



From the start, the International Association for Vegan Sociologists has provided a platform for vegan sociologists across the world to share research expertise, ideas, methodologies, and facilitate collaborations in service of nonhuman animal liberation and veganism. In the 2026 meeting of the International Association of Vegan Sociologists we want to invite participants to consider how we can achieve IAVS's aim to increase the visibility, legitimacy of, and collaboration within vegan sociology internationally, and how connecting local and international contexts is important to understanding and challenging nonhuman animal exploitation on a global scale, and to build a more just world for nonhuman and human animals alike.



| <b>Saturday, October 3, 2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |                                                                                                               | ACST<br>(Adelaide) | BST<br>(London) | EDT<br>(Toronto) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Opening Remarks (15 minutes)</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>6:30pm</b>      | <b>10:00am</b>  | <b>5:00am</b>    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>6:45pm</b>      | <b>10:15am</b>  | <b>5:15am</b>    |
| <b>Panel: IAVS Committee Reflections (10 mins)</b>                                                                                                                                                               |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Session 1: Australia</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>1.25 hour</b>   | <b>6:55pm</b>   | <b>10:25am</b>   |
| <i>Halal, Tayyib, and the Hardened Heart: Vegan Activism and Islamic Ecocultural Discourses in Sydney</i>                                                                                                        | Mohamad Faazeli    | University of New South Wales<br><a href="mailto:m.faazeli@unsw.edu.au">m.faazeli@unsw.edu.au</a>             |                    |                 |                  |
| <i>Wit(h)nessing trans-species trauma: From representation to multispecies response-ability</i>                                                                                                                  | Cassie A. Pedersen | Federation University<br><a href="mailto:c.pedersen@federation.edu.au">c.pedersen@federation.edu.au</a>       |                    |                 |                  |
| <i>Engaging men and boys in an ethic of care for the more-than-human world</i>                                                                                                                                   | Stephen Burrell    | University of Melbourne<br><a href="mailto:stephen.burrell@unimelb.edu.au">stephen.burrell@unimelb.edu.au</a> |                    |                 |                  |
| <i>Critical Pet Studies: Re-imagining companionship with Vegan Sociology</i>                                                                                                                                     | Zoei Sutton        | Flinders University<br><a href="mailto:Zoei.sutton@flinders.edu.au">Zoei.sutton@flinders.edu.au</a>           |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>30 minute break</b>                                                                                                                                                                                           |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Panel: Vegan Sociology Book Series (1hr)</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>8:40pm</b>      | <b>12:10pm</b>  | <b>7:10am</b>    |
| <b>Kate Stewart (University of East Anglia)<br/>Series Editor</b>                                                                                                                                                |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Matthew Melsa (Open University)<br/>Series Editor</b>                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>1 hr break</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Panel: Cultured Meat, Speciesism, and the Futures of Vegan Sociology (1hr)</b>                                                                                                                                |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>10:40pm</b>     | <b>2:10pm</b>   | <b>9:10am</b>    |
| <b>Vasile T. Stănescu (Mercer University)</b><br><i>Bringing Home the Bacon: Cultured Meat and the Myth of Animal Realism</i><br><a href="mailto:stanescu_vt@mercer.edu">stanescu_vt@mercer.edu</a>              |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Richard Giles (Independent)</b><br><i>On Cultured Meat and "The Impasse" of Animal Theory</i><br><a href="mailto:regiles@uwaterloo.ca">regiles@uwaterloo.ca</a>                                               |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Nathan Poirier (Lansing Community College)</b><br><i>Regression to the Meat: The Twin Absurdities of Cultured Meat and the Carnivore Diet</i><br><a href="mailto:poirinat1@gmail.com">poirinat1@gmail.com</a> |                    |                                                                                                               |                    |                 |                  |
| <b>Session 5: North America</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                                                                               | <b>1.5 hour</b>    | <b>11:40pm</b>  | <b>3:10pm</b>    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                                                                                                               |                    | <b>10:10am</b>  |                  |



*Does Animal Advocacy Change  
Hearts and Minds? A  
Randomized Control Trial of  
Short-Term Effects Across  
Advocacy Types  
Queer and Trans Witnessing*

Andrea  
Polanco

Faunalytics  
[andrea@faunalytics.org](mailto:andrea@faunalytics.org)

Ela Przybylo

Illinois State University  
[emprzy1@ilstu.edu](mailto:emprzy1@ilstu.edu)

*Globalization and Meat  
Consumption: An Analysis of  
122 Countries, 1992-2021*

Michael  
Briscoe

Department of Sociology, Criminology, and  
Anthropology, Colorado State University Pueblo  
[michael.briscoe@csupueblo.edu](mailto:michael.briscoe@csupueblo.edu)

*Overturning the Hidden  
Curriculum of Frog Dissection*

Robert  
Rosenberger

Georgia Institute of Technology  
[robert.rosenberger@pubpolicy.gatech.edu](mailto:robert.rosenberger@pubpolicy.gatech.edu)

*Who Cares? Identifying the  
Homeless Companion Animal  
Care Sector (HCACS) in  
Ontario, Canada*

Sarah May  
Lindsay  
Abe Oudshoorn

Western University  
[sarahlindsay@trentu.ca](mailto:sarahlindsay@trentu.ca)

**Day 1 Conference Close**

1:10am\* 4:40pm 11:40am

\*Next day



## Sunday, October 4, 2026

ACDT  
(Adelaide)  
**Note!**  
Daylight  
savings  
time from  
3am

BST  
(London)

EDT  
(Toronto)

### Session : UK

1 hour

6:00pm

8:30am

3:30am

*Beards of the World: The Politicization of Facial Hair in the Maintenance of Sex, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Species*

Corey Wrenn

International Association of  
Vegan Sociologists  
[corey.wrenn@gmail.com](mailto:corey.wrenn@gmail.com)

*Navigating Everyday Life in a Non-Vegan World: A Collaborative Autoethnography*

Sophie Savage  
Louis Gough

University of the West of England  
[Sophie.savage@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Sophie.savage@uwe.ac.uk)  
[gh@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:gh@uwe.ac.uk)

*Materialising vegan ethics: an international analysis of aesthetic practices in plant-based hospitality.*

Ryan Bogle

Independent Scholar  
[ryan.bogle213@gmail.com](mailto:ryan.bogle213@gmail.com)

*Apprehending the greyhound problem: dealing with the fallout of social justice movement successes*

Kerry Herbert

Independent Scholar  
[kerryherbert@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kerryherbert@yahoo.co.uk)

### Panel: Vegan Sociology Down Under: Setting a research agenda for the Australian/Aotearoa context (1hr)

7:00pm

9:30am

4:30am

Zoei Sutton (Flinders University)  
Alex Hill (Flinders University)  
Marlies Bockstal (University of Canterbury)  
Emily Major (University of Canterbury)

