

Environmental victims: a challenge to criminal law and a challenge to criminology

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Despite the notable developments in 'Green Criminology' over the last decade (see White, 1998), relatively little academic attention has yet been focused on those affected by environmental degradation and climate change (Williams, 1996). Grounding itself in the notion of 'social harms' (a concept extending beyond 'crime') this paper sets out a research agenda for the better understanding of the needs of so-called 'environmental victims', the limits of national and international justice systems in addressing these needs and the varying impacts of environmental harm on individuals and communities, both now and in the future. The case is presented for a multi-disciplinary approach to these issues encapsulating criminology, victimology and international law. The argument is made that each of these disciplines may benefit from such collaboration on what is set to become (and for some already is) a key issue for academics most fields of social inquiry in the 21st century.