Crime and Corporate Sociopathy: Lessons from the EU meat industry.

Dr. Mwenda Kailemia
Lecturer in Criminology
The school of criminology and sociology
School of social science and public Policy
Keele University
Keele, Staffs
ST55BG.
Email: m.l.w.kailemia@keele.ac.uk
mkailex@gmail.com
Tel: 0178234166
UK

Abstract:

This article examines the notion of corporate sociopathy apropos of the 2013 food scandal in which results of DNA tests carried out by the Food Standards Agency revealed up to 29% horse DNA in economy foods. Despite the pervasive culture of food fraud with at least 1305 different ingredient adulteration cases since 1980- there has been little examination of how we, as a society, are affected by the seemingly 'harmless' sociopaths who, as we reveal, are the main drivers of mid level corporate crime in the food industry. As such, contemporary analyses of sociopathy have limited their purview to occupations such as banking, law, and stock brokerage etcetera- perhaps because of the inherent conditions favourable to sociopathy within these career paths (Pech & Slade, 2007; Akhtar et al. 2012, Thomas, 2013). By examining the EU meat scandal, we aim to lob the much needed canisters at the criminological thinking which misses this complex and toxic rhizomes of corporate criminality, specifically the sociopathic culture exploiting the 'white spaces of capitalism' in the EU.

KEY WORDS: Meat Fraud; Corporate Crime; Sociopathy; Corruption; EU; Horse Scandal

Introduction:

When, on January14th 2013, the results of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) tests carried out by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) on frozen economy beef burgers found in European supermarkets (Tesco, Aldi, Iceland and Lidl) proved they contained up to 29% horse DNA, there was an unprecedented public outcry: Consumers wanted to know what kind of evil made a human pollute another's basic necessity and, more importantly, how such contamination had slipped past existing oversight frameworks. As it has become clearer since, the 2013 meat scandal was a complex case of food fraud[i] involving multiple producers and suppliers across Europe (Lawrence, 2013). In this article, we seek a criminological exploration of the intricacies of this food adulteration network using the notion of sociopathy which has hitherto been the province of organisational and business studies (Pech & Slade, 2007; Akhtar et al., 2012). Our intention is not to identify or reveal which individuals/corporations are sociopaths or, for that matter, to be blamed for the meat scandal but rather to test the fit of the corporate sociopathy[ii] model as a criminological tool.

This is for two reasons: First of all, there is discernible dearth of criminological literature on corporate sociopathy outside the traditional scope of large, multilevel, financial organisations. There has been little examination of how we, as a society, are affected by the seemingly 'harmless' sociopaths who may be the main drivers of mid level business, specifically in the food industry (Basham, 2011; Boddy, 2013). In general, there is surprisingly little criminological focus on food crime, despite the fact that the 20th century has played host to various forms of food scares from things as mild as meat mislabelling to dioxin poisoning with at least 1305 different ingredient adulteration cases since 1980 (Moore et al. 2012).

Secondly, we believe that within the tapestry of organisational culture analysis, there are critical strands which should enhance critical criminology. Although criminological attention is shifting to so called 'victimless crimes' contemporary analyses of psychopathy (mostly in organisational behaviour literature) limit their purview to occupations such as banking, law or stock brokerage, perhaps because of the inherent conditions favourable to psychopathy within these career paths (Pech & Slade, 2007; Akhtar et al. 2012, Thomas, 2013).

