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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SPECIESISM

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Abstract

Despite being animals, humans distance themselves physically and mentally from (most) other animals and prioritize human interests. We exploit other animals to feed, clothe, and entertain ourselves, to name just a few animal exploitation practices. Such discrimination against other species, or *speciesism*, is the central focus of the present chapter. Drawing on recent scientific findings, we reveal the psychological connections between speciesism and prejudices such as racism and sexism. Those who support animal exploitation also tend to endorse sexist and racist views and rely on the belief in group dominance and human supremacy to justify systems of inequality and oppression. The common denominator is that the interests of disadvantaged groups like animals, women, and ethnic minorities, are considered subordinate to the interests and privileges of advantaged groups like humans in general, and white men in particular. Although recognizing this intersectionality is critical to the understanding of human-animal relations, explicitly referring to such parallels in animal advocacy campaigns can be easily misunderstood, and may be ineffective or even counterproductive. We see value in experience- and behavior-based interventions where people learn to connect psychologically with animals to change their animal-relevant beliefs, and more generally, to broaden the mind and challenge exploitative societal traditions.

> What do they know – all these scholars, all these philosophers, all the leaders of the world – about such as you? They have convinced themselves that man, the worst transgressor of all the species, is the crown of creation. All other creatures were created merely to provide him with food, pelts, to be tormented, exterminated. In relation to them, all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka.
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> *Isaac Bashevis Singer, 1968*

On a mass scale and on a daily basis, animals[1] are being shot, gassed, suffocated, or electrocuted. This typically happens after living in miserable and abusive

circumstances in extreme confinement. Animals are being mutilated through branding, dehorning, amputating tales or tongues, etc., and crammed into trucks for long distances often in severe weather conditions. In his writings, novelist and Nobel Prize laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer regularly compared the way people treat and slaughter non-human animals to the way Jews were treated and killed by the Nazis (I. B. Singer, 1968). Others have used metaphors and imagery referring to the period of slavery in America to illustrate standard procedures in modern factory farms (e.g., Plous, 2003; Spiegel, 1988). Yet purely in terms of numbers, if you consider the billions of animals being killed every year, the Holocaust comparison undersells the scope of the problem.

The systemic exploitation of other species by humans is often referred to as "speciesism," analogous to the discriminatory treatment of people based on gender (i.e., sexism) or race (i.e., racism) (Dhont, Hodson, & Leite, 2016; Horta, 2010; Ryder, 2006; Singer, 1975; Sorenson, 2016, this volume). From a psychological perspective, speciesism can be defined as the differential treatment (behavioral) or moral evaluation (attitudes and beliefs) of animals merely based on their species membership (see also Caviola, Everett, & Faber, 2019). Surprisingly, only recently has speciesism become a topic of empirical research in social and behavioral sciences, despite the long-standing debates and controversies surrounding this topic in philosophical and animal advocacy circles.

This chapter reviews recent empirical work on the psychology of speciesism and the proposed parallels with biases towards human groups such as racism and sexism. Is speciesism comparable to other types of prejudice? And if so, what are the common psychological factors driving and maintaining both speciesism and human intergroup biases? After addressing these questions, we then discuss the usefulness of such comparisons in animal advocacy. Indeed, comparing speciesism to racism or sexism in animal rights campaigns, and referring to past atrocities against minority groups to raise awareness about the treatment of animals, has often caused public commotion and anger towards animal advocates, rather than towards animal abusers. Finally, we discuss the political polarization of animal rights and reflect on possible solutions.

Generalized prejudice and speciesism

Gordon Allport (1954) famously observed that "If a person is anti-Jewish, he is likely to be anti-Catholic, anti-Negro, anti any out-group" (p. 68). This general tendency of holding negative attitudes towards a range of different outgroups is known as *generalized prejudice* (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Bergh, 2011; Hodson & Dhont, 2015; McFarland, 2010). Supporting this idea, empirical research across cultural contexts has shown that those who devalue people of one social group, for instance by endorsing racist views, also tend to devalue people of other groups, for instance by also endorsing sexist and homophobic views (Akrami et al., 2011; Hodson, MacInnis, & Busseri, 2017; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015; Zick et al., 2008). Recent work further refined the theorizing on generalized prejudice by demonstrating that the idea applies especially, and perhaps only, to prejudice towards

marginalized (or low-status) groups, rather than *all* groups (Bergh, Akrami, Sidanius, & Sibley, 2016).

