

THE EVOLUTIONARY MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF COLLUSIVE GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

It is common to attribute the misconduct of individuals to a symbolic agent we call an organization. The more secrecy shrouding events, or the more complex the violation of accepted norms, the more likely it is, for example, that the "IRS" or "Goldman Sachs" will be defined as the rhetorical villain. Underneath these symbols, however, human beings strive to accomplish goals which may or may not be sanctioned by or in the best interests of the organization with which they are affiliated. Many of the best known and most infamous organizational travesties were transacted by groups of highly educated people with multiple skills, authorities, resources and professional affiliations. The present research examines several small group theories in an effort to more fully understand collusive phenomena. Contemporary theories are found to be lacking mechanisms useful for understanding these phenomena. Consequently, a theory of evolutionary psychology is offered to explain how such collusions form and why they are so persuasive to their individual members. Implications for management and research are offered.

Keywords: *Evolutionary Psychology, Organizational Behavior, Organizational Misconduct, Functional Group Theory, Social Identity Theory, Network Theory*