### 1 hour break

### Panel: Non-human animals around us and interdisciplinary knowledge production in Romania (1.25hr)

9:00pm

11:30am

6:30am

**Maria Martelli (Independent Scholar) & Aron Nor (Independent Scholar)**  
(Un)governable pigeons and dogs. Problematizing urban animals for a "civilized" Romania  
[maria.martelli@yahoo.com](mailto:maria.martelli@yahoo.com)  
[aronnor@protonmail.com](mailto:aronnor@protonmail.com)

**Irina Frasin (Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy)**  
Animal companions: Co-creating multispecies togetherness  
[irina.anthrozoology@gmail.com](mailto:irina.anthrozoology@gmail.com)

**Rimona Afana (Independent Scholar)**  
From Vile to Well-Meaning Captivity: Romania's Shelters and Sanctuaries as Transitional/Restorative Justice Mechanisms  
[rimona.afana@yahoo.com](mailto:rimona.afana@yahoo.com)

**Alina S. Rusu (Human-Animal Interaction Research Lab, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine)**  
Toward a "Care for Life" Mindset: An Interdisciplinary Master's Program on Human-Animal Interaction in Romania  
[alina.rusu@usamvcluj.ro](mailto:alina.rusu@usamvcluj.ro)

### 45 min break

### Session 8: Europe

1.25 hours

11:00pm

1:30pm

8:30am



|                                                                                                                                          |                       |                                                                                                               |                |               |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>Beyond the “lab rat” identity: discourses, practices and human-rodent solidarity in Argentina</i>                                     | <i>Julieta Campos</i> | <i>Universidad de San Martín<br/>julieta.camed@gmail.com</i>                                                  |                |               |                |
| <i>Rewriting Hierarchies: Representations of non-human animals as equal or superior beings in telepathic interspecies communication.</i> | <i>Annika Barzen</i>  | <i>TU Chemnitz<br/><a href="mailto:annika.barzen@hsn.tu-chemnitz.de">annika.barzen@hsn.tu-chemnitz.de</a></i> |                |               |                |
| <i>Interlocking Oppressions: How Speciesism, Sexism and Social Dominance Travel Together in a Central European Sample</i>                | <i>Andrej Kirbiš</i>  | <i>University of Maribor<br/><a href="mailto:andrej.kirbis@um.si">andrej.kirbis@um.si</a></i>                 |                |               |                |
| <i>Vegan Vigils in Poland</i>                                                                                                            | <i>Łucja Lange</i>    | <i>University of Łódź<br/><a href="mailto:lucja.lange@uni.lodz.pl">lucja.lange@uni.lodz.pl</a></i>            |                |               |                |
| <b>Panel: The rise of Vegan Sociology – IAVS co-founders in conversation (45 mins)</b>                                                   |                       |                                                                                                               | <b>12:15am</b> | <b>2:45pm</b> | <b>9:45am</b>  |
| <b>Concluding Comments: IAVS Conference Organizing Committee</b>                                                                         | <b>5 minutes</b>      |                                                                                                               | <b>1:00am</b>  | <b>4:30pm</b> | <b>11:30am</b> |
| <b>International Association of Vegan Sociologists: Annual Business Meeting</b>                                                          | <b>1 hour</b>         |                                                                                                               | <b>1:05am</b>  | <b>4:35pm</b> | <b>11:35am</b> |
| <b>IAVS 2026 Concludes</b>                                                                                                               |                       |                                                                                                               | <b>2:05am</b>  | <b>5:35pm</b> | <b>12:35pm</b> |



### **General Instructions for Speakers**

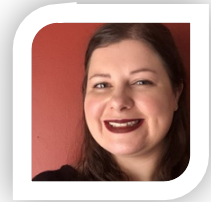
- Please register for the conference via the [Humanitix](#) link. Access details will be sent distributed via the Humanitix participant list.
- The conference will be hosted on Zoom. The zoom link and password will be emailed to presenters and attendees in the week before the conference.
- Login 10 minutes before the actual start of the webinar for a technology check
- The webinar will go 'live' 5 minutes in advance to allow attendees to login and test their sound
- The session host (Zoei, or Corey) will be opening the session and posting a welcome slide for the session.
- Zoei, or Corey will be moderating the individual sessions and introducing you as a presenter
  - After you present, the moderator will read questions from the audience in the chat for you to respond
- The presenter will be responsible for operating their slide presentation (if applicable)
  - Have your presentation open on your computer
  - Select 'Share Screen' in green in your toolbar of the screen (you will see once logged in)
  - Click on the presentation and 'Slide Show' in the document
  - Remember to 'Stop Screen Share' when you finish presenting
  - You may choose to have a final slide on your presentation 'Questions' for attendees to view while you respond to questions
- The attendees will only be able to view the 'active speaker' and whatever is shared
  - If you do not wish to be viewed 'live' while speaking, please upload a picture in your zoom profile
- Please feel free to stay and interact in the breaks! IAVS is a friendly conference and these informal times are a great opportunity to turn your video on, unmute and chat with your peers (It is also fine to disappear in the breaks if this isn't your thing).



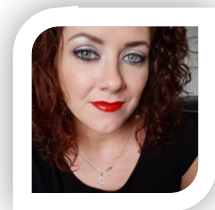
## Event Organizers

### Dr Zoei Sutton

*Dr Zoei Sutton is a vegan sociologist living and working on unceded Kurna land in Southern Australia. She focuses on centring nonhuman animals in research that concerns them in order to highlight the invisibilised power relations and interactions that maintain anthroparchy in everyday life. Recent projects include lived experiences of human-companion animal relations, multispecies rental housing and constructed killability of 'pest' animals. She is a Senior Lecturer at Flinders University, the co-founder of the International Association of Vegan Sociologists and current Chair of the Australasian Animal Studies Association.*



### Dr Corey Wrenn



*Dr. Wrenn is Senior Lecturer of Sociology with the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR) and Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Social and Political Movements at the University of Kent. She served as council member with the American Sociological Association's Animals & Society section (2013-2016), was elected Chair in 2018, and co-founded the International Association of Vegan Sociologists in 2020. She serves as Book Review Editor to Society & Animals, is a member of The Vegan Society's Research Advisory Committee, and hosts Sociology & Animals Podcast. In July 2013, she founded*

*the Vegan Feminist Network, an academic-activist project engaging intersectional social justice praxis. She is the author of A Rational Approach to Animal Rights: Extensions in Abolitionist Theory (Palgrave MacMillan 2016), Piecemeal Protest: Animal Rights in the Age of Nonprofits (University of Michigan Press 2019), and Animals in Irish Society (SUNY Press 2021).*

## International Association of Vegan Sociologists



*The International Association of Vegan Sociologists is a scholar-activist collective putting sociological theory and practice in the service of animal liberation and veganism. It was founded in May 2020 by Corey Wrenn, Chair of the Animals & Society Section of the American Sociological Association and Zoei Sutton, Co-Convener of the Australian Sociological Association's Sociology and Animals Thematic Group.*

*This association was formed to provide a platform for sociologists of a Critical Animal Studies background who recognize veganism and anti-speciesism as an ethical imperative in the discipline.*

