

# How can criminology (and victimology) become positive?

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Most or maybe all of us want to come across what we perceive as 'the Positive,' or 'the Good,' usually acts of individuals who reach out of themselves towards others. We appreciate it when we hear about it, we are touched when we witness it and we might be positively overwhelmed when we are the receivers of a positive, good heart response. It is our good human nature, claims the 'humanistic school' ever since, and it has been manifested in old, modern and ultra-modern humanistic thinking worldwide. It has been manifested in different cultures and in most known religions and spiritual schools, as well in secular writings. Nevertheless, still knowing it but minimizing its significance, more often than not, when facing any harming behavior we might be caught in a defensive reaction, that may even become an aversive one. And this is also considered natural. Most people do. We are socialized towards such a response. And social institutions, which are human created, well follow this manner. Most often than not, they react with aversion towards any considered harming or aversive behavior. In other words, while still appreciating the positive and the good and strongly aspiring for them, many times we follow the same order of reaction as that of the original harming behavior, sometimes by flight that might be inwardly with fright, frustration and anger, and other times by fighting back or by punishing. When facing a potential harm we, as individuals or as a society, want to keep our sense of safety, or to regain it, so at times we may apply 'the negative,' a pain inducing response, against the negative of others, hoping that ours will win and will bring security for us or justice to the world. We may want to harm the other, in order to reduce the harm, or to retaliate it. But is it the only possibility? Isn't there an alternative? What is the price of taking part in the negative? How lasting can be the benefits of this practice be to everyone involved?

The common, or even universal humanistic position, strongly insists that there are alternatives for the negative. It also insists that these alternatives may bring better results, although it may take time for them to ripen. Then again, it is so easy to silence the humanistic voice when dealing with crimes and so called criminals and offenders. Even when facing victimization and its survivors the humanistic voice unfortunately has been often silenced. Since I strongly believed in the potential of the good and that the negative carries a growing price for everyone involved while its benefits are questionable especially in the course of time, I kept on looking for alternatives.

Essentially, my personal journey into criminology was that of seeking such alternatives, which could be found in the established knowledge of different scholars, and also were explored in my different studies that served as milestones of my professional journey. The positive alternatives were also supported by my continuing practice as a clinical criminologist and above all, by my ever developing self-reflection. Fortunately, there are many alternatives, some of them were easy to find, even though too many times we tend to avoid them. Some of these alternatives to

'the negative' are new, others are old and well rooted in our culture and tradition – in fact, in most cultures and traditions. While they vary and take different routes and share different presumptions, nevertheless they all share something in common. And this 'something in common' I termed 'Positive Criminology,' a term aimed to serve as an integrative title for various practices, approaches or models that stem from a common perspective – that of the Positive as a leading principle in reactions to criminality or social deviance. To portray it, I describe here several stepping stones of my personal journey towards this principle of the positive. Next, I clarify some of its characteristics and will suggest several positive vs. negative vectors of experience. To conclude I designate several limitations of positive criminology, and suggest a general science and practice of the positive.

## **Acceptance is healing**

A middle aged man, looking hesitant and uncertain in what to do, approached the entrance of the Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meeting room in central Tel Aviv. The evening was still young, albeit a bit dark, and he saw no one else around. There was no sign on the door. Then the door opened and a younger man came out. Seeing this hesitating man, he gently asked: "Are you looking for something?" "Sorry ... yes," the man murmured, and looked into a worn-out piece of paper in his hand, trying to read from it, "I was sent to this address, looking for drug addiction treatment agency or something like that ..." "Do you suffer from a drug problem?" "No ... yes," he admitted with embarrassment, surprised by the straightforward, personal question that forced him to expose his great secret. "Well, you have reached the right place! Welcome! We need you here!" And the younger man wide opened his arms and warmly hugged him, introduced himself and showed him the way downstairs to the room, then introduced him to other fellows and served him a hot and sweet cup of coffee. Everyone welcomed him with warm hugs.

My first significant research in criminology was about the recovery process of members of NA Israel (Ronel, 1995, 1998a). For over two years in the early 1990s I had the privilege to participate in a variety of NA experiences and to closely follow several groups and dozens of members in various stages of their recovery. I witnessed success stories and rising human abilities but also many relapses and senses of disabilities. I closely watched struggles for sobriety and for a better life with positive vision, besides inescapable experiences of powerlessness, failures and tragic outcomes. Within this variety I encountered enormous meaningful factors and processes of recovery, too many to be described here. A striking one was that of acceptance. For example, a young man, looking like he was very 'high' on drugs, declared his one month of sobriety and received a strong applause from everyone, although they could guess that he actually lied and was totally 'stoned.' Another member told in a group meeting how he abused the name of NA for a fraud. Everyone laughed! One of the co-founders of NA Israel told me how, after he previously relapsed, he used to come to NA meeting to sell drugs. No one

confronted him, although his friends gently helped members to avoid his company, to save them from the temptation to buy from him. And there were many, many more stories alike.

