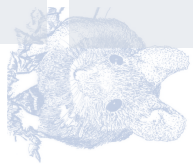


# TOWARDS MICE AND MEN

JIM A.C. EVERETT

Lucius Caviola,  
Julian Savulescu,  
Nadira S. Faber



## 1. BACKGROUND

Philosophers have argued that speciesism - treating beings differently solely on the basis of species membership - is a form of prejudice analogous to racism and sexism. But empirically, how accurate is this?

A key feature of prejudice is that it tends to generalize - someone who is prejudiced in one way is likely to be prejudiced in another way (e.g. Allport, 1954, Akrami et al. 2011, Bergh et al. 2012).

Critically, empirical work suggests prejudice can generalize from humans to animals. People who endorse 'traditional' forms of prejudice like racism and sexism are more likely to endorse speciesism (Caviola, Everett, and Faber, 2018), and this seems to be driven by underlying social dominance (Dhont et al. 2016).

But are people aware of this relationship? Do participants infer prejudicial attitudes and personality traits from a speciesist like they do a racist?

## 2. METHOD

We conducted three studies (2 pre-registered) in which MTurk participants reported their perceptions of a person who either strongly agreed or disagreed with statements from scales developed to assess prejudicial attitudes.

All studies were well-powered (Study 1 N = 275, Study 2 = 410, Study 3 = 403). Studies 2 and 3 were pre-registered.

Each study had a between-subjects design, where participants rated either a speciesist or anti-speciesist, or someone prejudiced in a traditional sense or not (Study 1: racist vs. anti-racist; Study 2: racist vs. anti-racist and sexist vs. anti-sexist; Study 3, homophobe vs. anti-homophobe).

For example, participants in the anti-speciesism condition were told that the other person:

- strongly disagreed (scale point 1) that "Morally, animals always count for less than humans";
- disagreed (scale point 2) that "Humans have the right to use animals however they want to"; and
- strongly agreed (scale point 7) that "Chimpanzees should have basic legal rights".

Participants in the pro-speciesism condition were given the same three statements, but the level of agreement was reversed.

## 4. DISCUSSION

We had participants judge someone who either strongly agreed or disagreed with three statements taken from published measures of prejudice.

In Study 1, we find that participants perceive a (anti-)speciesist and (anti-) racist in the same way, a finding replicated and extended in Study 2 to sexism, and then in Study 3 to homophobia.

Across the three studies, we find almost no differences in perceptions of the prejudiced person based on the type of prejudice: a speciesist is seen just the same way as a racist, a sexist, or a homophobe.

Participants clearly intuit a connection between speciesism and other forms of prejudice, though we expect few would explicitly and consciously concede that speciesist practices like eating meat, experimenting on animals, and visiting circuses are a form of prejudice.

## 3. RESULTS

Across all three studies and the range of dependent measures, results were highly consistent: there was nearly always a difference between the prejudiced and the non-prejudiced target, with the type of prejudice having no significant effect.

Just like racists, sexists, and homophobes, speciesists were:

- Perceived as less moral, warm, and competent
- Rated as less suitable partners in various social roles
- Expected to be more politically conservative & religious
- Thought to be higher in social dominance orientation
- Expected to be unsupportive of 'liberation' movements
- Received less transfers in an economic Dictator Game

