



**Green criminology: Critical, interdisciplinary and generally welcoming to newcomers  
An interview with Anna Di Ronco and Nigel South**

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**Abstract:**

This interview introduces green criminology as a vital approach to the study of crime, victimization and its control. It brings together two established scholars, Anna Di Ronco and Nigel South, who share their views on a range of topics, from personal reasons for engaging in green criminology and its position of green criminology in mainstream and critical criminology, to the different forms of green criminology (political economy versus cultural approaches), and possible solutions to green crimes and harms. The interview concludes with their thoughts on the public role of criminologists today.

**Keywords:**

Green criminology, cultural criminology, green political economy, Nigel South, Anna Di Ronco, interview.

**Resumen:**

Esta entrevista presenta la criminología verde como un enfoque vital para el estudio de la delincuencia, la victimización y su control. Reúne a dos académicos consagrados, Anna Di Ronco y Nigel South, que comparten sus puntos de vista sobre una serie de temas, desde las razones personales para dedicarse a la criminología verde y su posición en la criminología dominante y crítica, hasta las diferentes formas de criminología verde (economía política frente a enfoques culturales), y las posibles soluciones a los delitos y

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The interview was conducted by Václav Walach and Petr Kupka from the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava, Czechia. The Czech version of the interview was published in the Czech Criminology journal published by the Czech Society of Criminology.

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daños verdes. La entrevista concluye con sus reflexiones sobre el papel público de los criminólogos en la actualidad.

**Palabras clave:**

Criminología verde, criminología cultural, economía política verde, Nigel South, Anna Di Ronco, entrevista.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The thermally active spoil heap in Ostrava releases toxic fumes into the air and threatens to set fire to the nearby hazardous waste landfill (Knapová 2024). In Čáslav, police are prosecuting a company co-owned by billionaires for fraudulent waste storage (Klézl and Plíhal 2023). The district court in Vsetín ruled that the Bečva River was poisoned and all life in it killed by the company Energoaqua, but acquitted the company because, in its opinion, it was not a crime but a misdemeanour (Patočka 2023). These are just some of the cases that have happened in Czechia in recent years and which have so far remained without any criminological response. Yet, it is precisely in criminology that since the 1990s a perspective has been developing that provides suitable theoretical frameworks for their analysis and as such can contribute to understanding their specific form and the harms that they cause to the people and other species concerned, as well as to the environment.

The present interview on green criminology with two of its leading representatives, Anna Di Ronco and Nigel South, aims to introduce this research stream to readers who have only encountered it marginally or not at all. Anna and Nigel have worked together at the University of Essex, where they have also co-authored a number of studies within green criminology. While Nigel is one of the founding figures of the approach, Anna joined at a time when the approach was already in full swing. Their diverse experiences, professional trajectories and to some extent different research interests are precisely what make this interview a particularly interesting read.

The interview was conducted during the XI. Criminology Days from 19–21 June 2024 in Pilsen, Czechia, where the green criminologists presented their own papers and participated in a roundtable on the topic of engaged criminology with Shadd Maruna. Anna presented a paper from her research on the criminalisation of the environmental movement in southern Italy entitled *Criminalised environmental activists: the 'chilling effects' of judicial and economic repression*, highlighting the negative consequences of state repression on civic activism. In a paper entitled *Authoritarian ecology, dark green histories and narratives of "eco-fascism"*, Nigel explored green thinking particularly on the far right. He showed how, in this political current, ecological considerations are intertwined with authoritarian measures, some of which are almost Malthusian in character. The closing of borders and the sacrifice of large numbers of people go hand in hand here with the protection of the environment for that part of humanity which has the power to appropriate it for themselves.

We started the interview on the very first evening in a summer-heated office in the building of the Faculty of Arts. After almost two hours we were not even halfway through the prepared questions; asking and answering them increasingly resembled a discussion rather than a regular conversation, and Anna and Nigel were so kind to continue it. The final version of the interview was completed remotely after several correspondence exchanges, with the final full stop on October 1.