The older man from the opening example told me a few weeks later how he had experienced it. On that very day he was thrown out of his house by his wife and children, after they had discovered the severity of his addiction and became tired of his ceaseless excuses, broken promises and lies. His former experience was that of social rejection – he was almost always considered the wrong man at the wrong place and time. His close family members and friends avoided his company. But then this young fellow, a total stranger, hugged him with human warmth he had almost forgotten, and assured him that he is needed – they needed him! – and he is the right person in the right time and place. In his words, he was electrically shocked. He felt an immediate sense of inner warmth he never knew, the warmth of receiving unconditional, full human acceptance. He wanted to be part of this warmth, and was ready to do whatever necessary (Ronel, 1995).

Following Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), NA is a big and still growing international organization that by principle preserves its activities without any official sanctions (Galanter, Dermatis, Post, & Santucci, 2013; Peyrot, 1985). The organization, the groups and the interrelationship between members are all following a principle of voluntary permissiveness. Any member can be whatever one is and behave accordingly. Everyone is accepted at any time, under any conditions. Even the right to abuse drugs, or the recovery program itself, is accepted with no judgment or sanction. While the members are drug addicts on recovery and some are still abusing psychoactive substances, most of them are ex-offenders or even still practicing offenders. Many of the members are habitual impulsives and may easily react violently. However, although there is a marked permissiveness, as said, with no official sanctions to deter these ‘dangerous’ individuals from misbehaving at meetings, they rarely do so. Even when it happens, it is mostly locally and immediately solved with the same principle of acceptance. Most members adjust themselves to the unspoken norms. In other words, although individual members may usually represent a low level of moral reasoning and behave accordingly (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Ronel & Teichman, 2003), in NA, based on its spiritual 12-Step program (Galanter, Dermatis, Post, & Sampson, 2013), they created a moral atmosphere of the highest level (Kohlberg, 1981; Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990; Maxwell, 1984). The moral atmosphere of NA, as a social environment, is more than the sum of individual moral judgments and actions. It consists of a sense of accepting community, solidarity and coherence (Kohlberg, Levin, & Hewer, 1983). Most members want to be part of this and therefore they behave accordingly. In their behavior, at least in the context of NA, many members follow principles that represent a moral reasoning much higher than their usual ones (Ronel, 1998b). They learn these principles of behavior by active experience, both as actors and receivers. The marked acceptance, even of their ‘wrongs,’ symbolizes and supports this process.

NA created a socially approved organization for individuals considered as deviant, whose deviance is their entrance ticket to this organization (Gellman, 1964), which accepts them anyway, thus serves as their bridge to normativity (Ronel, 1998a). Being an organization of and

for imperfect individuals (Kurtz & Ketcham, 1992), that their admitted major imperfection – substance addiction – is their most common trait that serves as their ‘social glue,’ NA serves as a bridge for social integration. While members meet acceptance as described, they also learn by experience to accept others and to actively participate in social integration processes. They learn by experience how to become a productive member of a strong normative community and to assist other fellows to integrate into this community. Consequently they are able to accept themselves as well and to change their narrative from a failure one to that of hope, of redemption (Maruna, 2001).

In a short and somehow neglected paper Bogdan and Taylor (1987) called for the establishment of ‘sociology of acceptance.’ Positive criminology continues this and calls for an acceptance-based criminology (and penology and victimology as well). The recovery story of AA, NA and many more similar organizations proves its significance. Can such an acceptance be applied elsewhere? Can it work in an involuntary, compulsory setting? In a recent study of our research group, the first one that was consciously planned from the premises of positive criminology, Elisha interviewed 38 men who were incarcerated in two prisons in Israel, and who had been convicted of various sexual offenses (Elisha, Idisis, & Ronel, 2012). Most of these participants described a social and personal change process they went through during that sentence. A major credit for this change went to the support they experienced from different sources both inside and outside the jail, both formal and informal, particularly family members, including female partners, therapists who belong to the professional staff of the prison, and religious or spiritual figures. The prisoners experienced a strong acceptance by those supporting figures. However, it was conditioned by their progress in recovery, in a way that resembles reintegrative shaming (e.g., Braithwaite, 1989, 2000). They experienced acceptance as human beings, but it was clear for them that they must totally abstain from their sexual misconduct in order to still be part of these accepting relationships. Therefore the experience of acceptance can accompany social sanctions that target wrong behaviors.

