

**ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THE ETHICS OF MULTISPECIES
CO-LIVING: EVERYDAY LIFE OF A VEGAN FARM**

by
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**ANIMAL RIGHTS AND THE ETHICS OF MULTISPECIES
CO-LIVING: EVERYDAY LIFE OF A VEGAN FARM**

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines multispecies co-living at a vegan farm established in İzmir, Turkey. It explores this locally rooted initiative's potential for reimagining a non-speciesist way of living while investigating how a rights-based approach is enacted in practice. It reads the formation of interspecies relations through an ethnographic lens embedded in everyday life and attuned to sensory experiences. Drawing on veganism and animal rights, it builds the theoretical framework to explore the rights-based motivations underpinning such an initiative. Focusing primarily on interactions between chickens and humans but also considering the relations between many other species living on the farm, the thesis highlights the significance of sensory engagement in ethically informed, care-based relationships. By examining these interactions through everyday routines, it considers how non-speciesist knowledge production and dissemination occur. Rather than portraying the farm as a place without challenges or conflicts, the study attends to the complex realities of co-living—including illness, death, and conflict—arguing that such experiences are integral to building interspecies communities. It further contends that these spaces function as sites of knowledge-making, community-building, and resistance—both materially and politically—against systemic animal exploitation, while also providing practical insight into how ethical multispecies cohabitation can be implemented in everyday life.

ÖZET

HAYVAN HAKLARI VE ÇOK-TÜRLÜ BİR ARADA YAŞAMIN ETİĞİ: VEGAN BİR ÇİFTLİKTE GÜNDELİK HAYAT

HANDE ÇİÇEK

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Anahtar Kelimeler: çok-türlü bir-arada-yaşam, veganlık, hayvan hakları, çok-türlü etnografi, türler-arası bakım

Bu tez, İzmir’de kurulan bir vegan çiftlikte türler-arası bir-arada-yaşamı incelemektedir. Bu yerel inisiyatifin, türcü olmayan bir yaşam biçimini yeniden tahayyül etme potansiyelini araştırırken, hak temelli bir yaklaşımın pratikte nasıl hayata geçirildiğini tartışmaktadır. Türlerarası ilişkilerin oluşumunu, gündelik hayata gömülü ve duyuşal deneyimlere duyarlı bir etnografik mercek aracılığıyla gözlemlemektedir. Veganlık ve hayvan haklarından yararlanarak bir teorik çerçeve inşa ederken, bu tür bir inisiyatifi yönlendiren hak temelli motivasyonları anlatmaktadır. Çoğunlukla tavuklar ve insanlar arasındaki etkileşimlere odaklanmakla birlikte, çiftlikte yaşayan diğer birçok tür arasındaki ilişkileri de göz önünde bulunduran tez, etik temelli, özenli ilişkilerde duyuşal etkileşimin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu etkileşimleri gündelik rutinler üzerinden inceleyerek, türcü olmayan bilgi üretimi ve paylaşımının nasıl gerçekleştiğini ele almaktadır. Çiftliği zorlukların ve çatışmaların olmadığı bir alan olarak tasvir etmek yerine, bu çalışma, birlikte yaşamın—hastalık, ölüm ve çatışma dahil—karmaşık gerçekliklerine odaklanmaktadır ve bu deneyimlerin türlerarası toplulukların inşası için vazgeçilmez olduğunu savunmaktadır. Ayrıca, bu alanların hem maddi hem de politik olarak sistematik hayvan sömürüsüne karşı bilgi üretimi, topluluk inşası ve direniş mekanları olarak işlev gördüğünü ve etik türlerarası bir arada yaşamın gündelik hayatta nasıl uygulanabileceğine dair pratik içgörüler sunduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

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*To all animals whose lives
have been, and continue to be, exploited and devalued*

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1. INTRODUCTION

"...good multispecies relations are relations of good care. Relations of good care are those within which an individual's needs are recognized and met such that she can flourish. These relations are a starting point to think about common life in a multispecies society..."