*Our aim is to increase the visibility and legitimacy of vegan sociology, provide opportunities for career development, and facilitate transnational networking.  
We are completely volunteer-based.*

**Email:** [info@vegansociology.com](mailto:info@vegansociology.com)  
**Twitter:** [@vegansociology](https://twitter.com/vegansociology)  
**Facebook:** [@vegansociology](https://www.facebook.com/vegansociology)  
**Web:** [vegansociology.com](http://vegansociology.com)



## 2026 IAVS Committee

### Alex Hill (Event Coordinator)

Alex is a qualitative sociologist and doctoral student in Sociology at Flinders University. Their research examines insect-human relations under anthroparchy and, in particular, the invisibility of 'creepy crawlies' in the social sciences. Alex is broadly interested in species, gender, and veganism, and holds an MRes in Sociology (thesis title: *Soyboys Will Be Boys*) at Macquarie University. They have the privilege of living on beautiful Dharug and Gundungurra land in the Blue Mountains of NSW, and can often be found cooking, worldbuilding, or watching cicadas



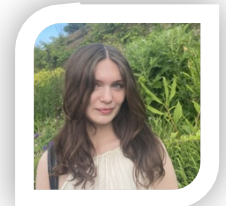
### Cassie Pedersen (Blog Editor)

Cassie Pedersen is a Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Federation University Australia, based on Wurundjeri land in Narm (Melbourne). Her work interrogates the interplay between the ordinary and the extraordinary, revealing how extraordinary harms are embedded in ordinary, everyday practices. Her interests include vegan ecofeminism, care ethics, trans-species trauma, and critical animal studies.



### Libby Hooper (Social Media Coordinator)

Libby is an undergraduate Sociology student at the University of Cambridge. Her current research qualitatively explores experiences of stigmatisation and empowerment amongst women in the animal rights movement. Her interests more broadly focus on speciesism, the (de)valuation of (non)human life, and necropolitics.



**We are currently accepting expressions of interest for our 2027 Committee! See [here](#) for more information.**



## National Sociology Groups with Animal Themes

While these groups do not always subscribe to a vegan baseline as we do at IAVS below are groups available to join at a national level if you are interested in presenting (and visibilising) vegan sociology in your closest national sociology association.

## TASA Sociology & Animals Thematic Group



The Australian Sociological Association's Sociology and Animals Thematic Group aims to contribute to the idea of nonhuman animals as critical members, and stakeholders in societies, who co-produce 'the social' along with humans and other nonhumans. With the rise of human-animal scholarship, sociologists are increasingly recognising the importance of including non-human animals in our academic endeavours, and the urgency of studying animals as actors, as well as subjects of marginalisation in societies. The aim of the Sociology and Animals Thematic Group is to create a supportive network of scholars working in human-animal studies, critical animal studies and/or other animal-related areas to facilitate the exchange of ideas, critical discussion and coordination of relevant academic events. We welcome all scholars conducting sociological research about, for, and/or with nonhuman animals.

Web: [www.tasa.org.au](http://www.tasa.org.au)

## CSA Animals in society research cluster



We are the **Animals in Society** research cluster (RC) of the Canadian Sociological Association (CSA)! As sociologists, we see value in scholarship that goes beyond an anthropocentric understanding of Canadian society, one that includes the non- or other-than-human and pays particular attention to "the question of the animal". The work of this RC is inclusive, anti-oppressive, and critical in nature. Working from an interdisciplinary perspective, we seek to expand current interpretations of societal structures and institutions, social norms, practices, policies, and relations that involve humans and other beings. The Animals in Society RC recognizes and respects that **we are all animals in a shared society**.

web: [www.csa-scs.ca](http://www.csa-scs.ca)

## ASA section on animals and society



The purpose of the American Sociological Association's Section on Animals and Society is to encourage and support the development of theory, research and teaching about the complex relationships that exist between humans and other animals. In the process, it is anticipated that the light we shed on these issues will increase the well-being of both humans, and other animals.

Facebook: [@AnimalsAndSocietyASA](https://www.facebook.com/AnimalsAndSocietyASA)  
Web: [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)

## BSA Animal/Human Studies Group



The study of animal-human relations within the social sciences is an increasingly important, vibrant and burgeoning field. The formation of the BSA Animal/Human Studies Group in June 2006 is therefore an important step towards addressing what Bryant (1979) has called the 'zoological connection', whereby sociologists need to recognise that people co-exist and interact not only with humans but with non-human animals too. For example, animals are increasingly utilised and involved in biotechnology and genomics; animal experimentation; the production and slaughter of food animals; companion animal-human type relationships and the therapeutic use of animals. Moreover, additional animal-related issues that have attracted attention by researchers are: the potential links between animal abuse and domestic violence; the nature of animal-animal interaction; potential links between women, nature and animals; bestiality; human-wildlife interactions; and human responses to companion animal death/euthanasia. Sociologists have much to offer this emerging area of study and are well placed to engage with the multifaceted, ambiguous and challenging nature of the animal-human interface in everyday life.

email the convener: [r.m.willkie@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:r.m.willkie@abdn.ac.uk)

Web: <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/animalhuman-studies-group-ahsg>



## Abstracts (in order of appearance on schedule)

**Name:** Mohamad Faazeli (they/them)

**Affiliation:** PhD Candidate, Environmental Humanities, School of Humanities & Languages, UNSW Sydney

**Preferred email:** [m.faazeli@unsw.edu.au](mailto:m.faazeli@unsw.edu.au)

**Title of talk:** Halal, Tayyib, and the Hardened Heart: Vegan Activism and Islamic Ecocultural Discourses in Sydney

### Abstract

Greater Sydney is home to a large and notably diverse Muslim population—6.3% of residents, against 3.2% nationally—and Islam claims some two billion adherents worldwide. Yet, Muslim communities remain largely peripheral in a Western vegan movement still sometimes coded as white and secular. Drawing on participant observation of street-based vegan activism across Sydney (2025–2026), this paper examines the situated encounters through which activists and Muslim members of the public negotiate veganism in real time. Using Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) alongside a Positive Discourse Analysis and ecocultural-identity framework, I attend to the verbatim discourses participants actually produce, and to how factors such as religion, diaspora, gender, generation, and embodiment braid together in specific configurations.

I argue that the most generative encounters do not introduce veganism as a foreign ethic but activate ecocultural and ecospiritual resources already sedimented within Islamic tradition — the distinction between halal and tayyib, Qur'anic framings of mercy (rahmah), prophetic narratives of kindness toward animals, and unease at industrial slaughter and Australia's live-export trade. Such activation reframes veganism as the ethical completion of an existing tradition rather than its repudiation. Attending to young Muslims in particular—Australia's Muslim community is strikingly youthful, the majority under thirty-five—I show how shared diasporic and spiritual ground enables dialogue that secular-rationalist activism cannot reach, offering a decolonial contribution to internationalising vegan sociology.

Using participant observation and discourse analysis, this paper connects micro-level street encounters in multicultural Sydney to broader questions in the sociology of religion, food, and human–nonhuman animal relations. The paper offers a sociological analysis of how religious, diasporic, and Islamic ecocultural identities shape engagement with veganism and animal-rights activism.