We encountered a somehow similar yearning for social acceptance in the recovery process of juvenile and adult clients of Retorno, a Jewish therapeutic community for addicted individuals in Israel (Ronel, Elisha, Timor, & Chen, 2013). The participants ranked unconditional acceptance and caring during therapy as the most important for their recovery. They wanted these qualities both from the staff members and from their peers. The structure of this therapeutic community, although involuntary by most means, allowed them to experience social acceptance as receivers and as givers in a process that shares some features with AA/NA and groups alike. Admittedly the clients wanted to be cared for – but who really cares? How can we construct an authentic sense of caring? This will be discussed through the next group of my studies.

## **Who really cares?**

“Are you a volunteer?” I was directly asked by a young man, probably a homeless adolescent. We stood on the street, nearby a small park in Tel Aviv where young men, usually drug abusers or already addicted individuals, usually runaways, work as male prostitutes. Older men come in with their cars and collect these adolescents for a sexual business ride. During late evenings there is always traffic there. ‘Time is money,’ and money is needed for drugs and for survival in tough street life. The adolescent who asked me that question was no different. A young working fellow, that instead of doing business came with his other peers to circle us. I arrived as part of a big van service of ‘Elem,’ a third-sector social organization that provides a variety services for youth at-risk and in distress. Elem consists of mostly volunteers’ services, and professional youth workers guide and lead them. The van served several sites in Tel Aviv, and once a week came to that park. The youth waited for it. When we parked, they approached us and even helped us to take out a table, hot drinks, cookies and sandwiches. Everything was known and well organized. However, I was new there. So they ‘smelled’ around me with their survival instincts, and this question was one of the most significant: “Are you a volunteer?”

In a deep qualitative study of this van service we learned about the importance that the youth attribute to the volunteers (Ronel, 2006). In their world of experience, life is a constant power struggle between people and interests. People use each other; mostly they attempt to abuse each other. You have to fight your way, or to exchange it for something. But then, these volunteers ask for nothing, get nothing, but give. They give some food and drinks, they give their company, they provide emotional support. They do their best to help, sometimes not only during encounters in the street but actively attempting to help these youth to improve, to get out of the street life, to reconnect. In another location in Tel Aviv, an adolescent who was new to this service asked his friend: “Who are these people”? And the reply was “They are Elem, They are ... good people!”

Volunteers may have different motivations to volunteer (e.g., Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1996; Ferreira, Proença, & Proença, 2012; Mac Neela, 2004), however, for the street youth, they are considered as altruistic. While the literature argues whether altruism represents selfish motives or an authentic non-selfish attitude (Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, & Tsang, 2002; Clohesy, 2000; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Khalil, 2004), the youth perceived the volunteers to be authentically altruistic. Perceived altruism is the attribution of a non-selfish, caring and good-natured quality to an act or to a person. For the street youth it was as significant as to mark the whole service as altruistic (Ronel, 2006). In another study of a different service of Elem, a study of the volunteers’ work at drop-in centers for youth at-risk operated by Elem, we obtained similar results: The youth attributed the volunteers as altruistic, preferred their services to those of the paid workers and were positively affected by their service (Ronel, Haski-Leventhal, Ben-David, & York, 2009). The volunteers set for the youth a living model of human goodness in action and represented the existence of a responsive society with mutual, unconditional caring. Can it be practiced also with adult offenders?

Vipassana is an increasingly known Buddhist practice that usually involves a retreat with intensive meditation, contemplation and self-reflection (Barendregt, 2011). It is also being

practiced with addicted individuals and offenders, also in prisons around the world (Bowen, Witkiewitz, Dillworth, & Marlatt, 2007; Brewer, Bowen, Smith, Marlatt, & Potenza, 2010; Marlatt et al., 2004; Orme-Johnson, 2011). The Israeli Prison Service ran a ten-day Vipassana workshop for prisoners at a rehabilitative prison in Israel. The participants were substance addicted prisoners on various stages of recovery. We interviewed them just prior to the workshop, immediately after and about 3–4 months later (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013).

