Chapter 6

General Discussion

This dissertation is inspired by the immensely negative impact that corruption has on people around the world and by the belief that understanding the social psychological dynamics of corruption can help to reduce it. So far, psychological factors in general, and social psychological factors in particular, have been widely neglected in the quest to understand and curb corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2017; Persson et al., 2012). Hence, the present dissertation aims to invigorate a stream of social psychological corruption research. To recapitulate the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of each chapter the ensuing General Discussion is structured along three main questions: What are the new insights into the social psychology of corruption that this thesis offers? How can these insights eventually prove useful to counteract corruption? What are avenues for future research? After this review of the topics of Chapter 2-5, the discussion moves beyond these subjects and illustrates for two concrete examples how a social psychological perspective can both enrich long-standing debates as well as newly emerging trends in corruption research. Finally, the General Discussion concludes with four main take-home messages.

Prospection in Individual and Interpersonal Corruption Dilemmas

Novel insights. The first contribution of this dissertation lies in the theoretical framework put forth in Chapter 2. Capturing the recent theoretical advances in the corruption literature, it models the decision to engage in corruption as a social dilemma (Chen, Jiang, & Villeval, 2015; Köbis, Van Lange, & Mkwella, 2017; Rothstein, 2000). To describe the *corruption dilemma* in simple terms: All citizens in a given society are collectively better off if nobody bribed. Yet, each citizen individually benefits from bribing – a situation in which individual rationality leads to collective irrationality (Kollock, 1998).

As an extension of existing social dilemma models of corruption, the theoretical chapter introduces a distinction between two main types of corruption dilemmas. The number of corrupt agents that are directly involved in the corrupt act determine whether it is a form of

individual or *interpersonal* corruption. While the first represents a "typical" social dilemma – a decision between short-term self-interest and long term collective interest – the second resembles the structure of a nested social dilemma. Here, a threefold conflict of interests for a corrupt agent exists: The (a) self-interest, (b) the corrupt partner's interest and (c) the collective interest, are at odds with each other. Consequently, the decision to engage in individual and interpersonal corruption rest on different social psychological mechanisms. Recognizing these differences helps to foster the understanding of corrupt behavior and is also a prerequisite to designing successful anti-corruption strategies.

Implications for Anti-Corruption Efforts. An analysis of the type of corruption at hand is needed to calibrate anti-corruption efforts. This need for differentiation becomes apparent when taking a closer look at the different psychological decision-making mechanisms involved in individual and interpersonal corruption. As outlined below, these mechanisms can be grouped into three main categories: a) some social psychological factors only matter for interpersonal corruption, b) some matter for both types of corruption and c) some have opposite effects for each type of corruption.

First, several psychological factors exist that matter *only* for interpersonal corruption, such as trust, reciprocity, and communication. Anti-corruption efforts aimed at these factors might help to reduce interpersonal corruption while leaving individual corruption mostly unaffected. These efforts typically target corrupt collaborations. One example is staff rotation. It describes the forced changing of positions within a company with the aim to undermine the stabilization of corrupt collaborations (Abbink, 2004; Gross, Leib, Offerman, & Shalvi, forthcoming). Individual forms of corruption are largely impervious to such efforts.

The second category comprises factors that matter for *both* types of corruption, yet to different degrees. One example are prospective cost-benefit estimations. People mentally forecast the likelihood and severity of detection and compare it to the prospected gains, both

in individual and interpersonal corruption dilemmas. Many existing anti-corruption efforts seek to reduce corrupt behavior by increasing the likelihood of detection. One concrete way to do so are whistleblowing schemes. Although whistleblowing programs can also help to uncover forms of individual corruption, such schemes have even bigger prospects at curbing interpersonal corruption. The reason lies in the outlined collaboration between the corrupt partners, who mutually pose a direct detection threat to one another (Waytz et al., 2013). Additional incentives, such as granting amnesty to whistleblowers through leniency provisions amplifies this detection threat for interpersonal corruption (Lambsdorff & Nell, 2007). Hence, due to the direct transaction between multiple corrupt agents, the threat of detection through whistleblowing is augmented for interpersonal corruption compared to individual corruption.

