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Prevention, Criminology and Governmentality Reconsidered

by

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INTRODUCTION

In recognition of alleged crises, fragmentations and failures in criminology, some criminologists have reflected retrospectively and introspectively on the state and potential of our discipline (see, for example, among others, Braithwaite 1989 and 2000; Chan 2000; Cohen 1988; Ericson and Carriere 1994; Foucault 1980; Garland 1992; Garland and Sparks 2000; Martel *et al.* 2006; Nelken 1994; O'Malley 2000; Pasquino 1991; Pavarini 1994; Pavlich 2000; and South 1997). Such critical and reflexive endeavours often raise concerns about the theoretical direction and practical worth of criminology. In many of these cogitations, some colleagues have both exposed and opposed criminology's institutional, managerial, applied and administrative orientations as problematically complicit, insular, hegemonic, controversial and partisan (see, for example, Chunn and Menzies 2006; Hogeveen and Woolford 2006; and Williams and Lippert 2006). While such musings have tended towards purging and pessimism, they have also drawn our

collective attention, rather optimistically, towards worthwhile alternatives to which we may aspire, and in which we may engage.

In this spirit of critical reflexivity, this paper offers a disruptive, yet humble and collegial, reflection on the unique place of prevention within criminology (see Gilling 1997). By undertaking an "internal inspection and criticism of its orientations" (Martel *et al.* 2006, 640), and thus illustrating the major characteristics of the prevention-oriented literature, this paper briefly presents some important challenges that should be brought to bear against criminological reasoning in the area of crime prevention. In an effort to set the study of prevention in Canada within a broader context of inquiry, it proposes a dialogue with the governmentality literature. However, while it thus engages with governmentality studies, it also challenges and extends them with critical criminological and sociological considerations. Finally, aiming for analytical comprehensiveness and disciplinary concord, it explores the desirability and viability of such a synergy.

1. CRIMINOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AND PREVENTION

As an alleged principle and objective, albeit an untameable concept, crime prevention is often thought to hold a special, almost untouchable place within criminology (see Gilling 1997). Since crime prevention was, and to a certain extent remains, an alternative to reactive criminal justice practices[2], the overwhelming majority of the literature dedicated to advocating its potential, especially in the late 20th century, has sought to ascertain its effectiveness. A review of criminological journals in North America, Europe, and Australia reveals that very few articles on prevention have been published in the early 21st century compared to the copious number published in the late 20th century. The majority of publications since 2000 have focused on evaluating implementation at the micro level.

This paper should not be interpreted as dismissing the positive and significant contributions made by prevention-oriented criminologists. I unequivocally support proactive pursuits as long as human rights are respected. However, I also contend that other analytical angles and

levels should be explored. Accordingly, this paper does not take the conventional criminological literature on crime prevention as a basis upon which to generate further evaluative and effectiveness-oriented research. Rather, such prevailing scholarship is treated as a phenomenon to be addressed. In so doing, this paper briefly scrutinizes the characteristics and constraints of prevention-oriented criminology. For a more thorough substantiation of the late 20th-century crime prevention literature, see Gervais 2002.

In pursuit of alternative aspirations, the crime prevention literature is characterized by a tenaciously optimistic and promotional rhetoric, replete with sundry rationales and a disparate set of strategic options that coalesce around appeals to prevention (see Gervais 2002). Written as an advocacy-oriented narrative of reform, it expresses mainly the desirability of prevention-oriented intervention by the State and communities. The grounds for caution include, among others, unchallenged conceptions of both crime and prevention; an uncontested promotional literature; an unquestioned state responsibility for prevention; a proneness to conceptual ambiguity; and theoretical myopia.

Further, prevention-oriented criminology, in Canada and elsewhere, is captured by a restrictive and narrow discourse of micro-level theorizing and managerial pragmatism. It has tended to be organizationally or technically based in its orientations, locally based in its foci, and evaluative in its analyses. Through its evaluation research, almost every prevention programme is read in a positive light whereby "everything works" to a greater or lesser extent (see Crawford 1997). While this promotional stance has advanced the literature, it has also rendered it an inward-looking, self-exemplifying and self-sustaining endeavour (see Gilling 1997).