The initial finding was that no one quitted and they all described a very positive experience. Usually substance dependent individuals, as with other individuals with a criminal background, are considered as having a low level of self-control and as searching for an immediate gratification (e.g., Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Vipassana, on the other hand, is a challenging experience with minimal sensual satisfaction – the participants had to sit still all day long, meditating and self-reflecting. They were served only simple vegetarian food with no meals after noontime, had minimal external stimuli, and during the daytime they renounced talking and nicotine. They attributed their ability to face this challenge to several factors, a prominent one was that they were served by volunteers, who were experienced Vipassana practitioners.

Again, the volunteers were perceived as representing ‘the Good’ and this perception was significant to the prisoners. The fact that this goodness was directed towards them had a strong impact on their decision to stay at the workshop, to sincerely practice and to attempt to internalize the Vipassana set of values<sup>1</sup> even after the course was over. The volunteers set a positive role model and inspired a wish to go along with this model. According to Nicholas (1994), a shared purpose of various therapies is to facilitate the ability for goodness within clients. When the agent of change, the therapist, is perceived as such, this perception can facilitate achievement of this objective. An immediate consequence is the need to include volunteers in the rehabilitation process (O’Connor & Bogue, 2010). However, professional therapists and rehabilitative workers might also adopt a similar caring attitude. Unfortunately there are many cases where an emotional distance exists between social agents of change and offenders who might be on a rehabilitation program (Horwitz, 1990; Maruna, 2011). This emotional distance creates distrust and a lack of positive model by these agents, thus limiting the ability of change. Positive criminology strives to create a caring attitude that can set an authentic example of goodness; as Brazier (1993) straightforwardly asserted: “The necessary condition [of change] is love” (p. 72).

## **Ending the criminal spin**

Aron is a talented person who desires everyone to know it. He had a nice small business that he had built with his own hands. It did well for some time and life was good for him. He almost ‘proved himself’ as he wished. Alas he had to show it even more. He tried to extend his small business and took loans. It didn’t work as in the beginning. He eventually lost that business. The loans grew higher. He looked for a solution. An idea came into his mind, how to steal from a

large company. A brilliant innovative idea that showed his great talent; a perfect business. He began working on it. It did work well. Again he showed the world that he can make it. He stole more and more, from other similar companies. He couldn't stop. It still worked well. He returned most of the loans. His wife, who thought that he was in a legal business, was satisfied. But then he was caught. Everything ended. What a shame. For the first time, he asked for help. Then we met, as part of my practice as a clinical criminologist.

What can we learn from the phenomenology of crime and offenders? Is there any common factor that exists in different offences, in different situations and contexts, under different circumstances? In my 'Criminal Spin' model I tried to portray such a common factor (Ronel, 2011, 2013). Usually a criminal behavior presents a process of escalation (sudden to gradual) that begins with either a thought, or an emotion, or a non-criminal behavior, or as it is generally, some mixture of these ingredients, as Aron experienced in the above described case. This process of escalation, once set in motion, preserves its own movement which continues and even grows in a behavioral flywheel effect (Bensimon & Ronel, 2012). Once the criminal spin is in action, it continues until it faces a breakdown (e.g., being caught) or until it reaches a peak and then subsides.

In a phenomenological study of gamblers in illegal casinos in Israel the narratives of participants well described a spin process that mostly ended with a crash (Bensimon, Baruch, & Ronel, 2013). In two other phenomenological studies of youth at-risk that were involved in criminality that were carried out in our research group, the narratives clearly demonstrated a criminal spin process that began with a 'small' behavior but afterwards the participants experienced how they lost control over their own criminal path (Uzan, 2009; Zemel-Stern, 2013). They were trapped in a process that grew over time; in their experience they were forced to react in a one-way direction. The sex offenders who were interviewed by Elisha (Elisha et al., 2012) also had formerly experienced a criminal spin process, where they had experienced a mixture of a trap that seemed to force them to behave in one direction and a sense of ability to fulfill their sexual desires.

