

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

ABOUT

The Centre for the Study of Social and Political Movements was established in 1992, and since then has helped the University of Kent gain wider recognition as a leading institution in the study of social and political movements in the UK. The Centre has attracted research council, European Union, and charitable foundation funding, and collaborated with international partners on major funding projects. Former staff members and external associates include Professors Mario Diani, Frank Furedi, Dieter Rucht, and Clare Saunders.

Today, the Centre continues to attract graduate students and international visitors, and facilitate the development of collaborative research. Recent and ongoing research undertaken by members includes studies of Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, veganism and animal rights.

The Centre takes a methodologically pluralistic and interdisciplinary approach, embracing any topic relevant to the study of social and political movements. If you have any inquiries about Centre events or activities, or are interested in applying for our PhD programme, please contact Dr Alexander Hensby or Dr Corey Wrenn.

<https://research.kent.ac.uk/social-political-movements/>

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SUBMISSIONS

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Spring 2021

Dear colleagues,

Things have been a bit quiet in the center this year as we've been teaching online and unable to meet in person. That said, social movements have not been phased by the pandemic. In the US, Black Lives Matter protests trudge on, fueled by the recent conviction of George Floyd's murder on April 20th and the police killing of 16 year old Ma'Khia Bryant in Ohio that same day. Meanwhile, the killing of Kent resident Sarah Everard (also by a police officer) spurred considerable protest in the London area. In Canterbury, a feminist art installation raising awareness to men's street harassment was installed (and can still be viewed) along the Stour River Walk toward the Sainsburys grocery store. Also in late April, a group of student demonstrators rallied for animal rights on the High Street. "Cut the Fug" bicycle activists with Extinction Rebellion continue to hold demonstrations across the city as well.

As for us, our work will have to remain online. This summer the University of Kent will be hosting the first Animal Advocacy Conference bringing together activists and academics from the world over. The International Association of Vegan Sociologists will also be hosting its 2nd annual meeting later in the year. The Centre also plans to offer a "Sustainable Shopping in Canterbury" panel this summer. It will feature both UG and PG students who will chat about the capitalist politics of environmentalism and community resistance.

Yours in solidarity,

Corey Wrenn



MEDIA

Sociology & Animals Podcast

As Past-Chair of the Animals & Society Section of the American Sociological Association, **Corey Wrenn** has released new episodes of Season 2 of Sociology & Animals Podcast, which is available to stream on vegansociology.com.

Sentientist Conversations Podcast

In this episode of *Sentientist Conversations*, **Kristof Dhont** discusses: "what's real?" & "what matters?" Sentientism is "evidence, reason & compassion for all sentient beings." The psychology of human-animal relations is discussed, as are the links between sexism, racism & speciesism. The psychology of behavior change is also considered.

Earlier in the year, **Corey Wrenn** also joined the show to discuss vegan politics.

Sentient Media

On social media, people are using photos of animal abuse to delegitimize Black Lives Matter protests. But the credibility of these claims is questionable at best. In this essay by Christian Sebastian McJettters, **Corey Wrenn** is quoted on the politicization of nonhumans by the right.

NEW RESEARCH

Dr Kristof Dhont

Dhont, K., Piazza, J., & Hodson, G (in press). The role of meat appetite in willfully disregarding factory farming as a pandemic catalyst risk. **Appetite**.

Krings, V., Dhont, K., & Salmen, A. (in press). The Moral Divide between High- and Low-Status Animals: The Role of Human Supremacy Beliefs. **Anthrozoos**.

Leach, S., Sutton, R., Dhont, K., & Douglas, K. (2021). When is it wrong to eat animals? The relevance of different animal traits and behaviours. **European Journal of Social Psychology**, 51, 113-123.

Leach, S., Sutton, R., Douglas, K., & Dhont, K. (2021). The 'me' in meat: Does affirming the self make eating animals seem more morally wrong? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 95, 104135. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104135

Salmen, A., & Dhont, K. (2020). Hostile and benevolent sexism: The differential roles of human supremacy beliefs, women's connection to nature, and the dehumanization of women. **Group Processes & Intergroup Relations**. Advanced online publication.

