

ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

OPEN ACCESS DISSERTATIONS

Title

New Insights into Corruption: Paradoxical Effects of Approach-Orientation for Powerholders

Author

Mindi Sara Rock, *University of Massachusetts Amherst Follow*

Date of Award

2-2013

Document Type

Open Access Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Degree Program

Psychology

First Advisor

Ronnie Janoff-Bulman

Second Advisor

Linda Isbell

Third Advisor

Robert Marx

Subject Categories

Psychology

Abstract

Does power lead to corruption (Kipnis, 1972), and if so, why? Here, a novel mechanism is proposed for understanding the complex relationship between power and corruption by incorporating recent work on morality (Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Hepp, 2009). By bridging the power, self-regulation, and morality literatures we proposed that powerful individuals, because of their approach tendencies, are oriented more towards moral prescriptions or “shoulds” and thus focus more on moral acts and moral intentions while minimizing the importance of moral proscriptions (*neglect pathway*). We proposed an alternative path to corruption for powerholders via moral self-regard. Powerholders, because of their approach-based moral focus, would experience an automatic boost of implicit moral self-regard that would license future immorality. In three studies we found suggestive evidence that the approach tendencies of participants primed with power maximized the role of good moral acts and intentions and minimized the impact of moral transgressions, because the individual’s monitoring system focused on and valued instances of moral successes rather than moral failures (*neglect pathway*). We did not find support for the moral self-regard pathway.

Recommended Citation

Rock, Mindi Sara, "New Insights into Corruption: Paradoxical Effects of Approach-Orientat for Powerholders" (2013). *Open Access Dissertations*. 702.
https://scholarworks.umass.edu/open_access_dissertations/702/

[Download](#)

DOWNLOADS

Since March 21, 2013

Included in

[Psychology Commons](#)

Share

COinS