In eleven questions, we covered a range of topics, from personal reasons for doing green criminology and its contributions to criminology as such, to its place in mainstream and

critical criminology and the various forms of green criminology (political economy versus cultural approaches), to possible solutions to green crimes and harms, including the public role of criminologists and criminologists in the current era, characterised by the intersection of multiple crises, including the climate one.

## 2. THE INTERVIEW

**Václav Walach & Petr Kupka:** Although you have multiple research interests, you both are interested in green criminology. Nigel is one of the founders of this now wide-ranging approach. Anna has worked on environmental protest and the criminalisation of activism. You also addressed green issues in your conference speeches. What makes the green perspective so appealing to you?

**Nigel South:** Part of it has to do with my personal narrative. I have always liked nature and the environment. I grew up in an industrial city, and so I appreciated what was outside, especially in the coastal areas. In addition to the idea of a personal connection to nature, I was struck by what seemed to be a lack of interest in green issues within criminology. In the 1990s, I was redeveloping a course, and that gave me the opportunity to think about many issues, including the possible future horizons in criminology. I engaged with radical history, feminism and so on. But no one was really talking about green or environmental issues.

So, I began to prepare a lecture on the subject and soon found that there was not much to draw on. There were some studies about environmental law and administrative regulations, but almost nothing in criminology. But then, I came across a conference paper on animal cruelty by Piers Beirne. It was one of his early proposals that eventually became a famous paper on a nonspecialists criminology (Beirne 1999). I sent Piers a letter across the Atlantic and this led to us exchanging documents. Through this, we began to build up our own thinking about the idea of a 'green' criminology, which we reflected in the preparation of a special issue of *Theoretical Criminology* (South and Beirne 1998). At the time, we did not know that Mike Lynch had also been doing something on green criminology - partly because he published his early thoughts in a newsletter that had limited circulation in North America, and this was before the Internet. The whole field was very new and fragmented at the time, but gradually, various colleagues with a similar interest met or corresponded and formed a kind of network within which the green perspective took shape.

Overall, I consider the green perspective appealing due to its interdisciplinarity and its focus on structural factors that are criminogenic but often overlooked. Related to this, it has always struck me as odd that criminologists do not look at public health. They have looked at drugs, alcohol, violence, crime, but they have not looked at housing, for example. However, all these constitute important factors that make people's lives worse and that are in part responsible for bad health and the substance misuse problems that they have. Green criminologists understood very early on that it is necessary to consider harm as much or even more than crime, as well as the conditions that give rise to such harm.

And finally, the green perspective allows for engaging with intergenerational justice. Not only do we not care about what we are doing to the planet now, we do not really seem to care about what we are leaving behind for our children, grandchildren and so on. This is very shortsighted...

**Anna Di Ronco:** The green perspective makes a lot of sense given the situation we are currently living in. Unlike in the 1990s, when green issues had perhaps less resonance for the public opinion, they can no longer be ignored today, given the ravaging human-caused climate crisis – the results of which are pretty evident to us all in our day-to-day living. This, and starting to work at the University of Essex alongside Nigel, are probably the reasons why I got interested in green criminology in the first place.

In 2017, during my first year at Essex, I started my first green criminology research project with Nigel. It addressed the representations of environmental harm and criminalisation by an Italian environmental movement on Twitter. I approached Nigel with what at the time was a very embryonic research idea, and he was very supportive and enthusiastic about it. This led to our first co-authored piece for *Crime, Media, Culture* (Di Ronco *et al.* 2019) – and to the start of a collaboration which I hope will continue over the years.

What I guess appealed to me about the field is also its focus on harm beyond ‘crime’, and its interdisciplinarity. Colleagues can come from many different disciplines and backgrounds, yet they are all doing green criminology as long as they contribute to understanding the role of criminalisation, punishment, social control, crime, harm etc. in relation to the environment. The field is also generally very welcoming to newcomers.

**VW&PK:** Like some others (e.g., Sollund 2021), we see green criminology as part of critical criminology due to its emphasis on harm rather than crime. However, there are some researchers who use the term ‘critical green criminology’. Is there a difference between green criminology and critical green criminology?