Dr Alex Hensby

Forthcoming paper at the Memory Studies Association Conference (July 5-9)

Heritage activism in the American South: slavery re-enactments as mnemonic restitution

This paper analyses the use of slavery re-enactments as a form of 'heritage activism' by African American community groups in the Deep South. Drawing on the work of Tillet (2012), I argue that heritage activism offers the potential for 'mnemonic restitution' in response to the 'civic estrangement' experienced by African Americans since the abolition of slavery. In so doing, it provides a way of countering the dehumanisation of African Americans inherent in antebellum cultural narratives. This research focuses on small-scale African American heritage groups operating at two key historical sites: the Forks of the Road in Natchez, Mississippi; and the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Using a critical race perspective, I suggest that for the performers involved, the re-enactments provide a vehicle for 'psychic preservation', and the opportunity to 'speak back' in response to the depleting effects of everyday racism (Tate, 1997; Soloranzo and Yosso, 2002). Through their performance and reception, re-enactments can help to temporarily rematerialize an African American history otherwise rendered invisible by a memorial culture dominated by Civil War sites and artefacts, and the racialized curation of plantation houses. However, practitioners also face the risk that their activities might facilitate an appropriative or voyeuristic engagement with black historical suffering. Drawing on interviews with heritage activists, this paper will thus explore the empowering opportunities and ethical challenges that African American community groups face in employing re-enactments to construct counter-histories of racism and slavery.

Dr Ellie Jupp

Dr Jupp has been researching on mutual aid under Covid, which will be included in her book forthcoming with Bristol University Press on **'The Politics of Everyday Life: activism and local action in times of crisis'** (forthcoming 2021).

Dr Corey Wrenn

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[What is Vegan Sociology?](#)" *Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage Seminar Series*. Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Online. April 9.

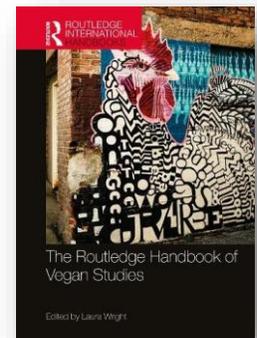
Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Vegan Geographies in Ireland](#)." Pp. 394-406, in **The Routledge Handbook of Vegan Studies**, edited by L. Wright. London: Routledge.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Beehives on the Border: Liminal Humans and Other Animals at Skellig Michael](#)." *Irish Journal of Sociology*. Online first. DOI: 10.1177/0791603521999957.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Animals and Society: A Canterbury Case Study](#)." University of Kent, SSPSSR Applicant Day. Online. March 20.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Irish Animal Rights](#)." *Facebook author's page*. Online. March 17.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "Peer-Reviewing in Critical Animal Studies." *International Association of Vegan Sociologists* in conjunction with the *American Sociological Association, Australian Sociological Association,*



British Sociological Association, Canadian Sociological Association, and Polish Sociological Association. Online. March 8.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Our Relationship with Our Current Food System.](#)" *Jameson Humane Workshop*. Online. February 17.

Wrenn, C. L. 2021. "[Digital Networking from the Margins.](#)" *Animals and Society Section of the American Sociological Association*. Online. January 15.

British Sociological Association Magazine

The CSSPM and the work of several CSSPM members including Alex Hensby, Joy Zhang, Carolyn Pedwell, and Corey Wrenn was featured in the latest issue of the BSA's *Network*.



International vegan group is launched

University of Kent: The first conference of the International Association of Vegan Sociologists was held online last year, with 100 people in North America, Europe and Australia attending sessions.

The association, founded by Dr Corey Wrenn last May, will hold its annual conference this year in October on the theme of 'The vegan promise'.

Dr Wrenn has also launched a 'Sociology and animals' podcast series, which interviews researchers working in the field, and the *Student Journal of Vegan Sociology*, a student-centred publication which calls for new ways of human and animal interactions.

In other news from the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, Dr David Garbin organised a series of webinars bringing together sociologists, anthropologists, visual artists, urban planners and engineering scientists as part of his two-year project, 'Pneumacity'. This explores the urban ecology and economy of informal roadside tyre waste infrastructure in mega-city Lagos in Nigeria and is run with the universities of York, Lagos, Toronto and Mohamed VI in Morocco.

