Abstract - Bennett & Archer-Lean

Camp Dogs: Ethical relationships between western discourses and Aboriginal worldview

In this presentation we consider the ways canine existence is often determined by cultural and discursive frames. The ethical considerations of this positioning are no more acute than with the management of dogs within remote and regional Aboriginal communities. Canines have always been integral to Aboriginal social, family, and environmental relationships; however, colonisation brought fundamental changes to these established relationships, with ramifications that have prompted welfare concerns about camp dog populations. We have reviewed existing research discourses and epistemological positioning of the supposed camp dog problem, veterinarian, public health and others. Our work surveys current literature to identify ways forward in facilitating Aboriginal self-determining of camp dog interactions in communities. The work is both anticolonial and focused on relational multispecies justice. From here we have begun interviewing some of the key stakeholders operating at the coal face of animal management in remote and regional Aboriginal communities to see what people need on the ground for effective, anticolonial and ethical practice.

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