being.

Appendix 8: Synopses of films analysed in Chapter 8

1. Additional films featuring whistleblowers who are men

1.1. On the Waterfront (released 1954)

Opening scenes show Terry Malloy lounging through the streets, then apparently bantering with a friend, Joey, encouraging him to go up onto the tenement roof to check for his racing pigeon's return. It is implied that there is something deceitful about Terry's behaviour – that there is an entrapment. Soon after Joey's body crashes to the pavement. Terry is horrified and guilty – he knows he is implicated in his death, although he had not intended it to happen.

Later Terry enters a bar, where \$ is being counted and paid out, changing hands clearly illegally. The men handling the money are well-dressed, confident, loud characters while those around them are hunched, tense, not making eye-contact, waiting for handouts. Terry's position seems ambiguous – he does not fit in either group, although there is something crushed about his manner. It emerges that those paying out the money are corrupt Union bosses and the money given and received are bribes. He is handed \$, by 'Friendly' the ironically named Union boss, in a way that seems to humiliate and patronize him. The Union controls both money and jobs. He is told that he will now be given an easy job on the waterfront (ie docks). He says he didn't intend that Joey would be killed but is told to 'wise up' – take the money and the cushy job and shut up. He is told that Joey was planning to 'rat' on his 'friends'

The priest is introduced into the story, saying last rites over Joey. Priest has a damascene moment when he realizes the waterfront and its workers are his parish and that his work is on the waterfront, not in his church. Joey's sister is also beside Joey's body and threatens that she will work to expose his killers. Terry is evidently drawn to her, but ambivalently – feeling she needs to wise up, yet moved by her grief.

Priest tries unsuccessfully to organize some of the more disaffected dockers to challenge the system. The church and the workers are attacked. Terry was sent to spy on them. He rescues Joey's sister from the mob and does not report what was said in his account to the mob leader. He begins an uncertain alignment with Joey's sister and tries to get help from the Priest to assuage his guilt about the death of Joey. Meanwhile the mobsters suspect he is wavering in his loyalty and take away his protected work.

The brutality and corruption of working in the holds of ships is demonstrated by the murder, in front of Terry, of the one worker who has agreed to speak out. Terry then decides he will testify in court against the mob. His brother Charlie, who is a mobster, is sent to organize his killing. Terry confronts him with his earlier failure to care for him by forcing him to swing a fight, thus ending his promising boxing career. Charlie warns Terry of the plot to kill him, sends him away and knowingly goes to be murdered himself. Terry finds his murdered body and narrowly escapes attack himself. Priest persuades Terry to fight Friendly by testifying in court rather than by attempting to kill him.

The following day he turns up for the hiring – everyone but him is hired and the crowd desert him – they can't meet his eye; he is an outcast and scapegoat. He goes to challenge the mob in their office and is brutally beaten, left for dead. Priest and Joey's sister, with whom he is in love, help him to get

up and lead the now rebellious dockers to defy the mob and ‘reclaim their union’. He is shown leading the dockers into the warehouse – and by implication, the control of – the owner of the waterfront. The boss is portrayed as a smiling, benign figure, curiously, dressed in similar fashion to the Union boss.

1.2. Serpico (released 1973)

This is a dramatized account of actual events leading up to Serpico, (Al Pacino) a New York City cop, blowing the whistle on police corruption and then, as retaliation, being abandoned to be shot during a drug arrest. After recovering he resigns from the police and moves to Europe.

The opening scene shows Serpico being rushed to hospital, close to death, having been shot in the face. Then, rapidly there is a flash-back to a much younger Serpico joyfully graduating as a policeman. Next he is shown as a fresh and eager young cop, increasingly frustrated with the casual and unregulated approach his fellow cops take to meting out justice: they are willing to let criminals evade arrest, but once caught brutally beat them up, then claim the credit for Serpico’s work. Scenes from his personal life show him becoming increasingly attached to an alternative counter-cultural lifestyle, which alienate him further from his colleagues, who view his habits and appearance with suspicion. When he joins a plain-clothed precinct team he finds he is expected to take bribes as everyone in the team does. He refuses to accept the money but is forced to witness colleagues brutally extorting the money from local criminals.