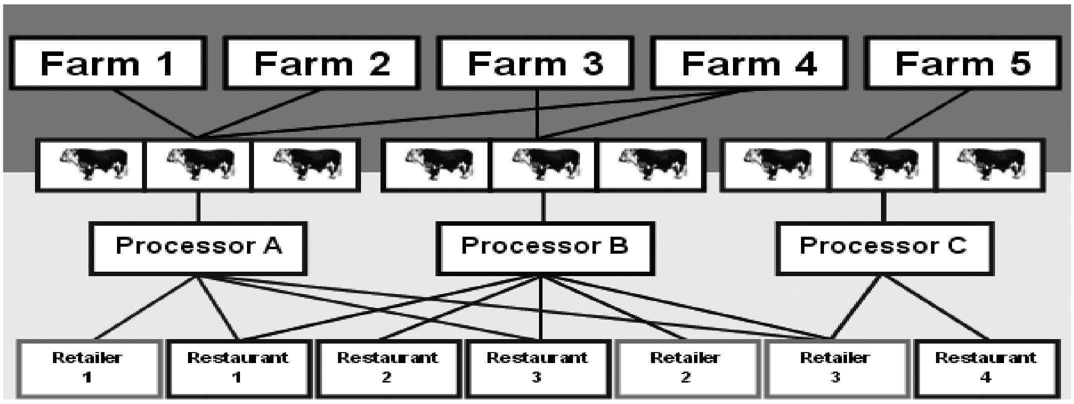
The notion of sociopathy heavily based on the work of Hervey Cleckley's (1941) iconic, 'Behind the mask of sanity', is a widely cited psychological condition, with literature surrounding its causes and symptoms developing with time. In popular culture, 'sociopathy'and'psychopathy' are commonly used interchangeably often divided using skewed definitions, namely due to the presumption that psychopathy is attributable to violent, murderous behaviour, whilst sociopathy being the 'diet' or non violent version[iii]. In tandem, while we shall use the terms interchangeably in most places, sociopath/sociopathy shall be used in specific reference to antisocial personalities whose behaviour is a consequence of social or familial dysfunction and, psychopath/psychopathy in reference to people/or behaviour resulting from a defect or aberration rather than an aspect of upbringing.

Along this line we shall claim two related things: First, all corporations (size notwithstanding) culturally nurture sociopathic tendencies amongst their successful players (Pech & Slade, 2007; Boddy, 2013, Basham, 2011). *Mutatis mutandis*, the meat scandal should be read as a toxic mix of this sociopathic[iv] culture with poor institutional oversight and what others for example Doherty et al. (2013) have referred to as the 'white spaces' of capitalism: A market driven by demand (for cheap alternatives) will inevitably result in food fraud or adulteration unless regulatory behaviour can enforce interpretations of the law favourable to its obedience. Our emphasis, however, is that so called 'looseness in enforcement' is not enough to account for the prevalence of food fraud[v] (Gallagher & Thomas, 2010); other factors including deliberate operational cultures must be in place to circumvent existing frameworks of regulation, precisely because of sociopathic incentive for such circumvention.

The meat industry in the EU mostly due to the trade lax and vast difference in the cost of everything from livestock to labour and spices is a convoluted network of supply and distribution chain, best described as a 'rhizome' (Lippens, 2001; Deleuze & Guattari (1987)): It is a complex, messy, multi directional network of dealers at various levels; First, there are animal farmers and breeders. Some of these, namely the bigger, more commercially successful, slaughter their own livestock and sell the meat, whilst the rest transport the animals for slaughter to abattoirs, like *Red Lion of Nantwich* (Lawrence, 2013b). Secondly, there are the meat processors. These are companies like *Spanghero* (France), *Frigilunch Q.V.* (Belgium), *Willy Selton* (Netherlands), and *Norwest* (Cheshire, England) that separate the different cuts of meat from the animal and process the rest of it. Sometimes the processors also buy processed meat from other meat processors, mix it with meat from multiple suppliers or their own products and then supply different grades of processed meat to their buyers (Lawrence, 2013b; Traynor & Harding, 2013). Thirdly, there are ready meal producers; factories like *Silvercrest*, *Comigel* (Luxembourg), and *Dalepak* which usually purchase frozen mince blocks and make ready meals and other meat products like mince, burgers, instant lasagne, bottled meat sauce, meat stock, pies and sausages (Lawrence, 2013a).

This delineation is misleading, however: At any one time, producers are concomitantly the processors or breeders and vice versa. The main aim of this rhizome is not just to maximise on the economies of scale or to tap into operational comparative advantages but something far more sinister as Lawrence (2013b) reveals apropos of the meat scandal: to eliminate all possibility of product traceability[vi], capitalizing on legal loopholes. Meat traceability, as Shackell (2008) observes, is critical for the retention of identity from the time an animal is born to when it is presented to the consumer as a cut of meat. Traceability is not only important for food safety, but also for ethical/cultural reasons; the meat consumer should not only have confidence in the product that it is what it is purported to be but she should also not have to worry about likely side effects on their conscience (Shackell, 2008, p.2135).

