

Constructions of animal cruelty and the production of power in public discourse: a case study of the live export debate

Brodie Evans

School of Justice, QUT

B10.evans@qut.edu.au



Today's Focus

- Rationale of the Research
- Research Objectives
- Review of the Literature
- Methodological Framework
- Brief Discussion of Findings

“It seems each week shocking new evidence of cruelty emerges from Australia’s live export industry. It’s beyond time to act to end the cruelty.”

Andrew Wilkie Independent Member for Denison



Rationale

Speciesism: “a prejudice or attitude of bias in favour of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those members of other species” – Peter Singer



Research Objectives

- to analyse what knowledge is produced through the problematisation of animal cruelty as a discursive object;
- to investigate how power is being performed through animal cruelty discourse, by identifying intersections with both human-animal and human-human relationships;
- to uncover how different positions are produced and encouraged to recognise moral obligations towards animals and humans through discursive practices on animal cruelty issues.

Research Question: How does knowledge and power impact on, and become produced by, animal cruelty discourses in relation to human-animal and human-human dynamics?

Methodology

Qualitative Research Methodology

- Case Study Design → Live Export
- Analytical Strategy → Discourse Analysis
- Theoretical Framework → Foucault

Data Set

- Documentary transcript
- Interviews with documentary participants
- Hansard transcripts of the first and second readings of the two bills introduced in June
- Public hearing transcripts
- Senate Enquiry Report by the Rural Affairs and Transport References Committee and the submissions
- Government response to the Senate Enquiry Report

Tentative Findings

Production of Knowledge

- Constructions of animal cruelty
- Constructions of responsibility and moral obligations

Production of Power

- Human-animal dynamics
 - Animal rights vs right to food
 - Life vs livelihood
- Human-human dynamics
 - Economic inequalities
 - Geographical inequalities
 - Cultural/Racial/Religious inequalities

Any Questions?