Such a criminal spin is detectable in almost any form of criminality – acute or chronic, sudden or gradual, individual, group or even national (e.g., the Nazis). Within each of these phases we can detect common, phenomenological, non-causal factors of the spin (besides the causal factors that are usually the target of different known theories in criminology). A noticeable one is a growing sense of self-centeredness, parallel to the growth of the spin (see Ben Zvi & Haimoff-Ayali in this volume). The stronger the spin, the more an individual (or a group, correspondingly) is occupied with oneself, with one's own fears, desires, anger, aims, expectations and more. We can discern two strong motives within the self-centered consciousness: 'I can' and 'I must.' The first – 'I can' – represents the sense of ability to accomplish the criminal act and the self-legitimization for it, as it was in Aron's case, where this motive grew with the spin. The more he stole, the greater his sense of ability was. Even when he was caught and the detectives showed their appreciation for his sophistication, he was unexpectedly satisfied. The second motive – 'I must' – represents a sense of an internal or external force to accomplish the criminal act, with

less and less alternatives as the spin grows. The participants of the Uzan and Zemel-Stern studies (see above) well described this motive. According to their experience, they had no choice, but to follow the criminal path, as though they became addicted to it. Aron also described such an inner motive that forced him to prove himself by any means, and once he began, he couldn't stop. The loans he took, the need to 'keep the show,' the failure in the normative business, altogether closed other alternatives, as he experienced it. Only when the police caught him, was Aron's spin over. The 'I can' motive, at least in the short term, was over too. However, what about the 'I must' motive? Can regular law enforcement end this strong motive?

Unfortunately, usually law enforcement can permanently (not too often) or temporarily (more often) stop the 'I can' motive, but not end the 'I must' motive. Law enforcement can stop individuals from offending (by arresting, surveillance, hot-spot prevention means, etc.), but it cannot bring the needed deep change of crime desistance that might reduce the 'I must' motive. Positive criminology, however, targets this as its aim – to facilitate an inner process of change that will lessen the need for criminality or for its results, thus to bring about a lasting process of crime desistance (McNeill, 2006).

## **What is positive criminology about?**

Positive criminology represents a wide perspective that may include various theories, perceptions, models and assumptions about moral, social and law-enforcement responses to criminality, social deviance and victimization and about transformation of individuals and groups. The variety of approaches may be similar at times but also very different at other times. However, they all share some common features that bring them together under the perspective of positive criminology.

Above all, I perceive positive criminology approaches to share a vision that acknowledges the need to discuss the 'what is' of criminological issues (e.g., 'risks,' 'what works?'), however it goes further to emphasize 'what ought' in a moral stance, life meaning and set of human basic beliefs (e.g., 'what society do we want to live in?'). To follow Kohlberg's (1981) critical understanding of the natural fallacy of psychology (and many times a fallacy of criminology as well) that ignores the visionary realm of our existence – an 'is' cannot stand alone without a certain 'ought' to it.

Put differently, positive criminology aspires to 'what might' (e.g., possibilities) or even 'what is wished' in a broad sense of human existence and social life. Still following Kohlberg's thinking (Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990), positive criminology goes further than studying and removing risks of criminality and constructing justice, to open possibilities of human potential development and growth by caring, benevolences and supererogation. It denotes a clear vision of why to practice criminology, rooted in a vision of what life we want to live and what do we see as our higher intentions, beyond momentary needs, risks and wishes. Such a vision became part of



psychology either by positive psychology (e.g., Gable & Haidt, 2005; Sheldon & King, 2001) or by the psychology of spirituality and faith (Miller, 2005; Pargament, 2007; Richards & Bergin, 1997). Although it does exist in some criminological writings (e.g., Braswell, 1990; Braswell, Fuller, & Lozoff, 2001; Martin & Stermac, 2010; Pepinsky & Quinney, 1991; Wozniak, 2002), the definition of positive criminology as an integrative perspective attempts to push it further into mainstream criminology.

To simplify the idea of positive criminology, we previously defined three core characteristics of any approach included under this perspective (Ronel & Segev, 2013). The first one is the emphasis on the positive. The positive might be a positive experience, as positive psychology well demonstrates (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Or it might be a positive social and human encounter with good intentions, as described earlier, or it might be an experience of growth albeit encountering challenges, as the bereavement studies and post-traumatic growth literature reveal (e.g., Balk, 1999; Shechory-Bitton & Ronel, this volume).

Unsurprisingly, different individuals and groups might differently consider what is a positive experience, encounter, intention or growth. Experiencing the positive is always relative and conditioned by inner and outer factors. For many individuals a positive experience, especially a sensual positive experience, might harm themselves (e.g., heroin injection) or others (e.g., sexual abuse). A self-centered individual may positively experience one's ability to accomplish something considered wrong by others, like Aron's self-enthusiasm about his criminally directed talent. Therefore there is a line of decision to be taken that involves choosing between 'right' and 'wrong' positive experiences, however, it need not just follow the line provided by the law.