As the image below (adapted from Shackell, 2008) illustrates, however, traceability is more complex when corporate activity is transnational or cross sectoral in which case the traceability/audit trail between the farm and consumer can become circuitous, even when the routes taken are relatively linear. As a simple illustration, complication can arise when, say, Processor C due to a lack in supply for a sudden seasonal increase in demand from Retailer 3 needs to purchase processed meat from Processor B, whom buys and mixes meat from Farm 3 and 4 (farm 3 might be from a different country) whilst the finished product sold by retailer 3 might be advertised as “all meat sourced from Farm 5 only.”



Schematic of a simple supply chain of pasture grazed beef (Shackell, 2008, p.2139)

Along the above outlines, the Horse meat scandal exemplifies the complex rhizomic networks which supplied meat(s) to local supermarkets and familiar brands in Britain. The most prominent supply chain was, as reported by The Guardian (2013), one that led up to Tesco’s main supplier, *Silvercrest*- also the first name highlighted at the emergence of the scandal. The chain was traced back to a horse dealer, Laurence McAllister (see Guardian, 2013): In October 2012, McAllister was caught smuggling cannabis in a consignment of sick and wounded horses and donkeys unfit for travel, (Lawrence, 2013c). Further investigation by the *Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* (USPCA) revealed the reason for the constant moving of unfit horses; since 2010, McAlister had been transporting horses from Northern Ireland into UK for disposal, but in most cases they were being sent to the *Red Lion Abattoir* in Nantwich, England (Lawrence, 2013a, p.27). The *Red Lion* slaughterhouse had already been under activist scrutiny prior to the horsemeat scandal explosion: A group called *The Hillside Animal Sanctuary* had planted hidden cameras in the abattoir and recorded Polish workers violating other animal cruelty regulations before slaughtering the horses (Lawrence, 2013c).

Apart from the activists, the abattoir had also been under FSA scrutiny for some time owing to tests that the horses processed by them turned out positive for a drug that had been banned from entering the food chain (Ricca-Smith, 2013). The drug, known as ‘Bute’ or Phenylbutazone, is not allowed in the food chain and findings of this substance in horsemeat are the result of illegal entry into the food chain of carcasses of horses treated with the substance[vii]. According to EU legislation, treatment of horses with phenylbutazone must be recorded in their “horse passport”[viii], resulting in the definitive exclusion of the animals from slaughter for human consumption (EFSA, 2013). This was clearly not the case considering that sick and injured animals were being transported, especially when some of them tested positive for Bute. Rather, the horses bore falsified and fraudulent passports. The plant was later ordered to halt all slaughter whilst under investigation. Investigations proved, however, that the slaughtered, frozen horse meat was allegedly packed and labelled legally as horse.

As it turned out, processed consignments from the *Red Lion* were subsequently delivered to a Dutch meat processor, Willy Selton, in Oss, Netherlands yet another player along the rhizome. (Selton had been ordered by Dutch authorities to recall 50,000 tonnes of meat distributed in the previous two years to more than 500 companies across Europe, because he was unable to show records of its origins. (Lawrence, 2013a, p.29)). Willy Selton is important to the concept of sociopathy because of the deliberate effort his factory put into destroying meat traceability. As Lawrence (2013a) reveals, Polish migrant workers at Selton's were often offered huge bonuses- paid in cash to avoid audit trails- for working in the middle of the night defrosting frozen meat, up to a year old, that was rotten. Some of the workers had to cover their mouths with shirts while some suffered indigestion due to the odour. They had to grind up this old meat with horse meat and newer beef, only to repack it as fresh beef for sale. Following this revelation Selton was arrested by Dutch authorities for fraud allegations. (Lawrence, 2013c)

Another example of this rhizome is *Norwest Food*, in Cheshire, England. As a meat processor (and seafood trader across the EU) *Norwest* sourced the meat from Selton to the *ABP* food processors (Lawrence, 2013d). Lawrence links all the players at this point in the network thus:

> *'the owners of Norwest, which supplied ABP with meat from Selton, included Ray MacSharry Jr, son of the former Irish agricultural minister of the same name. Ray MacSharry Jr. had worked for Goodman's [then] AIBP during the period investigated by the beef tribunal, and then left at the end of 1992,' (Lawrence, 2013a, p.47).*

A handful of sociopaths:

