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978-0-521-87210-2 - The Character of Harms: Operational Challenges in Control

Malcolm K. Sparrow

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The Character of Harms

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.

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.

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MALCOLM K. SPARROW

*Professor of the Practice of Public Management, John F. Kennedy
School of Government, Harvard University*



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