

# The 'Making The Link' Study



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There is now a volume of evidence identifying the 'LINK' between animal abuse and aggression toward humans including violence. This connection between animal abuse and human aggression has been documented by major bodies globally, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Federal Government. In Australia, the link is accepted by the police force, and by government agencies (e.g., <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/pets/care-and-welfare/animals-and-people/the-link-between-animal-abuse-and-human-violence>). Indeed, it is accepted by professionals and scientists alike that mistreating animals is not an isolated act but part of a constellation of antisocial behaviours.

Children who are cruel to animals are more likely to bully other children. Adults who are cruel to animals are more likely to commit other crimes, particularly violent crimes including partner or child abuse. At the more extreme end of the antisocial behaviour continuum, FBI work has shown that animal cruelty is a prominent behaviour in the profiles of violent criminals such as serial and mass murderers.

It is also known that one of the strongest pathways of aggression development is through the observation or witnessing of such behaviour. Another is through being a victim of the behaviour.

Also of note is the strong finding that status diminishment of a sub-group encourages aggression. It follows then that a country with a disproportionate number of animals on its streets provides a potential 'aggression displacement' facility. When exacerbated by higher levels of domestic abuse and status diminishment of the animal sub-group, aggression enhancement is facilitated.

- A large body of research connects animal abuse with inter-human crime and aggression against people and property.
- The 'Making the Link Study' program conducted in Bistrita, Romania has evidenced significant and disproportionate levels of abuse against animals and individuals with an attendant impact on society.
- Availability of significant numbers of socially devalued animals on the streets provides a 'displaced aggression' practice facility encouraging abusive activity against humans. Given that a strong means of developing aggression is through witnessing it, it is of particular concern that animal abuse is witnessed so readily in Romania by adults and children alike.

- World experts in this domain have documented the link in many published articles and books. With its high prevalence of human and animal abuse, Romanian society provides extremely strong support for this link and is a case screaming for intervention to decrease animal abuse which can only help to decrease human aggression and violence making it a safer place for all.
- EU has 'shared competence' to assist Romania to achieve a humane neutering program thereby removing an aggression training facility from the abuse cycle.
- Reduced *affective empathy* has been identified as a factor exhibited by abusers. Education programs are suggested, promoting humane animal awareness with special focus on enhancing affective empathy.

From J. Levin and A. Arluke in 'The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence' ed Andrew Linzey:

***"Inflicting injury, suffering or death on an animal, absent of provocation or hostility, gives an individual tremendous psychological pleasure, the malicious youngster rehearses his sadistic attacks - perhaps on animals, perhaps on other people, perhaps on both - and continues into his adult years to perpetrate the same sorts of sadistic acts on human beings. His attacks on animals are serious and personal. He chooses 'socially valued or culturally humanized animals - for example dogs and cats - against which to carry out his sadistic aims but he is likely to repeat his abusive behaviour on a variety of animals.***

***If he later finds a socially acceptable means of compensating for his sense of powerlessness, then he might very well escape the grip of violence perpetrated against humans. If not, his early experience with animal cruelty may become a training ground for later committing assaults, rape, and even murder."***

The 'Making the Link Study' enacted in Romania with a control comparative group in Berlin, Germany has found that extensive abuse of animals is enacted by those with aggression against people and society. As many as 86.3 % of the research group in Romania witnessed animal abuse in public places. Abuse is cyclical with domestic violence, sexual abuse and practice of animal abuse providing a cycle of violence with some inevitability of being copied and enacted by the next generation. Whilst domestic violence is being addressed, animal abuse is NOT. It is inevitable then that the domestic violence is only temporarily being addressed since the continuation of animal abuse will interfere with any long-term success of dealing with domestic violence.

It is reasoned that under EU competence, stray animal issues are the responsibility of Member States. We would reason that not only does this act as an aggression learning facility but enhances anti-social criminal and violence which is also freely exportable. It is suggested that a requirement exists to minimise the opportunity for aggression to be practised. This, sensibly and humanely, calls for a program to achieve this. The currently practised policy under Law 258/2013, encourages a killing program to achieve 'eradication'. Such practice is opposed by major organisations such as WHO and encourages the breaking of Treaties and Conventions in its application. Such diminishment of the status of the animals promotes aggressive practices. Similarly, diminishment of affective empathy was found to be a factor exhibited by abusers. It would be suggested that education programs informing about animal management and awareness with special emphasis on enhancing affective empathy, would be instrumental in reducing abuse.

Because of the impact in the 'human domain' caused by the availability and encouraged enactment of aggressive violence, it is recommended that the issue be addressed under the Treaty of Lisbon where 'shared competence' invites EU involvement if the 'scale' and 'effects' warrant this. It is self-evident that national government has failed or neglected efforts to achieve a humane number reduction. It is not surprising, given the high prevalence of aggression in Romania, that government officials have not been excluded from the aggressive population or culture. Effective intervention may therefore only be instituted in collaboration with external avenues, who have not also adopted the culture of aggression so evident in Romania. Thus, given recent changes, it may be more amenable to invite EU-support in achieving a humane neutering program, critically including 'owned dogs'.

Currently an article is being prepared by a number of world leading Professors in this domain. It is based on the results of the 'Making the Link Study' in Romania and will identify the severe ramifications for a human society if these issues are not urgently addressed. Indeed, these ramifications are already being observed in several locations where abuse and human aggression are both of extremely high prevalence. Upon publication of the paper, the results will be presented at a Press Conference with European media invited.

For and on behalf of **The 'Making the Link' Study Group Ltd**

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**For further information, please see:**

[The 'Making the Link' Website](#)

['The Invisible Rape of Europe'](#)

['Suffering in Romania' – All Connected](#)