The second characteristic of positive criminology attempts to provide such a distinction. It emphasizes crime desistance in a broad implication that includes a process of transformation of belief system, thoughts, emotional realm and behavior and also includes prevention of criminality at any level. This characteristic is value laden and designates a built-in morality, by the very understanding of right or wrong positive experiences. It is especially important in a post-modern world where almost everything is considered relative (but not relativism itself, unfortunately) and culturally dependent (Bloom, 1987; Schwartz & Gottlieb, 1998).

The inclusion of a declared set of values requires a positive understanding of it, that will avoid falling into conservatism or fundamentalism. For example, homosexuality was considered a crime and a sin not long ago and is still considered a sinful crime in several societies, however positive criminology will not target homosexuals for crime desistance, but probably any discrimination against them. Therefore I suggest a general and pragmatic understanding of 'the golden rule'<sup>2</sup> as a common and reasonable line of distinction between right and wrong and what one should desist from (Reinikainen, 2005). Accordingly, 'right' is to behave towards others according to what would be acceptable from the imagined perspective of those affected and 'wrong' is to behave in such a non-acceptable way. Although it received a vast amount of criticism during the centuries by philosophers and moralists, in most cases it may be well

understood and adapted. Most of my clients, who had a criminal background, easily comprehended it.

Keeping the golden rule may well stand for the second characteristic of positive criminology. In addition, to keep the positive criminology vision of benevolences and supererogation and to avoid self-centeredness of the morality itself (strict conservatism and fundamentalism), the right or wrong distinction may emphasize a direction that attempts to go beyond morality of justice (a possibility beyond the second characteristic indicated here) to one that follows the law of love (*agape* – unconditional love) as described by several thinkers (e.g., Solovyov, 2007; Sorokin, 1967). In the words of Kohlberg (1981, p. 352):

Agape is not a principle competing with the principle of fairness, it is an attitude inspiring acts that go beyond duty, acts that cannot be demanded or expected by their recipients but are, rather, acts of grace from the standpoint of the recipient.

This vision of agape well corresponds to the findings of the studies of perceived altruism and goodness and their impact; that is, it provides a very positive experience that has a strong potential to enhance a process of self-transformation in the direction of crime desistance (see also both Pepinsky and De Cock in this volume).

The third characteristic of positive criminology is that of integration, that might be holistic and accomplished in three levels: social/interpersonal, intrapersonal and spiritual. Criminality involves a sense of separation at any of these levels (Ronel, 2013), hence there is a need for an opposite direction, that of integration in order to maintain rehabilitation and recovery.

In the social level, criminality separates between individuals and groups and harms relationships, as the restorative justice literature emphasizes (Timor, 2008). Although among groups of offenders there is an experience of inter-personal integration between members, these groups are separated from mainstream society. According to their values, norms and collective behaviors they may stand in contrast to society, as the social theories of criminality and variety of studies of group delinquency well showed (e.g., Battin-Pearson, Thornberry, Hawkins, & Krohn, 1998; Becker, 1963; Cohen, 1955; Porter & Alison, 2006). Inappropriately, the reaction to crime may continue this line of separation by labelling offenders, removing them from society and limiting their ability to reconnect. For crime desistance to come about, efforts and ability to integrate into normative society are critical.

Social and interpersonal integration is an important, however not sufficient focus. As said, individuals in a criminal spin are pushed by external and internal forces to create an 'I must' motive. While the interpersonal integration might well reduce these external forces, there is a similar need to reduce the internal ones; to create a sense of intrapersonal integration that will assist individuals in crime desistance. Broadly resembling recovery from addictions (Best, 2012), the process of rehabilitation and recovery from criminal behavior and lifestyle involves inter-and intrapersonal aspects, that should meet the social and psychological needs of those involved, and assist them to experience gains of good lives and of being beneficial, positively valuable and

even helpful (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011; Riessman, 1965; Ross & Hilborn, 2008; Ward & Maruna, 2007). These are all aspects of integration of the self that can assist individuals to overcome the chaos of criminality and to experience the growth of an inner moral center of personality (Timor, 2001).