This insularity is especially evident in the literature's expressions of the desirability of state responsibility in the area of crime prevention. As such, in its quest to produce a knowledge that continually enhances its own capacity for action the prevention literature has become part of the "useful" criminological enterprise whose applied relevance has enabled it to provide advice on expedient state policy approaches to crime and victimization (Cohen 1985, 18; Stehr 1994, 95; Garland and Sparks 2000, 193; Chunn and Menzies 2006, 666; Williams and Lippert 2006, 705). Such a claim seemingly embeds the prevention literature within

what some refer to as the "criminological–criminal justice beast" and others call the "symbiosis" (Chunn and Menzies 2006, 676; and see Hogeveen and Woolford 2006). However, a distinction must be noted.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the early crime prevention literature explicitly sought to develop situational and community-based alternatives outside and, in some ways, against the traditional reactive criminal justice responses. Early prevention advocates no longer took the state and its agencies to be the primary actors in the business of crime control, as non-governmental, community and private services became engaged in preventative activities (see Gilling 1997). Herein lies this literature's apparent mark of innovative discontinuance with criminology and criminal justice. Eventually, and predominantly in the late 1980s and early 1990s, prevention-oriented scholars, including some in Canada, took considerable strides in attempting to entrench proactive approaches into the political mainstream and thus into state-based initiatives, albeit not necessarily into punitive "criminal justice" ones. In fact, punitive legal responses are strongly discouraged by leading Canadian prevention proponents (see Waller 2006).

Nevertheless, as a result of having seemingly raised pragmatism as an ideology (Nuttall 1989, 470), prevention-oriented criminology has had scant regard for the wider contexts in which the appeal to prevention is shaped, negotiated, rationalized, advanced and manifested. Similarly, the academically based patronage and prescription of state intervention in the name of crime prevention has also been seemingly taken for granted and, therefore, not subjected to much reflexive scrutiny. Efforts to answer the contingent question of "what works" have seemingly obscured the questions of why and how certain strategies are advanced in particular political contexts, and at specific historical moments. In other words, the rationales underlying the changing visions of prevention have not been adequately explored in terms of their significance to broader relations between state regulation and civil society. In this sense, prevention-oriented criminologists have been doing what Hogeveen and Woolford (2006, 685) describe as answering questions asked *by* neoliberalism, without posing significant questions *about* neoliberalism.

If prevention-oriented criminology is to remain analytically innovative and relevant, its relative silence on the contexts of emerging forms

of governance and regulation must be overcome. To this end, I propose that technical questions be cast aside in order to foster a reflexive exploration that is broader in its scope and more expansive in its analytical depth than those previously undertaken within the conventional literature on crime prevention. In this light, this reflection draws inspiration simultaneously from the insistence of Adam Sutton (1994) that prevention programmes be located within the context of critical social theory; from the invitation issued by Janet Chan (1994) to explore "the history and manifestations of the crime prevention concept"; from the quest undertaken by Daniel Gilling (1997) to "frame crime prevention upon a much broader canvas"; and from the caution against obscuring wider arguments issued by Adam Crawford (1997). I further acknowledge others' advocacy of situating crime prevention within the contexts of emerging technologies (see O'Malley 1992, 1996), broader political trends (see Pavlich 1999) and governmental predicaments (see Garland 1996, 1999, 2000).

2. GOVERNMENTALITY ENGAGED AND RECONSIDERED

In order to transcend the non-reflexive and uncritical focus of the aforementioned literature, I propose that academic attention bring the study of crime prevention into more analytically comprehensive accounts of discourses and practices of regulation. Part of the impetus for such a proposal is to render prevention both a subject and an object of criminology. The intention is to move prevention beyond its seemingly unchallenged projection as an object, and therefore as an objective, of criminology, and to render it a subject, open to wider and more profound scrutiny, on the understanding that the term "object" here refers to the unique place of prevention as an unquestioned objective or goal of criminology (see Gilling 1997), whereas the term "subject" refers simply to an area under discussion. Treating prevention as a subject of criminology is imperative for fostering reflexive and critical analyses that would, at the very least, help to situate and challenge prevention's unique place as an objective of the discipline (see Gilling 1997).