As these examples reveal, the European meat processing industry is dominated by a handful of players. The Irish *ABP Food Group*, (parent group of *Silvercrest* and *Dalepak*) is one of the major players perhaps the largest, slaughtering around 1 million cattle a year. *ABP* employs 2500 people in Ireland and 8000 throughout Britain, Netherlands and Poland, with an annual turnover of £2.5 billion and annual profits of £80 million. Although, as a private, unlimited company, it does not publish accounts, it is linked to the 'Irish Beef Baron', Larry Goodman- a business tycoon who, in the 1980's came under fire from the Irish public and the Beef Tribunal for meat fraud involving passing of poorer cuts of beef as prime beef. Since the tribunal failed to prove that Larry Goodman made the decisions relevant to the fraud allegations he blamed rogue managers and laid them off subsequently he received his subsidies and by 1999 gained full control over his "empire" again.

But Goodman is not new to controversy: he has also been linked to one of the biggest political corruption scandals in the Republic of Ireland's history beef exports to Iraq to feed Saddam Hussein's army. As an example, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, Saddam defaulted on £100m worthy of debts owed to Goodman's companies. It has been additionally alleged that Goodman had been favored inappropriately in being underwritten with insurance paid for by the Irish government although a tribunal ruled that Charles Haughey, the then Taoiseach, had not made decisions improperly, but instead because he believed it was in the national interest to support one of Ireland's most important economic sectors.' (Lawrence, 2013e). It was no surprise then that, in 2013, ABP was linked to the scandal in which its supplies to top supermarkets like Lidl, Aldi, Iceland and Tesco revealed high quantities of equine DNA. As in the past, however, Goodman unsurprisingly claimed innocence by blaming "rogue managers', before laying them off and selling the *Silvercrest* factory which has since hired new managers and reclaimed the lost contract to supply Burger King (Lawrence, 2013c).

Goodman's companies are not the only existing supply chain involved, however. *Draap Trading Ltd*, a Cyprus registered trading company, is another example. Ran from the Antwerp area of Belgium, it is owned by an offshore vehicle based in the British Virgin Islands[ix]. Jan Fasen, a director of *DRAAP Trading Ltd*, is cited in Harding and Traynor (2013) as having confirmed that he bought a consignment of horsemeat from two Romanian abattoirs and sold it to French food processors after he had labelled it as 'beef'. (Fasen was sentenced in January 2012 for deliberately marketing South American horsemeat as halal slaughtered Dutch beef and falsifying documents.) *DRAAP*'s involvement in the 2013 scandal was in the supply (together with a French company *Spanghero*) of various ready-meal products, like the *Findus* lasagne products found in

British supermarket chains which arrive through its *DRAAP*'s franchise, *Comigel*. When the scandal broke, Draap insisted that the meat delivered to its Castelnaudary plant in southern France had arrived labelled 'Beef' but that *Spanghero* might have delivered a mixed beef mince product that contained horse meat to *Comigel.*

Revisiting organizational psychopathy:

In popular culture, sociopathy and psychopathy are commonly used interchangeably- often divided using skewed definitions- mostly due to the presumption that psychopathy is attributable to violent, murderous behaviour, whilst sociopathy being the 'diet' or non-violent version. Over time, due to the breadth of the psychopathy spectrum, various sub-theories and disorders have been drawn and connected to the disorder. However, in 1930, Partridge reviewed contemporary research and identified a subgroup (of psychopaths) for whom difficulty or refusal to adapt to the demands of society is the pathognomonic symptom, and he named this disorder "sociopathic personality" (Lykken,2006). In similar vein, Clekley (1988) has documented several cases of individuals who possessed the core personality features observed in criminal psychopaths such as egocentricity, lack of remorse, and superficial charm yet manifested those traits in ways that did not result in criminal prosecution. He presented several cases of what he labelled as 'incomplete manifestations or suggestions of the disorder'. Among these individuals were several prominent, high functioning members of society, including businessmen, physicians and ministers. Due to the fact that some psychopaths have tried to fit into society and make honest living, some have concluded that, 'certain psychopathic traits might in fact serve as valuable personal assets in some professions, such as law, politics or business.' (Hall & Benning, p.459).

