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Vegaphobia. Emancipation and institutional change for an overlooked diversity dimension

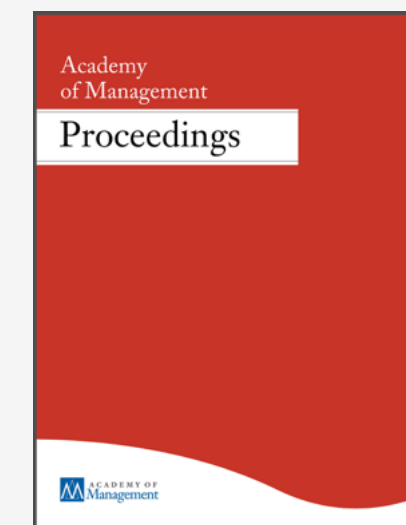
Giuseppe Delmestri

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Abstract

Research in psychology, sociology and the humanities has found that ethical vegans are stigmatized and subject to discrimination for their endorsement of animal rights and the refusal of speciesism. Speciesism, analogically derived from racism, denotes the dominant ideology that it is morally justifiable to consider humans as more significant than non-humans on the only ground of species membership. Stigmatization of vegans has been found to be higher than that of other marginalized minority groups. Yet, the discrimination of vegans has largely been overlooked in diversity management and critical management discourse both in academia and in practice. This is unfortunate not only for vegans, whose emancipation this text is aimed to contribute, but also because the legitimization of veganism could contribute to reducing excessive meat consumption, which is considered harmful for both human health and environmental sustainability. Theoretically, vegaphobia is an intersectional problem connected to masculinity, gender, race and gender identity issues. Due to its intersectional and deeply institutionalized nature, and the extreme widespread stigmatization of veganism, the issues posed by vegaphobia offer important avenues for developing both the literature on the construction and reproduction of identity categories, and, through thought experiments, knowledge on symbolic and material institutional work.

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Academy of Management
100 Summit Lake Drive, Suite 110
Valhalla, NY 10595, USA
Phone: +1 (914) 326-1800
Fax: +1 (914) 326-1900