His efforts to raise concerns with superiors fail to make a difference. He is told he must testify in public to his concerns which he refuses to do, partly fearing for his safety and at first, out of loyalty to his colleagues. Meanwhile he shown unable to sustain close relationships with girlfriends because he priorities his passionate commitment and pre-occupation with the corruption over his attachment to them.

Even when he does testify, he notices that more senior figures in the hierarchy are protected. He and his main allies decide to report what is happening to the New York Times, partly to spur the system into a more active investigation and partly to protect him from retaliation. However, he is moved to a more dangerous, narcotics squad. During a drug arrest his colleagues leave him exposed to danger and he is shot in the face. The implication is that he was deliberately made vulnerable as a punishment.

The final scenes show him recovering although disabled and then emigrating to Europe, an isolated and damaged figure with only a dog for company.

2. Films featuring whistleblowers who are women

2.1. Silkwood. (released 1983)

The slow opening scenes position Karen as an ordinary person, with a complicated emotional past and some moral ambiguity. An early scene indicates that she may not be trustworthy: her children live with their father, not her, and she can be unreliable about visiting them. She and two other young people live a careless and unconventional life on the margins of small-town America. The household is shown smoking dope, having poor time-keeping and her gay house-mate’s partner openly flouts convention.

Karen is shown initially as a routine employee at the local plutonium processing plant, the major employer in the small community. She is friendly and well-integrated with her co-workers. Karen gradually begins to notice reasons for concern about the impact of the work of the plant on everyone’s well-being. The film introduces the signs casually, almost covertly, so we as audience begin to feel

anxious and unsettled in step with K's increasing awareness. The song 'Amazing Grace' plays in the soundtrack, presumably as a metaphor for her awakening. A small detail in her history frames her as someone prepared to be independent: at school, girls were encouraged to do Home Economics, but she chose to do science, although for characteristically irreverent reasons, because there were more boys in the science classes. But this choice indicates that she might be available to do something against the tide of convention and understand something of the technology of what she was seeing, while simultaneously undermining her status as a person to be taken seriously.

Her understanding of the danger to the community grows, and she begins to raise concerns inside the plant, but at some risk to herself. Distressing scenes show her being brutally decontaminated from radio-active substances. As she becomes politically active, collaborating first with the union and then with journalists on the New York Times, she is increasingly alienated from the community she is trying to save, as her 'toxic' views threaten its economic well-being. Her boyfriend leaves her, having forced her to choose between her activism and their relationship and she is shunned and eventually isolated in the workplace as her colleagues recognise that she threatens their livelihood.

Towards the end, as she becomes aware that she has been fatally internally contaminated by radiation, she is able to restore her closeness with her partner and they consider establishing a life further marginalised from the small-town community. The tension between her private commitment and her passionate ethical commitment to the community is reflected in the final scene with her partner. The public commitment wins out as she makes a choice to deliver vital documents to her journalist ally. The final scene implies that the choice kills her as she dies in a road accident which may have been deliberately staged. End credits again emphasise her moral ambiguity: it states that in fact the cause of her death was judged to be unclear, and her body was found to contain tranquillisers and alcohol.

2.2. The Whistleblower (released 2010)

The film opens with a short episode plot in Ukraine. Two young girls are seen planning to escape their dissatisfaction with humdrum, limited horizons. Their conflict with their parents is established. The scene is shot in half-darkness, in murky colours

The scene shifts to a US police-station, which, by contrast is light, airy and clean. Kathryn Bolkovac is framed as an ordinary working woman/police officer, but with a complicated family life. She is framed as unwomanly, not only in these opening scenes. Although she protests that "*I am not married to my job. Just because I like my job doesn't make me a bad mother*". She seems to prioritise her job and loses legal custody of her children. The film shows her taking a very well-paid job with the UN peace-keeping force in Bosnia as a way to solve the complexities of her broken family life rather than because she was committed to the task. (However, her actual biography shows that she specialised in gender-based violence in her police work in the US).

Kathryn's initiation to the peace-keeping world quickly establishes that this 'peace' is fragile, possibly a veneer. On her journey from the airport into Sarajevo she notices an extensive graveyard, the camera cuts to scenes of burials, houses pock-marked by bullets. It is also made clear that she is entering a masculine world: there are scenes of her in a bar, part of a hard-drinking, flirtatious world: e.g. a pinball machine has naked girls on its base. The implication is that she has to be tough to negotiate this world. In a subplot she is shown quickly developing a liaison with a married man

The UN office environment is spacious, light, clean and is sharply contrasted with the murky, night-time world outside the UN. Even in the woman's refuge which Kathryn visits in the daytime, the protected women are shadowy figures in a crowded and poorly furnished environment.