Roughly sketching their personality, people high on generalized prejudice tend to be less friendly, less compassionate, and less humble, not just toward members of other groups, but towards other people in general (Cichocka, Dhont, & Makwana, 2017; Hodson & Dhont, 2015; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008). They are also more conventional and closed-minded; not very open to innovative ideas or novel experiences. Such personality characteristics are further implicated in the type of ideological and political beliefs people endorse (Carney, Jost, Gosling, & Potter, 2008; Cichocka & Dhont, 2018; Hodson & Dhont, 2015; Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009), which, as we will see, are relevant for our understanding of people's attitudes towards animals. People characterized by a greedy, interpersonally insensitive, and rude (as opposed to humble, compassionate, friendly, etc.) personality are, ideologically speaking, more acceptant of social inequality. Indeed, they strongly prefer a society with a strict hierarchical order where some social groups are dominating over others, as opposed to egalitarian intergroup relations. This ideological belief of endorsing inequality and group-based dominance has been termed social dominance orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, conventional people tend to resist societal change, and rather seek stability and order. They strongly value cultural and family traditions, are more compliant with laws and authorities, and tend to be intolerant towards individuals or groups violating or deviating from the cultural norms. This cluster of socially conservative ideological beliefs is known as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1996). Both SDO and RWA are strong predictors of generalized prejudice (Hodson & Dhont, 2015; Hodson et al., 2017; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008) and of support for parties on the right side of the political spectrum, and in the case of SDO, support for far-right parties (e.g., Van Assche, Van Hiel, Dhont, & Roets, 2019; Van Hiel, Cornelis, Roets, & De Clercq, 2007).

In general, relatively few people show explicit support for inequality between human social groups merely based on their group membership. Indeed, in principle, only few would say that certain social groups, like particular ethnic groups, or one gender or age group, are morally inferior to another group (see Kteily, Ho, & Sidanius, 2012; Sibley & Liu, 2010). Yet, comparatively, a substantially bigger number of people agree that an animal life is inherently of lesser value than a human life (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Salmen & Dhont, in prep). Relative to other low-status groups, animals may represent the *quintessential low-status group* – targets of speciesism.

Illustrative of speciesism, in one of their studies, Caviola and his colleagues (2019) asked American participants to allocate \$100 between a charity that focuses on helping humans and a charity that focuses on helping animals. For both charities, the researchers mentioned that an allocation of \$10 would keep one individual free from pain and suffering for one day. Far from an equal split between both charities, an average of \$68 went to helping humans versus \$32 to helping animals. For these participants, the pain and suffering of a human being was worth more than twice as much as the pain and suffering of an animal. The authors further

demonstrated that the differential allocation of money to a human or an animal cause was larger for those participants holding stronger speciesist beliefs, measured by asking participants to indicate their agreement with statements such as "*Morally, animals always count for less than humans.*"

At this point, some readers may object that the differential treatment or judgment of humans and animals are not based on species membership alone, thereby questioning the concept of speciesism altogether. Instead, one could argue that, compared to non-human animals, our higher cognitive abilities and capacity to suffer is the reason and also the justification for why people consider and treat the life of animals as less valuable. Such viewpoints not only fail to acknowledge the scientific observations of the rich cognitive and emotional lives of animals (Bekoff, 2007a; Bekoff & Pierce, 2009; de Waal, 2016), but can also not (fully) account for the devaluation of animals by humans (Caviola et al., 2019; Horta, 2010; P. Singer, 1975). Why else, other than their species membership, would those with severe mental disabilities, but not animals with high mental abilities like chimpanzees, be granted equal moral value just like all other humans? When the same participants of the study by Caviola and colleagues were asked to rate the intelligence levels and suffering capability of chimpanzees and those with severe mental disabilities, chimpanzees were rated as smarter, while the ratings of suffering capability did not significantly differ between these two groups. If anything, one would expect that the chimpanzees received the advantageous treatment if cognitive capacities matter, or no differences when considering the capacity to suffer. This is not what happened. With $100 at their disposal to allocate between the two groups, on average $72 went to helping those with severe mental disabilities leaving only $28 for helping the (smarter) chimpanzees. Speciesism is real, and the animals are paying the price.

Speciesism does not only manifest itself in the differential treatment and moral evaluation of humans and animals, but also in the way we treat and think morally about different animals. Consider for instance the horsemeat scandal that broke out in the UK in 2013, and then spread across Europe ("Q&A: Horsemeat scandal," 2013; Quinn, 2013). When the UK food safety authorities revealed that numerous beef products contained horsemeat, with some "beef" lasagnes even being 100 percent horsemeat, this caused public rage and fury among plenty of British consumers – not because of the incorrect labelling or fraudulent practice, but because of the cultural taboo against eating horses in the UK. Britons are effortlessly willing to devour pigs and cows, as their Sunday roast drowned in gravy, or as a meat pie with a crust of mashed potato, yet they are disgusted by the idea of eating horses. The lack of moral objections to eating cows or pigs indicates that there is no other reason for the horrified reactions over horsemeat than the fact that horses are not considered food animals in the UK ("Why are the British revolted by the idea of horsemeat?", 2013). In contrast, many French people living in the UK did not understand what the fuss was all about and, at worst, experienced this issue as an inconvenience for not knowing the ingredients. While the horsemeat scandal temporarily increased the sales of vegetarian meat alternatives in the UK, it also sparked

a rise in sales of approximately 15 percent for traditional horse butchers in France (Chrisafis, 2013)! It seems that the (bad) publicity and chatter about horsemeat had ignited renewed interest in traditional horsemeat dishes in France and reminded French people about the availability of this "low-fat, low-cholesterol" alternative to beef and pork.

