

Emotion regulation and morality

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Abstract

What influence does emotion regulation have on the moral judgement of politicians? Using the trolley dilemma thought experiment, which illustrates many real-life moral dilemmas - especially those involving political decision making - the influence of emotion regulation on (German, mainly state level) politicians' moral decisions (N=75) is examined. Based on theoretical foundations, the induction of disgust, here through presenting visual stimuli from the DIRT Database, correlates positively with choosing deontological judgements in moral dilemmas. As a result of the experimental investigation, an increased choice of utilitarian judgement was shown in connection with explicit emotion regulation instruction via cognitive reappraisal in the experimental group. These results show how intrinsic emotion regulation can alter the choice of politicians' moral judgement in case of moral dilemma. Advanced results are interpreted and discussed.

Keywords: Cognitive Reappraisal, Emotional Regulation, Moral Judgement, Politicians, Utilitarianism