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Whistleblowing in banks and the role of time

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Perceptions of time

From homogeneous, linear 'clock time' to the idea of time as a social construct, different for each person

Examining whistleblowing and long-term disputes



Time and a sense of self

- Past, present and future as a resource in people's construction of self
- Organizational resistance and time



Research methods

- 20+ in-depth interviews with whistleblowers in financial services
- UK, Ireland, Switzerland and the U.S.
- Lloyds Bank, HBOS, AIB, Irish Nationwide, Citigroup and JP Morgan among others.
- Secondary accounts, transcripts of parliamentary debates and public inquiries & media sources



Findings

- Time and self esteem
 - Long term unemployment
 - Self esteem & vicious circle
- Time and Money
- Temptation to Quit



Time and Self-esteem

- I am totally unemployable in financial services [YM]
- You Google me, and my name is everywhere... Any company that would hire me will see that. I can never live that down [LA]



Time and Self-esteem: a vicious circle

Of course that becomes a kind of vicious circle...because your low esteem...you know, you find yourself becoming shy even meeting other human beings.

...After a time, somebody who was good at their job, successful at it, can turn into somebody who can't even conceive of working with other people in a business environment. They have lost the confidence to sort of even face that situation. [GS]



Time and Money

- It's David against Goliath. And Goliath has \$800-dollar-an-hour lawyers coming out their ears... [MW]
- The stakes are very, very high. And if you lose, you have lost your job; you've lost your livelihood. And you look at your wife and your three kids and you feel, "I've let you down so, so bad. If I'd have kept my mouth shut, everything would be going along fine [MW]



Temptation to quit

- It's depressing to fight against so many people. And to be let down time and time and time again. You think maybe this person will give me a remedy and you know, it doesn't happen. [GS]
- It's completely gut wrenching to be honest. I don't know, people I suppose, quite often people do give up. I mean a lot of other people go on and get nowhere. [GS]



Time and past selves

- Even at the age of twenty or twenty-two, I played soccer in Switzerland and the UK. They tried to bribe me and I didn't take the bribe. I actually did the contrary to what they wanted me to do. [RE]
- I think I'm pretty solid in that point, even though I could have used the money very well... I think, basically, I haven't changed that much I would say, but I have learned a lot [RE]



Time and future selves

- I don't want to be, in twenty years' time, thirty years' time, looking back and wishing I had done something. I did it, I have done it, but I will never get a job financial services again... [YM]
- You know it's been tough but I will not be one of these people that I worked with for ten years, who will look back say, "God I wish I had the opportunity [again]...." [YM]



Discussion

- Ambivalence of time: Both cause and alleviation of anxiety
- Performative aspects of time as obstacle
- Political implications of time



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Conclusions and Questions

- Thank you

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