Robert Hare (cited in Boddy, 2006: 1462) has proposed a modified subset of Clekley's criminal checklist, catering to 'organisational psychopaths': Glib and superficially charming; a grandiose sense of self worth; pathological liars; good at conning and manipulating others; no remorse about harming others; emotionally shallow, calculating and cold; callous and lacking in empathy; failing to take responsibility for town actions et cetera. By comparing special ops commandos, surgeons, business executives, and dangerous criminals, Dion (2009) has also laid out a 'psychopathic personality map' emphasizing 'charm', 'fearlessness', 'ruthlessness', and a 'laser like focus' on issues of interest to the psychopath: In the extreme, traits like these will land the psychopath in prison, but, judiciously applied, they may turn him into a hero or saint.

Popular culture is actually replete with various versions of this psychopathic map: While many Wall Street traders crumble under their losses, *The wolf of wall street* brushes off failure and starts afresh the next day; where normal folks would shudder, the SEAL sniper calmly squeezes the trigger, et cetera. In psychological theory, some- such as the leading American psychologist, Robert Hare have even claimed that psychopaths or sociopaths are four times more likely to be the head of a company than the person sweeping the floors.' (See, Huston, 2013, p.59). Along this vein, recent studies by Akhtar et al. (2012) and McKenzie et al. (2007) on the relationship specifically between entrepreneurship and subclinical psychopathy have concluded that the psychological approach to entrepreneurship asserts that entrepreneurial activity is a function of individuals' psychological makeup. Such studies emphasize the positive correlation between primary psychopathy (emotional bluntness and callousness) and entrepreneurial abilities or tendencies.

Of importance here is the view that corporations with few employees and often single decision makers are statistically more likely to nurture psychopathic traits than those with a large, diffused network of documented decision-making. This view has also been linked to the notion of 'management failure' which James Gobert has advanced as the key concept in understanding 'corporate manslaughter' and 'corporate homicide'. Here, 'Management Failure' refers to behaviour which falls 'far below' what could reasonably have been expected under the circumstances; it does not refer to the failures of a company's managers, but to the flawed way in which the company manages its affairs,' (Gobert, 2008, p.75). As Gobert argues, a focus on 'management failure' should bring to perspective the reasons institutions/corporations become dangerous entities in society: If some of the people managing, or, more critically, the ones whom set the internal culture and focus of the organisation (or worse, industry) are psychopathic in nature, society will be haemorrhaging important values which are critical to its welfare and survival. In that sense, the welfare and survival of society is undermined by organizational sociopathy in which corporations actively seek out monsters and nurture them with bonuses and praise.' (Basham, 2011). Corporate sociopathy not only preserves and rewards psychopathic individuals (Pech & Slade, 2007; Basham, 2011), but also seems to seek them out as much as they desire the jobs that satisfy their carnal hunger; it's a symbiotic process which advances the interests of the corporation and those of the psychopath[x].

Management failure and corporate amorality:

Apropos of the 2013 horse meat scandal, one should go further here and suggest that the meat industry is characterized by a large number of psychopathic individuals who are tasked with managerial decisions calculated to maximize profit. The industry is characterized, not only by a rhizomic network of traders, but by a complex network which nurtures diffusion of responsibility and decision making. Nonetheless, like other forms of organized criminality these decisions are only known or visible to a closely neat family of operatives. It is not surprising then that, behind the plethora of front end suppliers, the entire industry is under the tight grip of shadowy dealers with family or political connections to each other. This is what allowed the criminality to remain well hidden away from the unsuspecting public.

Beside individual psychopathy, focus should also be on the 'management failure' of the retail chains: This failure is down to the drive to maximize profit, by driving down prices (and costs) in order to interest more customers. The logic is simple: If company A could produce lasagnes for 40p each and market them for a £1, they would be making the kind of profit that company B can only hope to achieve by having the same supplier, and so on. Domination of the cheap (but profitable) products by a handful of suppliers turns it into the interests of the retailers to nurture closer relations with the suppliers and to an extent to protect their sources. The 'management failures' here were not about compliance with the law, but rather poor oversight in the drive to maximise profits, encouraged by the fact that 'everyone else is doing it'.

The economic recession of 2008 meant not only that more families had to rely on poorer quality but cheap food, but government laissre fairer in order to encourage economic growth. It also engendered a 'survival for the fittest' mentality among retailers to weather the storms of economic slump. In this conundrum we see the psychopathic tendency to take risks, to make more and more profits, to outsmart everyone from regulators and customers[xi].