Third, some factors have *opposite* effects on both types of corruption such as the intricate workings of guilt. Triggering guilt to prevent corruption requires a close look at the reference group of guilt because it matters a great deal who the potentially corrupt agents feel guilty *towards*. To illustrate this point: In individual corruption dilemmas, the only possible reference group is the victim of corruption. That victim can range from a concrete person to abstract entities such as the society as a whole. However, in interpersonal corruption, due to its nested social dilemma structure, two possible reference groups for guilt exist: the victim but also the corrupt partner(s). Here, guilt can propel corruption. Corrupt agents might feel guilty for *not* engaging in corruption which can even be seen as a loyalty violation (Köbis, Iragorri-Carter & Starke, in press).

While general cues of guilt might thus backfire, situational cues that are calibrated to elicit guilt *towards the victim* could help to reduce both individual and interpersonal corruption. Behavioral ethics research draws a promising picture (Mazar et al., 2008a), as moral reminders can successfully reduce the level of unethical behavior (Bryan et al., 2012;

Shu et al., 2011; Shu, Mazar, & Gino, 2012). Recognizing the different moral concerns that are at work in both forms of corruption increases the chances of success of such nudges.

Future Research. The distinction between individual and interpersonal corruption dilemmas is by far not the only distinction of corruption types (see for example, Bauhr & Nasiritousi, 2011; Blau, 2009; Huberts, Lasthuizen, & Peeters, 2005; Köbis & Huss, 2017; Pinto et al., 2008; Rose-Ackerman, 2006). The combination of existing corruption distinctions epitomizes an important pathway for future conceptual research. An integrative theoretical framework, a sort of *atlas of corruption types* (Kelley et al., 2003; Köbis & Huss, 2017), would help to differentiate the multiple forms of corruption that are currently subsumed under the same umbrella term. In a subsequent step, future research could investigate the psychological underpinnings involved in each of these multiple types of corruption.

"Who doesn't?" - The Impact of Descriptive Norms on Corruption

Novel insights. As a first empirical contribution of this dissertation, Chapter 3 investigates the influence of social norms on corruption. More specifically, it applies the social psychological distinction between descriptive and injunctive social norms. The results of three studies suggest that the former trumps the latter when it comes to corrupt decision-making. Put into simple words, people often engage in corruption *although* they know it is morally wrong (injunctive norms), *because* they think others do it as well (descriptive norms). Hence, perceived descriptive norms pave the way for rationalizations that morally legitimize corruption: "If others are doing it, I don't have to feel so bad about it myself" (Brandt, Köbis, & Starke, 2016).

Yet, these perceived descriptive social norms do not only serve as a justification of one's own unethical behavior, they also serve as a signal for the behavior of others (Bicchieri & Xiao, 2009). An accurate estimation of whether a counter-part is corruptible inherently

determines the consequences of the decision "to bribe or not to bribe". Put into game theoretic terms, corruption represents a frequency-dependent equilibrium (Bardhan, 1997) – the level of corruption in the society shapes whether bribing or abstaining is the best course of action (Bicchieri & Rovelli, 1995; Kosfeld, 1997; Rothstein, 2000).

For instance, consider a police officer in a highly corrupt police force: Not accepting bribes does not just lead to lower short-term payoffs (= not earning a bribe) but is outright dangerous as the corrupt colleagues might punish deviation from the "corruption norm" – the officer is in a social trap (Rothstein, 2013). On the contrary, asking for a bribe as a police officer in a low corruption context can have adverse consequences due to high likelihood and severity of punishment. Social norms in general, and perceived descriptive norms in particular, serve as a marker for these different levels of corruption – they constitute the "grammar of the society" (Bicchieri, 2005).

It is however important to note, that perceived injunctive norms – the moral acceptability of a certain course of action – are by no means irrelevant (for a discussion on that matter, see Bicchieri & Mercier, 2014; Mockus, 2013). Indeed, the moral evaluation of a given corrupt act also impacts its psychological justifications (see also, Shalvi et al., 2015). One example is the distinction between *need* and *greed* corruption (Bauhr & Nasiritousi, 2011; Tanzi, 1998). Think of a citizen who bribes a doctor to receive urgent medical treatment. On the other hand, consider a well-off businessperson who bribes to top-up a salary that was already in dizzy heights. The general tendency is to condone the behavior of the former because it happens out of need, and condemn the behavior of the latter as it is driven by greed. Recent research furthermore suggests that forms of corruption that involve non-monetary exchanges are seen as more acceptable than those than involve pecuniary transactions (Köbis, et al., forthcoming). These differing moral evaluations reflect the

differences in (perceived) injunctive norms, which in turn impact a person's willingness to engage in corruption.