The moral concern for animals is thus largely based on criteria that, in principle, would be considered irrelevant when judging whether or not certain decisions and behaviors are morally acceptable. Indeed, our social and cultural relation with specific animal species, the function of the animal category for humans (e.g., edible or not), the way they look (e.g., cute, ugly, similar to humans), and how we portray or perceive their behavior (e.g., as dangerous or threatening), all feed into the differential concern and treatment of animals (Bratanova, Loughnan, & Bastian, 2011; Herzog, 2010; Joy, 2010; see also Piazza, this volume; Woods & Hare, this volume). In a recent online survey study, we presented a list of twenty animals to American participants and asked them to select those animals that they feel morally obligated to show concern for (Leite, Dhont, & Hodson, 2019). We included several *companion animals* like dogs, cats, and horses, several animals typically considered as *food* such as cows and pigs, but also ducks and chickens, and thus a range of food animals that are very different from each other from a purely biological perspective. Furthermore, participants also rated a range of *wild animals*; some *more appealing* and of *higher status*, such as chimps, bears, and dolphins, as compared to *less appealing* wild animals like snakes, frogs, and crocodiles. As expected, participants selected animals belonging to the same categories about equally frequently. Yet, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, there were huge differences between the categories of animals. A vast majority of the respondents felt morally obliged to show concern

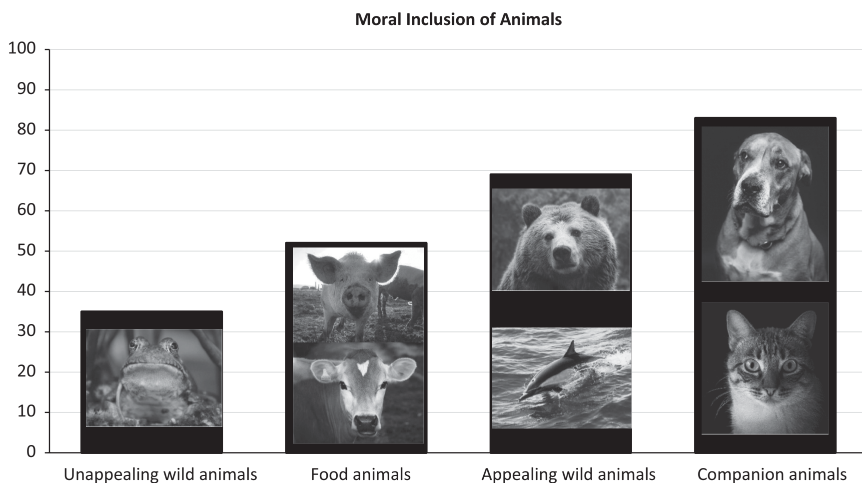

FIGURE 3.1 Mean percentage of moral inclusion of different animal categories (based on Leite, Dhont, & Hodson, 2019).

for the welfare and interests of companion animals (cats, dogs, and horses), clearly more than for any other animal category. Most participants also indicated that they care about appealing wild animals (e.g., dolphins, chimps), yet the proportion of participants feeling moral concern dropped significantly to just over 50 percent when it concerned food animals (e.g., chickens, pigs, cows), with a further drop for unappealing wild animals (e.g., snake, snail). These findings demonstrate that judgments about the need to morally care for an animal vary widely between animal species, and are directly linked to whether or not the animal is typically exploited or ignored by people.

A similar discrepancy between different animals was observed in the study by Caviola and colleagues (2019) discussed earlier, when participants were asked to allocate $100 between a charity helping dogs and a charity helping pigs. On average, participants allocated more than double the amount to help dogs ($69) than to help pigs ($31). In our study (Leite et al., 2019) participants cared most about dogs, of all animals, with 90 percent indicating that they feel morally obliged to care about dogs. If the detection of horse meat already leads to public calls for a largescale boycott of affected supermarkets, can you imagine what would happen if food safety authorities were ever to find traces of dog meat in beef products? Thinking of chewing on a steak of Labrador or gulping down Beagle stew not only feels disturbing and physically repulsive for most people, it also violates our moral intuitions (see also Joy, 2010). Dogs are our buddies, part of the family, and who would eat their friends or family? The special social relation we have with dogs, rooted in Western cultural traditions, makes Westerners perceive and think about dogs differently than how we perceive and think about pigs and cows. Despite the absence of fundamental differences in their emotional and cognitive capacities, we value the life of a dog much higher than the life of a pig or a cow. Yet, if you were born and raised in Vietnam or China, there is a chance that you would be slurping tastefully from a bowl of dog meat soup every now and then, and if born in India, consider the cow a sacred being and never eat beef.

This selection of scientific findings and the example of the horsemeat scandal should suffice to illustrate the widespread prevalence of speciesist principles and expressions. We view ourselves, humans, as inherently superior to animals and we value different animal species differently depending on their functional or cultural role for humans, reflecting human self-interests. Such sharp demarcation between us and other animal species underpins our prejudicial thinking about animals and the biased way we treat animals, providing moral justification for the exploitation of all kinds of animals, particularly food animals. Renowned biologist Marc Bekoff (2007b, pp. 170–171) puts it this way:

> The separation of "us" and "them" creates a false picture and is responsible for much suffering. It is part of the in-group/out-group mentality that leads to human oppression of the weak by the strong as in ethnic, religious, political, and social conflicts.