**ADR:** I would say so. I sometimes use this term to distinguish my work from studies that are less interested in thinking critically about harm, crime, social control, criminalisation, etc., and the structural factors that shape them, and are more interested in, for example, finding quick-fix solutions which appeal to policymakers or local authorities. But it may probably be unnecessary: like you, I also see green criminology as grounded in critical criminology, not least because of its focus on ‘harm’ rather than on ‘crime’.

**NS:** I think that terminology issues can be a bit tedious and often unnecessary, but people get really hung up on them. I and Avi Brisman wrote a chapter entitled ‘Critical green criminology, environmental rights and crimes of exploitation’ for the book *New Directions in Crime and Deviancy* (South and Brisman 2013). The editors wanted the book to be about critical approaches, so we followed them. Now, the term is used in many different ways. I remember one scholar from northern Europe who did not want to contribute to a collection called *Green Criminology*, as she saw the term as signalling political alignment with green political parties and for various reasons did not want to be seen as affiliated to them. I think this was related to very specific political issues in her country, but of course a ‘green criminology’ does not have particular national political party connections – it is just about saying that the environment is important to our work. There are alternative terminologies such as ‘eco-global criminology’, a label created by Rob White who thinks of it as a green criminology that is global (White 2009). On the other hand, there are criminologists who are committed to environmental issues, but are not really interested in political economy or leftwing issues. Some call themselves conservation criminologists. Personally, I and many others really do not care all that much – what matters is your argument and your data. It is what you try to say, not what you want to call it.

**VW&PK:** The history of green criminology seems to be well documented, which is also to Nigel's credit. If you were to choose the three most important contributions of the green perspective to criminology so far, which would they be?

**NS:** Beyond identifying the idea of green criminology or green harms and crimes, one of the greatest contributions lies in expanding the range of victims. At first, it was about recognising victims of environmental harm as such. Christopher Williams published several pioneering essays (Williams 1996a, 1996c, 1997) and edited a special issue of *Social Justice* (Williams 1996b) in the 1990s. Although he was not a criminologist, he wrote about environmental victimology, laying the groundwork for much of what subsequently became green victimology. Matthew Hall (who seems to have stepped back from the field) once organised a fantastic little symposium in Sheffield. The event was about environmental victimology or green victimology, and we all went to the pub afterwards and there was this quiet guy sitting at the table with us. So, to start a conversation I said something like 'So did you enjoy it? Why are you here? What are you doing?' And he said, 'Oh, my name's Chris Williams. I used to write about this some time ago.' What? Here's the guy who kick-started this direction in the field and I thought he lived in the States, but here he was, in this pub in Sheffield having come to this seminar.

Since then, people have focused on what green victimisation means for the affected populations. Indigenous communities were pretty much left out for a long time, unless you were looking at anthropology or development studies or whatever. This has changed following the growth of criticism of global biases in criminology and the idea of southern criminology, drawing on Raewyn Connell's southern theory. Although this approach has been criticised in various ways, it has alerted criminologists to the need to think about 'the southern'.

In fact, all this was more of a rediscovery of the calls for re-orientation of criminology, as Boaventura de Souza Santos in Portugal had been writing about epistemological bias in the social sciences for quite a long time. And I remember Boaventura and Jock Young discussing and agreeing on these issues during a meeting of the National Deviancy Conference and the Conference of Socialist Economists in 1979, just before Margaret Thatcher was elected as UK Prime Minister. There were also connections with Latin America, including Rosa del Olmo who attended several meetings of the European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control. So, some ideas that had been bubbling for a long time were 'rediscovered' by southern criminology. Younger scholars have been very active here, and David Rodriguez Goyes produced a new perspective based on the synthesis of green and southern criminology, which highlights important issues and mobilises activity, writing and projects in this area.