Of course not every individual involved in unethical or questionably illegal corporate activities is a head hunted psychopath; some more fluid personalities are moulded by the container they fill. By the demands of their socio economical containers mostly in the pursuit for money and success (Bakan, 2005) some become operational sociopaths; 'smooth', adroit at manipulating conversations to subjects they want to talk about, willing to put others down, accomplished liars, totally ruthless and opportunistic, calculating and without remorse (Boddy, 2006, p.1461).

Amorality is a theme corporations often find themselves described by; unlike immorality, it is not a pathological desire to commit sadistic abuse of others due to a lack of empathy. Neither is it the need to function morally due to values one was raised with, it is simply calculating which action brings the most overall value. Substituting beef in burgers with horsemeat might be a risky activity, one may get fined and lose approximately X% in business if discovered, share prices could potentially drop, but the net profits will be £Y, which is substantial; therefore, commit meat adulteration. In such a case, if the projected loss in share price and market share was too risky, they would have just as easily stuck to more expensive beef, increased their prices and painted their walls with "fair trade" posters and commitments.

Organization culture and sociopathy:

What this means is that we have to take an objective view of corporations themselves, and specifically their organisational culture, in order to fathom the myriad ways in which they fuel and/or nurture deleterious psychopathic practices. The classic 'one bad apple spoils the barrel' scenario comes to mind: One psycopath can ruin the rest of the actors within the organisational chain granted leeway. Under what conditions, however, does this first sociopath begin to form and mobilise a network? According to Roddick (2005) the critical moment is when decision makers remove themselves from the possibility of a relationship connection with their consumers (effectively their victims, as Bakan (2005) points out). As Chirayath et al. (2002, cited in Dion, 2009: 437) correctly points out this may sometime are a mundane issue of entrapment in 'doubtful, immoral or disloyal means that are used by competitors'. Afterall, business is the business of business and companies want employees that can deliver and reach (financial) organisational goals. Similarly, investors want returns on capital employed, and employees, including executives, want rewarding bonuses which is only possible on high net profits. Punch reads this conundrum thus:

> *'The emphasis on goals, and the necessity to achieve organisational goals, may enhance practices where the ends are held to justify the means. As such, it could be argued that all organisations experience pressure to resort to illegal means of (acceptable) goal attainment,' (Punch, 2000, p.255).*

What this means, for the horse meat scandal, is that, although the taboo[xii] of consuming horse meat may seem to explain public outrage over the scandal, it is precisely the interpretations of this panic which missed the real danger: How regulatory weaknesses is actually an aspect of widespread violation of consumer rights in European food markets. For illustration, consider these 3 examples: First, a third of the domestic Irish beef market consists of imports from Argentina and Brazil where, unlike in Europe, Zebu derived cattle is extensively used. In a test conducted by the *Irish Farmers Association*, 53 random beef products of varying outlets were submitted for DNA analysis that resulted in 15 out of 53 testing positive for Zebu specific alleles, indicating non European origin: However, 12 out of the 15 samples were labelled as pure 'Irish' beef. (Shackell, 2008). Secondly, a third of fruit juices sampled were not what they claimed or had labelling errors; two contained additives that are not permitted in the EU including brominated vegetable oil, which is designed for use in flame retardants and linked to behavioural problems in rats, at high doses (Lawrence, 2014). Thirdly, in 2005, a batch of Worcestershire sauce was discovered to be contaminated with the toxic dye "Sudan 1". Within a week the FSA identified 474 products mostly soups, snacks, sauces and ready meals containing the contaminated sauce contained additive sauces and stocks many of which were simplified on the labels as 'spices' that weren't specified. (Shackell, 2008).

Corporate sociopathy and corporate white spaces:

It is probably crucial to note here that most available literature on corporate crime, organisational deviance, corporate psychopaths, or corporate culture that is reviewed here speaks of corporations with a high number of employees, namely entrepreneurial, profit driven businesses like investment banking or petroleum corporations. However, this article has concentrated on the various (corporate) actors along the ready meal supply chain, which bears a slightly different structure; with far less levels of management, far less empowered employees and no project groups. However, Lippens (2001, p.234) is correct apropos of organizational philosophy when he notes that