– *What Are Good Multispecies Relations?: An Analysis Through the Concept of Caring Relations*, Maude Ouellette-Dubé (2020)

My involvement with writing on the ethics of multispecies co-living began through thinking about what a good multispecies relation entails, just like Ouellette-Dubé puts it. I wanted to explore how veganism intersects with the practice of multispecies co-living, as an ethical stance that has helped me consider animals as my equals with the right to live and thrive. This study explores how humans and animals live together on a Vegan Farm as a space deeply grounded in vegan ethics. In a world dominated by speciesism, vegan practices of multispecies co-living have much to offer when it comes to *becoming with* animals. The thesis reflects on the meaning of such micro-political practices in everyday life to imagine and co-build rights-based spaces for living with other species, whose exploitation is normalized.

As of today, 11th of July 2025, according to Animal Clock (2025), nearly 30 billion animals have been killed for food in the United States for the year. In the U.S. alone, 105,480 animals are slaughtered every minute and 1,758 animals every second, just to be eaten by humans. It is estimated that at least 192.1 million animals were used for scientific research in 2015 (Cruelty Free International 2025). More than just staggering figures, these numbers reveal how the prevalence of speciesism is costing animals their lives. Anthropocentrism and speciesism penetrate every mundane interaction between humans and non-human animals, while structural systems perpetuate animal cruelty.

Pervasive animal abuse, killing, and experimentation for human demands urge us to consider non-human animals ethically for their intrinsic values. As sentient beings, non-human animals have an interest in living. They are beings with preferences, dislikes, and they can feel happy, sad, angry, and disappointed. Because of their interests in life and their sentience, they have rights, just as humans do. The most fundamental of these rights is the recognition that animals must no longer be treated as property, but as individuals with intrinsic value. Veganism suggests that our minimum responsibility toward them is to stop using them as commodities. From verbal language to food choices, as humans, we need to reconsider our relations with more-than-human worlds ethically and politically.

Building on this ethical obligation, veganism seeks to restore animals' rights to life by refusing to treat them as property (Francione 2020). In doing so, it aims to build a vegan future where speciesism no longer persists, and all species are granted an equal right to live. Vegans reject speciesism in all forms, including language, and refrain from eating, wearing, or using animals for their own benefit. They also develop practices that explore how ethical interspecies cohabitation can be made possible (Tavella 2025). One such practice is to generate vegan co-living spaces, where humans and other animals can form non-exploitative forms of togetherness. This thesis focuses on a Vegan Farm located in İzmir, Turkey, as such a living space and examines what this locally rooted initiative may offer to animals, through the lens of everyday life, in envisioning a vegan future, advancing animal rights, and fostering interspecies cohabitation. I conceptualize Vegan Farm as both a space and a practice in terms of effectuating human and non-human-animal relations. Prioritizing non-exploitative and non-hierarchical relations between different species, I consider the potential of the vegan farm practice for animal rights discourses and activism through multi-sensorial embodied experiences in a multispecies space. Being the first and only Vegan Farm, and as an animal sanctuary for chickens in Turkey, a study on this space can contribute to discussions about our ethical relations and co-living with non-human animals.

Sanctuaries are facilities providing care and rehabilitation for rescued animals from human exploitation. They house companion animals, farmed animals, primates, and many other species (Abrell 2019). However, sanctuaries can be categorized as vegan or non-vegan. In non-vegan sanctuaries, a speciesist mindset can still prevail in which animals' property status is not challenged; rather, the living conditions of the animals are to be "bettered" with a welfarist outlook. On the other hand, vegan place-making indicates replacing this hierarchical social structure, considering animals as agents of change (Tavella 2025). Vegan Farm is such a space that hosts a non-human animal community, mainly chickens, as well as two human inhabitants.