Implications for Anti-Corruption Efforts. The transformation of social norms poses a big challenge but it also bears great potential to reduce corruption. While injunctive norms of a given behavior tend to be relatively stable over time, targeting descriptive norms could help to lower corruption levels. Research on trust and corruption suggests that people adjust relatively quickly to their social environment (Barr & Serra, 2008; Dinesen, 2012). They stop acting corruptly if they (rightly or wrongly) believe that others are not corrupt either. The challenge then lies in shifting these perceptions about corruption.

One channel for change consists in the media portrayal of corruption cases (Starke, Wickberg, Aurelia, & Köbis, forthcoming) – conditional on the media being sufficiently free to report about corruption (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Starke, Naab, & Scherer, 2016). The framing of a story covering a corruption case might specifically impact the perception of descriptive norms. A news piece that tells a story of *yet another politician caught up in a corruption scandal* caters towards the general belief that *all (politicians) are corrupt*. Such a frame might contribute to the formation or consolidation of corruption-inducing norms. However, a report, that focuses on the *honest and brave police officer who detected the corruption case*, might do the opposite (for more details on how to use the media to fight corruption see, Kindra & Stapenhurst, 1998; Köbis, Iragorri-Carter & Starke, forthcoming). Taken together, targeting and changing the beliefs about *what others do* could potentially help to reduce corruption – especially when it comes to interpersonal forms of corruption in which such perceptions of social norms fulfill an important signalling function.

Future research. Related to the proposed anti-corruption strategies, future research at the intersection of psychology and political science could investigate how transformations of political systems affect the perception of social norms. How fast do people adjust to changes

in the "rules of the game" of corruption (Olivier de Sardan, 2013a)? Gradual shifts of corruption might lead to the persistence of existing social norms of corruption because people might not recognize the steady changes (Gino & Bazerman, 2009). On the contrary when political change occurs abruptly like a "big bang" (Rothstein, 2011b) people might quickly adjust their own behavior as well as the perceptions about the behavior of others to the sudden changes of the political climate. How different anti-corruption strategies might affect the perceptions of social norms could provide crucial insights into the psychological underpinnings of political change.

The Look Over Your Shoulder: Corruption and Cheating Decreases in the Presence of Another Person

Novel insights. While Chapter 3 showed that the belief about what others do influences corrupt behavior, Chapter 4 amplifies this social element of corruption by investigating the impact of the *actual* presence of a second person on corrupt decision-making. Two studies show that the company of another person suffices to lower the level of unethical behavior. Remarkably, this reduction occurred even when the other person was a friend or could co-benefit from dishonesty. Possibly, reputation outplayed corrupt trust. The other person seemed to have swayed the needle of the individual's "moral compass" (Moore & Gino, 2013).

A supplementary interpretation of the obtained results is that secrecy characterizes most forms of corruption. Due to its illegitimacy and illegality, corruption typically takes place as a *shadow transaction*; corrupt deals rarely occur in plain sight (Mény, 1996). Think of the common practice to hide monetary bribes within an envelope or in other documents like a passport or driver's license. This secret element of corruption also manifests itself linguistically. Instead of calling a bribe a bribe, people typically distance themselves from the

corrupt act by using indirect language (discussed in more detail in the Anti-corruption section of this General Discussion for Chapter 5) and euphemistic labels. *Tea-money* (=informal payment; Sub-Saharan Africa), *baksheesh* (= tip / gift; Middle-Eastern and Southern Asia), *guanxi* (= connections; China), *jeitinho* (= little way circumventing formalities; Brazil) or *Seilschaften* (= insider relationships; Germany) are just some of the many examples how everyday parlour softens corruption (Smith, Huang, Harb, & Torres, 2011). The obtained results support this notion of secrecy and distancing as participants were more willing to cheat and bribe when they could not be seen by others.

Implications for Anti-Corruption Efforts. The findings also indirectly support a commonly proposed anti-corruption strategy: the four-eyes-principle (Hiebl, 2015; Lambsdorff, 2012). It describes that at least two public officials simultaneously share the decisional responsibility for a task. As a result, corrupt deals become more difficult to establish, in part because the communication process between a corrupt agent and an official becomes less private. The additional public official complicates the corruptibility estimations. A corrupt agent now needs to find not just one but two corrupt counterparts. The four-eyes-principle, already implemented by many police forces, could potentially be extended to other domains that are prone to interpersonal corruption.