To this end, academics may draw upon a synthesis of governmentality and critical criminology that confronts the wider contexts and

concerns of governing crime, but from which criminological scholarship on prevention has remained disconnected. This analytical fusion not only enables the exploration of shifting government interventions in the area of crime prevention, but it also facilitates a more comprehensive examination of the reasons for such emerging patterns of continuity and change. More trenchant insights can be drawn from analyses that situate prevention among broader trends of governance, risk and at-a-distance orientations (see, for example, Garland 1999 and 2000; O'Malley 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2001; Parnaby 2006; and Rose 1993, 1996, and 2000).

The governmentality approach is pertinent to the study of crime prevention on several levels. First, by emphasizing decentred governance, it sheds light on both state and non-state forms of governance, and the relations between them. This consideration is especially relevant to the complexity of articulations and manifestations of prevention at the level of the Canadian federal government, whereby decentred and at-a-distance governance has become a predominant feature in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (see Gervais 2002). Second, the governmentality approach has drawn our attention to changes in governance that are associated with shifts from social welfarism to neoliberalism. These are recognizable, albeit not absolute, in Canadian federal prevention initiatives.

The third analytical strength of the governmentality approach lies in its scope, which encompasses the range of both governmental rationalities and technologies of government, and the intricate link between them, the former being embedded in the latter. In the context of crime prevention in Canada, analysis has certainly been carried out on the processes and outcomes of programmes, but very little corresponding emphasis has been placed on their relationship to shifts in broader rationalities. This lacuna can be overcome by an engagement with the governmentality literature, through which one can locate prevention as a programme of government in relation to the rationalities that generate and shape it.

While I invoke the governmentality approach as a relevant and discerning lens through which to observe the shifting trajectory of crime prevention in Canada and elsewhere, I do so cautiously, in recognition of its well-known limitations, some of which I highlight below. First, while the strength of the governmentality approach lies in its focus on

the "nexus" of mundane practices and broader political rationalities (O'Malley, Weir and Shearing 1997, 503), it has tended to explicate this link through abstract narratives of change, without adequate substantiation of such claims in any concrete form (see, for example, Garland 1999; Rose 1993, 1996, and 2000; and Rose and Miller 1992). In this sense, rationalities have tended to remain "free floating" and not grounded in material conditions (see Rose and Miller 1992; and Curtis 1995, 586). As a result, the governmentality approach has overemphasized tendencies of rupture and discontinuity in its forecasts of the death of the social and the rise of neoliberalism in government programmes (see O'Malley *et al.* 1997; Stenson and Watt 1999; O'Malley 2000; and Rigakos and Hadden 2001).

Further, governmentality writings have also tended to emphasize knowledge-based rationalities that are manifested in textual discourses, thereby overlooking the oral discourses and social practices through which rationalities are also revealed (see Garland 1999; Stenson 1999; and Williams and Lippert 2006). As such, knowledge-based rationalities conceal "non-instrumental rationalities" that entail "the expressive, emotionally driven and morally toned currents" (Garland 1999, 34–35), and the "messy actualities" of implementation (see Barry *et al.* 1993) that affect policies and programmes. They further obscure the contingent actualities—integrating the notion of contingencies that refer to accidental forces (see Curtis 1993) with the concepts of "messy actualities" (see Barry *et al.* 1993) and of non-instrumental rationalities (see Garland 1999)—that encompass the aleatory and circumstantial realities that condition governmental programmes, and are discoverable through oral and textual discourses (see Gervais 2002). They further entail the expressive currents manifested through the visual imagery intentionally used to propel decentred governance, including the photographs, logos, and other images used in marketing material to promote governmental programmes, but also to express priorities, goals, and outcomes related to various rationalities (Gervais 2002). In this light, non-instrumental rationalities, as well as messy and contingent actualities, can lend greater empirical credence to governmentality forecasts, by more adequately illustrating the nuances of the interconnection between rationalities and technologies (see Garland 1996; Pavlich 1999; Stenson and Watt 1999; Braithwaite 2000; and Williams and Lippert 2006). The term

"technologies" here refer both to "specific ways of acting" (see Garland 1999), and to the programmes, techniques, apparatuses, and procedures that give effect to governmental ambitions (see Rose and Miller 1992).

