



PRESS RELEASE

A doctoral thesis demonstrates the effectiveness of moral emotions in increasing respect for non-human animals

'Images that liberate. Moral Shock and Strategic Visual Communication in Animal Liberation Activism' is a doctoral research defended by Laura Fernández at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra

The results show that the moral shock produced by images of violence transforms the way we relate to other animals

The results also support the effectiveness of images of violence in increasing respect for non-human animals

Images of violence help to adopt veganism, according to research conducted with vegans from three European countries

UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics / UPF-CritiCC, 13 December 2021

On December 10, 2021, Laura Fernández defended the doctoral thesis *Images that liberate: Moral Shock and Strategic Visual Communication in Animal Liberation Activism* at the Communication Department of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. The thesis has been supervised by Dr. Núria Almiron (UPF-Center for Animal Ethics and Critical Communication-CRITICC) and has obtained an international mention with the highest qualification, excellent cum laude.

- This research demonstrates the effectiveness of images of exploitation and violence towards non-human animals and the emotional experience of moral shock to abandon speciesist attitudes (discrimination towards individuals of other species).
- The doctoral thesis is based on the experiences of 60 vegans and defenders of non-human animals in Spain, Sweden and Denmark.

- The research collects data on the influence of images and videos of violence to make people adopt veganism and become activists in defence of non-human animals.
- The study proposes a scale for the analysis of visual violence applied to the representation of farmed animals. The scale includes the category of “images of explicit violence” and “images of less explicit violence”, and has the objective of exploring the effectiveness of both types of representations in different contexts and in relation to diverse audiences.
- This doctoral research collects information on how activists for animal liberation use images of violence and the strategy of moral shock in their activism, what dilemmas they face, how they relate to said violent images and how they use other visual strategies to complement the narratives of exploitation and speciesist oppression from a positive perspective and not only related to suffering.

For more information on the research, consult the executive summary available on the UPF-CAE website.

CONTACT

Laura Fernández

Department of Communication, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics, Roc Boronat 138 (08018 Barcelona)

Web: <https://www.upf.edu/web/cae-center-for-animal-ethics>

Email: laura.fernandez@upf.edu / cae@upf.edu

Twitter: https://twitter.com/UPF_CAE

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/upfcae>