Future research. Due to the relative lack of studies that investigate how the physical presence of others influences corrupt decision-making, multiple avenues for future research exist. To name a few, studies could specifically investigate the main driver of the obtained results by disentangling reputational concerns from mere presence effects (Rajecki et al., 1977). In the set of studies presented in Chapter 4, the other person could see the participant's behavior. What if the second person is blind(-folded) and thus not able to observe what the participant does? Would the mere presence similarly reduce unethical behavior?

Other research could explore whether the level of corruption in a given context moderates the effect. Both studies reported in Chapter 4 were conducted in the Netherlands, a country that ranked eighth on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2016 (Transparency International, 2016). This relatively low level of (perceived) corruption begs the question: would the effect differ, or even disappear, when conducted in a country with higher levels of corruption? This research could in turn help to inform anti-corruption efforts. Quite plausibly, the four-eye principle works when corruption levels are low yet not when corruption is wide-spread; finding an extra corrupt counterpart might be less of a problem in systemically corrupt contexts (Gawthorpe, 2016). Hence, the policy recommendation of the four-eye principle might be contingent on the level of corruption. In low-corruption contexts, the presence of another person might help to prevent the occurrence of interpersonal corrupt deals.

The Road to Bribery and Corruption: Slippery Slope or Steep cliff?

Novel insights. The last empirical chapter deals with the emergence of severe corruption. It presents some of the first experimental studies on sequential corrupt decision-making. A review of the social psychological literature, dating back to the seminal obedience studies by Milgram (1963), suggests that severe unethical behaviour emerges gradually – also referred to as a slippery slope process. According to it, people are willing to breach ethical norms, step-by-step. Four experiments compared this slippery slope process to a steep-cliff process, in which participants could abruptly engage in severe corruption. With overall costs and benefits identical in both conditions, results of four studies challenge the commonly held belief in the ubiquity of the slippery slope analogy. Instead, the new findings suggest that people at times engage in single more severe acts of corruption rather abruptly than gradually.

Implications for Anti-Corruption Efforts. The steep-cliff-effect can be applied to anti-corruption efforts, by impairing the spontaneous formation of severe corrupt deals between corrupt agents. One way to do so is the mandatory use of written communication for specific corruption-prone domains. Written communication aggravates the use of indirect language, a form of communication that facilitates spontaneous corrupt transactions (Pinker, 2007; Pinker et al., 2008). The multifaceted dynamics of indirect language deserve further elaboration: when instigating a corrupt transaction, both potentially corrupt agents face the challenge to convey the willingness to engage in corruption without (a) accusing the other of being corrupt, or (b) stepping into dangerous legal territory of admitting the own corruptibility (Gambetta, 2009). Indirect language allows this communicative balancing act and written communication thus aggravates spontaneous abrupt corrupt deals.

As a positive side-effect, written communication also increases the risk of detection as written statements are more easily traceable to an individual than spoken word. It also reduces plausible deniability (Pinker, 2007; Pinker et al., 2008). For instance, the evidence of written email-correspondence about corrupt deals weighs more heavily on corrupt partners than alleged spoken words. E-government could be one domain in which this idea could be applied (Starke et al., 2016). For instance, written communication could hinder the ad-hoc extraction of bribes in the process of granting permits.

Future Research. Many facets of sequential corrupt decision-making remain unknown. One important factor is punishment as the set of studies presented in Chapter 5 did not contain a potential threat of being detected and sanctioned for corruption. The experimental set-up thus reflects a state of impunity – a circumstance that occurs frequently when corruption has become endemic (Olivier de Sardan, 2013b). Here, formal sanctions for corruption are so unlikely that they do not deter corruption. The findings therefore again underline the importance of moral costs. Abrupt corruption meant avoiding the moral costs of repeated

corruption. Pairing sequential corrupt decision-making with punishment regimes could shed light into how corruption unfolds in contexts in which a realistic threat of punishment exists. Future research could also test whether in such contexts the slippery slope might reflect a learning process: People might first engage in small forms of corruption. When they realize that they get away with it and not get punished, they might go one step further and so on, until they engage in behavior that they never deemed possible (Welzer & Christ, 2005).

