



The Political Economy of Preventive Justice

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Editorial

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Introduction

What is to be done about the emergent problem of widespread riots against established authority? Critical criminology shows that crimes are socially constructed by powerful elites, to reflect their own political ideologies of a good society. Modern punishments are nuanced to protect private property. Take the United States, home of the world's first written constitution. It was a consensus among White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant framers, established to secure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They believed that happiness is synonymous with property. Yet, happiness, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Crime Control Amid Unequal Private Property

Ideally, property is a human right. Thus, everyone should own a sufficient amount of property to sustain themselves or at least have access to the means or opportunities to acquire and own things. However, the capitalist private property system ousted indigenous communitarian socioeconomic formations. Previously, in pre-colonial traditional African societies, property was held collectively, and made accessible to whoever needed it. In modernity, the right to property is not universal [1]. Rather, liberal socio-sexual and socio-economic systems inherently produce hierarchies and inequalities. Colonialism not only introduced private property. It also ousted indigenous criminal law. Post-independence liberal democratic criminal justice systems continue protecting disingenuous inequalities in property ownership as well as unjustified historical majority marginalization.

The late 20th Century ushered in an Information Age, where actuarial science became dominant. Upon abundant statistical and demographic reports, epidemiological patterns became pervasive [2]. Nowadays, dangerousness is deemed preventable, if the incorrigible classes are profiled

though screening partnerships. Situational controls include CCTV cameras, electric fences, alarms, locks, malls, lighting and other surveillance mechanisms designed as barriers to deny risky persons any opportunity of interfering with gated communities and their properties.

Producing Peace in Modern Society

Besides architectural and administrative criminology, preventive justice embraces education and even redistributes wealth as factors of producing social peace and political stability. Therefore, despite unequal access to the means of production and property ownership, peace is maintained through diverse superstructures. Class conflict is pacified through three coordinated mechanisms: the criminal justice system, the educational and religious systems and finally, the welfare state [3].

First, the criminal justice system. This is the most expensive factor in peace production. It comprises policemen, police stations, guns, handcuffs, batons and other heavy duty apparatuses to physically prevent, not only theft of private property, but also to repress mass revolt, thus sustaining law and order. They are backed up by prosecutors, courts, judges, magistrates, lawyers, courthouses, probation workers, prison warders, and jails. Militarily, special units rely on heavy artillery supplemented by secret surveillance services. Considerable tax revenues maintain these facilities. Nonetheless, it is not economically viable for society to protect private property through employing one policeman per citizen. Furthermore, the logic of a police society contradicts the ideals of freedom. A police state can precipitate revolutionary pressures.

Second, in order to augment reprisals against the "have nots," the ruling class co-opts two allies: The religious and the education systems. The pastorate class teaches the poor to await salvation by persevering in poverty. The key to



heaven, for the Messianic religions, is to “love our neighbor” and “pray for those who persecute us.” Similarly, schools teach Kantian ethics of “doing unto others what you wish they would do unto you.” While liberal education is designed to debunk myths, it places faith in scientific solutions to inculcate civic morals. Consequently, some poor people who may be tempted to harm others are instead persuaded to refrain from doing so, since they can earn livelihoods using legitimate means. Consequently, social mobility is attainable by avoiding violating rules which are known in advance. Such conscience-formation internalizes moral behavior, thus negating much need for criminal justice management. There may be no need to fine, incarcerate or even kill those who are properly educated to embrace moral norms. Moreover, in a functioning economy, sound education can facilitate upward mobility through formal or self-employment.

Wealth Redistribution for Preventive Justice

Third, the political class function as norm-entrepreneurs. Our politicians are well paid because they catalyze behavior change through persuasion. The legislature enacts tax legislation that redistributes part of the social wealth from the rich to the poor. This is why we have socio-economic rights to minimum wages, or employment safety standards, free maternal healthcare, free primary education, rights to decent housing, and so on. Subsidies bribe the youth against rebellion. Thus they receive some of the conspicuous wealth being consumed by the upper classes. Politicians are then able to act as brokers between the warring classes by collecting sufficient taxes to redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor so as to prevent radicals from spontaneously rebelling against the constitutional arrangement.

In conclusion, the capitalist notion of crime emphasizes property crimes. Yet, offending is not the preserve of the poor. Invariably, crimes of passion such as murder or rape are exacerbated by relative deprivation. Capitalist countries like the US, South Africa, UK, and Kenya with wide wealth disparities exhibit the highest crime rates. Soaring crime is

not only attributable to the fact that few people possess most of the wealth, while the majority wallow in abject poverty. But also because these wealth inequalities are perceived as being illegitimate. In Kenya, it is difficult to justify why many individuals are squatters and the masses are propertyless in their own country, while a single bourgeois owns more land than an entire country like Rwanda. The potential of criminal punishments to deter wrongdoing heightens among those with something to lose [4]. They are deterrable not by the severity of threatened sanctions, but by a higher probability of getting caught and punished. Yet, there is scant history of criminal elites being punished for suite crimes [5]. 2024 “Gen Z” uprisings therefore rocked the African continent demanding transparency, accountability and good governance. Instead, preventive justice responses, evidenced for instance by abductions and extrajudicial killings of protesters in Kenya, indicate not only a realization of the futility of utilitarian logics to deter incorrigibles. But also the diminishing indoctrinal impact of ecclesiastics and education on youths, attributable to the social media onset.

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