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Short Communication

Environmental Crime and Social Injustice: An Overview of Green Criminology

Alex Bitna*

Department of Law, School of Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

DESCRIPTION

Green criminology is a relatively new field of study that emerged in the late 1990s, and it focuses on the relationship between environmental harm and criminal behavior [1]. In essence, it seeks to understand how the exploitation and destruction of the natural world are not just ecological issues but also issues of social justice and criminality [2]. This essay will provide an overview of green criminology and its significance, exploring its key themes and concepts. One of the central themes of green criminology is the recognition that environmental crimes are not just committed by individuals but also by corporations and states [3]. This recognition challenges traditional criminological theories, which often focus on the individual as the primary unit of analysis. In contrast, green criminology acknowledges the role of corporations and states in perpetuating environmental harm, often through activities such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change [4].

Given that it combines a variety of viewpoints, as well as theoretical and ideological notions, green criminology is difficult to categorize. Therefore, rather than their being a single separate green criminology, it is more accurate to refer to a criminology that is concerned with both the inclusion of green ideas into mainstream criminology and the overall disregard of ecological issues within criminology. Another important concept in green criminology is the idea of ecocide. Ecocide refers to the destruction of large-scale ecosystems, such as rainforests, oceans, and wetlands. This concept highlights the fact that environmental harm is not just about individual acts of pollution but also about the destruction of entire ecosystems, which can have devastating consequences for both human and non-human communities [5]. Ecocide is evident as a serious crime against the environment, and some scholars argue that it should be recognized as an international crime, alongside genocide and crimes against humanity. Green criminology also emphasizes the interconnectedness of environmental harm and social inequality [6]. This recognition challenges traditional criminological theories, which often treat crime as an individual problem rather than a structural one. Green criminologists argue that environmental harm is often linked to broader issues of social injustice, such as poverty, racism, and colonialism. For example, corporations often locate their polluting industries in marginalized communities, where residents may lack the political power or economic resources to resist. This can result in disproportionate harm to these communities, which are often already facing social and economic challenges [7].

The implications of green criminology are significant, as they challenge traditional notions of what constitutes a crime and who should be held accountable [8]. Green criminologists argue that environmental crimes should be treated as serious offenses, with appropriate penalties and legal consequences. This includes holding corporations and states accountable for their actions, as well as addressing the structural inequalities that contribute to environmental harm [9].

In conclusion, green criminology provides a critical lens through which to understand the relationship between environmental harm and criminal behavior. It challenges traditional criminological theories by emphasizing the role of corporations and states in perpetuating environmental harm, as well as the interconnectedness of environmental harm and social inequality [10]. As such, it has important implications for how we think about and respond to environmental crimes, including the need to hold those responsible accountable and address the structural issues that underlie them.

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Correspondence to: Alex Bitna, Department of Law, School of Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, E-mail: bitnaale@gmail.au

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