**Name:** Cassie A. Pedersen (she/her)

**Affiliation:** Federation University Australia

**Email:** [c.pedersen@federation.edu.au](mailto:c.pedersen@federation.edu.au)

**Title:** Wit(h)nessing trans-species trauma: From representation to multispecies response-ability

### Abstract:

Utilising the concept of trans-species trauma, with a specific focus on witnessing, this paper examines what it means to bear witness to nonhuman animal (ab)use under conditions of systematic erasure. Despite the imperative to present the absent referent, representational approaches to witnessing may inadvertently reproduce hierarchies, such that witnessing becomes the consumption of



traumatic imagery, risking (re)traumatisation, desensitisation, and the reproduction of a voyeuristic gaze.

*Moving beyond representational approaches to witnessing, this paper advocates for bearing wit(h)ness. Here, bearing wit(h)ness takes on ethical and ontological dimensions, entailing a reorientation toward relational vulnerability and multispecies response-ability. Wit(h)nessing thus becomes not an act of looking-at but of being-with—an attunement to the intricate entanglements through which human and more-than-human lives are continually becoming-with one another.*

**Name:** Dr Stephen Burrell (he/they)

**Affiliation:** University of Melbourne, Australia

**E-mail:** [stephen.burrell@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:stephen.burrell@unimelb.edu.au)

**Title:** Engaging men and boys in an ethic of care for the more-than-human world

**Abstract:**

*Masculinity is the subject of public discussion more than ever and increasingly politicised, as it has been brought into critical spotlight by movements like #MeToo, and as organised anti-feminist backlash has become increasingly mainstream around the globe. Within these contestations, there is growing attention towards the relationship between masculinity and the destruction of the more-than-human world, such as men's disproportionate contribution to the climate crisis and the large-scale exploitation and killing of non-human animals (especially for men who are white, middle/upper-class, and in the Global North). This builds upon decades of ecofeminist insights, such as Carol Adams' (1990) groundbreaking work on how the objectification, fragmentation, and consumption of non-human animals, as with women, provides a powerful way of enacting hegemonic masculinity in Western capitalist societies. What is less often discussed within mainstream discourses as-yet is the role that an ethic of care for non-human animals and the planet can play in offering an alternative path forward for men and boys, away from the hatred, alienation, and violence of manospheric politics and patriarchal masculinities. This paper will explore possibilities for engaging with men and boys about fostering such caring subjectivities, and both the opportunities and tensions that such work poses. For instance, it will consider how care for one's local context and relationships with individual non-human beings can be mobilised to act to address harms taking place on a global, systemic scale.*

**Name:** Zoi Sutton (she/her)

**Affiliation:** Flinders University

**Email:** [zoi.sutton@flinders.edu.au](mailto:zoi.sutton@flinders.edu.au)

**Title:** Critical Pet Studies: Reimagining Companionship with Vegan Sociology

**Abstract:**

*This presentation provides an overview of my [new book](#) which defines and argues for a Critical Pet Studies that challenges conventional narratives about human-pet relationships. Bringing together critical theoretical understandings of human-pet relationships and empirical research on them, this book investigates three sites of inquiry: the construction of animals-as-pet-commodities, multispecies cohabitation, and multispecies resistance. This sociological analysis of human-pet entanglements firmly situates them in a broader structural context that enables the categorisation of animals as 'Pet'.*

*Drawing on over 60 qualitative interviews with 'owners' and stakeholders involved in housing and supporting pet-owning humans, and species-inclusive observation, I demonstrate that unequal power relations become evident when nonhuman animals are centred in research that concerns them. Committed to the activist-scholarship agenda, this book offers a fruitful contribution to multispecies scholarship and human animal studies more broadly. It moves beyond previously depoliticised and*

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human-centric explorations of human-pet relations, and challenges the reader to re-imagine companionship with other animals.

### **Panel: Vegan Sociology Book Series**

*Emerging and crucially relevant, the field of vegan sociology is a radical, critical, and intersectional sociology that challenges the anthropocentric and speciesist frameworks embedded in sociology and other social sciences. This timely book series both recognises and advances the field. It is a home for practical applications of sociological theory and methodology in multispecies inquiry, and sociology that uniquely recognizes nonhuman animals as persons and stakeholders. Hear from the series editors, Kate Stewart and Matthew Melsa, commissioning editor Katy Mathers as well as several authors with forthcoming vegan sociology books.*

**Presenter:** Kate Stewart

**Affiliation:** University of East Anglia

**Email:** [Kate.Stewart@uea.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.Stewart@uea.ac.uk)

**Presenter:** Matthew Melsa

**Affiliation:** The Open University

**Email:** [matthew.melsa@open.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.melsa@open.ac.uk)

### **Panel: Cultured Meat, Speciesism, and the Futures of Vegan Sociology**

**Presenter:** Vasile T. Stănescu (he/him)

**Affiliation:** Mercer University

**Preferred email:** [stanescu\\_vt@mercer.edu](mailto:stanescu_vt@mercer.edu)

**Title:** *Bringing Home the Bacon: Cultured Meat and the Myth of Animal Realism*

### **Abstract**

*This paper examines lab-grown meat as a sociological and ideological formation rather than as a neutral technological advance. In particular, it argues that cultivated meat depends upon and reproduces what I call the myth of animal realism: the belief that any viable future of food must preserve meat as the social, cultural, and affective center of the meal. Rather than challenging the status of animal flesh as norm, aspiration, and marker of the good life, lab-grown meat accepts that status and seeks to reproduce it by other means. In this sense, cultivated meat does not mark a break with the symbolic order of animal agriculture; it extends and stabilizes it.*

*The paper situates this argument within vegan sociology, critical animal studies, and the political economy of food. It asks why, at the very moment when the environmental, ethical, and social costs of animal agriculture are increasingly visible, so much cultural and financial energy has been directed toward preserving “meat” itself. The answer, I suggest, lies not simply in taste or consumer preference, but in the ideological force of meat as a social object: a structure of feeling tied to family, normalcy, class aspiration, masculinity, national identity, and human dominion. Cultured meat succeeds rhetorically to the extent that it promises transformation without sacrifice, change without rupture, and moral reassurance without any need to confront the deeper social logic of animal use.*

*By framing cultured meat as a solution, its advocates often leave intact the central assumption that meat must remain. This paper argues that such efforts are sociologically revealing. They show how speciesism adapts to crisis, how capitalism absorbs critique, and how even putative alternatives to animal agriculture may remain captive to the cultural prestige of animal flesh. What is presented as innovation, then, may be better understood as a defensive project: an attempt to save meat from the growing crisis of legitimacy surrounding animal agriculture.*

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**Presenter:** Richard Giles

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**Title:** On Cultured Meat and “The Impasse” of Animal Theory

**Abstract**

Cultured meat has enjoyed considerable normalization as a solution to the “impasse of animal theory” – the notion that animal welfare, rights, and liberation advocates have been unable to swing the pendulum away from violence towards animals at a sufficient scale, consequently necessitating an existential reconsideration of animal theory’s purpose, goals, and possibilities. Against the recent backdrop of the plant-based meat industry’s collapsing share prices and market presence, the argument for cultured meat seems as if it should be stronger than ever. Yet, investment and interest in cultured meat have been subject to an even greater collapse, indicating that its future for changing human-animal relations is more vulnerable than ever. But was it truly poised to “solve” the impasse? This presentation – based on doctoral and postdoctoral research – argues otherwise. Highlighting various environmental and resource quandaries, ethical inconsistencies, and the underlying instability of investment in the cultured meat experiment, this presentation will demonstrate that animal theory must prepare itself to move forward, and to address “the impasse,” without cultured meat as a realistic prospect.