In parallel with the addition of indigenous peoples and the development of southern criminology, colleagues like Ragnhild Sollund and Piers Beirne advocated for recognising non-human species. Both talked about speciesism, and Piers also borrowed the term of theriocide to highlight the various actions that cause the death of animals (Beirne 2014). Earlier on, Piers and I had edited a book called *Issues in Green Criminology: Confronting Harms Against the Environment, Humanity and Other Animals* (Beirne and South 2007). The book was well received, but people have often missed the 'other' in the title. Right from the start, we were saying that the focus should be all-encompassing, that humans are animals and that we should pay attention to other animals too.

The second contribution concerns extending the range of harms, including the harms of pollution, climate change, and technology. Reece Walters has pursued a very interesting research agenda about the destruction of all the elements on which human life depends: air, water, food, land, and energy (see, e.g., Walters 2025). So-called green technologies are definitely worth paying attention to, as green technology does not always mean being green and some of those technologies can be hugely destructive to the environment as well as human rights because of the need for extraction of rare and expensive metals.

Another interesting area, and also the third most important contribution, is the issue of denial. Stan Cohen was one of my Master's teachers in the late 1970s, and I think it was about that time that he started to think about arguments that ended up in *Visions of Social Control* (Cohen 1985) and later in *States of Denial* (Cohen 2001). The way in which the sociology of denial has expanded has been really interesting in the context of environmental issues. Although climate change is critical to our survival, the predominant response seems to be global cognitive dissonance: it will go away, it is not happening, or complete denial. And while we are all guilty of this, the importance of the media in representing climate change is indisputable. Avi Brisman and I (Brisman and South 2015a, 2015b) have written about the media and the denial industry, which then in part led to the idea of bringing cultural and green criminology together. So, these are just three significant research directions that have developed in green criminology and as such present a significant contribution to criminology. But of course, there are more!

**VW&PK:** Anna, you came to green criminology at a time when it was already well established. Before that, you worked on other topics such as urban regulation. What won you over to green criminology? And what contributions do you consider to be important for you, or for the field generally?

**ADR:** Well, I have not stopped working on questions of inclusion/exclusion in the urban space, which has indeed been the focus of my PhD and my research ever since. But I have grown an interest in green criminology, in particular in relation to environmental movements. I think I have recently put these two strands of my research together in my book *Policing Environmental Protest* (Di Ronco 2023).

In this research, I analyse the policing of eco-justice movements during the pandemic, taking an Italian city as a case study. One of the main findings I discuss in the book is that eco-justice protests during the pandemic were often displaced from inner-city spaces to less 'central' areas of public social life, for economic reasons (e.g., to facilitate the post-lockdown local economic recovery in urban 'centres'). This economic reasoning is also what often justifies the exclusion from inner-city areas of vulnerable and marginalised individuals. At the same time, I also analysed the ways used by eco-justice groups to keep their grievances in public sight, in spite of all the restrictions imposed on them and their mobilising.

Given the importance of representations in my work, I found the (sub)area of green cultural criminology, which has been pioneered by Nigel and Avi Brisman, to be extremely important. At the moment, I am also really interested in human control and 'management' of nonhuman animals - including in the city - and I find the work of Piers Beirne, Ragnhild Sollund and Tanya Wyatt, among many others, to be extremely relevant and inspiring.



**VW&PK:** In his seminal article on ‘a green field for criminology’ (South 1998), Nigel argued that, compared to other disciplines, criminology was overdue in terms of including green issues in its orbit. Despite the huge expansion of green criminology since then, Michael Lynch and Michael Long (2022) consider this perspective to be peripheral to the mainstream of criminology. Would you say that what you do is peripheral or marginal?

**ADR:** I would not say so. Perhaps green criminology may not have been well represented in the programmes of recent American Society of Criminology conferences. But in Europe, I think that green criminology is pretty mainstream. The European Society of Criminology is quite mainstream for me and very open about different perspectives and thematic areas. And they have just endorsed green criminology as one of its working groups (ESC, n.d.). This itself can be seen as a recognition that green criminology is an established field of research for many people, at least in Europe.