Dr Alexander Hensby and Dr Barbara Adewumi began a longitudinal study of 27 high-potential undergraduates from widening participation backgrounds, to identify potential barriers to belonging among BAME students and BTEC entrants.

The Centre for the Study of Social and Political Movements hosted a panel discussion, 'Activism amidst Covid-19', featuring speakers from the UK and US.

Dr Joy Zhang recorded a documentary on 'Science denial in a "post-truth" era' with Lee McIntyre, of Boston University, for the Aspen Institute.

Books written by members of the school will be published later this year. Dr Carolyn Pedwell's *Revolutionary Routines: The Habits of Social Transformation* argues that seemingly minor everyday habits are the key to meaningful change, drawing on the politics of Trumpism and Brexit, nudge theory, social media and Black Lives Matter.

Dr Zhang's book, *The Elephant and the Dragon in Contemporary Life Sciences*, written with Dr Saheli Datta Burton, illuminates a de-colonised vision of science governance and demonstrates how key global regulatory challenges are reflected in, rather than created by, China and India's rapid development.

Dr Corey Wrenn

Magazine of the British Sociological Association, Spring 2021 [Network](#)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Keira Pratt-Boyden

I'm in my final year of a doctorate in Social Anthropology at SAC. Among other things, my thesis looks at the everyday philosophies and practices of caring 'otherwise' among mental health activists who call themselves 'service evaders' in London. The 'otherwise' is a term borrowed from recent anthropological work on social movements with prefigurations of care at their core (e.g. Raschig 2016; Zigon 2018; Cubellis 2020). For activists, this requires being differently in the world in a way that promotes wellbeing. Caring 'otherwise' involves forms seeking alternative possibilities.

Mental Health Activism is part of a movement which broadly (re)configures care through cultivating certain ways of being and types of relationship, in place of biomedical spaces and (un)caring relationships. Many of those involved in 'service evading' groups share a dream that *another* mental healthcare is possible, and necessary. Most individuals have experiences of 'treatment as usual' which has been (in their own words) iatrogenic. In these contexts, receiving standardised NHS treatments for severe or enduring distress made the recipient feel worse and often took them on a path to explore alternatives, some through activism. For many, especially those who have experienced forced treatment such as drugging, or involuntary hospitalisation, their individual journeys have involved (re)finding their

voices, identities and community. Feeling tainted or ostracised from experiences both before and during treatment, they come together to 'repair' [Mattingly 2017].



I draw from phenomenological approaches such as Zigon's conceptualisation of 'disclosive freedom' (2019) to examine activists' collective responses to mental distress, attending to the ways in which actors build alternative healing experiences within certain restrictive environments. Caring otherwise is central to politics and the maintenance of daily needs and involves an affective dimension that many activists perceive to be missing in clinical approaches. Examples of caring 'otherwise' include creating spaces for listening, refraining from judgment or intervention, attuning toward other's needs, cultivating flexibility, acceptance and disorder and tolerating uncertainty.



The World is on Fire: Animal Agriculture, Climate Change, and the Path Forward

On March 25th, we were honored to host Dr Vasile Stănescu from Mercer University. He gave an impassioned talk to an audience of 80 on the politics of climate change, the silence on animal agriculture's contribution to the environmental crisis, and major tactical failings of the animal rights movement.

[Watch here >>](#)