Arguably, in many respects, how we discriminate between human and non-human animals resembles the way that low-status human groups are being discriminated against. Such insights suggest that the concept of generalized prejudice is not limited to prejudices towards human groups but can be extended to prejudice towards animals. The parallels or interconnectedness between speciesism and prejudices towards human groups have often been discussed by influential scholars like Peter Singer and Carol Adams. Moreover, some animal advocacy posters allude to these similarities, for instance those showing a picture of a chained animal next to a picture of a chained human slave. Yet, only recently have these parallels been empirically investigated in psychological research.

Common ideological roots of speciesism and prejudice towards human groups

Is speciesism a type of prejudice comparable to traditional types of prejudice like homophobia or racism, and can it be integrated in the construct of generalized prejudice?

The central idea of generalized prejudice is that someone who is highly prejudiced towards Group X is highly prejudiced towards Groups Y and Z (Allport, 1954; Akrami et al., 2011; Meeusen & Dhont, 2015). Hence, a first, relatively easy way of testing whether the concept can be broadened to include animals as another outgroup (and target of prejudice), is to investigate whether those who express negative and prejudiced views toward human outgroups (e.g., ethnic and religious groups) also endorse exploitative attitudes toward animals (speciesist attitudes). We tested this idea in a number of different samples, first in a Canadian sample of students and subsequently in a series of studies conducted in Belgium, the UK, and the USA using student and more heterogeneous samples of adults (Dhont, Hodson, Costello, & MacInnis, 2014; Dhont et al., 2016). Confirming the associations across all samples, those who expressed more negative attitudes against ethnic and racial minority groups also expressed greater support for a range of practices of animal exploitation such as hunting, factory farming, animal testing, whaling, and using animals for human entertainment. Following up on this research line, several other studies further showed that stronger endorsement of gender-based prejudice (i.e., sexism) and sexuality-based prejudice (i.e., homophobia) is positively related to greater speciesism (Caviola et al., 2019; Salmen & Dhont, in prep). Taken together, the first conclusion from these studies is that speciesism is a type of prejudice, reliably related to prejudicial attitudes towards a range of human outgroups. These findings point to the psychological similarities between these different types of prejudices and suggest they all share a common, generalized component. But *why* is this the case?

In the next step in this research line, we addressed the question of *why* prejudicial tendencies towards human outgroups and animals are connected. What is the psychological key ingredient underpinning both speciesism and prejudice towards human outgroups? The Social Dominance Human-Animal Relations Model (SD-HARM; Dhont et al., 2016) proposes that the desire for group-based dominance and social inequality, that is SDO, represents the unifying ideological

motive constituting the common core of both speciesism and prejudice towards human groups. According to Social Dominance Theory, social dominators (i.e., those higher on SDO) want to preserve hierarchical social structures and further enhance the dominant position of high-status and advantaged groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). To this end, they deploy a range of discriminatory belief systems like racism and sexism to rationalize and morally legitimize the implementation of institutionalized discriminatory policies. Hence, as a robust predictor of generalized prejudice, SDO operates in a wide-ranging fashion, targeting marginalized and low-status groups "regardless of the manner in which these groups are defined" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 61; see also Kteily et al., 2012).

Given this generalized tendency for group-based dominance and inequality, the impact of SDO may extend well beyond the realm of human intergroup relations and be implicated in human-animal relations. Indeed, research showed that those higher on SDO tend to see greater differences between animals and humans and more strongly believe that humans are superior to animals (Costello & Hodson, 2010, 2014; Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Hodson, Dhont, & Earle, this volume). Furthermore, across all our samples, those higher on SDO not only showed higher levels of ethnic prejudice but also more strongly endorsed speciesist attitudes (Dhont et al., 2014, 2016). Theoretically, much like how social dominators adhere to legitimizing ideologies such as racism and sexism to justify the oppression of low-status human groups, they also endorse human supremacy and speciesist beliefs to defend the exploitation and consumption of animals (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Hyers, 2006).

Critically, we also formally tested whether the significant association between ethnic prejudice and speciesism can be explained by their joint association with SDO, as proposed by the SD-HARM model (Dhont et al., 2016). In statistical terms, this means that the correlation between ethnic prejudice and speciesism would drastically decrease or disappear (i.e., become statistically non-significant) after accounting for SDO. This was confirmed in each of our studies: when SDO was modelled as the common ideological core underpinning both ethnic prejudice and speciesism, the residual relation between ethnic prejudice and speciesism approached zero and was nonsignificant. Caviola and colleagues (2019) replicated this pattern of results and further showed that SDO also accounted for the associations between speciesism and homophobia.