**NS:** It is true that green criminology does not get much attention at ASC conferences. But when Robert Agnew was president of the ASC, he created a green stream and asked me to be its coordinator. I think Avi is this year’s coordinator. Green topics are discussed in other streams as well. The Division of Critical Criminology and Social Justice, which is one of the largest divisions of the ASC, constantly recognises green criminology. They have awarded prizes to green criminologists such as Piers Beirne, Ragnhild Sollund, Vincenzo Ruggiero and myself. And then there is the matter of labelling. Some people do not see themselves as green criminologists, but their work fits in there – for example, researchers working on health harms and dispossession affecting Indigenous communities as a result of force.

On the other hand, not all critical criminologists were so enthusiastic about green issues. In *States of Denial*, Stan wrote that his own personal denial was environmental issues. He said that he could not get too worried about the plight of other species or the fate of the environment because somebody else will take care of it, and that he was more concerned about the torture of other human beings as a human rights violation. My friend and former PhD supervisor, Jock Young, could see how the environment was important, and Jayne Mooney has reminded me that at the time that Jock was involved in running crime and victimisation surveys he wrote that ‘it would be quite easy to add ... a medical epidemiological questionnaire in order to measure the prevalence of illness caused by chemical pollution’ (Young and Matthews 1992, 14) – but regrettably he did not really pursue such possibilities. So, it is not just about the difference between mainstream and critical criminology, some of the critical giants did not consider green issues to be essential either.

**VW&PK:** One important strand of green criminology builds on political economic theories. Your work is also representative of a cultural approach to green issues, drawing on cultural criminology (Di Ronco *et al.* 2019, Brisman and South 2020), southern criminology (Rodríguez Goyes and South 2017, Brisman and South 2020, Rodríguez Goyes *et al.* 2021), visual criminology (Di Ronco and Allen-Robertson 2021), and even gothic criminology (South 2017). How do you see the relationship between the two (i.e., green cultural criminology and political economic theories), and why do you think it is important to go beyond political economy?

**NS:** I think that one way to answer your question is to think about academic intellectual work. We were influenced by Ken Plummer, who was a great writer on the breadth of sociological thought. Following C. Wright Mills, he believed that practising sociology means developing the sociological imagination. It involves imaginative thinking about what is in front of you. And this is a two-part thing. There are the bodies of work, theories and ideas, and events and the world, and then, there is you as an intellectual creator. One of the key themes of *Sociological Imagination* is the art of learning the ‘craft’ – this is about how one becomes a sociologist, and there are many approaches to it. Some in the field specialise and focus on certain topics. Personally, I have always been more restless and perhaps curious. So, I have got involved in different areas. And I think that has been quite interesting for me, but also, it is something that green criminology I think invites. Once you start to think about the environment, the world, the planet, different populations, different issues from this perspective, you soon find that there are many different ways of looking at them and many stories to listen to.

**ADR:** I think that my answer is similar to Nigel’s. I find the political economy perspective to be really relevant and important, and I have also sometimes used it in my work (see, e.g., Di Ronco and Cavalcanti 2024). But I am also curious and perhaps also as restless as Nigel. For example, like Nigel (who – with our former colleague at Essex Bill McClanahan – wrote a fantastic and pioneering piece on sensory criminology, see McClanahan and South 2020), I have recently engaged with sensory perspectives to think about policing, control, harm and resistance in the city and beyond. In the book that I have mentioned earlier, for example, I argue that the senses – and affective atmospheres in particular – are key to understanding eco-justice resistance, the harms that activists campaign against, and the progressive and transformative scenarios that they champion (see Di Ronco 2023 – chapter 3 in particular).

Even more recently, I argued that the senses and affect are also important to understanding urban governance, as the exclusion of vulnerable people and nonhuman animals deemed ‘unworthy’ (both commercially and economically) can also be linked to the sensory and affective registers of the powerful ‘majorities’ (see, e.g., Di Ronco 2024; see also Peršak and Di Ronco 2021, 2024). In short, I think that political economic analyses of green crime and harm are essential, but they also need to be combined or integrated with other perspectives – such as the sensory ones that I have just mentioned – to fully capture and understand human experience.