The decision to base this study on a space where chickens make up the majority is grounded in the ethical and political urgency of addressing their systemic exploitation, as well as other formerly farmed animals. From a human-centered perspective, chickens, alongside marine animals, are often regarded as culturally insignificant and are among the most industrially abused and numerically slaughtered animals in animal agriculture. In the United States alone, 3,797,000,000 fish and 8,127,632,113 chickens are killed annually (Animal Clock 2025). This absurd number of fatalities and the social (non) meaning of those lives for humans requires a radical mindset to consider an alternative way of communicating with animals.

It is precisely this search for alternatives that guides my research questions, which center around the alternative ways of togetherness and ways of communication between chickens, and, in general, farm animals, and humans in a vegan space. How do different species living in there interact with each other, show affection and care for one another, change, and challenge the understandings of shelter, disease, and death, and constitute the space in which they are interacting? How are all these practiced in a space without exploitation, and what can we understand from living with rescued chickens in terms of becoming with different species? How can one reflect on the effects of being a ‘rescued animal’ where the non-human subjects come from places where they were exploited? How can one analyze these as an activist ethnographer, and what meaning do sanctuaries have for the animal rights movement? I aim to consider the processes of animals’ “journeys” to the vegan farm and its aftermath to reflect on how non-human agency is considered and sustained within a vegan space.

Ultimately, Vegan Farm, as well as other vegan multispecies efforts for community and space-building, function as sites of resistance where human–animal relations are sustained through embodied care, mutual respect, and the rejection of conventional speciesist practices. These initiatives are grounded not only in the physical spaces they inhabit, spaces reclaimed from dominant systems of oppression where the expected norms of interspecies relations are maintained mainly through exploitation, but also in practical, solidarity-based approaches that seek to dismantle speciesist structures from within. Importantly, this is not a romanticized vision; rather, it acknowledges the presence of conflict, the challenges posed by past traumas, and the emotional labor required to build genuinely inclusive interspecies communities.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Anthropocentrism, Speciesism, and Critical Animal Studies

Since the emergence and expansion of environmental ethics in the 1970s, there have been discussions about the value of the non-human environment, which are mainly divided into anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives. Anthropocentrism is a human-centered theory where humans assigned an intrinsic value, whereas non-humans' value is measured only by their capacity to provide for humans. An anthropocentric ecological take prioritizes this human subject over non-human others and advocates environmental justice based on protecting and promoting the well-being of humans (Taylor 2011). This human subject, rather than referring to the universal state of the human, is a product of certain ideologies, particularly those that draw sharp boundaries between nature and culture, mind and body, male and female. Within these frameworks, as Plumwood (2002) argues, nature is feminized and subordinated, while the human is constructed as a rational, autonomous, and dominant subject, typically male, white, and Western. This construction legitimizes the domination of nature and reinforces multiple hierarchies, including gender and race, by associating them with the “natural” and thus the inferior. The human subject is known for its autonomy and detachment from nature ‘out there’, divided into superior and inferior parts of the ‘animal body and the animating mind’ (McCance 2012). This Cartesian dualism with its anthropocentric provisions is challenged by many scholars who point out the inadequacy of anthropocentrism and call for ecocentrism as a solution (Kopnina et al. 2018; Quinn, Castéra, and Clément 2016; Rolston 2020). Ecocentrism values ecosystems and their interconnected processes as inherently important, prioritizing the health of the whole planet over individual human desires or needs (Gray, Whyte, and Curry 2018).