**Presenter:** Nathan Poirier

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**Title:** Regression to the Meat: The Twin Absurdities of Cultured Meat and the Carnivore Diet

**Abstract**

This presentation will provide a review/commentary on Bruce Friedrich's new book on alternative meat products, *Meat: How the Next Agricultural Revolution Will Transform Humanity's Favorite Food—and Our Future*, scrutinizing his and the Good Food Institute’s focus on “meat” as desirable and “hard-wired.” This messaging will be related to the current carnivore diet fad and, incidentally, the US's new 2026 dietary guidelines, which slant toward “carnivore.” This focus and these new dietary guidelines are related to the US’s investment in importing “beef” from Argentina, which highlights the international relevance of this phenomenon while applying it to a local context. One common thread between alternative animal products and the carnivore diet is the focus on “protein” to the detriment of all other considerations of a diet or food in general, vegan or otherwise. It will be argued that Friedrich, GFI, and others like him promoting cultivated meat are leaning into what is popular, not what is right or what is needed, in order to “succeed” — though the vegan sociologist might ask, at what? While vegan cultivated meat promoters think they are doing this “for the animals,” they end up appealing to the “carnivore” crowd. In this sense, they are regressing toward a social mean that favors meat. Various aspects of the carnivore diet will be covered to provide insight into the dangerous territory cultivated meat promoters risk treading. Relating to this conference’s overall theme, this presentation comments on how this overall trend impacts vegan scholar-activists across the world.

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**Title:** *Does Animal Advocacy Change Hearts and Minds? A Randomized Control Trial of Short-Term Effects Across Advocacy Types*

**Abstract:**

Animal advocates use a wide range of tactics (from graphic undercover footage to uplifting animal videos), but little experimental evidence exists on their psychological and behavioral effects. This study used a randomized controlled design to examine how eight types of advocacy content (ranging from social media videos to news articles) affect U.S. online participants across five outcomes measured immediately and two weeks after exposure: emotional reactions, animal product consumption, engagement and information-seeking behaviors, policy support, and moral concern. Most advocacy types significantly increased negative emotions compared to control, while positive formats had distinct effects — recipe videos uniquely increased desire, and uplifting animal videos uniquely increased happiness. However, these emotional responses did not translate into measurable behavior change. No advocacy type produced significant effects on animal product consumption, engagement and information-seeking, policy support, or moral concern at the two-week follow-up. The one exception involved moral concern: street outreach videos and protest articles actually decreased moral concern among meat-avoiders and women/non-binary participants — two groups advocates might consider natural allies. These null and backfire findings raise important sociological questions about the relationship between emotional arousal and sustained attitude or behavior change, and about how advocacy tactics interact with audience identity. The divergence between immediate emotional impact and downstream outcomes suggests that moving people in the moment may not be sufficient, and in some cases may be counterproductive, for the goals of animal rights movements.

**Name:** *Ela Przybyło* (they/them)

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**Title of talk:** *Queer and Trans Witnessing*

**Abstract**

This talk will draw on queer vegan sociology (i.e., Griggs 2021; Guenther 2024) and queer and trans ecologies (i.e., Durban and Moore 2024; Vakoch 2020; Sandilands and Erickson 2010) to consider two recent queer portrayals of pig slaughter, Torrey Peters' short story "The Chase" (2025) and Ocean Vuong's *The Emperor of Gladness* (2025). I explore these representations from a queer and trans vegan sociological framework, considering what they have to say about gendered power, trans and queer life, and the intersections of animal exploitation. I ultimately argue that while Vuong's novel develops a politics of witnessing (Gillepsie 2016), Peters' short story partakes in using non-human animal suffering as a plot device. Overall, this paper explores the intersections of queerphobia and transphobia with speciesism, and is attentive to centralizing the importance of vegan praxis and politics in queer and trans worldmaking.

**Name:** *Michael D. Briscoe* (he/him)

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**Title:** *Globalization and Meat Consumption: An Analysis of 122 Countries, 1992-2021*

**Abstract:**

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*As countries globalize and become more integrated in world society, global norms are transmitted - frequently from higher-income Global North countries to lower-income Global South countries. One norm reinforced by political economic institutions and structures is meat (nonhuman animal) consumption. This presents problems for human, nonhuman animal, and environmental well-being as meat consumption is linked with negative outcomes for each of these domains. In this analysis, I analyze how the level of globalization, as measured by the KOF globalization index (which measures economic, social, and political global integration), is associated with per capita meat consumption in 122 countries between 1992 and 2021. Results of panel regression models show that increased globalization is associated with higher meat consumption. These findings highlight the relevance of global integration in influencing the lives of both humans and nonhuman animals, and suggest a need for a shift in global norms away from unsustainable and cruel diets that have been prominent in the Global North in recent decades.*

**Presenter:** Robert Rosenberger

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**Title:** *Overtuning the Hidden Curriculum of Frog Dissection*

**Abstract:**

*The activity of dissecting a dead animal, often a frog, continues to be common in precollege education in many places, including the US and Canada. Of course, criticism of it also continues. In my own work, including the 2026 book *Against Frog Dissection: The Materiality Argument* (downloadable for free here: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-032-14346-4>), I attempt to identify, articulate, and overturn some of the core assumptions that underlie this whole debate. In particular, I take up ideas from the Social Construction of Technology (or SCOT) perspective from the field of STS to show the contingency of the animal dissection activity.*

*My main move is to identify the dead frog itself as the central guiding technology in these discussions. I claim there to be a socially settled status to the technology of the dead frog, which we can call “the dissection paradigm.” In this presentation, I outline my observations on the dissection paradigm, including, for example, the pervasive idea that the dead frog is the “real” and “natural” thing where simulated alternatives are merely virtual and manmade, as well as the idea that the frog dissection activity is the educational ideal and that the simulations must only attempt to mimic it as precisely as possible. Against the dissection paradigm, I highlight the dead frog as a technology, an animal caught, killed, shipped, preprepared, and presented as a specimen-for-dissection, all things with educational and ethical implications that get concealed when it is portrayed primarily as “real,” and “natural,” and “an educational ideal.”*

*This set-up, I suggest, presents several opportunities for the work of vegan sociology. There is room for theoretical expansion. There is a need for empirical study of the dissection paradigm. And there is a need for further exploration of the educational potentials of simulation freed from the task of mimicry.*