> *'Post-bureaucratic organisations tend to emerge as more or less loose clusters of ever-changing, ever-connecting, ever-disconnecting networks. Flexible networks are formed in order to be able to react quickly to internal, "internal" as well as "external" problems. Networks are not just "internal"; sources on the alleged "outside"are part and parcel of post-bureaucratic organisational networks. The "outside, thus, is always potentially on the "inside" as well.'*

The same goes for the space in-between networks: ‘this space and the resources therein, are always, at least potentially already within each of the networks.’ (Lippens, 2001, p.234). To revisit Shackell’s (2008) schematic above, the structures and networks found outside meat corporations are found inside and vice versa – therefore, the type of competition, power relations, symbiosis and comingling that may take place in more concentrated organisations with numerous levels of management and work groups, are sometimes present between several organisations that lack that structure. This rhizome is an aspect of what others (for example, Bakan (2005) have referred to as the ‘white spaces’ of late capitalism: the unexamined, unpoliced corporate feeding trough which only receives attention when something goes wrong publically. This space is also frequented and thrived on by many because it shields many from responsibility. Bakan (2005) points out that shareholders, directors and executives are all uniquely shielded from responsibility and all bear limited liability in corporate criminality: Where better to hide in (for everyone) during the frantic day long witch hunts that usually ensue after an exposé than the white spaces between everyone’s responsibility? Apropos of this corporate ‘iron dome’ of protection Punch has remarked that

> *‘the nature of the industry which encouraged covert alliances to cope with structural uncertainty, weak enforcement with co-opted regulators, a near collusive government engaged in prestigious projects and mindful of the importance of the industry for the national economy, etc. made it almost rational and reasonable to break the law.’ (Punch, 2008, p. 104)*

Thus, when coupled with the psychopathic tendencies that a corporation has, and the ability of directors and managers to become alter egos when they have their “management hats” on, we begin to see how these “actors” play the part in the monstrous corporate machine and remain independent from responsibility by recourse to ‘denial of responsibility’ (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p.667). This denial also allows one to sustain the conscience duality split which Roddick bemoans in ‘business as unusual’: one is able to eat the cake and have it by rationalizing and justifying deviant behavior but being able to do this not as autonomous individuals but as corporate actors by day and ‘normal people’ by night. People who are highly moral in their private lives ‘leave their consciences at home’ when they enter the portals of the firm’ (Punch, 2008, p.105)[xiii].

Conclusion:

This article should conclude by emphasizing that the 2013 meat fraud, like most examples of corporate sociopathy, is not attributable to a single actor. It is, rather, a result of complex and far reaching lapses in regulation and consumer oversight. This lapse is itself nurtured by the existence of a complex rhizome of supply and distribution, which is sometimes intertwined with organized criminality. That is to say, food industry criminality thrives precisely in the interstices of corporate sociopathy and public oversight failure. Poor oversight is thus the first broken window we should address in order to reign in corporate sociopathy. How this is to be done is a different thing, altogether. In that sense the meat scandal was not such a scandal, after all: Given the low demand and therefore low pricing- of horsemeat (along with its availability from various places within EU, and ease of moving the horses around) the meat corruption could easily have been done anytime anywhere (and has probably been done repeatedly in the last century).

Even then, given the risks involved, perhaps the temptation into large scale adulteration has connections with the economic collapse of 2008 and subsequent squeeze on domestic spending. As we have seen elsewhere, where the post-2008 world has been marked by reduction in expendable income for families, it has also been characterized by corporate ruthlessness, with business upping the ante of salesmanship, recruiting the ‘the best and the brightest’ to survive and so on (Basham, 2011). Nonetheless, the claims of this article remain: While economic factors are important, the logic that takes a certain ‘breed’ to survive in the cut throat environment characterized by perennial collapses in business empires (Hare, 1994; cited in Boddy, 2013) is mostly the decisive factor in food industry sociopathy.

The main achievement of this article is that, while most available literature is mainly focused on corporate psychopathy and sociopathy in large corporations, we have attempted to show how these traits may also be embedded in an unusual place, and that this may even be more needful of attention than the usual sources of public moral panics. While the European populace was enraged by the sociopathy of the pre-2008 banking industry, another breed was busy replacing 1 ruminant with another in their 60% filler economy burgers, quite undetected. Therein is the rub: What both the financial crises and the meat scandal had in common is the lax regulation despite the obsession on transparency (Abotts & Coles, 2013)-and the runway culture of rewarding psychopathy, most prominently under the bonus culture.