Inter-and intrapersonal integrations are obviously characteristics of positive criminology. In addition, the visionary outlook of this perspective signifies the possibility of a third level of integration, that is, a spiritual one. This level of integration attempts to offer individuals spiritual faith and a sense of spiritual belonging or relation with higher power, however not limited to any religion or any definition of a spiritual discipline (Braswell et al., 2001; Ronel, 2008; Worthington, Hook, Davis, & McDaniel, 2011). Historically, religious institutes and representatives of religion considered themselves to be rehabilitative and this has continued ever since (Whitehead & Braswell, 2000). In addition, the last century witnessed the growth of spiritual-but-not-religious institutes and approaches for recovery and rehabilitation of offenders. The related literature of this topic embraces rehabilitation and recovery in religious or spiritual environments, spiritual self-help groups and spiritual-based professional rehabilitation programs. A growing body of studies focus on religious education, intervention and conversion in correctional institutes (e.g., Armour, Windsor, Aguilar, & Taub, 2008; Johnson, 2011; O'Connor & Bogue, 2010; O'Connor, Duncan, & Quillard, 2006), or during life course (Giordano, Longmore, Schroeder, & Seffrin, 2008). To conclude, while spiritual integration is not a necessity in crime desistance, it may definitely empower such a process and support its persistence and prevent future recidivism. Definitely it goes beyond these somehow narrow benefits to assist individuals to act beyond their self-centeredness even when facing life challenges (Ronel, 2008). It provides a deeper meaning that relates to the quality of individuals' life (Frankl, 1982) and assists them to find life satisfaction deeper than they ever knew.

## **The positive vectors**

A comparable outlook at the above characteristics and possibilities of positive criminology indicates several 'coordinate systems' or vectors, each defining negative vs. positive directions. Their description provides a pragmatic scheme that may assist in evaluating the strength and relevance of different intervention approaches. Obviously, positive criminology is recognized by the attempt to promote a development in the direction considered as the positive at any given vector, and it is indeed a pragmatic definition of the term itself. In addition, different theories, models and practices may emphasize different vectors as their target of explanation or intervention. Locating different approaches on the negative to positive overall vector scheme may assist in defining their presumptions, studying and comparing them, and constructing a set of accompanying approaches that provides a more holistic system than each for itself. Another aspect of the definition of various vectors is that it enables to plan an intervention either by reducing the negative (e.g., reducing risks), as many times as needed, or by promoting the

positive, which I believe may provide a lasting effect (promoting likelihoods), or both, of course. Lastly, no vector can stand alone, but a set of vectors may represent any intervention approach.

The first vector that I will describe is that of exclusion – integration or separation vs. unification. Accordingly, an experience of social separation and exclusion defines a negative pole and the positive direction is that of social integration and an experience of social belonging and unification, as I described above. Evaluating this vector requires an examination of both the vector of the individual within a social group and that of the wider social context of that group. For example, although gangs represent a cohered group of belonging, they are detached or excluded from normative society (Klein, 1998). Evaluating the relative strength of each vector (within the group and that of the group within others) can provide an evaluation of the overall exclusion–inclusion status of individuals. Another example is that of Narcotics Anonymous that targets excluded labeled individuals (‘addicted’) and provides them with an integrating bridge to normative society (Ronel, 1998a).

A second vector indicates harming others (and at times the self as well) as a negative pole and supporting others as a positive one. Law enforcement, for example, many times reacts to criminality by harming the self of the offenders (punishment), although research in criminology often questions this direction (Braithwaite, 2006). Over centuries the discussion of the golden rule within moral philosophy questioned this with no definite solution (Reinikainen, 2005). The usefulness of the definition of this vector becomes obvious when seeing that criminality and law enforcement may share a similar direction within this coordinate. Consequently this vector may be useful in defining the appropriateness of interventions and experiences. A positive development of the self, that can assist its experience of integration, may be approached by enabling individuals to participate in support activities for others (see Maruna & LeBel in this volume). This participation has proved to bring a rehabilitative change (e.g., Ross & Hilborn, 2008).

A third vector is that of dependency and experience of powerlessness as a negative pole vs. sense of independence and the exploring of personal strength as the positive pole. The strength perspective, for example, that targets existing strengths of individuals (Van Wormer & Davis, 2003), indicates a positive approach concerning this vector. Other interventions alike are those where the client is considered as an active expert for her/himself (Bohart & Tallman, 1996). The negative pole might be represented by those interventions that admittedly or not, keep the client in an inferior state in relation to the expert therapist (Cohen, 1985; Horwitz, 1990).