What, then, can be discovered about crime prevention initiatives at the federal level in Canada in the late 20th and early 21st centuries when governmentality analyses are substantiated empirically by the integration of contingent and messy actualities? Data sources for such contingent actualities include content analyses of ministerial speeches, promotional materials, government publications, and interviews with policy-makers related to Canada's federal-level prevention initiatives and the National Crime Prevention Strategy between 1974 and 2002. Regarding the alleged ascendance of neoliberal configurations of risk and the decline of welfarist modes of social governance, one recognizes that the shift was not as neatly sequential, nor as completely displacing, nor as unidirectional, as was previously forecast (see Stenson and Watt 1999; Gervais 2002; and O'Malley 2000, 2004).

Consider, for example, the case of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) established in 1994. It is currently administered by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) within the Community Safety and Partnerships Branch of Public Safety Canada. It supports community mobilization initiatives, shared-knowledge networks, private sector partnerships, and research-based demonstration projects. The predominant focus is on "at risk" children, youth, women and Aboriginal populations through selected social development measures. One can observe an intersection between neoliberal and social welfare rationalities and technologies. Rather than neoliberalism wholly displacing social welfarism, the "balanced" approach of the NCPS demonstrates that they have become interpenetrating and mutually reinforcing. Within the NCPS, as evidenced in a cursory review of projects funded through it from 1998 to 2008, neoliberal features of responsibilization, cost-effectiveness, prudence and at-a-distance forms of governance are coupled with support for welfare-oriented concerns that partially address socioeconomic, cultural and gendered inequalities, child care, and housing. This hybridized coexistence of neoliberal risk-based practices with welfare-oriented practices, against the seemingly residual and permanent backdrop of neoconservatism in the form of policing and correctional responses as part of a balanced approach, is a testament

to the compromised, corrupted and partial ways in which rationalities settle in their practical form (Garland 1999, 31; see also O'Malley 2000).

One must nevertheless acknowledge that at these points of convergence "the social" is inevitably thwarted and reformulated. In the "balanced" approach advanced through the NCPS, social welfare conditions are now interpreted only as risk factors (O'Malley 1999, 96–97). For example, in many of the community-based projects funded under the NCPS between 1998 and 2008, early intervention initiatives have been targeted towards children, youth, and families deemed to be at risk of potential victimization or later offending. However, while referrals to existing social services are part of many of the programmes' supportive efforts, most of the project interventions are aimed mainly at helping individuals and families to overcome the risk factors through developmental responsibilization strategies such as education in parenting skills, recreational and skills training projects for youth, and behavioural adjustment for children, rather than addressing the broader structural sources of the inequalities of which the risk factors are only symptoms. It is understood that broader structural inequalities are not relevant to Foucauldian analyses, but they are raised here as being reflective of social welfare concerns. Given the purposive and selective consideration of both risk factors and social welfare provisions, these preventative initiatives more accurately reflect "submerged social" or "neosocial" tendencies (see Stenson and Watt 1999; and Gervais 2002). "Post-social" is less relevant here because, while neoliberal tendencies have dominated Canadian federal-level crime prevention initiatives, social orientations have not been displaced in their entirety. "Neosocial" better reflects the revised and constrained conditions of socially based programmes (see Gervais 2002).

Based on the very brief foregoing discussion, it appears that Canadian federal crime prevention in the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been a site at which governmentality's forecasts of the death of the social and the ascendance of neoliberal emphases must be reconsidered. While shifts are discernible, we can also observe patterns of continuity and instances of reinforcing intersections. As such, a governmentality framework that is grounded in contingent actualities remains a distinct and valuable analytical resource that can bring the intricacies of evolving rationalities and technologies that coalesce around crime prevention to the fore.