A justice-oriented vision for ecology contains more-than-human entanglements as part of this ecocentrism. That means justice for ecosystems must be sought through the premise that all species and ecosystems have their inherent value and interests beyond anthropocentric ideals (Taylor et al. 2020). Wolfe (2010), problematizing anthropocentric ideals of who can be the subject of moral consideration, points to the unexamined status of speciesism within cultural studies, looking at the field's success in covering the issues of racism, sexism, and classism. As a framework and ideology overlapping with and promoting anthropocentric ideals, speciesism can be defined as the “unjustified disadvantageous consideration or treatment of those who are not classified as belonging to a certain species” (Horta 2010, 243). It is generally

rooted and justified by the perception of discontinuities between human/non-human, nature/culture, and body/mind. In this way, humans are considered superior to the non-human animal ‘other’ in their ability to think, reason, speak, and make moral judgments. Singer (2009) explains how some speciesist grounds, like racism and sexism, are based on favoring one’s own ‘group’ in which they share biological commonality, and that this cannot entitle us to be morally superior. Following the notion that humans are morally superior because of their cognitive abilities also implies that humans with mental conditions are morally inferior. Thus, speciesism perpetuates species discrimination by identifying certain capacities of humans as antecedent to moral value.

While speciesism constructs human and non-human subjects by negation of each other, it ensures the superiority of humans through it. Ideologically, historically, and practically, the concept of “human” rests on and is dependent upon non-humanity (Birke and Holmberg 2018). Anthropocentric humanism, with human exceptionalism on moral consideration based on the potential ‘perfection’ and ‘dignity’ of humans, is the consequence of the production of subjectivities established through this negation of others (Weitzenfeld and Joy 2014). This ontological premise mostly entails the domination over more-than-human worlds through their construction as uncivilized, pure, untouched, or wild. Anthropocentrism considers this humanistic culture as progressive and civilized through its ‘capture’ of and ‘rule’ over nature. This approach reduces the non-human animal, as part of ‘the nature’, to a ‘wild’ and ‘untamed’ body, and it establishes and maintains power through those binaries. Further, it homogenizes all intra-categories with the assumption of the animal as referring to all non-human animals.

Indeed, various scholars in the history of ethics, with this homogenic assumption on mind, have argued for non-responsibility towards animals, and they have attributed this to the claims that animals are not sentient beings, or, as Descartes famously argues, that they are mere non-sentient automata working only with physical mechanisms and lacking consciousness (Harrison 1992). Conceptualizing animals as monotypic machines, as automata, not only differentiates them from humans but also tries to legitimize human domination over animals based on these differences. Accordingly, humans, in their capacity to mindfully reflect on their goals, are deemed worthy of exploiting other species for their interests.

A more heterogeneous understanding of the social sphere, which encompasses more-than-human beings as actors, is necessary to consider and challenge the constructed binaries among different species. This requires a concept of the social as a hybrid ‘association’ between ‘beings’ (Latour 2007). Following this, humans are emergent with other species and nature. Haraway says, “If we appreciate the foolishness of

human exceptionalism, then we know that becoming is always becoming *with*, in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake” (Haraway 2010, 244). Acknowledging the implications of this *becoming with*, in turn, gives us a way to interpret critically the relations between different species and to re-evaluate the concept of species altogether (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Such perspectives for the social sphere have been increasing within social sciences and humanities in the last fifty years. Methods of new materialism, posthumanism, animal studies, actor-network theory, and more-than-human studies are examples of these emergent perspectives. Despite their efforts to account for more-than-human subjectivities, however, respective studies might still maintain exploitative practices where scholars do not politically and ethically engage with animals’ use as properties.

Critical Animal Studies (CAS) has emerged through such criticisms of apolitical or politically speciesist works within animal studies. Emerging within philosophy, CAS aims to develop an ethical response to human exploitation of animals (McCance 2012). As speciesism promotes and legitimates the use of animals for and by humans, CAS objects to speciesism and tries to comprehend the scope of economic oppression of animals, the factors, and power relations naturalizing this control and domination with the aim of dismantling them (McCance 2012). This scholarship, thus, offers an engaged study of non-human animals where the anthropocentrism within various disciplines is challenged, aiming for the unsettlement of all power relations adopted in the commodification of animals, including humans (Matsuoka and Sorenson 2018). The term ‘critical’ in this scholarship has multiple meanings. In addition to being critical of the mass exploitation of animals, extinction of species, and global warming, the term also connotes a ‘turning point’ for these ills, which suggests a better way to turn things around (McCance 2012).