**VW&PK:** How have green criminologists used the findings and data of the natural sciences so far? Do you think that a greater involvement of the natural sciences in green criminology can be beneficial for its development, or are they too epistemologically and methodologically distinct projects to yield relevant results?

**NS:** Some green criminologists have scientific backgrounds. Mike Lynch’s father was a Professor of Toxicology and Pharmacology with an interest in environmental issues, and Mike has always made the case for using scientific data of various kinds. Mike and colleagues are great at drawing on data produced by government agencies or NGOs etc. But there are other ways of incorporating ‘science’. First, you can focus on how scientific data are used in social struggles. There is no such thing as neutral science. We can observe this again and again in how different actors interpret scientific data. I wrote a chapter (South 2007) where I use the book *Tainted Desert* (Kuletz 1998), which is partly about the

struggles of indigenous North American communities from the Nevada Desert and their use of science in an effort to hold the U.S. government accountable for testing nuclear bombs. There are other cases from the United States or Latin America, where corporations will say that their data show that this dam or mine will not destroy the environment of wildlife, while the scientists working on behalf of the local communities show otherwise.

Second, there are attempts to create more multidisciplinary projects. Rob White (2018) has emphasised the importance of looking at climate science. Piers Beirne has written important papers about Covid related issues (Beirne 2021, 2022). And Aitor Alonso and I have engaged with emerging zoonotic/infectious diseases and the need to pull together green criminology and a public health perspective. The paper argues that the two can benefit from each other. Green criminologists can work with the public health data, while researchers in public health can learn from the research that green criminologists do (Ibáñez Alonso and South 2024). To give an example, Alonso interviewed people who work in multidisciplinary teams about infectious disease transmission and emergence. But they had not really understood wildlife trafficking and how wildlife trafficking leads to spillage of diseases. Because they are not criminologists. They are public health scientists, statisticians or from other disciplines. And he was saying there is a million-dollar wildlife trafficking industry going on under your nose, and of course they know about some of this from newspapers and so on. But there's an expertise gap there. So, we need a two-way flow of expertise.

**ADR:** I think that green criminology, among the many areas within criminology, is the ideal field where interdisciplinary collaborations can and should be established, and where data from the natural sciences can and should be used. The examples mentioned by Nigel are all great, and indicative of an openness of the field to the expertise of other disciplines, including the natural sciences. This is something that I also want to explore more in my future work. As I mentioned earlier, I recently got interested in the human control of nonhuman animals, as well as in human-to-animal conflicts, which I believe have a distinctive criminological dimension such as when this control involves the killing of animals, or their displacement from areas which are thought to be for humans only, like cities. But to really come to grips with these issues, one needs an interdisciplinary team and multi-disciplinary expertise.

**VW&PK:** We have talked about how green criminology takes as its object of interest not only legally defined crimes, but also legally perpetrated harms. This is well-known from prior discussions in critical criminology, and it was also there where the now classic dilemma was formulated: to criminalise or to decriminalise? Where do you stand in this case? Is more criminalisation of green harms a desirable way, and perhaps, how does it fit the abolitionist, anti-carceral state argument?

**ADR:** My first emotional reaction would be, sure, we should criminalise the powerful. But the problem does not lie in the individual corporation which causes the harm or the crime. Rather, it lies in the economic system which encourages corporations and states to prioritise profits over the wellbeing of ecosystems and all their living entities. In essence, it is a problem of mentality which needs changing. For this reason, I do not believe in further criminalisation, although I recognise that in some cases criminalisation may hold a powerful symbolic dimension. My preference would always go, where possible, to environmental restorative justice, an approach which tries to instil in people's minds that harming the

environment is bad for everyone, including the perpetrators. I believe that admitting that we have done something wrong and that we need to make it right can be a step forward in terms of avoiding future reoccurrence of harms. Nigel and I (Di Ronco & South, forthcoming) discussed this in a recent piece that we have written together for the *Elgar Research Agenda on Environmental Crime and Law*. The chapter is titled 'Environmental harms, ecocidal trends and restorative responses: some interdisciplinary directions' and will be published soon.

