

Editorial: An Increasingly Warmer, Unfairly Structured and Environmentally Interdependent Planet

Ascensión García Ruiz, Nigel South and Gema Varona
Editorial Team for the Especial Climate Change Criminology

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The past decade has been marked by a myriad of structural, social, and economic changes, all of which are closely linked to significant anthropogenic environmental degradation. In other words, the geological period known as the Anthropocene (Crutzen, 2006) has altered the conditions that make Earth habitable, forcing the most vulnerable living beings out of their natural habitats. In addition, an increase in environmental and climate litigation appears to be growing worldwide, particularly relevant in the case of the Global South, as a means of controlling, adjusting, and comprehending the rapidly changing reality of this transformation (Global Climate Litigation Report, 2023: Status Review).

The spirit behind this special issue is to unite various perspectives that have been overlooked in recent criminological literature focused on climate change and environmental topics. Readers will find a wide range of contributions ranging from a pure critical criminological approach, discussions on forestry conservation and legislation, or examinations of ecological and interspecies injustices through the lens of corporate restorative justice. In addition, an exploration of the effectiveness of prosecuting ecocide as an international crime, a novel analysis of astro-green criminology, a call for regulation of the cryptocurrency

market to address the global energy crisis and broader climate emergency, and a study examining anthropogenic pressures in the Arctic, a crucial region emblematic of ecological degradation, often termed 'white ecocide' – which currently lacks strong international criminal protections. Moreover, the fusion of Spanish and English in article writing, along with the geographical and discipline diversity of topics addressed, reflects a fresh epistemology that challenges the long-established dominance of Anglo-Saxon studies and validates the importance of non-Western viewpoints from which new stakeholders emerge to underline the interdependence of harms (and power) and their relationship with the criminal system and other forms of formal and informal social controls, including non-human perspectives in complex ways (Joy, 2023).

With its established presence in multiple academic and institutional fora, green criminology has become an essential perspective to apply in studies that aid understanding of the various forms of criminality and victimisation experienced by humans, animals and plants, understood as individuals and species sharing planetary boundaries that can only be fully grasped in an intergenerational way. Taking a further step is crucial. For instance, there is no denying that fully exploring the significant expanse of our planet, over 71% of which is covered by water – so often referred to as the 'blue planet' – will require a comprehensive examination of the challenges facing our seas and oceans, which are plagued by environmentally

unsustainable practices and whose management remains anchored in dysfunctional or even absent regulations from a holistic perspective (García Ruiz et al., 2022; Bueger & Edmunds, 2020). These bodies of water are essential to life on Earth, therefore attempts to classify, punish, or remedy ecocidal behaviours in terrestrial or atmospheric contexts are ineffective if we do not consider their impact on the oceans as part of a comprehensive climate change strategy.

In this sense, marine fauna and flora are still being overlooked as living beings of equal relevance to terrestrial species in maintaining the health of biodiversity. Despite the fact that attitudes, empathy, and sensitivity towards non-human species have drastically changed for the better in many parts of the world, the truth is that we still struggle to fully understand the nature of suffering – whether of fish, invertebrates or seaweed. Here, sensory criminology plays a key role in uniting transversal concepts related to the sensory capabilities of individuals within different species, and a sensorial approach within green criminology could contribute to expanding our understanding of harms experienced by non-human animals, thus broadening our criminological knowledge (McClanahan & South 2020: 13). Sensory criminology can be put in conversation with the emerging neuroscientific knowledge on animal and plant sentience and consciousness, that is, on perception, feeling and experiencing, linking intergenerational schools of philosophical thoughts beyond Western views, and valuing indigenous knowledge (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2024).

The theory suggesting that Earth has entered an era of global ecosystem collapse due to human activities (Sato & Lindenmayer, 2018), along with scientific findings identifying nine planetary boundaries that serve as the lifeline for our planet's existence (Rockstrom et al., 2009), are two of the most significant discoveries regarding the health of our planetary system. This fragile state of health is also threatened by the impact of zoonotic transmission of viruses, with exposure and circulation increased as human activities push into and change the habitats of other species (Alonso and South, 2024). It is unsurprising and obvious that the global COVID19 pandemic has pushed forward further thinking in this area and in the future, this will mean that our enquiries into environmental crimes and harms will require 'analysis which is wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary, and which is sensitive to the

interconnectedness of social and ecological phenomena' (White, 1998: 214).

The challenges that are with us now and that lie on the horizon are deeply worrying and, indeed, may sound catastrophic, but this means that it is now even more important than ever, to acknowledge the reality that action must be taken to prevent irreversible damage to our globe. There is still time to make a difference – but the window of opportunity is not unlimited. This volume aims at enlarging the criminological kaleidoscope to open new avenues of seeing and acting that will not cause further harm.

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