While mainstream animal studies (MAS), as Best (2009) puts out, remains an apolitical abstract discipline where scholars produce “theory for the sake of theory” absorbed in speciesist ideals and lifestyles, critical animal studies expose the limitations of the discipline through political engagement with animal rights. The supposed neutrality within academia about animal rights issues urges an important reflection on this depoliticization of animal exploitation. Thus, CAS emerges as a field of interdisciplinary study with an activist agenda that engages with research in its political and ethical dimensions. The fact that animal suffering is spread across a wide range of areas, including food, clothing, and entertainment industries as well as experimental and educational fields, highlights the necessity for these critical perspectives.

This study follows the line of thought that critical animal studies put forward and critically engages with the existence of animal exploitation. To this end, I refer

to animal rights theory, specifically abolitionist vegan theory, to reflect on where Vegan Farm and sanctuary practices fit into the context of animal rights theory, but also within the animal rights movement in Turkey. While there are some studies on animal sanctuaries (Abrell 2019; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015; Meijer 2021), this study can contribute to the literature by pointing out the potential of vegan sanctuaries in fostering co-living and advancing animal rights through the context of the vegan movement in Turkey.

1.1.2 Animal Rights and Veganism

To discuss a rights-based way of multispecies co-living, I need to first explain what I mean by rights-based, and how animal rights differ from animal welfare. Today, especially those outside the movement, might think that animal welfare corresponds to animal rights activism. However, there is a clear separation between these two perspectives. In the introduction, I briefly mentioned that some sanctuaries may have a welfarist outlook in which animals' property status remains intact. Animal welfarism, as the name suggests, concerns the treatment of animals and aims to ensure that animals live in welfare. Through various mechanisms, they aim to decrease animal suffering. Yet, most welfarists maintain that animal life holds a lesser value than human life, considering it morally acceptable to use animals so long as they are treated "humanely" (Francione 2010). In this view, the issue lies not in the use of animals itself, but in the manner of their use. Many grassroots campaigns throughout history organized towards this end are in favor of minimizing the suffering that animals experience. However, with this goal in mind, not all welfarist movements necessarily engage with the thought of ending animal exploitation, but rather they aim to modify exploitation to reduce the suffering of animals (de Villiers 2015). In this manner, different from a rights-view where a sentient being's right to live and prosper is recognized as the minimum responsibility towards them, welfarism primarily is concerned with the animals' living conditions, although this means that non-human animals might be kept in an exploitative status throughout the course of their lives.

As one result of welfarism, concepts such as 'humane treatment' or 'ethical treatment' of animals have emerged to refer to the bettering of living conditions of animals who have been exploited within various industries. Through several campaigns, many brands have started showing that the animal product they sell is produced under 'ethically right' conditions. However, Wrenn (2012) differentiates between humane treatment and the welfarist movement in terms of their approach and who

defends their views. According to them, while the humane treatment approach draws attention not to the exploitation of animals but to the conditions in which they are exploited, the welfarist view, while acknowledging our moral obligations to non-human animals, has a stance on regulation and reform of animal exploitation rather than the total abolition. Humane treatment is generally promoted by institutional producers for profit through marketing their products as ethically produced with labels such as “free-range”, “humanely raised,” and “cage-free” (Wrenn 2012).

Welfarism, on the other hand, is usually advocated by non-profit groups who suggest the abolitionist view ¹is unachievable, and that short-term regulations must be applied with the goal of ending animal suffering (Wrenn 2012). These are mainly the activists who support the view that animal exploitation should come to an end but think that end might not be achievable soon. Thus, they try to use means to change animals’ living conditions for the better, although that better is not always clear, nor are there many examples showing that it is achieved for now. These advocates think the goal of abolitionist theory is unrealistic because it requires the complete elimination of animal exploitation. Instead, they think of welfarist reforms to reduce the suffering of animals and abolish exploitation *in the end* (Francione 2003).