Weighing in on long-standing debates and emerging trends

Beyond the topics discussed in Chapters 2-5, the contributions put forth in this dissertation can enrich long-standing debates as well as newly emerging trends in the corruption literature. To outline how, the ensuing part deals with two concrete examples: First, it discusses one of the most commonly proposed ways to reduce corruption: the increase of public officials' salaries, also known as fair salary hypothesis. Second, it illustrates the psychological facets of using technological advances to limit corruption.

Fair Salary Hypothesis. Paying higher wages to public servants in the hope to reduce corruption, marks one of the most frequently proposed anti-corruption policies, both by aid donors and corruption researchers (Azfar et al., 2001; Rose-Ackerman, 1997; Tanzi, 1998) One of the basic arguments behind the fair salary hypothesis, the so called "efficiency-wage" argument (Becker & Stigler, 1974; Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001), posits that the higher the salaries in the public sector, the bigger is the potential loss of getting caught at corrupt activities. If working for the government is actually a good job (e.g., well-paid) then public officials would try to avoid losing it.

While this theorized link is plausible in countries with effective policing institutions, in many high corruption contexts the threat of being punished for corruption, let alone lose the job over it, is almost non-existent (Rothstein, 2000). Here, the aforementioned state of

impunity exists for public officials. It is thus not surprising that the empirical work on the subject, stemming from different disciplines, has yielded inconclusive evidence (Abbink, 2000; Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001; Van Veldhuizen, 2013). While some studies show that extremely high salary top-ups are needed to effectively reduce corruption (Van Rijckeghem & Weder, 2001), other studies show that increasing public wages can even led to more, not less, corruption (Foltz & Opoku-Agyemang, 2015).

One reason for the lack of success of these efforts might lie in the theoretical model of corruption. Most of these previous studies on the topic have modelled corruption using a principal agent framework (Marquette & Peiffer, 2015), which assumes that an honest principal (e.g. honest police force or politicians) exists. This theoretical model tends to underestimate the pervasiveness of corruption in contexts where it has become systemic (Huss, 2016). Here, corruption becomes a second order collective action problem (Persson et al., 2012) as anti-corruption institutions themselves might fall prey to the existing corruption level (Engelbert, 2014).

In the absence of formal punishment institutions, the social dilemma model, put forth in Chapter 2, might more adequately explain the ineffectiveness of salary top-up programs. Increasing public officials' wages without any accountability mechanism in place, does not change the incentive structure for public officials – they thus have little reason to curb their corrupt behavior. Instead of allocating higher salaries to public officials it might make more sense to use the financial means to empower those who are affected by corruption. For example, a different mode of payment that empowers the recipients of public services and provides them with a means to reward impartial use of public power, could create the market for honesty that increased salaries have failed to deliver (Köbis, Soraperra, Efferson, Vogt, Offerman, & Shalvi, forthcoming).

Novel technological advances. Besides contributing to long-standing debates in the corruption literature, recognizing the social psychological dynamics of corruption could also enrich novel trends in anti-corruption. For instance, consider technological innovations aimed at reducing corruption. Recent studies show that using modern banking technology, like biometric bank cards, can reduce leakages and embezzlement in cash transfer programs by up to 47% (Hanna, 2017). Similar technology could be used to avoid public expenditure disappearance in the education system and streamline the often highly complex payment systems of teaching staff (Brandt, forthcoming). Although first results are promising, the psychological consequences of introducing technological solutions need to be considered given that recent studies show that technological solutions can backfire: Citizens might respond with reactance to novel technological tools that substitute human elements (Laakasuo, Palomäki, & Köbis, forthcoming).

The replacement of human governance with non-human governance and the psychological implications deserve more attention. Such implementations of automated decision-making already exist in many different forms; ranging from teaching staff using computerized exam corrections that impede partial grading to algorithms that are entrusted with autonomous decisional power to award public tender, like the public procurement software ProZorro in Ukraine. The decisional scope of such intelligent machines likely increases in the future which poses important questions, like: Whether, when and how should humans, who seem to have an inherent tendency to be biased (Kahneman, 2011), be replaced with unbiased machines? Which moral code should machines be programmed with (Wallach, 2010)? And what if the machine misbehaves? Who is to blame? These and other challenging questions mark crucial, yet fascinating avenues for future research on the intersection of psychology, philosophy, technology and (anti-)corruption.