The storyline is one of mounting tension and horror. She gains a quick success by using the legal system competently, but each of her interventions seems to have a bad ending. There is a particularly shocking scene, where she promises she will keep girls safe in exchange for their testifying. Even by this quite early stage in the narrative it seems unlikely she will be able to deliver on her promise.

The abusive system is gradually exposed: Kathryn discovers that a bar popular with peacekeeping personnel is in fact a brothel. She goes on to discover that UN personnel are not just clients of the brothel but are the perpetrators and profiteers of a system of sex-trafficking and enslavement which crosses national borders across the Balkans. She also learns how the girls are terrorised into silence. Efforts to rescue particular girls from enslavement fail. There are scenes of horrific violence which end in one girl's death.

There is mounting fear for Kathryn's safety. Although she is shown as successfully confronting some of the brutal perpetrators, it is made increasingly apparent that as an unprotected woman with little power, physical or systemic, she cannot break the abuse. It is implied that senior people in the UN mission are involved in the abusive system. She also learns that UN personnel are immune from prosecution. She is ostracised by other UN personnel, and it is suggested that she is raising concerns because she is 'burnt out'. She is also taunted with not being 'the maternal type'.

After she sends a report to the UN High Commission, reporting serious organised crime involving UN personnel she is dismissed, allegedly for submitting false expense claims. She is ordered to leave the building but is aided to leave with incriminating documents by senior figures within the UN who support her. The final scenes of her escape are staged as a typical thriller, where the audience are kept in suspense about whether her allies have betrayed her and whether she will escape.

The closing scenes show how her whistleblowing finally reached the ears of the public. She won a case in the UK for unfair dismissal in the context of a protected disclosure against her UK based employers and ensured that the case was reported on the BBC. When she is asked if she would do it again, despite the great risks entailed she starkly replies 'Yes'.

2.3. Official Secrets (released 2019)

Official Secrets is the story of Katharine Gun, a whistleblower who leaked information to the press about an illegal NSA spy operation designed to push the UN Security Council into sanctioning the 2003 invasion of Iraq. At the time she was working at GCHQ as a Mandarin translator when she read an email requesting that incriminating details about UN representatives likely to oppose the invasion of Iraq be assembled. The details would be used to leverage their vote to support the invasion.

The structure of the film involves numerous flash-forwards and back to convey how intertwined the personal life and motivations of this ordinary citizen were with the events which led to her trial for breaching the Official Secrets Act in 2004. Scenes from her home and work life emphasise how marginal political issues were to her life, until she was angered by Tony Blair "making up facts". She is shown as diligent and professional. A bystander colleague remarks "ours not to reason why" when they receive the email asking for the incriminating details, and at first it seems possible she will share

his views. But events unfold to demonstrate her increasing awareness and discomfort with what has been asked for. It also emerges that her husband is an asylum seeker with only a precarious status in the UK. So the narrative begins to demonstrate how such an apparently ordinary figure might take such an extraordinary step. Her diligence is part of what determines her ability to think for herself. She is increasingly positioned as someone somewhat outside ordinary British culture

The narrative follows the tense process of her copying the email and posting it to a contact who eventually presents it to a journalist at the Observer. Thereafter there are two professional contexts in the story. Investigative journalists seem to get all the excitement, with some anger and histrionics in the newsroom as they debate whether they can risk publishing it and when Vuillamy seeks verifying evidence in the US – the only part of the film which seems to come close to the genre of a classic spy thriller. They decide to publish, not as a matter of principle but because it will make a ‘good story’. A similar ambivalence is also shown in the offices of Liberty, the legal firm which eventually organised her defence, but there the ambivalence is cautious, understated, thoughtful.

The scene returns to the mundanity of Katharine’s life. Her husband is angry with her for not discussing her actions with him and presses her not to confess, saying no-one cares about the distortion of truth. At work intimidating interrogations are being conducted. Eventually she feels compelled to admit her responsibility and is arrested. She prepares her case with the lawyers. During her interrogation she states that she works, not for the Government, but for the British people.