**Presenter(s):** Sarah May Lindsay; Abe Oudshoorn

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**Title:** *Who Cares? Identifying the Homeless Companion Animal Care Sector (HCACS) in Ontario, Canada*

**Abstract:**

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On any given day, there are thousands of companion animals without a home (HCAs; e.g., cats, dogs) in Ontario, Canada (Toronto Humane Society, 2026). Simultaneously, in response to what some call the “overpopulation” (BC SPCA, 2026) of CAs, there are (at least) hundreds of community members, groups, and organizations across the province working to help and house HCAs. However, little is known about what HCA care work looks like in the province. Reporting on results from an online survey, this presentation begins to fill this gap, identifying the demographics of HCA care workers, the structure and funding sources of these organizations, and how much of the work is voluntary and unpaid. We argue that HCAs must be included in Canada’s definition of homelessness, and that recognition, regulation, and funding must align with the critical and essential nature of the HCA Care Sector (HCACS) in Ontario. Additionally, in line with the theme of this year’s conference, we wish to hear from colleagues and attendees about their experiences with and knowledge about the HCACS in their region; particularly how the caregivers and positionality of HCAs differ or are similar in their community.

**Presenter:** Corey Wrenn

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**Title:** *Beards of the World: The Politicization of Facial Hair in the Maintenance of Sex, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Species*

**Abstract:**

*In the 18th century, a particularly tensioned period of colonization, slavery, revolution, and human rights projects, taxonomists were attempting to categorize the world. In these years before working knowledge of evolution, taxonomy was more heavily influenced by religion, racism, sexism, and speciesism. Those beings who more closely resembled the dominant class with regard to physical and cognitive capacity were thought to be closer to god, better designed, and more worthy of rights and privileges. Schliebinger’s (2004) *Nature’s Body* examines this taxonomy project, arguing that it not only created distinctions between humans and the natural world, but it also sought to explain racial differences and oppositional sex traits. In an increasingly multicultural and liberal society, there was an intense motivation to identify scientific and natural rationales for the suppression of people of color, colonized people, and women. While much has been made of skin tone, skull size, and wandering wombs in the maintenance of racial and sexual hierarchies, secondary sexual traits have also been employed for this purpose. Because animality was also under construction at this time, attention was also paid to similar or dissimilar traits exhibited by fellow animals in these racial and sexual constructions, including the capacity to breastfeed and the shape of breasts, the shape of the labia, the position of the cervix and vagina, and the prevalence and positioning of body hair. Beards, European taxonomers would discover in their encounters with people of the world, were not a universal human trait, offering another accessible means for distinguishing white European men and animalizing many colonized human groups (as well as nonhumans themselves). What did this mean for nonhumans (orangutans, lions, dogs, goats, etc.) who sported beards? Schliebinger argues that bearded animals enjoyed cultural prestige given their presumed alignment with European masculinity. Beards, in other words, are both a marker of animality (as an instance of mammalian hair) and humanity (few species grow beards). They are also deeply gendered and racialized, frequently referenced in the policing of women, non-gender-conforming people, and people of color, suggesting that beards evidence the deeply intersectional nature of social inequality. Indeed, a contemporary vegan reading of bearded animals would find they are granted limited privilege in a society that overwhelmingly emphasizes their non-humanness. This paper argues that 18th century ideas of white male supremacy have informed race, sex, and gender categories, but in doing so, draw heavily on politics of animality to rationalize an unequal distribution of resources for a variety of marginalized groups, nonhumans included. Finally, it suggests that a vegan sociological approach has the potential to delink real or imagined ideas of “nature’s body” from the right to bodily autonomy, dignity, and equal consideration.*

**Presenter(s):** Sophie Savage (she/they) & Louis Gough (he/him)

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**Title:** Navigating Everyday Life in a Non-Vegan World: A Collaborative Autoethnography

**Abstract:**

Two British vegan sociology colleagues, based at the University of the West of England, create a collaborative autoethnography exploring their lives as vegans living in a non-vegan world. We position ourselves as feminist, anti-ableist, critical researchers committed to an intersectional approach to animal liberation. This study was created in accordance with the principals of crip-time, using flexible approaches to our roles based on the needs of our wellbeing and bodyminds. We created a collaborative space for an open dialogue navigating the origins of our beliefs, our journey to veganism and the varying emotional consequences of our commitment to anti-speciesist and anti-anthropocentric ethics that arise in our daily social lives. Drawing on current vegan sociological research that studies the lives of vegans, we contribute findings and analysis that concern the development of authentic vegan identities, maintaining commitment to veganism amongst social stigma and refining the practice of everyday vegan activism. Our study illustrates differing desires regarding the need for belonging, connection and authenticity in contexts of social isolation resulting from our anti-hegemonic beliefs.

**Name:** Ryan Bogle BA, M. Phil, MA (he/him)

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**Title of talk:** "Materialising vegan ethics: an international analysis of aesthetic practices in plant-based hospitality.

**Abstract:**

This research explores how the visuality of plant-based hospitality contributes to the emergence of a recognisable, universal 'vegan type' and reveals how veganism is communicated through the deployment of typography, colour and design, and argues that these trends signal a globalised 'vegan type' to the general public. Drawing on a visual analysis of plant-based restaurants' interior and exterior design, menus, and other branding materials, this research identifies how an evocation of veganism is developed that bridges cultural, linguistic and demographic divides. To support a cross-cultural perspective, international vegan networks have been consulted to source a broad, multilingual dataset of vegan hospitality worldwide. This research argues that the consolidation of vegan community through its aesthetic practices contributes to a globalised, broadly homogenous vegan culture that simultaneously strengthens both vegan branding and communications as well as the cultural divides between vegans and their non-vegan counterparts. Thus, this research raises further questions into how vegan hospitality can adapt to engage more effectively with non-vegan communities and communicate veganism beyond its visual indicators.

**Name:** Kerry Herbert

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**Title:** Apprehending the greyhound problem: dealing with the fallout of social justice movement successes

An upswing in the global successes of activism for greyhounds is a welcome shift towards a liberational future for other animals. Recent bans on commercial greyhound racing in parts of the US, as well as New Zealand, and UK nations Wales and Scotland, point to the winding down of an animal use industry



*which has co-opted and commodified this breed of dog for 100 years. However, the successes of positive political action risk producing unintended relational harms for greyhounds and therefore warrant wider attention.*

*Unwanted greyhounds are repurposed for the pet market, through a normalised (re)cycle which has saved countless greyhound lives yet also enabled the racing industry to reproduce itself (Herbert, 2025a). Widely accepted narratives that 'greyhounds make great pets' reflect the successes of a public imagination of greyhounds beyond racing. Yet they also fail to reflect the complex needs and vulnerabilities of these institutionalised dogs. By caricaturising greyhounds, not only do such imaginations problematically invoke the minimal animal (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2025) but they also assume benevolent lifeworlds for other animals regarded as 'pets'. However, a growing body of scholarly work recognises that pet keeping is not a neutral practice, interrogating both the social construction of pet keeping (Nast, 2006; Sutton, 2024, Motamedi Fraser, 2024) and problematising it as both institution (Healey & Pepper, 2024) and its associated practices (Bockstal, 2024; Herbert and Stone, 2024; Herbert, 2025b).*

