



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Criminology



## *Differential Deterrability: On the conditional relevance of control*

**Assoc. Prof. Dr Helmut Hirtenlehner**

Head of Centre for Criminology, Johannes Kepler University Linz

Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 5.30pm**

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

*A drinks reception in the basement foyer will follow this seminar for attendees*

Criminal deterrence has been a long-time topic in criminological inquiry. Despite a plethora of research, the state of knowledge on the deterrent impact of criminal punishment is still controversial. There is some consensus that sentencing severity has at best a negligible effect on criminal activity, but whether sanctioning certainty affects criminal behaviour is contested up to now. Studies on the efficacy of punishment celerity are largely absent.

This presentation summarises the available empirical evidence on the effectiveness of general deterrence. Emphasis will be placed on the role of perceived sanction risk, especially on its intertwining with experiential effects and its interplay with potential moderators of deterrent effects. Using several data sets from different European countries, it will be investigated (1) whether the risk-crime correlations found for the general population in cross-sectional studies actually reflect experiential effects, and (2) whether perceived sanction risk interacts with other factors, thereby producing deterrent effects for at least some subgroups of the population. Results indicating that the impact of perceived risk is conditioned by personal and environmental characteristics support the notion of differential deterrability.

Helmut Hirtenlehner studied Sociology at the University of Linz (Austria) and completed his dissertation in 2000. In 2008 he finished his habilitation in Criminology. He is currently head of the Centre for Criminology at the Johannes Kepler University Linz. He also holds the position of Professor of Criminology and Empirical Research Methods at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, where he is attached to the department of social work. His research interests include criminal deterrence, Situational Action Theory, fear of crime and quantitative methods. His teaching experience covers criminology, the sociology of deviant behaviour, empirical research methods and statistics.

This seminar is free, and is open to all interested in attending, with no ticket required.  
If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on: [jf225@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jf225@cam.ac.uk)  
For full listing of IoC Seminars: <http://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/> For directions: <http://map.cam.ac.uk/>