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[i] 'The UK Food Fraud Taskforce defines food fraud as, 'deliberately placing on market, for financial gain, foods that are falsely described as otherwise intended to deceive the consumer.' The common goal is to make money at the expense of the consumer, when legitimate goods are counterfeited and sold as the genuine article or genuine goods are adulterated with extraneous matter,' (Gallagher & Thomas, 2010, p.347).

[ii] The notion of Corporate sociopathy has been explored previously, in various industries and forms. Some, for example Lykken (2006) and Boddy (2013), emphasize individual sociopathy as the overidding aspect of their criminality while, for others, corporations are sociopaths (Bakan, 2005).

[iii] One recent rendition of psycopathy is: 'Psychopaths are people who, perhaps due to physical factors to do with abnormal brain connectivity and chemistry, especially in the areas of the amygdala and orbital/ventrolateral frontal cortex lack a conscience, have few emotions and display an inability to have any feelings, sympathy or empathy for other people.' (Boddy, 2011, p. 256).

[iv] It is important to note here that most relevant literature speak of corporate psychopaths –psychopathic individuals who work for corporations (Boddy 2006; 2010; Pech & Slade 2007; Akhtar et al. 2012). However, some speak of sociopath corporations / corporate psychopathy in reference to organizations (even fictional entities) with psychopathic tendencies/ symptoms (Bakan, 2005).

[v] 'The UK Food Fraud Taskforce defines food fraud as, 'deliberately placing on market, for financial gain, foods that are falsely described as otherwise intended to deceive the consumer.' The common goal is to make money at the expense of the consumer, when legitimate goods are counterfeited and sold as the genuine article or genuine goods are adulterated with extraneous matter,' (Gallagher & Thomas, 2010, p.347).

[vi] Shackell (2008) defines meat traceability as 'the ability to maintain a credible custody of identification for animals or animal products through various steps within the food chain from the farm to the retailer,'

[vii] As the FSA states, Phenylbutazone, (also known as Bute) is a commonly used medicine in horses ad is also prescribed to some patients who are suffering from a severe form of arthritis. But going by the levels of Bute that have previously been found in horse carcasses, a person would have to eat 500 - 600 one hundred per cent horsemeat burgers a day to get close to consuming a human's daily dose, not to mention that the drug passes through the system fairly quickly, so it is unlikely to build up in the human body (FSA, 2013).

[viii] A horse passport, as the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website mandates, is a mandatory document that every individual horse, pony or donkey owner must have with them at all times when with their animal; its purpose is to ensure horses treated with particular drugs don't end up as food for people (Defra, 2013). In theory, each animal is assigned one at birth and has its life veterinary history recorded in it. The passports follow the animals as they are traded, for whatever their purpose and can only be slaughtered when an official inspector at a slaughterhouse has checked the animal is free from banned drugs. (Lawrence, 2013a, p.21).

[ix] The irony is that, "Draap" spelled backwards is the Dutch word for horse: Paard.

[x] Braithwaite (1989) was right here in pointing out that when regulation is too strict, unreasonable, uncooperative, inflexibly rulebook-oriented, organised business subcultures of resistance develop. Once there is a climate of hostility between the business (industry) and regulators, the regulators lose capacity for informal control over the managers and how the business is run.

[xi] Maybe it took more sadistic genius to name a beef processor Draap, the reverse of Paard (horse in Dutch) and then supply "beef" mince internationally (Lawrence, 2013a)?

[xii] According to Claridge (2013), horse meat once had its place in cuisine, much like it does in some countries like France and Iceland: At times horsemeat was a sacrificial food, and at others, it seemed to be ordinary food, but it was often rebuked by early Christian missionaries, most often in the context of ritual

feasts. In an attempt to tried to dissuade people from eating horse, ‘In 723 Pope Gregory III issued a papal decree to St Boniface, explicitly forbidding the consumption of horse meat,’ (Claridge, 2013, P.32).

[xiii] Does this not remind us of Sykes and Matza’s *Techniques of neutralisation* which allow the delinquent to shift the blame for their actions unto another party? In effect, the corporate delinquent approaches a "billiard ball" conception of himself in which he sees himself as helplessly propelled into new situations … deflecting blame attached to violations of social norms and its relative independence of a particular personality structure.’ (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p.667).