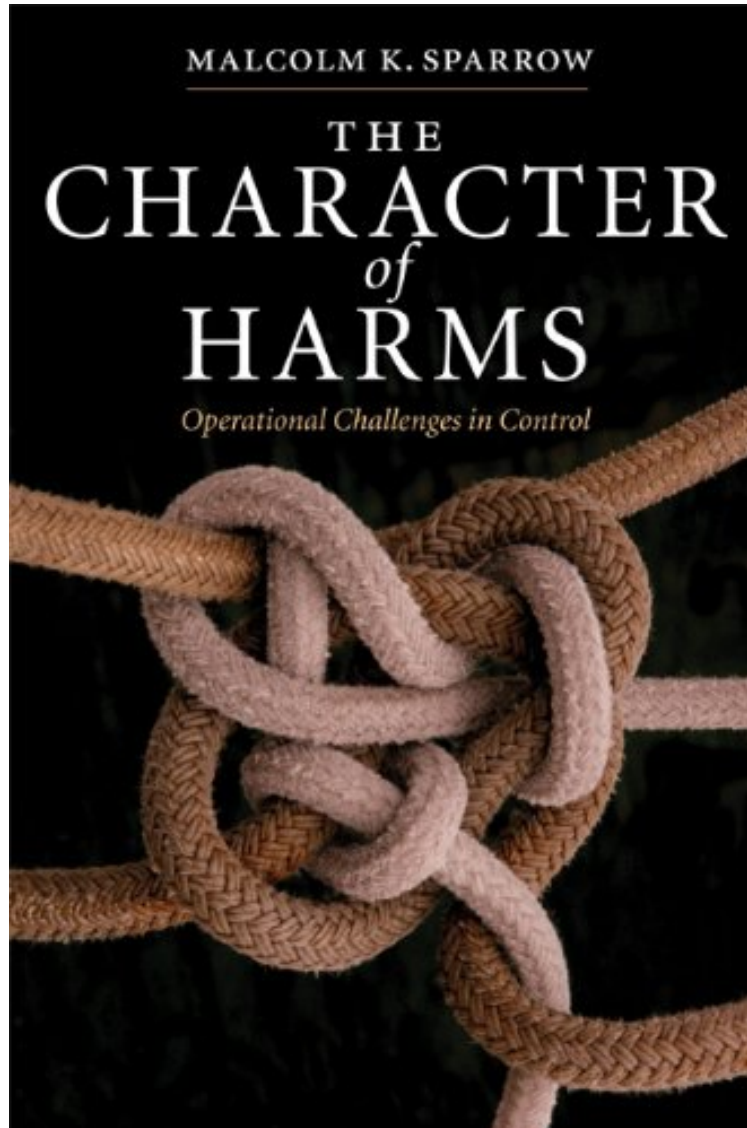


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The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control

Malcolm K. Sparrow

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University. He exposed his theory to a group of Venezuelan decision makers on crime prevention. I was not so lucky to go on that trip, but I got hold of the book and I believe that Mr. Sparrow has a lot to say on crime control. His theories based on problem-oriented policing is the way to go to reduce crime indicators in many fields. I have made a free translation of the main ideas of the book in Spanish. It is not official and I have included many own concepts adapted to our Latin American experience and you can check this document at: [...] Highly recommended, Luis Cedente. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book written for the leaders who actually do the work. By William R. Voss I have spent the last 20 years as an executive in regulatory agencies and non-profits. I have advised regulatory systems in dozens of countries. This book is incredibly important and relevant to the people who actually do the job. If you run an agency regulating anything, anywhere in the world, you should buy this book.

How should we deal with societal ills such as crime, poverty, pollution, terrorism, and corruption? *The Character of Harms* argues that control or mitigation of 'bad' things involves distinctive patterns of thought and action which turn out to be broadly applicable across a range of human endeavors, and which need to be better understood. Malcolm Sparrow demonstrates that an explicit focus on the bads, rather than on the countervailing goods (safety, prosperity, environmental stewardship, etc.) can provide rich opportunities for surgically efficient and effective interventions - an operational approach which he terms 'the sabotage of harms'. The book explores the institutional arrangements and decision-frameworks necessary to support this emerging operational model. Written for reflective practitioners charged with risk-control responsibilities across the public, private, and non-governmental sectors, *The Character of Harms* makes a powerful case for a new approach to tackling the complex problems facing society.

"I was amazed, reading Malcolm Sparrow's book, at how powerfully a careful, focused definition of a problem can open the way to novel solutions. Sparrow makes clear that we often need to reverse direction, shifting the focus from promoting the general good to addressing specific harms. He shows how to do that, and how to proceed from there. It is a joy to read someone who, through practical experience, really knows what he is talking about." Professor Tom Schelling, University of Maryland, Nobel-Laureate in Economics "A fascinating, timely, and important study of risk, harms, and regulatory interventions, with a wonderfully broad range of topics and examples, and a great deal of common sense. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the topic of precautions." Professor Cass Sunstein, University of Chicago "Malcolm Sparrow provides a clear, readable account of approaches to controlling harms, threats and risks in modern society. His skillful combination of academic literatures and practical examples presents a strong argument for evidence based action. In particular his cross domain approach should attract a wide readership ranging as it does from issues of world poverty to harm reduction in individual organizations. It will appeal to academics and practitioners alike." Professor Bridget Hutter, London School of Economics "Today's environmental problems, as Sparrow teaches, really do come in a daunting array of shapes and sizes. At the EPA we have discovered that organizing our compliance programs around specific problems, analyzing their causes and contours and developing customized strategies for each, the way Sparrow proposes in this book, represents a profoundly difficult but highly rewarding departure from traditional operations. *The Character of Harms* will deeply affect anyone working to make the world safer, better, and more secure." Michael Stahl, Director of Compliance, United States Environmental Protection Agency "Harms have an intricate character that must be studied, Malcolm Sparrow tells us. This is a remarkable book for people whose job is to control harms. It supplies nuanced reflection on how to pick problems apart and fix them. Sparrow is one of our great public policy thinkers. Here he advances the art of being evidence-based in public policy with wisdom about just what kind of artistry is involved." Professor John Braithwaite, Australian National University About the Author Malcolm K. Sparrow is Professor of the Practice of Public Management at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He is Faculty Chair of the Master of Public Policy Program, and of Executive Programs on regulatory and enforcement strategy, corruption control, and counter-terrorism. A mathematician by training, he joined the British Police Service in 1977, serving for ten years and rising to the rank of Detective Chief Inspector. He left the police to take up a faculty appointment at Harvard in 1988.