3. TOWARD A GOVERNMENTALITY–CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY SYMBIOSIS

The penetrative potential of governmentality analyses of crime prevention and other forms of contemporary regulation can be even further enhanced by a closer dialogue between governmentality and critical criminology. Williams and Lippert (2006) propose such a dialogue to demonstrate how governmentality studies can help to overcome limitations of critical criminology, but there is merit in exploring the potential benefits of the reverse relation whereby critical criminological approaches can help to ground governmentality forecasts. While elements of such a dialogue have already been engaged in this paper in the proposed grounding of rationalities, other relevant aspects must be taken into consideration. As O'Malley, Weir and Shearing (1997) have claimed, the governmentality framework avoids a critical agenda and prescriptive political engagement. Gillian Balfour (2006, 742) has similarly contested the idea that "governmentality's analytical tools enable us . . . to ask questions of 'how?' without balanced attention to 'why?' and 'what now?'" The socialist feminist project that Balfour advocates is perceived by some critics to be supportive of the criminalization and incarceration of abusive men, and thus as a tactic that results in the amplification of the coercive apparatus of the state. Given that I raise questions about the prevention literature's expression of the desirability for state responsibility in the area of crime prevention, it must be understood that I am not seeking to reinforce enhanced state control. Nevertheless, I contend that in the context of crime prevention, all three questions of 'how, why and what now' are valuable, viable and, indeed, answerable by using the combined tools of governmentality and critical criminology.

One area where such questions and the proposed analytical dialogue may be especially relevant pertains to governing crime preventatively "at a distance." The "at a distance" nature of the NCPS is evident in the way in which the strategy is steered through federally directed project, research and funding priorities, and then implemented locally, and thus in a decentralized way, through community programmes coordinated by dispersed practitioners and used by diverse clients. Exploring how such at-a-distance governance is experienced by practitioners and lived by clients (both potential perpetrators and victims)

could potentially yield more comprehensive answers to the questions of "how," "why," and "what now" related to the crime prevention trajectory in Canada. Being attentive to the voices, narratives, and lived realities of the people affected by, and participating in, governmental practices may be one of the most pivotal benefits of a synergy between critical criminological inquiry and governmentality analyses (see Williams and Lippert 2006).

Listening to the voices and hearing the experiential accounts of prevention advocates, policy-makers, practitioners, and beneficiaries, including victims, across Canada would inevitably reveal the nuances and complexities of federally directed prevention initiatives.[3] Such penetrating inquiries may reveal instances of resistance and moments of contestation among policy-makers, fund managers, practitioners, and clients (both perpetrators and victims) in the shaping and experiencing of crime prevention. Such explorations may thus demonstrate empirically how government programmes are neither univocal nor coherent (see O'Malley *et al.* 1997). A previous study of mine (Gervais 2002) integrates contingent actualities, including the voices of policy-makers involved with the NCPS, and demonstrates instances of contestation, resistance, and confusion around the meanings and priorities of "at risk" and "social development," as well as around such issues as the role of policing and the extent of social welfare provisions required to advance a "balanced" approach to preventing crime. The voices of practitioners and beneficiaries, including both perpetrators and victims, will undoubtedly bring to the fore other relevant examples of contestation and resistance that directly affect their daily lives.

They may also uncover the ways in which prevention, at the intersection of neoliberal, neosocial and neoconservative rationalities and technologies, is variously understood, embraced, resisted, contested, and renegotiated by clients and practitioners in a myriad of communities across the country. Exploring how neoliberal, neosocial and neoconservative orientations are advocated, resisted and contested by promoters, beneficiaries, and critics, either simultaneously or separately, will shed greater light on the desirability, variability, and viability of intersecting rationalities and technologies (see O'Malley *et al.* 1997).