In testing the critical role of SDO in these relations, we also investigated whether other ideological variables such as RWA and left-right political orientation would explain the associations between ethnic prejudice and speciesism. We found no evidence for this, which rules out several alternative explanations for the observed associations and emphasizes the unique role of *group-based dominance motives* in connecting prejudicial tendencies in human intergroup and human-animal relations. Yet, interestingly, political conservatism also predicted speciesism even after accounting for SDO and RWA. This finding may suggest that beyond group-dominance motives and the preservation of cultural traditions, political conservatives may oppose animal rights (and endorse speciesist practices) possibly because support for animal rights, just like pro-environmentalism, is perceived as a

left-wing topic. We come back to this ideological divide between the left and the right later in this chapter.

In conclusion, by revealing the key role of SDO, SD-HARM offers a unifying and parsimonious theoretical account for the connections between attitudes towards animals and attitudes towards ethnic outgroups. Our studies empirically substantiate the long-held views of scholars in philosophy and animal advocates who argued that common or interconnected belief systems sustain the exploitation of both animals and human groups (e.g., Adams, 2015; Adams & Gruen, 2014; Ryder, 2006; Singer, 1975; Spiegel, 1988; see also Dhont, Hodson, Loughnan, & Amiot, 2019; Hodson & Costello, 2012; Plous, 2003). Desires for power and the might of one group over another motivate oppressive and discriminatory views and practices towards human and non-human outgroups.

Extensions of SD-HARM

Part of the appeal of SD-HARM is that the model relies on a single principle, with SDO as the main protagonist. Yet, we acknowledge wholeheartedly that a variety of psychological and contextual factors, along with historical and economic factors, play a role in how speciesism develops, and need to be considered to fully understand why speciesism is deeply entrenched in society and in people's way of life. In testing and confirming SD-HARM, our studies focused on ethnic intergroup attitudes and support for animal exploitation across a range of different animals and practices. Hence, this approach restricts the conclusions in at least two ways, leaving room to extend the model. First, the findings tell us little about the ideological or psychological drivers of why different animals are being perceived and treated differently from other animals within and between cultural contexts. As we have seen earlier, eating horse or dog meat are common practices in some countries, but met with revulsion and outrage in other countries. Along similar lines, bullfights in Spain and whaling practices in Norway and Iceland are defended passionately and vehemently by a sizable number of citizens living in those countries, but are seen as inexcusable brutalities to many others. These examples highlight the systematic differences between cultures in support for specific types of animal exploitation, with particular animals being loved in one culture but exploited in others. Cultural norms and traditions often dictate what is acceptable and inacceptable. Yet people also differ from each other in the extent to which they value traditions and cultural norms. Hence, while SDO, as a generalized tendency, reliably predicts greater support for many types of animal exploitation within and across cultures, cherishing specific practices from one's own culture likely reflects ideological values of social conformity and traditions. This idea is consistent with the finding that RWA, as a typical indicator of social-cultural conservatism, correlates robustly with meat consumption (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Hodson et al., this volume). The more socially conservative people are, the more meat they eat. Extending this idea to other practices of animal exploitation, we suspect that social-cultural conservatives (e.g., those higher in RWA) will show greater support for specific practices of

animal exploitation typical for their own cultural region, but not necessarily for foreign cultural practices.

As an initial test of this idea, we surveyed an online sample of about 250 American adults and asked them about their views regarding three different practices of animal exploitation (Dhont, Leite, Hodson, & Milfont, in prep). Two of these practices, bullfighting and whaling, are not part of the cultural traditions in the USA, whereas the third practice, rodeos, happens widely over the USA, and for many Americans is closely tied to national or regional traditions. We also measured their levels of SDO and RWA. Consistent with our line of reasoning, although SDO was related to stronger support for all three practices of animal exploitation, RWA only predicted support for rodeos, and did not significantly predict support for whaling or bullfighting, after statically accounting for SDO. These findings are a first step in extending the SD-HARM model and show that in addition to group-dominance motives, desires to preserve cultural traditions and resistance to cultural change can be a powerful ideological motive to defend practices of animal exploitation. Yet a critical test of these ideas involves the cross-cultural comparison of people's attitudes.

Secondly, the SD-HARM studies only investigated the associations between speciesism and ethnic prejudice, but no other types of outgroup prejudice like sexuality-based prejudice, sexism, or ageism. As we have seen, at least one published study demonstrated that SD-HARM also applies to the association between speciesism and homophobia (Caviola et al., 2019, Study 3). Noteworthy however, the findings of Caviola and colleagues also suggested that SDO accounts for only part of the association between speciesism and sexism, indicating that other factors likely play a role in this relation. Indeed, the associations between sexism and speciesism may be more complex because of the multifaceted nature of sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001). Consider for instance the use of aggressive and derogatory metaphors by calling women "bitches" or "cows" (Haslam, Holland, & Stratemeyer, this volume), as witnessed during the 2016 US presidential campaign when Donald Trump fans were wearing t-shirts and badges screaming "*Trump That Bitch*!". The explicit association of women with animals in these metaphors is meant in an intimidating and pejorative way, reflecting a hostile type of sexism. Moreover, such views inherently imply the inferior status of animals relative to humans, and thus a belief in human dominance over animals (see also Adams, 2015; MacKinnon, 2004). By putting women in this lower "animal status," not only dominance motives in human intergroup relations (i.e., SDO) but also human supremacy beliefs serve to sustain and legitimate hostile sexist views of male dominance over women (Salmen & Dhont, in prep).

