



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Institute of Criminology



*Preliminary Thoughts on the  
Concept of Morality in  
Situational Action Theory*

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Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 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*

The concept of morality has not received much attention in criminological theory, though arguably it is included among the main variables or mechanisms of influential theories such as social learning, drift or social control. Partially the reason lies in the ambiguity that surrounds the term in Sociology, though it could be argued too, that it poses some challenges to mainstream Criminology.

Situational action theory (Wikström et al., 2012; Wikström and Treiber, 2015) has highlighted the importance of morality in the field of criminological theory. This theory maintains that morality is relevant to the explanation of crime both at the level of the individual and in the context or situation. This explanation grants morality a role in the “moral filter”, during deliberation and in the exercise of self-control. The “moral filter” is a test for potential actions, deliberation includes moral elements and self-control is a higher-order construct. He will argue that a unitary conception of morality underlies all three concepts.

In this presentation, preliminary thoughts on the conception of morality in situational action theory, as well as its connections with compatibilism and rationality, will be shared. It will be argued that this theoretical effort is related to a long established tradition in Occidental thought, which strengthens its logical consistency and explanatory power.

Prof. Serrano-Maillo teaches Criminology and Criminal Law in the Spanish Open University and is currently working on the concept of morality in criminological theory, with especial attention to situational action theory. He is also interested in the connection of *insecurity* and *punitivity* at the individual level in a late-Durkheimian framework. His main publications in Criminology have covered the role of opportunity in criminological theories and the assessment of self-control theory.

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)  
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