Documenting instances of contest and resistance is further relevant to the caution that must be raised against state-based conceptions and

dominant discourses of both crime and crime prevention. As emphasized at the outset, this paper does not take the conventional criminological literature on prevention at face value. That scholarship's uncontested conceptions of crime and prevention must be scrutinized. Since the prevention literature does not deconstruct the state-based and legal definitions of crime upon which its proposed programmes are intended to intervene, it tends to reproduce dominant crime discourses and reinforce state regulation. By extension, among other corresponding constraints, state crimes and state harms remain problematically unchallenged within that framework (see Matthews and Kauzlarich 2007), and attempts at their prevention are therefore not undertaken. Given the grave human costs associated with state crimes and harms, critically reflexive analyses of definitions of crime and state-based harms must thus be engaged so as to avoid fortifying repressive state control.

Undoubtedly, significant complexities can be brought to light by a synergy between governmentality and critical criminological analyses. Moving scholarly attention to prevention forward through such a dialogue is both desirable and viable. While Foucauldian emphases on governmentality help to situate the emergence and evolution of crime prevention amid broader rationalities and technologies, they can be supplemented by critical criminology, and particularly its left realist variant, which helps to ground the flows and alignments of prevention in lived realities and material conditions. This proposal is not novel, since grounded insights have been advocated by left realists since the 1970s.

Critics may view governmentality's tendency towards description and critical criminology's tendency towards prescription as incompatible trajectories. However, I am not attempting to render one approach more or less prescriptive or descriptive than the other. I am merely contending, as others already have, that proper Foucauldian analysis can be achieved when governmentality forecasts are substantiated by the empirical and reflexive insights of critical criminologists (see, for example, O'Malley *et al.* 1997; and Williams and Lippert 2006). Thus, in the few lines of this short paper, I make no claims of reconciling the entrenched tensions between the two approaches, but I do offer a preliminary proposal that points to the potential of the broader avenues of analysis that can become available when the strengths of the two are combined.

CONCLUSION

In raising questions about scholarship, this paper has sought to move beyond the myopic lens of the conventional criminological literature on prevention, and to consider the more penetrative and integrated analytical angles of governmentality and critical criminology. If criminologists are to offer clearer insight into the complex manifestations of crime prevention, then we must be open to, and active in, retrospective and scrutinizing reflections of our discipline so as to reconsider its depth and scope. We should nevertheless avoid further polarizing criminology into divisions that are either, on the one hand, too internalized—and thus reinforcing of administrative complicity with the state and criminal justice—or, on the other hand, too externalized—and therefore irrelevant to, and limiting of, transformative potential (see Chunn and Menzies 2006; and Hogeveen and Woolford 2006). We must be careful not to lose touch with the people affected by crime and victimization.

While there is definitely space for both levels and directions, their proponents—in this case, prevention-oriented scholars, governmentality writers, and critical criminologists—should begin to engage in dialogue so that their analyses become mutually integrative in complementary and supplementary ways. While such a dialogical approach may initially seem unsettling, it is one that is worth pursuing if more penetrating and relevant analyses are to be developed, particularly regarding both state and non-state sources and locations of injustices and abuses. Interweaving connections concordantly between prevention-oriented criminology, governmentality writings, and critical criminology should not be inhibited by rigid disciplinary boundaries. Concerns about integrative compatibility and disciplinary integrity (see Garland 1999; and de Lint 2006) are inevitably resolvable with appropriate and careful consideration. As Zedner (2007, 275) optimistically claims in her challenge to existing modes of our scholarship, criminology is adaptable to change and can readily meet new challenges because it is allegedly "voracious in its capacity to absorb new ideas" and to integrate intellectual resources, especially from other social science disciplines. Enhancing its capacious directions can undoubtedly go some way towards renewing criminology's intellectual vitality (Chancer and McLaughlin 2007, 170).

The desirability of a symbiosis between governmentality and critical criminology that examines crime prevention is further propelled by the optimism associated with what George Pavlich (2001) refers to as a criminology of *possibility*, "which involves thinking and pushing the limits of the *possible*, which simultaneously includes thinking the im*possible*" (Hogeveen and Woolford 2006, 691). Such a symbiosis or dialogue need not be restricted to governmentality and critical criminology. Consider the possibilities for prevention opened up by other integration proposals that seek to inform criminology and/or governmentality by sociology (see Garland 1999), globalization studies (see Franko Aas 2007), "public" criminology (see Chancer and McLaughlin 2007), economic analyses, international relations, moral philosophy, and political theory (see Zedner 2007), and peacemaking (see Pepinsky and Quinney 1991).