At the same time, plenty of media commercials depict women (but seldom men) frivolously swirling in a natural environment, such as washing their hair under a glorious waterfall in a crystal blue lagoon. Such images portray, ostensibly harmlessly, women as being closely connected to nature and animals in ways that are meant to communicate a kind, positive message. We also often hear that women

are more "in tune" with nature, or on other occasions, that they have better natural, "maternal" instincts. Yet despite being perceived as subjectively benevolent, connecting women to nature nevertheless sustains the traditional view of women as fragile and in need of protection and control. In other words, it implies a paternalistic view of gender roles, as also expressed in patronizing animal metaphors when calling women "kittens" or "pets" (see Haslam et al., this volume). Just like hostile sexism, albeit in a more subtle way, this benevolent form of sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 2001; Hopkins-Doyle, Sutton, Douglas, & Calogero, 2019) reflects how people think about both women (relative to men) and animals (relative to humans). Based on this theorizing, Salmen and Dhont (in prep) proposed that beliefs in human dominance over animals and nature underpin both hostile and benevolent sexist ideologies and serve as a justification for the lower status of women and animals in society, hence lying at the core of sexism and speciesism.

Putting these ideas to the test, Salmen and Dhont (in prep) conducted several online survey studies totalling more than 1500 adults from the USA and the UK (approximately 55 percent female). Across all studies, the results confirmed that hostile and benevolent sexists hold stronger speciesist views, providing further evidence that speciesism can be considered a type of prejudice linked to other types of prejudice. Critically, the results also consistently demonstrated that human supremacy belief was significantly related to both hostile and benevolent sexism, above and beyond the effects of gender. When further testing the role of dominance desires in human intergroup relations by simultaneously investigating SDO and human supremacy beliefs, the findings revealed that both SDO and human supremacy beliefs uniquely predicted sexism. In other words, consistent with the SD-HARM model, speciesism and different sexism dimensions are indeed meaningfully related and rooted in common ideological belief systems, with SDO of crucial importance. Yet these findings further extend SD-HARM by highlighting that also people's perception of a hierarchical divide between humans and animals guides how they perceive and treat women relative to men. Indeed, those with stronger desires for human dominance over animals tend to endorse hostile and benevolent sexist views, which, in turn, are implicated in harmful behaviours such as downplaying or justifying sexual violence and restricting women's autonomy (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Petterson & Sutton, 2018; Salmen & Dhont, in prep).

To conclude, the way we think about animals has implications for the way we think about human groups. And the other way around, what we consider permissible in the (mal)treatment of humans, translates and often aggravates what we consider permissible in the (mal)treatment of animals. Systems of oppression and exploitation of humans and animals not only show important outward similarities, they also connect psychologically, deep down in the human mind, in how we think categorically about the world, in how we shape our social constructions about human-animal and human intergroup relations, and in how we create intractable ingroup-outgroup divisions. Yet the challenge remains: What can we do about it?

Implications for animal advocacy

How helpful or convincing is it to compare the struggle for animal rights with other social justice issues in animal advocacy? Establishing empirical evidence for the connections between different forms of oppressions does not in itself demonstrate that communicating about these connections in animal advocacy is an effective strategy. Unfortunately, as far as we are aware, no empirical research has addressed this question yet. We can merely speculate about the possible consequences of alluding to the Holocaust, slavery, or to racism, sexism, and the like as a means of reducing speciesism or the consumption of animal products. However, we can foresee reasons for being cautious about such approaches.

From the viewpoint of a vegan or animal rights activist, the slogans like "racism = speciesism = sexism" make complete sense. Such observations can also stimulate interesting theoretical debates within the animal advocacy movement and lead to a deeper understanding of different social issues. Yet, within this movement, most people accept the underlying morally motivated presumption that the life and suffering of an animal is of equal value as (or similar enough to) the life and suffering of a human. As we have seen, however, the majority of people disagree with this basic idea and value human life more than the life of an animal, especially farm animals. For them, such slogans are likely perceived as unreasonable, silly, or antagonistic, and therefore further ignored or resisted. Using such comparisons can, therefore, lead to unintended, harmful consequences that work against the cause of animal advocacy.

One possible reaction of a typical meat-eating lay audience is that they may not only feel that they are being judged and criticized for eating meat, but also think that they are being called racist or sexist. Rather than raising awareness about animal suffering, such interpretation of the message will likely upset and offend the audience. Indeed, as we can reasonably assume that the vast majority of an audience of ordinary people frankly rejects racism, (unintentionally) accusing them of racism will create unwanted negativity or even plain hostility between the messenger and the receiver. This turns people off and leads to disapproval of the animal advocacy organization or activist.

