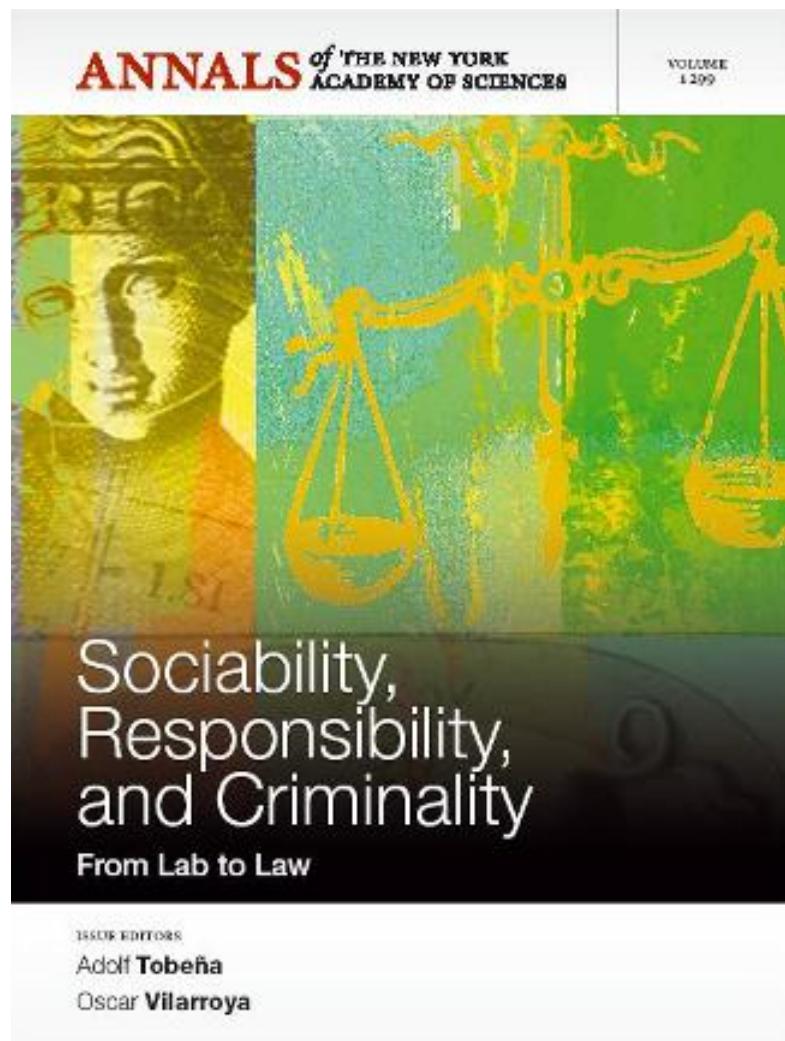


11/2013

From Lab to Law



Two professors from the UAB, Dr Adolf Tobeña and Dr Oscar Vilarroya, organised a conference on Neuroethics titled "From Lab to Law" in November 2012. Now a compilation of articles from this meeting has been published. The Neuroethics examines the neurobiological basis of fundamental sociological issues and includes an exploration of ethical concepts such as moral judgement, the predisposition to crime and legal liability.

An international debate session on Neuroethics took place on 12 and 13 November 2012 at Cosmocaixa Barcelona under the title "From Lab to Law", which examined issues such as sociability, responsibility and criminality. Now a volume of the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences has been published which compiles the articles from different experts who participated in those sessions.

Neuroethics is a developing scientific field addressing the neurobiological bases of critical sociological issues. The field of neuroethics includes both the "neuroscience of ethics", an exploration of the neurology underpinning ethical concepts like moral judgement, the neural predisposition toward criminality, and legal responsibility; and "the ethics of neuroscience", which focuses on the ethics of applying neuroscientific or genetic information toward legal, predictive, and therapeutic ends. Recent progress has been made in understanding the neurological processes and constraints in decision making and the neurological and genetic factors underlying criminal and addictive behaviours, as well as the sociocultural vectors and value systems driving the dynamics of insurgency and terrorism. Advances in neuroimaging, psychopharmacology and genetics offer new possibilities for evaluation and intervention for problematic attributes of human behaviour.

Proponents of Neuroethics argue that such new understandings of neurobiology can have benefits to human society, but that interpretations of these findings require careful critical and ethical consideration. As our understanding of moral decisions, values, and responsibility progresses, it becomes necessary to rigorously define the ethics of predictive psychiatry.

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References

Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1299. 2013.

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