As the press publish the leaked emails her husband is detained and is about to be deported but is rescued in a dramatic last-minute action. But her lawyers tell her to keep her husband in the background as his status as an asylum seeker might prejudice her case.

The final scenes of Katharine parting from her husband and entering the dock at the Old Bailey are played as high drama, followed by the sudden denouement of the Government withdrawing their prosecution and she is told she is free to go. It is made clear that the Government dropped the prosecution to avoid revealing that they had been advised the invasion would be illegal.

The final scene of the film has Katharine’s lawyer encountering the Director of Public Prosecutions, while fishing. They were previously old friends and allies and in an earlier scene, there is some suggestion of how the old boys’ establishment might fix things between them. (A scene interestingly reminiscent of the 1983 Rumpole version of Official Secrets). Instead, her lawyer refuses to have anything more to do with his old friend, charging him with being morally compromised..

Appendix 9: Sample film codings

On the Waterfront. Focused codes + memo-ing

Contents of scene	Focused codes
1. Terry + men in overcoats	T patronized and treated as incapable of thought
2. Terry, Joey	T implicated in tricking Joey, leading to his death
3. Street scene, T some gangsters	Establishing the personal danger in wb'ing
4. Body falling	
5. T & gangsters	Showing T as unable to think
6. Pavement, priest police, girl	
7. Police J's fa, Andy's wife <i>Active bystanding</i>	Community endorsing danger of wb'ing and defining gov authority as the enemy
8. Edi, priest <i>EK rejecting Xian principle of turn other cheek – he was ?Jewish and more warlike God?</i>	Different versions of truth in conflict
9. Jonnie, T, Morgan the banker, various crooks	
10. T, J <i>The 'gang' both internal and external persecutor; drive to belong corrupts? Stein on ?Baring Bros</i>	T showing he is too stupid to calculate- unlike the other mob members. T as marginal figure?
11. T and a boy on the roof <i>Attachment, healthy dependency. Pigeons are caged – sees being caged as ->freedom from care</i>	T showing aspect of himself which would be available for pro-social motivations
12. On the docks – various dockers <i>Jacket as Christ's mantle – a curse and salvation in one.</i>	Community re-inforcing the norm of not 'stooling' – both dangerous and anti-community
13. Investigators; T	
14. T & other docker	ditto
15. 2 dockers, one in charge.	ditto
16. Priest and Edie <i>Plato's cave</i>	Deciding not to turn a blind eye
17. Dockers	The crowd of dockers behaving as mindless and needy rabble
18. Edie and T <i>T begins to separate from the herd</i>	
19. Priest, E, other dockers	Justifying bystanding
20. T & brother Charlie	Allegiance to friends/community as dominating value
21. Priest, dockers T <i>EK portraying not speaking out as cowardice</i>	ditto
22.	Emphasizing the power of the rule of law
23.	Rule of law failing to be powerful enough

24. Outside the church	
25. T & E	Romantic attachment may be powerful enough to save body
26. Priest and Kayo	
27. T & E	T being forced to choose. Belief in the power of money to stop people's mouths
28. T & E	T's badness can be redeemed by ?love and kindness
29. E & her fa at home	Social/external environment dictates level of morality in behaviour
30. T, E and 2 boys on the roof, by pigeon coops <i>Obviously metaphorical: hawks=predatory mobsters: pigeons=settled, passive community, prey to the mob. Morally ambiguous. Pigeon not => stool pigeon – they are bate here. Stool apparently comes from Stale – hunting metaphor emphasizing the entrapment part of the process. SparkNotes says the roof top is the territory where T can be innocent</i>	T trying to show where/why he positions himself – uncertain if he is a hawk or a pigeon
31. T, E in a bar <i>Failed early attachments; loyalty only has use value and is not relational.</i>	Explaining utilitarian values drive morality
32. T, E in a bar	E understanding T's helplessness – that he has no agency
33. T alone in bar <i>Damascene moment? Is this the tipping point?</i>	
34. E, crowded bar	
35. T & E in a corridor	Both Exploring belonging : outsider
36. T, E policeman, bar	Struggling over utilitarian vs moral values
37. T street Jonnie bro Charlie	The mob interfering at every level of the system
38. T, Kayo, other dockers in ship's hold	Mob demonstrating their power over life and death

Appendix 10: Whistleblowers in film. (MacCarthy, 2020)