A second possible interpretation of the message is that it is considered an attempt to downplay the severity of the atrocious historical events or trivialize other social justice issues. Needless to say, depreciating extremely sensitive issues by mentioning the Holocaust, for instance, will be met with outrage and resistance. Between 2003 and 2006, the animal rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) travelled around the world with exhibits entitled "The Holocaust On Your Plate" and "Animal Liberation Project: We Are All Animals." The first one displayed enormous campaign boards with headers such as "To animals, all people are Nazis," that juxtaposed photos showing rows of chickens in battery cages with photos of rows of prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp lying in wooden bunks. The other exhibition displayed massive panels with photos of a range of practices of animal exploitation (circus animals, animals in factory farms)

next to photos of a range of historical examples of violence and exploitation of marginalized groups including slavery and lynching scenes. In both cases, various journalists and a number of leaders from the Jewish and black communities and civil rights organizations sharply denounced the exhibits as disgraceful and morally appalling (Kim, 2011). In both cases, the moral outcry from mainstream media and minority community members led to public apologies from PETA's president. Germany's highest court even banned PETA's Holocaust campaign after the Central Council of Jews in Germany had sued PETA. Holocaust survivor and president of the Central Council, Paul Spiegel, described the campaign as "the most disgusting abuse of the memory of the Holocaust in recent years." Similarly, African Americans and survivors of racial violence in the USA found it utterly repulsive that PETA had used other people's suffering for their "own" cause. Rather than making people rethink the treatment and value of animals, Jewish and Black people, among others, these groups felt that PETA dehumanized them by comparing their group to animals.

To be clear, in the absence of empirical data, it is impossible to tell how effective PETA's campaigns were in increasing awareness about animal suffering. Clearly such campaigns can cause counter-productive outcomes, perhaps leading to long-term grievances towards animal advocates within certain communities. We know from psychological research that such negative cycles are hard to break. People who feel dehumanized by a certain group will, in turn, also show a strong hostile counter-reaction and reciprocal dehumanization toward that group (Hodson et al., this volume; Kteily, Hodson, & Bruneau, 2016). We doubt that this was an intended feature of PETA's campaign strategies. In sum, relying on the parallels between speciesism, racism, sexism, etc. in animal advocacy can be counterproductive, particularly when communicated in ways that could offend your audience.

What is the relevance, therefore, of revealing the connections between different types of prejudices? The discovery that common ideological beliefs underpin different types of biases also implies that implementing interventions that change precisely those common factors responsible for a wide range of prejudices may have a far-reaching impact on a range of intergroup biases. Our findings suggest that techniques aiming at attenuating people's fundamental preferences for group-based dominance and inequality in human intergroup and human-animal relations (i.e., SDO and human supremacy beliefs) have this potential. But again, there is a catch.

When explicitly emphasizing principles of social equality and advocating for social justice and change, the topics of animal rights and veganism seem to belong inherently in the left-wing domain. It is common knowledge, that the majority of vegetarians or animal advocates consider themselves liberal or left-wing, as also demonstrated by a recent Gallup poll conducted in the USA (Reinhart, 2018). Among the 5% of Americans calling themselves vegetarians, there is a staggering ideological divide of 11% vegetarians among American liberals compared to only 2% vegetarians among conservatives. Only focusing on values that are particularly important for left-wing adherents may further increase the political polarization on this topic, or even encourage conservatives to eat more meat and take pride

in it, as it is likely seen as a conservative thing to do. Hence, framing the case for animal rights only in terms of equality values (or egalitarianism) and social change/ justice values likely turns off conservatives, given that these values are either not important to them or contradict their values (see Jost, 2017; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). By being more mindful of the values of people across the political spectrum, and especially those of conservatives, there is potential to reach a broader audience. Indeed, even though political liberals are slightly more sensitive to suffering and harm than conservatives, the principle of "do no harm" appeals to people on both sides of the ideological spectrum (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). Future research can test the impact of different moral framing techniques in animal advocacy messages.

Another method to side-step the ideological polarization of animal rights is to avoid the explicit use of ethically loaded arguments or messages altogether. Many omnivores, no matter their ideological beliefs, care about animals (to some extent), but continue paradoxically and happily with exploiting them, for instance by eating meat. The psychological flexibility of our moral reasoning and behavior is mind-boggling, as discussed in detail in other chapters of this book (e.g., Loughnan & Davies, this volume; Piazza, this volume), meaning that various motivational, social, and external obstacles prevent people from stopping or reducing their meat consumption. Therefore, interventions that do not actively try to convince people about what is right or wrong, but rather aim to change aspects of people's behavior, might prove particularly promising (see also Leenaert, this volume). Indeed, research on cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957, 1962) suggests that after people engage in the desired behavior, they may bring their attitudes in line with their behavior (Olson & Stone, 2005), whereas attempts to change people's attitudes to bring about behavior change is often met with resistance (Knowles & Linn, 2004; Wegener, Petty, Smoak, & Fabrigar, 2004). Here we will focus on one such technique: creating opportunities for positive and meaningful interactions between members of different groups, including those between humans and farm animals.