**NS:** Much work has been done recently on the topic of ecocide and its implementation in international criminal law. Philippe Sands and others have helped advance an internationally agreed definition of ecocide and some countries have begun to incorporate it in their domestic law. But originally, around 2009, it was Polly Higgins and her colleagues who called for changes to the Rome Statute and inclusion of something prosecutable at the International Criminal Court. This was always a difficult proposition because many countries do not recognise the International Criminal Court, not least the major polluters such as China, Russia and the United States. Higgins and various NGO partners organised two demonstration trials. The first was a prosecution event at the Supreme Court in London in 2011 (Carrington 2011), the second a sentencing event at the University of Essex in 2012 (University of Essex 2012). Restorative justice was absolutely fundamental to the punishment. They used restorative justice circles, including the voices of the affected communities, Indigenous peoples, other species, future generations and so on and actors as corporate representatives of the guilty parties.

So, while I would like to hold corporations accountable and criminalise them because of the lavish lifestyles of their executives and the lies that they tell, I think that restorative justice is an important part of making the criminal justice system ethical and effective. The thing with the abolitionist route is, as much as I have sympathy for some of their arguments, that ultimately it does not really take you anywhere. Stan Cohen was quite in favour of abolitionism until he tried to engage with the real-world problems that really grabbed him emotionally: human rights abuses in relation to Palestine. In the end, he had to turn to human rights law, which cannot exist without courts and police to enforce it.

**VW&PK:** Like other corporate and state harms, environmental ones are regulated by civil law and compliance policies. Are these regulations effective? Why so, why not?

**NS:** You do not need green criminology to answer this question. We know from public records that the regulatory agencies are underfunded and subject to regulatory capture, which means that the role of the agencies is thwarted by the fact that their boards are staffed by people from the very business that they are supposed to regulate. They are perceived as experts, not as people with vested interests. We know that this is a widespread problem. John Braithwaite has written about it quite a lot but also other people such as John Abraham in the context of the pharmaceutical industry and more recently Monica Pons Hernández (2022) describing a case study of such 'revolving doors' in Spain. It is scandalous, but it is there. And we know how the powerful and their networks cover things up. Everywhere from the United Nations down to localities, there are partnerships and codes of practice and things like that. Lots of money will be spent, but the balance does not change because this is just remedial work that is aimed to improve public images.

And then of course, there is apathy. People often simply do not care until it hits them. But even then, they continue to suffer if their local economies are entirely dependent on a major employer who causes pollution. You can see this time and time again. The asbestos scandal in Italy, mining companies that dominate an area in Appalachia, chemical industries that have dominated parts of the UK. Everyone knows about the problems, but the local population does not necessarily want anything to be done. There was a mining operation in Spain that the European Union wanted to close down. It was getting subsidies from the EU and when the EU wanted to withdraw the funds the local population protested. What would you do in this case? Either you are a paternalistic interventionist from outside who closes down and destroys a community on behalf of some notion of public health or you let the company continue to undermine it.

**VW&PK:** This is a great example that speaks to our next question, which is about the possible limits of victims extension in green criminology. If we understand non-human animals or the entire environment as victimisable, does not this raise the question of how do we identify harm and what harm would be prioritised? We can take an example of the Bečva case, which was about the industrial pollution of the river. Who is the victim here? Is it the fishermen who suffer from industrial pollution of the river (as in the well-known Bečva case in Czechia)? Is it a local community? Is it society as a whole? Is it also non-human animals or the environment?

**ADR:** As I mentioned earlier, Nigel and I have recently written a piece together also addressing environmental restorative justice. In this piece, we have mentioned exciting new interdisciplinary research projects which have focused on trying to hear the voices of the more-than-human which has been harmed and victimised around us (for examples, see Pali *et al.* 2022; see chapter 16, in particular). These projects are all very interesting and promising, including because they embrace a very broad definition of who is the ‘victim’.

But when it comes to the law, we know that a more restricted definition of ‘victim’ often applies. In countries such as New Zealand, Colombia, Ecuador, India and Uganda, more-than-human entities have sometimes been given the status of legal subjects which allowed them to stand in court (via a human guardian or custodian). However, in all other instances, we know that only the interests of *some* human ‘victims’ are valued and protected (obviously, so long as the harms they have suffered are recognised and protected by the law).