In the context of crime prevention, the task requires extending the parameters of what already exists in terms of analytical levels so as to be open to revealing other possible and imperative analyses. Rethinking crime prevention beyond what it has been and what it is can be an engaging and productive task. Herein lies the challenge for criminologists exploring crime prevention. This task is also contingent upon the ability of prevention-oriented academics to "resist the encroaching forces of neoconservatism and neoliberalism" (Chunn and Menzies 2006, 676), and to actually scrutinize these trends (Hogeveen and Woolford 2006, 685). A parallel challenge for governmentality writers is to ensure that their analyses are adequately grounded with contingent actualities and non-instrumental rationalities, so that the shifting trajectory of prevention amid broader governmental trends, in Canada and elsewhere, is more accurately and comprehensively understood.

In pursuit of heightened and expanded analyses, another area that the foregoing integration may address pertains to the often unexplored and unanswered "why" of state-directed preventative quests. Presuming that rationales are indicative of why certain courses of action are taken, then rationales are worth investigating more profoundly. Rather than taking promotional rationales that propel prevention agendas at face value, the discourse of such rationales must be assessed. This recommendation is based on the premise that the rationales underlying rationalities and technologies must also be scrutinized, as they too shed light, and likely to a greater extent, on the shifting trajectory of prevention, and by

extension on potentially problematic and narrow conceptions of crime and state intervention.

This proposed emphasis on rationales through a dialogue between governmentality and critical criminology may be especially pertinent to studies that conceive of prevention within the context of social justice, and thus seek to uncover injustice, oppression, and inequality within preventative pursuits (see Gervais 2002; Chunn and Menzies 2006; Hogeveen and Woolford 2006; and Williams and Lippert 2006). More trenchant investigations must unflinchingly explore the insidious potential of prevention. They may do so, for example, with a reimagining of the concept of "at risk" and under the notion of the "power to prevent," a concept coined by this author out of concern for how the notion of prevention has been variously used and misused to justify such interventions as eugenics, genocide, and torture, which are in such stark contrast to the positive support associated with social development variants of prevention. The stakes are indeed high.

The main concern is how prevention is sometimes expressed as a rationale to promote and justify extremely intrusive and destructive interventions, often through excessively repressive state control. Such state-directed prevention practices tend to place individuals at greater risk of human rights violations and crimes against humanity, including, among others, forced sterilization, forced abortion, torture, rape, mass executions, and genocide. Given the human costs of such corrupted versions of prevention, it behoves us to ensure that these crimes by powerful states no longer remain "criminological blind spots" (Franko Aas 2007, 297; see also Jorgensen 2009; and Tombs and Whyte 2003). In addition to state crimes, crimes and harms inflicted by corporations and other non-state actors, as well as their associated human, social and environmental costs, are equally relevant here. For the reasons explicated above, a symbiosis between governmentality and critical criminology is especially pertinent to investigating both the state and non-state spaces where injustices and abuses of power occur (see Williams and Lippert 2006). More penetrating explorations must cautiously reconsider and reflexively restore what has often been constructed as the ultimate criminological priority and objective known as prevention. I recommend, then, that criminologists pursue prevention, which remains worthy both as a means and an end, in ways that not only are genuinely

proactive, but also respect and enhance human rights, human dignity, and human potential.

NOTES

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa (Christine.Gervais@uottawa.ca). I am grateful to Michael Kempa, Bruce Curtis, and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I dedicate this paper to all those individuals whose lives have been adversely affected by a corrupted version of prevention. May their losses and struggles serve as reminders of the importance of drawing limits of acceptability.
2. Albeit proactive and reactive measures are often projected as complementary
3. Victims are included here as they are recognized as vulnerable populations whose voices and experiences must be taken into account. Victims are widely understood as encompassing individuals harmed not only by street or domestic violence, but also by corporate, political and state crimes.

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