Yet, the abolitionist view holds that both approaches still sustain the property status of animals, and these kinds of regulations might not be reduced, and in some situations, may promote mass animal suffering globally. For instance, more traditional methods, compared to mass industries, might seem appealing for increasing the wellbeing of animals. These ‘traditional farming techniques’ may have provided animals a more natural environment than industries, but animals are nevertheless continuing to be exploited and killed (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). Since welfarism occupies a significant place within the animal movement and has a strong position in shaping the movement, perspectives like these may have contributed to the emergence of concepts such as “humane treatment” and the relative marginalization/radicalization of activism centered on animal rights. While I do not view these developments as having a direct causation relationship, as an activist, I cannot help but think that an approach centered on animal rights and driven by the aim of abolishing animal exploitation would be more effective if supported by all advocates of the animal movement.

One of the main reasons why welfarism holds such a dominant place in the animal movement today, and why some of its key arguments have become so widespread, is the influence of Peter Singer’s writing. Singer’s perspective is utilitarian, in which

1. Within the animal rights discourse, the abolitionist perspective argues that we must eliminate the property status of animals entirely and put an end to animal exploitation. In the following pages, I discuss the abolitionist approach in greater detail.

morally right actions are considered those involving the interests of the maximum number of beings (Paccagnella and Borba Marchetto 2019). Utilitarianism aims for the maximization of the total good through the consideration of every individual being's interest and preferences. For Singer, the interests and preferences of all beings, including animals and humans, is to be considered in the decision of what is morally right or wrong. Since all sentient beings can have interests and a capacity for suffering, they deserve equal consideration to Singer.

In order to better understand Singer's ethical framework, it is helpful to look at the roots of utilitarianism. Considered as one of the founding theorists of classical utilitarianism, Bentham's famous book, written in 1789, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, is cited frequently within animal welfare literature. He is thought to be the first Western philosopher to write on animal issues, emphasizing animals' capacity to feel pain and pleasure. Through this perspective, a being's capacity to sense indicates that they have an interest in their life, and they need to be treated accordingly. Bentham stresses the irrelevance of language and reasoning on the matter of suffering with his famous note:

“The day has been, I grieve to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing as, in England for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day may come, when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the os sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or, perhaps, the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?” (Bentham 1970, 282).

Emphasizing sensibility, the capacity to experience pain and pleasure, as a criterion for the moral consideration of beings, Bentham's theory remains a significant crossroad for the inclusion of animals into moral theory. Accordingly, Singer (2022) suggests that this capacity to feel pain and pleasure indicates that beings have in-

terests and that equal rights do not mean that every animal is obliged to have the exact same rights as humans, but rather should have equal consideration of their interests. However, despite his efforts for the equal moral treatment and animal welfare, Bentham was defending that we can still kill and exploit animals unless we inflict ‘pointless cruelty’ to them (Kniess 2019). Utilitarianist thinkers act with the premise that every moral action can be evaluated precisely on the scale of pain and pleasure. In their writings, utilitarian theorists, including Bentham, hold the view that if not inflicted ‘unnecessary pain’, it is morally acceptable to derive non-human animals’ right to live for humans’ pleasures. Then, killing a chicken, with the premise that they lived a ‘happy’, ‘pain-free’ life, can be considered morally acceptable within this perspective. It is quite clear that most of our daily use of animal products cannot be categorized as necessary, nor can their killing be justified on these accounts.

Garner (2013) has a different approach to animal rights, which he describes as an *enhanced sentience position*, suggesting that although animals have the right not to suffer, their interest in life and liberty is smaller than that of humans. Recognizing that the welfarist approach cannot return rights to animals, Garner thinks that it can be reformulated to be used more effectively and that some animal use practices can be justifiable (Francione and Garner 2010). Garner presents animals’ right not to suffer as the ideal theory for justice. Further, he does not see abolitionist theory as an ideal theory but a utopian one on the basis that it “seems to demand too much of human beings” and he considers the moral value of humans as greater than animals, in which humans can maintain some animal use (Francione and Garner 2010, 13).