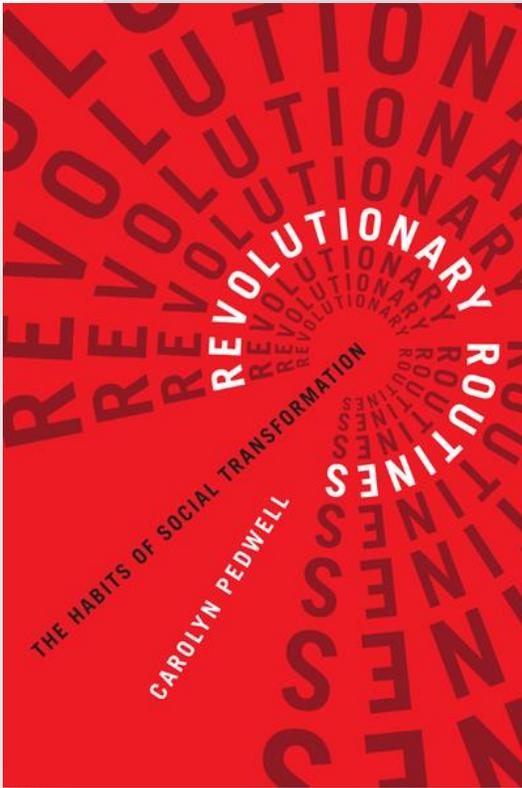
ABSTRACT

In 2006, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), issued a report titled "Livestock's Long Shadow," concluding that animal farming presents a "major threat to the environment" with such "deep and wide-ranging" impacts that it should rank as the leading focus for environmental policy. Recently, these stakes were raised again when the UN determined that the world has only fourteen years to act to prevent catastrophic effects due to climate change. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity estimates as high as 150 species go extinct each day; the UN determined animal agriculture represents the single largest cause of habit loss, species extinction, and biodiversity loss. Most importantly, exponentially more animals are killed, in worse conditions, every year: My first publication in critical animal studies, entitled "Green Eggs and Ham: The Myth of Sustainable Meat and The Danger of the Local" was published in 2010; at that time, the world raised and killed approximately 60 billion land animals each year. Today it is 80 billion; the UN estimates by 2050, the number will exceed 120 billion. **The world is on fire.**

The response by many, including both advocates for animal agriculture and animal rights, has been three main strategies:

- 1) Attempts to move toward local, humane, and free-range animal farming based on, in part, a belief that such moves will positively affect the environment
- 2) The rise of so-called "in vitro" meat which, like claims about humane meat, will also offset the environmental effects of animal agriculture
- 3) Market based moves to sell new meat substitutes, such as Burger King's decision to sell the Impossible Whopper.

However, in reality none of these proposed solutions will work. Indeed, most – if not all – will in reality make the environmental effects of animal agriculture worse. Instead, I argue, we need a social justice based approach to animal advocacy, based on directly confronting speciesism and anthropocentrism, that seeks to build solidarity between animal rights and other social justice movements to affect broad based change. We are running out of time. To paraphrase the famous maxim attributed to Marx: As scholars, we no longer possess the luxury to only understand the world; we have to change it.



Revolutionary: The Habits of Social Transformation

A new book by SSPSSR Reader in Cultural Studies, Dr Carolyn Pedwell, critically examines the logics of habit and the nature of social change, power, and progressive politics.

Although we tend to associate social transformation with major events, historical turning points, or revolutionary upheaval, *Revolutionary Routines* argues that seemingly minor everyday habits are the key to meaningful change.

Through its account of influential socio-political processes - such as the resurgence of fascism and white supremacy, the crafting of new technologies of governance, and the operation of digital media and algorithms - this book rethinks not only how change works, but also what counts as change. Drawing examples from the affective politics of Trumpism and Brexit, nudge theory and behaviour change, social media and the international refugee crisis, and the networked activism of Occupy and Black Lives Matter, Carolyn Pedwell argues that minor gestures may be as significant as major happenings, revealing the powerful potential in our ability to remake shared habits and imaginatively reinhabit everyday life.

Revolutionary Routines offers a new understanding of the logics of habit and the nature of social change, power, and progressive politics, illustrating diverse forms of consciousness and co-operation through which political solidarities might take shape.

Revolutionary Routines: The Habits of Social Transformation (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Research presentations of the [PHAIR Society](#)

- **April 29, 4pm UK time:** Alina Salmen – **Beef it up! How masculinity distorts perceptions of vegan men and meatless meats**
- **May 27, 4pm UK time:** Catherine Forestell – **Reducing Omnivores' Desire and Intentions to Eat Meat**

Anyone who would like to attend the talks, can get in touch with Kristof Dhont (k.dhont@Kent.ac.uk) and will be added to the email list.

May 10, 6pm UK time. **Kristof Dhont** will appear as guest panelist on [The Animal Rights Show](#). WHERE: Roger Yates' Youtube Channel.