*As racing bans render thousands of additional greyhounds homeless, advocates, activists and rescuers are under increasing pressure to rehome this vulnerable population of dogs at a time of diminishing public financial and emotional resilience. This paper therefore calls for a broader conversation about rehoming unwanted animals, drawing on both structural and relational arguments to call for new approaches to apprehending the greyhound problem.*

**Panel: Vegan Sociology Down Under: Setting a research agenda for the Australian/Aotearoa context**

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*In 2024 IAVS ran a two day workshop in South Australia 'Vegan Sociology Down Under'. Through expert-led roundtable discussions, engagement with a local sanctuary and collective writing, participants developed a research agenda for Vegan Sociology in the Australia/Aotearoa region. This panel reflects on the role of in-person collaboration in creating heterotopic spaces in which vegan sociological thought can flourish and discusses the key elements of 'Vegan Sociology Down Under' that came out of the event*

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**Panel: Non-human animals around us and interdisciplinary knowledge production in Romania**

*Research on human-animal relationships in the Romanian context is under-reported and underfunded. Despite this, the country's position in Eastern Europe is a unique ground for the interaction of multiple discourses and conflicting practices. As Romania is being caught up in the global economic crisis after years of neoliberalism and after the fall of the socialist regime, human-animal relationships are being*



*changed as well. This panel will present research on civilizational discourses and Western practices that are being implemented in relation to urban and companion animals, as well as the hardships experienced by rescued animals and human caretakers in Romania's shelters and sanctuaries. Knowledge production in universities is possible, but it is difficult to maintain a critical position to the status quo, thus the challenge of teaching critically about human-animal studies will be addressed. Community, activist, and artistic knowledge production programs are trying to fill the knowledge gap, but are quite sparse. By grouping scholars from within and outside academia, this panel aims to create ties between international vegan sociology, disciplines such as anthrozoology and criminology, and local knowledge-production practices, as well as to make present the already entangled power exchanges that influence human-animal interactions in the region.*

**Presenter(s)** Maria Martelli & Aron Nor

**Affiliation:** Independent scholar-activists

**Title:** (Un)governable pigeons and dogs. Problematizing urban animals for a "civilized" Romania

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**Abstract:**

*Human relationships with pigeons and dogs have been ongoing for a very long time, being part of our common history. This presentation aims to show how urban pigeons and free-living dogs challenge anthropocentric visions of the city, and to raise critical questions about the "civilizing" process. Both pigeons and dogs are problematized in the urban space: their presence and actions are (in)visibilized in particular ways – they are rendered as „out-of-place”, while their subjectivities are minimized. Both are seen as “too many” in the public space, and are thus governed through population control, often with little critical understanding of shared histories and the ecological niche they occupy.*

*In the case of street dogs, the problematization of their mobility and presence in public spaces, as well as their subsequent transformation into "pets", contributes to the denaturalization of our complex history of mutualistic and commensal relationships with them, erasing and criminalizing local practices of communal care and negatively relocating their belonging from the neighbourhood/village to the status of human property (i.e specific to Western practices of dog ownership). Similarly, the problematization of pigeons as “dirty”, as “bringers of disease”, and as belonging to the “natural” space, is forgetful of their history of domestication, ignores current synanthropic relationships, and vilifies them. By situating the analysis at a specific margin within Europe and by centering multispecies justice, this presentation aims to critically reconsider how liminal urban animals are framed, governed, and imagined.*

**Presenter:** Irina Frasin

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**Title:** Animal companions: Co-creating multispecies togetherness

**Abstract:**

*Human – animal relationships are very significant in today's world, when we all live and cope with changes and challenges and their significant impact. Our companion animals may be, oftentimes, our sole sources of support, belonging and sanity. They may also be the ones who help us re-discover the world, its wonders and our own curiosity and sense of awe. Thus we find ourselves connected in ways far deeper than visible at first glance. Also, living by their side, immersed in a shared environment, we may find ways to re-center wellbeing and heal our connections to the natural world, re-think our affiliations, and re-discover the essential. In discovering our joint vulnerability, we may become more attuned to the others, human and non-human alike.*

*The main purpose of this paper is to analyse our human – companion animal relationships within a larger framework and show that treating non-humans with equal respect truly means re-organising our perspective to acknowledge the importance of the presence of other animals and multispecies relationships in our lives. Instead of considering only the benefits of these relationships for humans we should work to build mutual thriving in cooperation, in interrelation, in togetherness. This research is informed by my experience in working with companion animal (especially cats) guardians in Iași, Romania in different workshops, public meetings and counselling.*

**Presenter:** Rimona Afana

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**Title:** *From Vile to Well-Meaning Captivity: Romania's Shelters and Sanctuaries as Transitional/Restorative Justice Mechanisms*

**Abstract:**

*While the torturous practices, captivity included, defining factory farms, labs, zoos, aquaria, or circuses are often condemned, gray areas remain on what constitutes captivity and whether all forms are harmful. Kinder forms of confinement are not easier on animals' body and spirit, as attested by the condition of beings with complex sentience trapped in rescue establishments. To examine well-meaning captivity, illustrative of the paradox of simultaneous care and harm, I document the harms experienced by animals in shelters and sanctuaries in Romania, home to one of Europe's largest population of homeless animals, a country with inadequate animal protection legislation, with few resources to support animal rescue, and lacking an animal rights culture. Using as case study Libearty, the world's largest sanctuary for brown bears, I show that shelters and sanctuaries function as nascent transitional and restorative justice mechanisms, sometimes healing victims, yet unable to address the impunity defining animal abuse.*

**Presenter:** Alina S. Rusu

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**Title:** Toward a “Care for Life” Mindset: An Interdisciplinary Master’s Program on Human-Animal Interaction in Romania

**Abstract:**

The master’s degree program “Ethology and Human–Animal Interaction,” launched in 2021 at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, represents a pioneering initiative at the national level. Grounded in an interdisciplinary framework, the curriculum integrates animal sciences, ethology, psychology, and sociology to critically examine human-animal relationships and promote responsible, ethical engagement across species boundaries. Positioned within a growing international network of scholars and practitioners in anthrozoology and related fields, the program facilitates knowledge exchange, collaborative research, and the dissemination of student and faculty work. The program attracts students from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, such as: biology, veterinary medicine, animal husbandry, philosophy, geography, social work, technical engineering, and economics. This diversity of student backgrounds reflects an emerging societal openness toward rethinking human-animal relations in Romania. In this contribution, I will frame the program as part of a broader cultural shift toward a “care for life” mindset, aligned with vegan sociology’s emphasis on multispecies justice, relational ethics, and the deconstruction of anthropocentric norms.