An extensive body of research has long established that favorable contact between people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds or with different sexual orientations reduces mutual prejudice and improves intergroup relations (see Hodson & Hewstone, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Yet, positive intergroup contact also has wider implications that generalize beyond the immediate intergroup context, as illustrated by what is known as the secondary transfer effect of intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 2009; Tausch et al., 2010). Research conducted on representative samples from divided communities demonstrated for instance that cross-community contact between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland improves attitudes not only towards the other religious community but also towards racial minorities uninvolved in the contact situation (Tausch et al., 2010). Similar observations have been reported for contact between Greek and Turkish Cypriots leading to better attitudes toward mainland Greeks and Turks, and between Black and White American students resulting in improved attitudes towards Hispanics. By stimulating outgroup empathizing and taking the perspective of the opposing

group, positive intergroup contact not only leads to a better mutual understanding, but also generates an open and flexible way of thinking about intergroup relations and about the world (Hodson, Crisp, Meleady, & Earle, 2018; Meleady, Crisp, Dhont, Hopthrow, & Turner, in press). In doing so, it can change general beliefs about intergroup hierarchy and inequality (Dhont, Van Hiel, & Hewstone, 2014). For instance, Belgian high school students going on a one-week trip to Morocco where they socialized with Moroccan students and their family not only showed lower anti-Moroccan prejudice after the school trip, but also lower levels of SDO (Dhont et al., 2014). In another study, conducted in a university housing setting in the USA, first-year students were randomly allocated to share a room with either someone from the same race or someone from a different race at the beginning of the semester (Shook, Hopkins, & Koech, 2016). At the end of the semester, those living in interracial rooms, but not those in same-race rooms, showed a decrease in SDO as well as more favorable attitudes towards both the other racial group (the roommates' group) and toward other groups uninvolved in the housing setting, such as Muslims. These findings thus show that by decreasing the levels of SDO, intergroup contact reduces the ideological underpinnings of a range of intergroup biases, and a core component of speciesism.

The ideas and findings from intergroup contact research can be further developed and applied to human-animal relations. The possible applications are countless, yet largely unexplored. A first series of new research questions could focus on the generalized effects of contact with human outgroups. Can positive contact with human outgroups reduce speciesist attitudes by lowering SDO levels and stimulating cognitive flexibility? Under what conditions does the secondary transfer effect of contact generalize to improved attitudes towards animals? A second research line can delve into the effects of interactions of animal advocates or vegans with meat eaters. Can positive contact with vegetarians and vegans not only reduce prejudice towards vegans and vegetarians but also facilitate changes in dietary habits and reduce the consumption of animal products? What is the role of social networks (e.g., peer groups and parents) in smoothening or hindering attempts to go vegan? And what are the types of interactions that really put off meat eaters? For instance, recent research reveals that those relatively more conservative (vs liberal) are more likely to lapse back to eating meat after attempting to stop, in part because they experience inadequate social support for their endeavors (Hodson & Earle, 2018). Such findings suggest that positive and supportive social interactions with other people, who are pro-animal in nature, can help people achieve their own goals to exploit animals less.

Finally, a third research line can focus on interspecies contact. Plenty of anecdotal evidence tells us that personal contact with animals has strong potential to form a long-lasting interspecies friendship bond, not only with companion animals (Auger & Amiot, 2017) but also with farm animals (see Baur, this volume) and wild animals like bonobos (see Woods & Hare, this volume). Such cross-species friendships engender empathic ties with the animal that likely generalize towards the entire species in ways that increase opposition to the exploitation of the species. Along with the affectionate bond, befriending farm animals can create greater

awareness of their cognitive abilities and sentience, leading to the rejection of harming or killing them (e.g., for meat production). Regular visits to farm sanctuaries provide this possibility, and intervention studies could test the impact of such visits. Of course, getting people to visit farm sanctuaries in the first place and letting them build a connection with animals would be a first challenge to overcome. Schools and youth or community organizations could play a meaningful role here to make this happen. Where direct interspecies contact is difficult to establish, other techniques that rely on the power of human imagination and let people take the perspective of animals may be effective. This can be achieved through the use of virtual reality, media channels and storytelling, techniques that are worth to investigate in empirical research.

Conclusion

Humans live conflicted lives with regard to animals, both loving them (especially as pets or exotic wild animals) but also exploiting them (particularly for food and clothing). Much of this ambivalence remains largely unresolved because of the speciesist attitudes that run hard and deep throughout culture and across time. Animals, relative to humans, are undervalued and thus afforded less consideration and concern. In conjunction with the many rationalizations about "naturalness" and human supremacy, the psychological ambivalence is something that most people learn to live with and not typically resolve. As we have outlined in this chapter, human-animal relations are intimately intertwined with human-human interactions and the overarching justifications for inequality, with one form (e.g., animal exploitation) propping up the other (e.g., sexism, racism) and vice versa. Although we urge caution in implementing interventions that explicitly highlight the similarities between speciesism and prejudice, we recognize that their intersectionality is critical to address and confront. Given the power of intergroup contact, we encourage that interventions to change beliefs or moral thinking about human-animal relations are paired with contact-based experiences that broaden the mind and challenge societal traditions and assumptions.

Note

1 Throughout the chapter, we use "animals" to refer to non-human animals for the sake of brevity, nonetheless recognizing that humans are animals.

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