

Testing Situational Action Theory: Propensity, Exposure and Their Interaction

The purpose of this session is to test some crucial assumptions of Situational Action Theory using data from the longitudinal Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+). The papers cover the key concepts of *propensity* and *exposure* and their interaction. Each of the concepts, and their interaction, are discussed theoretically and applied empirically. The findings provide support for some main assumptions of Situational Action Theory.

Chair: Frank Cullen (University of Cincinnati)

**1. *Person and Propensity. Morality and the Ability to Exercise Self-Control.*
Kyle Treiber & Per-Olof Wikström (University of Cambridge)**

SAT proposes that a person's crime propensity is a function of his/her morality and ability to exercise self-control. SAT further proposes that morality is the more fundamental source of propensity and that the ability to exercise self-control is only causally relevant when a person's morality allows his/her to see an act of crime as an action alternative. In this paper we test empirically these two propositions.

**2. *Environment and Exposure. The Moral Context.*
Dietrich Oberwittler (Max Planck Institute, Freiburg) & Per-Olof Wikström
(University of Cambridge)**

SAT proposes that people's actions are influenced by the settings to which they are exposed (i.e., their activity fields). SAT further proposes that it is the moral context of a setting that is crucial for its criminogenic influences. In this paper we test (1) whether young people's crime tends to occur in criminogenic settings and (2) whether young people's exposure to criminogenic settings predicts their level of crime involvement. These analyses utilize structural equation modelling based on small area econometrics and space-time budget methodology.

**3. *The Interaction Between Propensity and Exposure. Cross-sectionally and Developmentally.*
Andromachi Tseloni (Nottingham Trent University) & Per-Olof Wikström
(University of Cambridge)**

SAT predicts that a person's crime involvement is dependent on his/her propensity and exposure (and their interaction), and that changes in a person's crime involvement are dependent on changes in his/her propensity and/or exposure. The theory is tested via repeated measures hierarchical modelling of crime counts which predict (five year) trajectories of crime involvement for different levels of propensity and exposure.

**4. *Discussant.*
Charles Tittle (North Carolina State University)**