In individual cases, moreover, the interests of different ‘victims’ may also collide. For example, I am thinking of the case of the Ilva steel plant in Taranto (south of Italy), which overtime has released many toxic pollutants causing the death of many employees and local residents, while also affecting non-human animals and plants. In spite of all these harms, and the continuous risks to the lives of their loved ones, the company’s employees fought for a long time against the shutting down of the factory. This case clearly shows how ‘victims’ can have different views on harms and their solutions, and that what is good or desirable for some (employees, for example) may have negative impacts on others (residents and the more-than-human, in this case).

**NS:** I have argued for seeing green criminology as a sensitising perspective, which means that it should make people think more broadly and sensitively about the environment and the things that threaten it. Thinking of your example reminds me of an article by Pamela

Davies from Northumbria University, in which she explored a similar problem in North East England (Davies *et al.* 2019). There was an aluminium smelting plant that was breaking pollution emissions rules, but which was too expensive to bring into line with EU standards. The plant was therefore closed, making many local people unemployed, and damaging the local economy. This was a case of human justice versus environmental justice, where you have to weigh things up in terms of the hierarchy of victimisation.

I think that there is a point about how we construct this notion of victims. On the one hand, you have to be sensitive about victimisation globally. People just do not realise how much deterioration is happening to their air, water and food. On the other hand, you have to think locally and be realistic about whether you can get support for closing a factory that employs a lot of people. And yet, if – for example – a substance like mercury leaks into a river, this is also going into the food chain, and will have a cumulative impact on public health, leading to deaths or severe impairments for generations. So, the argument is that unless we do something now, we create the conditions for longer-term disaster.

**VW&PK:** In your conference papers, you focused on topics that do not exactly fill one with hope for a happy future. There are concerns about state criminalisation of the environmental or climate justice movement or inaction in the face of climate change commitments, or the far right's resistance to or takeover of green issues, often supported by corporate interests. What should be the public role of criminologists in such circumstances?

**ADR:** The role of criminologists is important, especially during the ongoing 'convergence of crises', as Nigel and his colleagues have put it (Lam *et al.* 2023). Critical analyses are not only needed but are essential to expose excessive uses of power and criminalisation. They are also needed, among others, to expose environmental harms and give (further) visibility to the grievances of environmental movements fighting for eco-justice, which often endure a very intense level of policing and criminalisation. We can pursue these aims not only through teaching and public dissemination activities, but obviously also by engaging (more) with the media.

**NS:** I agree with Anna, and to build on her comments, I think that here you are asking about what has been broadly defined as 'public criminology'? The debate about what this should mean has gone in several directions, but I have always taken it to mean more than simply engaging with 'public policy', as some seem to have interpreted it. Perhaps, it should be more about finding ways to take criminological thinking into the public realm as a form of what Vincenzo Ruggiero (2012, 15) called 'social criticism'.

Eamonn Carrabine, Maggy Lee and I wrote about this very soon after the emergence of discussions about a 'public sociology' (Carrabine *et al.* 2000) and revisited the literature and state of debate twenty years later (Carrabine *et al.* 2020), arguing criminology – whether inward- or outward-looking – remained guilty of 'amnesia and absences', repeating the same old questions and using the same old methods. When Michael Burawoy (2005) first talked about a 'public sociology', one key element of his position was that contemporary sociology failed to engage critically with key public issues and contemporary challenges, and for all the progress made by sociology and criminology since, they can still seem guilty of failing to engage across epistemological and geographical boundaries. So, for example, a 'southern' perspective or a re-orientation to other area than Global North is welcome, but

it is astonishing that it took so long to be recognised as necessary. Actually, it is both productive and exciting to challenge ‘silos’ of thinking, as with the work on ‘eco-fascism’ and right-wing use of arguments that blame environmental problems on migration and weak border controls. This is an issue that is local and global, interdisciplinary, political and public!

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