Taken together, a wide-open field for social psychological research on corruption exists. Although the dissertation provides some insights into when and how people are willing to instigate an abuse of entrusted power, many questions remain open. These questions bear relevance for the ever-growing field of corruption research, and the answers hopefully inform anti-corruption efforts. Future research endeavors, emphasizing the social and psychological tenants of corruption, can inspire new solutions to existing puzzles in the corruption literature – for instance the fair salary hypothesis – and identify emerging challenges ahead.

Take home messages

More than five years ago I was discussing research ideas over a coffee with a friend. Inspired by game theory and interdependence theory, we started modelling games for Paul Van Lange's expert workshop. We tweaked some aspects here, changed some parameters there. After a second or third coffee, we re-examined what we came up with. "This is corruption" one of us said, looking at the model that I had drawn up. That is how corruption came into my (academic) life. The fascination for the topic has not faded but has rather grown. After this initial coffee talk, I kept encountering corruption over and over again: in the news, during conversations with friends, colleagues and taxi drivers or when reading ostensibly unrelated literature. So, after more than five years of researching corruption and after having written this dissertation, I guess it is time to draw an interim conclusion and dare to spell out some take-home messages – of which there are four.

The first take-home message that has become repeatedly clear to me is that corruption is an umbrella term than requires specification. The word corruption is (often loosely) used to describe a wide array of phenomena. Academics, journalists and the public parlour use corruption to describe various behaviors ranging from bribery to embezzlement, from lobbyism to nepotism, from match-fixing to any type of misbehavior by (political) decision-

makers. Researching, understanding and eventually curbing corruption requires closer differentiation. This dissertation introduces a theoretical model that combines state-of-the-art theories from the corruption literature with insights from social psychology and models the decision to act corruptly as a social dilemma. Dependent on number of corrupt agents directly involved in the corrupt act, the framework distinguishes two types of corruption dilemmas: individual and interpersonal corruption. Hopefully this theoretical framework lays the groundwork for more integrative frameworks to follow and inspires future conceptual work to create an *atlas of corruption types*.

The second take-home message emphasizes the importance of focusing on key features of the *social* environment factors to understand corrupt behavior. All three empirical chapters of this dissertation explore this social element of corruption. The first empirical chapter examines the link from the *individual to the social environment* and indicates that the perception of what others do – i.e. perceived descriptive social norms – crucially shape the decision to engage in corruption. Social norms may also help to explain the vast differences in corruption levels around the globe. The second empirical chapter investigates link from the *social environment to the individual* and shows that the physical presence of another person, who has neither the authority nor the means to directly punish, can reduce unethical behavior. It underlines that people preferable engage in corruption when being out of sight of observing others. The third chapter explored sequential corrupt decision-making *between corrupt individuals* and challenges the commonly held believe that severe forms of corruption emerge gradually ("slippery-slope-effect"). Instead, results of four studies demonstrate that it frequently occurs abruptly ("steep-cliff-effect"). All in all, comprehending why an individual engages in corruption requires an analysis of the social context.

The third take-home message stresses the importance of interdisciplinary research on the complex dynamics of corrupt behavior. Above-mentioned distinctions between corruption

types facilitate a research approach across disciplinary boundaries and seek to reduce misunderstandings when using the term corruption. Given the relative scarcity of social psychological literature on corruption, this dissertation is largely based on corruption literature stemming from various disciplines. Studying non-psychological literature nourished my curiosity and at the same time made me humble. A lot of insights have already been gained, yet a lack of exchange between the disciplines hinders its dissemination. Exchange and collaboration between corruption researchers from different disciplines hopefully results in a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted social phenomenon of corruption.

Finally, to go back to the initial motivation of this dissertation, let us recapitulate the *why* of this dissertation: corruption poses one of the most pressing social and societal challenges to the current generation – and perhaps future generations – around the world. Misallocation of shared resources that benefits only a selected few increases social injustice and hinders peaceful (global) co-living. Fighting corruption requires evidence-based programs that are informed by (interdisciplinary) research conducted in the laboratory and the field. Thus, the final take home message is that social psychology needs to join the scientific quest to understanding and reducing corruption. Hopefully, the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions of this dissertation inspire more research on the challenging, relevant and fascinating social psychology of corruption.