

Palgrave Studies in Green Criminology

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Criminologists have increasingly become involved and interested in environmental issues to the extent that the term Green Criminology is now recognised as a distinct subgenre of criminology. Within this unique area of scholarly activity, researchers consider not just harms to the environment, but also the links between green crimes and other forms of crime, including organised crime's movement into the illegal trade in wildlife or the links between domestic animal abuse and spousal abuse and more serious forms of offending such as serial killing. This series will provide a forum for new works and new ideas in green criminology for both academics and practitioners working in the field, with two primary aims: to provide contemporary theoretical and practice-based analysis of green criminology and environmental issues relating to the development of and enforcement of environmental laws, environmental criminality, policy relating to environmental harms and harms committed against non-human animals and situating environmental harms within the context of wider social harms; and to explore and debate new contemporary issues in green criminology including ecological, environmental and species justice concerns and the better integration of a green criminological approach within mainstream criminal justice. The series will reflect the range and depth of high-quality research and scholarship in this burgeoning area, combining contributions from established scholars wishing to explore new topics and recent entrants who are breaking new ground.

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Legitimizing Corporate Harm

The Discourse of Contemporary Agribusiness

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In Memory of Anne C. Johnson

PREFACE

I want to begin by noting that I think it is important for researchers to locate themselves within their research in order to be transparent about their potential biases. Reflexivity is essential to qualitative social research because “the researcher is the primary ‘instrument’ of data collection and analysis” (Watt 2007: 82). I agree with the idea that no research is value-free. Although the proper and systematic application of certain techniques may increase the rigor of one’s work, research interests and questions do not just magically come into being; rather, we begin with ourselves and our own understandings of the world. Indeed, data analysis reflects the theoretical, epistemological, and ontological assumptions of the researcher (Mauthner and Doucet 2003).

For as long as I can remember, I have cared deeply for animals. My early aspiration was to become a veterinarian, and it was not uncommon for me to feed and bring home strays in my youth. Later in my life, I participated in lobby days for the HSUS, volunteered for a cat rescue group, and donated money to various animal welfare groups, including HSUS, Best Friends Animal Society, and the World Wildlife Federation. I have also been a practicing pescatarian for about a decade or so. I decided to stop eating all meat besides fish because I wanted to reduce my participation in the harms perpetrated by industrial agriculture, namely, the harm inflicted upon animals. While I realize that the conditions of farmed fish are also harmful and that overfishing of the oceans is detrimental to the environment, I also recognize myself as an imperfect human being striving to be better; my ideal self is vegan. It is from this place of caring that I was inspired to

examine how the harm of some animals is not only tolerated but is culturally legitimized in the United States. In short, I *did* enter this project with preconceived notions about industrial agriculture's role in harming animals. I do not believe we can ever enter the research scene in a neutral way, but throughout my analysis, I aspired to be as critical of myself and my methods as I was of the texts I analyzed.

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References

- Mauthner, Natasha S., and Andrea Doucet. 2003. Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis. *Sociology* 37: 413–431.
- Watt, Diane. 2007. Becoming a Qualitative Researcher: The Value of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Report* 12: 82–101.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of the discursive construction of corporate harm and orients the work theoretically within green criminology. This chapter also outlines the focus of the book which is to answer the question of how agribusinesses culturally legitimize their harmful practices. Chapter 2 will focus on the staggering rise of industrial agriculture and some of the general harms that result from it—particularly intensive animal farming. I will first trace the origins of industrial agriculture and emphasize some of the particular harms of raising and processing animals for food in the industrial system, looking specifically at harm to animals, harm to the environment, and harm to human health. Then, in Chap. 3, I will explore and discuss some noteworthy cases of harm perpetrated by Tyson. Cases include multiple incidents of animal harm recorded via undercover video at Tyson processing plants and contracted farms as well as multiple documented environmental harms that resulted in legal action against Tyson. The descriptions of both the general and specific harm in Chaps. 2 and 3 provide a useful context for the remainder of the book. Chapter 4 illuminates the way in which corporate harms and their legitimation are situated within a complex cultural, structural, and historical landscape. The unifying argument of this chapter is that Tyson’s harm/socially responsible discourse reflects general attitudes about harm to nonhumans and corporate power, as well as weak corporate regulation. In addition, Tyson’s harm/discourse cannot be understood without also understanding the history of corporate PR or “spin,” and its contemporary conduit par excellence, the corporate web page, and the particularly modern “need” for companies to

project social responsibility. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss how Tyson disguises their actions toward animals and the environment by using binary discourses where Tyson aligns with ideological “good” and distances themselves from ideological “bad”. Chapter 5 focuses on the distancing, whereas Chap. 6 focuses on the aligning. Chapter 7 contains the summary and conclusions of the book.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFO	Animal Feeding Operation
ALDF	Animal Legal Defense Fund
ASPCA	American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
AVMA	American Veterinary Medical Association
CAFO	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FSIS	Food Safety Inspection Service
FTC	Federal Trade Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PR	Public Relations
RMP	Risk Management Plan
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SEP	Supplementary Environmental Project
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

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