

## **Whistleblowing: An Inclusive Interdisciplinary Conference**

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Call for Papers

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Political Science, Peace History / Studies, Social History / Studies, Human Rights, Cultural History / Studies

### **Whistleblowing**

#### **An Inclusive Interdisciplinary Conference**

**Sunday 5th July 2020 - Monday 6th July 2020**

**Bratislava, Slovakia**

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Whistleblowers can play a vital role in exposing illegal, unjust or unethical behaviour on the part of businesses, governments and individuals in positions of power. However, whistleblowing is seldom a black and white matter. Exposing secrets can be instrumental in achieving positive change; but at the same time, such disclosures may run the risk of endangering innocent lives. Affording whistleblowers protection whilst also providing natural justice to those accused of wrongdoing can be a difficult balance to maintain. While whistleblowing empowers those who are generally without power, it could also contribute to the creation of a culture of surveillance and reporting that undermines positive engagement between colleagues, employees and citizens.

As a complex, fundamentally polarizing concept, whistleblowing can take many forms, from hourly workers informing bosses about unsafe working conditions, to high-end employees at international corporations informing the public about health risks, to anonymous informants disclosing illegal practices at the highest levels of governments around the world.

In one of the earliest examples of whistleblowing, two American naval officers in 1777-78 accused the Commander in Chief of the Continental Navy of torturing British prisoners of war. The Continental Congress dismissed the Commander in Chief and covered the naval officers' defense costs in a

subsequent libel suit. The Continental Congress also enacted a law declaring it the duty of persons living or serving in the United States to inform Congress or another proper authority of misconduct, frauds, or misdemeanours committed by a person in the service of the states.

Fast forward to today, and Wikileaks is the largest whistleblowing operation in the modern era, made possible because of technological advances in knowledge-sharing. The disclosures on WikiLeaks have been enormous in terms of their reach and volume, and have prompted a worldwide cultural conversation about the relationship between national security and individual privacy. The founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, is currently imprisoned, and the focus of differing views on the legality of extraditing him to the USA. WikiLeaks provided a platform for very many whistleblowers, such as Chelsea Manning who disclosed classified military documents and served seven years, commuted from 35 years, for espionage. Edward Snowden lives in exile, in Moscow, with the right to asylum, after also leaking classified documents to journalists about government security operations whilst working for the CIA. Such figures have become household names, partly because of the rise of internet platforms which make it impossible to keep the cases under wraps, and partly because they tap into our deepest desires, to be kept safe from threats and harm, and our deepest fears about the power of states and their capacity for operating global surveillance for their own ends.

All of this raises the question of how we got to the point where individuals who expose wrongdoing are themselves the recipients of punishment, and this has of late become even more pressing as events around the world expose the underside of global machinations. Revelations by whistleblowers lay bare the details of US President Donald Trump's dealings with Ukraine, foreign interference in the United Kingdom's referendum on leaving the European Union, corrupt dealings by Crown Casino in Melbourne, Australia and countless other cases.

It is an appropriate time to reconsider the meaning and implications of whistleblowing. What conditions give rise to and sustain whistleblowing? What purposes does whistleblowing serve in a democratic society? What lessons are to be gained from case studies in terms of the possibilities of achieving change by working within a system, working outside a system, working alone or as part of a collective that may or may not be organised? How can societies harness the benefits of whistleblowing as a form of extreme civic engagement while preserving the values of justice and fairness, and protecting the rights of relevant parties? What are the rules of engagement for blowing the whistle on and dealing with whistleblowers?

From the conversations and dialogues which take place, our intention is to form a selective innovative interdisciplinary publication to engender further research and collaboration.

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## Key Topics

In recognition of the complex, inter-disciplinary nature of this topic, our unique, interdisciplinary conference provides a platform for participants from any relevant field, profession or practice to engage in dialogues on any aspect of whistleblowing including:

- ~ case studies and their implications
- ~ conditions that give rise to whistleblowing
- ~ legal and legislative frameworks that support, protect, or enable whistleblowing
- ~ motives of whistleblowers
- ~ social attitudes toward whistleblowing and the people who do it
- ~ false/fraudulent/misleading claims
- ~ best practice for dealing with whistleblowers and preserving natural justice for involved parties
- ~ implications for job training and human resources policies
- ~ legacy and impact of whistleblowing on institutions, workforce, etc.
- ~ moral duty to blow the whistle on wrongdoing/complicity of failing to blow the whistle
- ~ mechanisms for providing support for whistleblowers
- ~ espionage and whistleblowing
- ~ role of technology in facilitating whistleblowing
- ~ representation of whistleblowers and whistleblowing in film, television, theatre, literature, news media
- ~ connections with activism, protest and movements

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## What To Send

The aim of this inclusive interdisciplinary conference and collaborative networking event is to bring people together and encourage creative conversations in the context of a variety of formats: papers, seminars, workshops, storytelling, performances, poster presentations, problem-solving sessions, case studies, panels, q&a's, round-tables etc. Creative responses to the subject, such as poetry/prose, short film screenings/original drama, installations and alternative presentation styles that engage the audience and foster debate are particularly encouraged. Please feel free to put forward proposals that you think will get the message across, in whatever form.

At the end of the conference we will be exploring ways in which we can develop the discussions and dialogues in new and sustainable inclusive interdisciplinary directions, including research, workshops, publications, public interest days, associations, developing courses etc which will help us make sense of the topics discussed during the meeting. There is an intention, subject to the

discussions which emerge during the course of the meeting, to form a selective innovative interdisciplinary publication to engender further research and collaboration.

300 word proposals, presentations, abstracts and other forms of contribution and participation should be submitted by Friday 10th January 2020. Other forms of participation should be discussed in advance with the Organising Chairs.

All submissions will be at least double reviewed, under anonymous (blind) conditions, by a global panel drawn from members of the Project Team, The Development Team and the Advisory Board. In practice our procedures usually entail that by the time a proposal is accepted, it will have been triple and quadruple reviewed.

You will be notified of the panel's decision by Friday 24th January 2020.

If your submission is accepted for the conference, a full draft of your contribution should be submitted by Friday 1st May 2020.

Abstracts and proposals may be in Word, RTF or Notepad formats with the following information and in this order:

a) author(s), b) affiliation as you would like it to appear in the programme, c) email address, d) title of proposal, e) type of proposal e.g. paper presentation, workshop, panel, film, performance, etc, f) body of proposal, g) up to 10 keywords.

E-mails should be entitled: Whistleblowing Submission

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### **Where To Send**

Abstracts should be submitted simultaneously to the Organising Chair and the Project Administrator:

Diana Medlicott: [diana@progressiveconnexions.net](mailto:diana@progressiveconnexions.net)

Len Capuli (Project Administrator): [bratislavawhistleblowing@progressiveconnexions.net](mailto:bratislavawhistleblowing@progressiveconnexions.net)

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URL:

<http://www.progressiveconnexions.net/interdisciplinary-projects/human-rights/whistleblowing/conferences/>