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**Title of talk:** Beyond the “lab rat” identity: discourses, practices and human-rodent solidarity in Argentina

**Abstract:**

In this talk, I’ll be sharing the key points from my master’s thesis on Sociology of culture, defended on October 2025, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My thesis starts with a sociohistorical outlook of the development and systematisation of animal experimentation, along with its social controversy, in Europe, United States and Argentina between the 19th century to the present. In this context, three important figures emerge: the bioscientific community, the animal activists (antivivisectionists and antispeciesists, according to the period), and the “laboratory animals” themselves, biologically manipulated and socially constructed, but also agents of resistance. The overall aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate how the local hegemonic discourse of animal experimentation about the “laboratory animal” contrasts with discourses and practices from civil society, creating an opening for the animals categorised under this label. To do this, I analysed a corpus of local scientific research (comprising text and images) involving protocols with animals; secondly, I explored the work of a local NGO that rehomes rats and mice for adoption after their liberation from the laboratory. These animals take part of a family, finding another identity than that already given by science (whether as tools, objects, or even as “heroes”). My findings suggest a destabilization of the hegemonic scientific discourse about animals used for research when confronted with sociocultural efforts from a growing number of local people helping rodents to find a new life outside of the laboratory and into the family.



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**Title of talk:** *Rewriting Hierarchies: Representations of non-human animals as equal or superior beings in telepathic interspecies communication*

**Abstract:**

*This paper presents findings from an empirical study originally designed to examine processes of reality construction in the context of telepathic interspecies communication services advertised on websites. During the analysis, a previously unanticipated analytical focus emerged: the ways in which non-human animals are represented and positioned within this field of discourse. Drawing on a grounded theory approach, the study investigates how non-human animals are linguistically and symbolically constructed in relation to human animals.*

*The analysis shows that non-human animals are consistently framed in ways that reject hierarchical inferiority. Instead, they are predominantly represented either as equals or as beings occupying superior positions in relation to human animals. On the one hand, non-human animals are described as family members, friends, or companions of human animals, emphasizing relational equality and emotional closeness. On the other hand, they are frequently attributed elevated roles such as teachers, guides, or wise entities with privileged access to forms of knowledge that are portrayed as unavailable to human animals.*

*These findings point to the emergence of a distinct discursive field in which conventional human-non-human animal hierarchies are systematically reconfigured. Rather than being positioned as resources or subordinate beings, non-human animals are constructed as epistemically and morally significant actors within communicative frameworks. The paper discusses how these representations challenge dominant societal assumptions about human-non-human animal relations and open up new perspectives on the cultural imagination of interspecies communication.*

**Name:** Prof. Dr. Andrej Kirbiš (he/him)

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**Title:** *Interlocking Oppressions: How Speciesism, Sexism and Social Dominance Travel Together in a Central European Sample*

**Abstract**

*Speciesism, defined as the assignment of differing moral worth to beings on the basis of species membership, is increasingly understood not as an isolated individual attitude but as one expression of a*



*broader orientation toward social hierarchy. Vegan sociology argues that the exploitation of other animals is entangled with inequalities among humans, yet most empirical evidence derives from Anglophone and Western European settings, leaving post-socialist Central Europe almost entirely unexamined. Using data from a Slovenian population survey, this study will measure anti-animal prejudice with a six-item speciesism scale and anti-human prejudice with a composite of unfavorable attitudes toward vegans, vegetarians, and other minority groups, and will ask which orientations toward social hierarchy, namely social dominance orientation, authoritarianism, and sexism, connect the two. Drawing on intersectional and ecofeminist theory and on the social-dominance model of human-animal relations, the analysis will proceed in four steps using hierarchical regression. First, it will estimate the association between the speciesism and human-prejudice composites, establishing whether the two forms of prejudice co-occur. Second and third, it will test which hierarchy orientations predict the anti-animal composite and the anti-human composite, net of sociodemographic characteristics. Fourth, it will assess which orientation most reduces the speciesism coefficient when added to the model, identifying the dimension that does the connecting work. Both social dominance orientation and authoritarianism are expected to predict speciesism as well as human prejudice, consistent with the view that a preference for group hierarchy underlies the devaluation of both other animals and marginalized humans. Generalized social dominance, as the more direct expression of that preference, is expected to account for most of the association between the two composites. By widening the geography of vegan sociology to a Central European case and locating the hierarchical root that links anti-animal and anti-human prejudice, the study offers empirical grounding for the discipline's claim that human and animal oppression are interconnected.*

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**Title:** *Vegan Vigils in Poland*

**Abstract:**

*Veganism in Poland constitutes a socially situated practice embedded in broader structures of morality, religion, power and everyday interaction. Rather than approaching veganism as an individual lifestyle choice, this panel proposes a sociological analysis of veganism as a form of social action shaped by institutional contexts, symbolic boundaries and emotional regimes. Drawing on affect theory, the sociology of religion, symbolic interactionism and critical approaches to power and knowledge, the contributions examine how meanings of veganism are produced, negotiated and contested in contemporary Polish society.*

*The paper focuses on veganism as a performative and relational practice, explored through rituals, moral emotions and processes of inclusion and exclusion. Particular attention is paid to questions of normativity, legitimacy and grievability, as well as to the role of dominant cultural and religious frameworks in shaping social responses to veganism. By analysing both everyday interactions and wider discursive formations, the panel situates Polish veganism within intersecting regimes of power, knowledge and affect. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to sociological debates on moral economies, social boundaries and the dynamics of cultural change.*



## ***2026 Business Meeting Agenda***

Contact us at [info@vegansociology.com](mailto:info@vegansociology.com) to add an item to the business meeting agenda

### **1. Update on activities**

- a. Vegan Sociology "Research Lab"
  - b. Vegan Sociology Shut Up and Write (SUAW) Teaching Vegan Sociology
  - c. Intern Federica Pasquali
  - d. Social media: Reminder that we are happy (and eager) to promote any new research, announcements, etc. from all academic/non-academic levels, but we need to be notified ([info@vegansociology.com](mailto:info@vegansociology.com))
  - e. Blog: Consider spotlighting a recent talk or publication or reworking your abstract for the blog
  - f. Additions to website
    - i. Research repository for new publications
    - ii. Reminder to submit teaching resources to the website ([info@vegansociology.com](mailto:info@vegansociology.com))
2. Society & Animals Journal call for book reviewers 2027
  3. Invite new affiliates
    - a. Those holding an ABD or PhD in Sociology (or in a related discipline if you are conducting sociological research) are invited to join our affiliates network; please contact us at [info@vegansociology.com](mailto:info@vegansociology.com)
  4. Theme for next year's conference
  5. Waiting for funding decision with American Bird Conservancy, "Vegan Sociology in Flight"
  6. Corey W. is applying for a British Academy conference grant for 2028, theme of food; who can commit to presenting in person?
  7. Kate S. potential inaugural day conference
  8. 2027 Committee positions - We are actively seeking our 2027 committee
  9. Thank you to 2026 Committee, Libby, Alex, and Cassie! And our intern Federica!

In attendance: