



Understanding Legitimacy:

A Dialogic Relationship within Institutional Normative Order

Professor Sir Anthony Bottoms
and Dr Justice Tankebe

Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

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Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA

That the idea of legitimacy has become a key topic in criminal justice research is beyond question. Yet legitimacy remains under-theorised. Our aim in this seminar is to try to correct this lacuna in legitimacy research within criminology. We argue, developing an insight by Max Weber, that legitimacy is dialogic, involving continuous *claims* by criminal justice agencies and citizens' *responses* to those claims. We further argue that the tension/conflict/consensus inherent in this claim–response dialogue reflects congruities and incongruities between law and morality in any 'institutional normative order' (an important concept developed by Neil MacCormick). It is argued that such an understanding of legitimacy moves attention quickly beyond its implications for legal compliance and cooperation with legal authorities (the principal focus of criminologists at present); instead, attention begins also to focus on the implications of legitimacy for the understanding of stability and change in criminal justice organizations, and their role within wider society.

Anthony Bottoms is Emeritus Wolfson Professor of Criminology at Cambridge, and Honorary Professor of Criminology at the University of Sheffield, and Justice Tankebe is British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge.

This seminar is part of the IoC Public Seminar Series, and is open to all interested in attending.
If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on:

jf225@cam.ac.uk