

Measuring Public Attitudes Towards National Security Whistleblowers

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The Purpose of this Study:

- Does the public have a different view of national security whistleblowing than it does towards whistleblowing in other areas of government?



Secrecy in Government



What is Whistleblowing?

- “The disclosure by organization members (current or former) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers to persons or organizations who may be able to effect action.”
----- (Marcia Miceli and Janet Near 2008)



Points of Emphasis

- Heroism and morality: Whistleblowers as “ethical resisters” and “policy entrepreneurs” (Glazer and Glazer 1989)
- Retaliation: Whistleblowers as “broken people,” often crushed by organizations they’ve exposed (Alford 2001)



Types of Whistleblowing

Public Sector



National Security



Whistleblowing and Public Opinion

Do you regard Edward Snowden, the national security consultant who released information to the media about the phone scanning program, as more of a traitor or more of a whistle-blower?

	TOT	REP.	DEM.	IND.	MEN	WOM.	WHT.	BLK.
TRAITOR	34%	38%	36%	34%	34%	35%	34%	39%
WHISTLE-BLOWER	55%	51%	56%	55%	57%	55%	52%	50%
DK/NA	11%	11%	9%	11%	9%	13%	11%	10%

Source: Quinnipiac University Poll, July 10, 2013



The Method

- Comparative hypothetical scenario model, all scenarios based on real cases
- 4 cases of “Public” Whistleblowing
 - EPA Water Safety
 - FDIC Fraud prevention
 - FDA Drug Safety
 - NRC Nuclear Safety
- 2 cases of National Security Whistleblowing
 - Air Force Drone Operation
 - NSA Data Collection



Results: A Pilot Run

- Confirms the utility of the method
- Surveyed a cohort of Southern Oregon University Students (N=56)
- Desire to conduct further study based on this model



Why does this matter?

- Whistleblowing: a part of modern organizational life
- Exposing Corruption
 - Whistleblowing and the Media
- Democratic theory: Consent of the governed