The last vector is that of self-centeredness as the negative pole vs. a growing ability to be other-centered or God-centered at the positive pole. While self-centeredness is considered here to be at the root of any behavioral disorder and criminality, growing out of it indicates a direction out of the boundaries of the self (Krebs & Van Hesteren, 1994). Having the other and God as indicatives for this direction defined it as the highest moral possibility that represents the principle of love (Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990; Ronel, 2008; Sorokin, 1967). The principle of highest morality and love might provide an answer to the potential question – why grow out of self-

centeredness? The answer indicates the opening of oneself to the experience of love, which is deeply rewarding. This vector sets a recommendation for any intervention approach to target the self-centeredness of its clients and to provide them with means of growing out of their self-centeredness towards others. In addition, spiritually based interventions might provide their clients with means to grow out of their self-centeredness towards God, as these clients understand God. Usually, 12-Step groups attempt to provide these means (Chen, 2006; Maxwell, 1984; Ronel, 2008). In a way, this last vector is a basic one and any given vector can be related to it. For example, social alienation indicates or can increase a high self-centered experience, while social integration involves a degree of other-centeredness. Harming or supporting the other obviously indicates a component of self vs. other centeredness, and a growth from dependence towards independence assists individuals to reduce their marked self-centeredness (Kurtz & Ketcham, 1992).

## **Where do we go from here?**

Mainstream criminology and victimology are sciences that target the negative. Unfortunately, and to keep to a realistic view, in our human social world the focus on the negative is inescapable; it provides a necessary, valuable and resourceful discipline. Still unfortunately, such an approach might preserve the very level that it is focused on – the negative. For example, a violent reaction to violence, even under the light of the law and in situations when it is considered the only alternative to reduce any harm, is still a violent reaction (Gil, 1996); while it might be the only alternative to cut or prevent violent and victimizing acts towards innocent victims, it may at times preserve violence. Positive criminology calls for and offers an alternative, that is, the inclusion of the positive, as an inspired vision or as an everyday practice, whenever possible. Positive criminology (and positive victimology alike) suggests a shift in focus that creates a complementary perspective: the study and practice of the positive. It can be perceived as a reaction to the negative phenomena of crime, i.e., the positive as a cure for the negative (Ronel & Segev, 2013). However, the vision of positive criminology goes further beyond a cure for the negative, to offer a total breakthrough – the positive as it stands for itself, not in relation to the negative, but as a possibility to detach from the negative, by the very existence of the positive. In other words, positive criminology holds that a positive impact and growth might be a sufficient condition that can transform the negative to become irrelevant. Of course, and regrettably, when coming back from vision to reality, the positive perspective might face several limitations.

A major limitation is actually the gap between vision and reality. While the vision of positive criminology can be easily aspired by many, it is as well considered at times to be too romantic, idealistic, impractical and incapable to meet the acute needs of reality that call for immediate and concrete response. There are situations where this gap between vision and reality might be perceived as unbridgeable and correspondingly the focus is back on the negative, as a realistically perceived alternative. Second, the negative has a great potential to attract

attention. The negative symbolizes an urgent need, and this realistic urgency pushes aside 'romantic' visions of the good and its power. Third, and along the same lines, the urgency of the negative stands as immediate risk and need that calls for a powerful, immediate reaction or study. The positive might be perceived as an important, however future perspective. Rarely does this future arrive, because urgent needs and risks are usually replaced by newer ones. Lastly, the positive perspective that aspires for integration contains an inherent limitation; that is, the defined separation between positive and negative. In other words, positive criminology limits itself by the creation of a separation that it calls to eliminate. Still in other words, positive criminology is limited by its own subjectivity, similar to any other perspective.

Based on the acceptance of these limitations, positive criminology does not postulate a substitute to traditional criminology, but a complementary perspective, to create holistic science of criminology (and likewise victimology). The power relations in between traditional focus on the negative and the complementary focus on the positive might vary at times and under different circumstances. My belief is that the more we aspire to extend the positive perspective in research and practice, the better we can get as individuals, scholars and society. Back to the opening words – almost all of us appreciate it, so we all might gain by the growing application of the positive. But is it only in relation to criminology? Is the complementary positive perspective specified to criminology (and psychology – e.g., positive psychology), or can we create a general human science of the positive that might be relevant to any discipline, i.e., medicine, sociology and other fields? To continue my vision of the growing extension of the focus on the positive in criminology research and practice, extending it to other disciplines and towards a general perspective of the positive might be even more fruitful. A possible future challenge would be to define such a positive school of thinking. Eventually such a positive school will be able to define a holistic vision that might be deduced to any particular discipline. The above discussion of the characteristics of positive criminology, and the inclusion of visionary spiritual components, as well as the visionary focus on caring and love as agape, might provide a path to such a science of the positive.

## Notes

1. These values represent Buddhism, e.g., non-violence, no intoxication, mindfulness practice, etc.
2. 2.see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule).

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