These thinkers’ positions can be categorized under what we call ‘new welfarism’. Francione (1996, 34) describes new welfarists as people whose long-term goal is to end all animal suffering but think that welfarist reforms can be strategically employed to achieve that end goal. Thus, the new welfarist perspective holds that it is morally wrong to exploit animals but emphasizes that the end of this exploitation is only possible through welfarist reforms, which aim at making the conditions of animal exploitation better. In this sense, it is different from traditional welfarist theory, where there is not necessarily a mention of ending animal suffering as a long-term intention (Francione 1996, 35). Garner defends the new welfarist view, although in the book they wrote with Francione, he mentions that he prefers the label “animal protectionism,” which better explains his support for both animal welfare and animal rights positions if they are going to protect animal interests (Francione and Garner 2010, 104).

In sum, from a welfarist point of view, non-human animals are not perceived merely

as *things*, but they are entitled to *some* rights, such as having adequate food, water, or space to live their lives. However, they still have less value than humans, positioning their interests and rights hierarchically under human interests. This means the calf, who is the entitled owner of the milk that their mother provides, has no say over her life but is obliged to live in exploitation, but according to these welfarist mechanisms, under *less exploitation*. The idea of humane treatment and the laws on animal welfare still favor the interests of the ‘property owner’ and the consumer rather than the interests and rights of the animal (Francione 2010). Animals are still regarded as property and are deemed insignificant compared to human interests in these views.

As vegan activist Seb Alex (2023) says that the conditions in which animals live, whether they are given names, or whether they were happy before they were killed, do not say anything about the rights violation of those animals. Labels such as *ethically produced* are often found on animal products. However, their primary function is to reassure consumers and further incentivize consumption. In most cases, we do not even have an idea regarding the actual living conditions of these animals and the extent of their welfare. This raises the critical question: where do animal rights truly stand within this strategy? Unless we challenge animals’ property status and they remain as tools for human goals, we cannot talk about rights.

A rights-based approach requires taking the rights of the individual/s as the starting point for discussion. To recognize someone’s rights, it is a prerequisite to accept that the person has a value that would entitle them to these rights. If we are to say that animals have the right not to suffer, for instance, we think that animals are worthy of being considered in our ethical treatment of them. Based on an animal-rights approach, abolitionist theory suggests that our ethical treatment of animals requires them to be considered as persons, not as things. Abolitionist theory advocates for the abolition of all animals’ exploitation and their status as property, emphasizing the *inherent value* of all animals. Francione (2020) ² argues that if we

2. One of the principles of the abolitionist approach holds that human and non-human animal rights are intertwined and abolitionists are against all kinds of discrimination. As with heterosexism, racism, ageism, and ableism, speciesism is a form of exclusion where other-than-human species are derived from their rights to be not used as property and be killed for the pleasures of the human species (Abolitionist Vegan Hareket n.d.b). Although Francione and his partner Anna Charlton laid the foundations for abolitionist theory, recent trans-exclusionary comments of Francione indicate his disregard for this principle. Francione (2023) says transphobia is wrong and trans people should not be discriminated against based on their gender identity. Yet, he sees transgender identities as “metaphysical/spiritual claims” where it is “not transphobic” to “fail” to believe in them. It is impossible to recognize trans individuals’ rights without acknowledging their gender identity and Francione’s claims invalidate and further marginalize transgender identities. Many abolitionists took a stand against his position. Although I refer to abolitionist theory, Francione’s discriminatory stance is unacceptable and reflects neither my stance nor animal rights

accept that animals have moral significance, they should be entitled to personhood and not be used as things. While having a value for a thing lies in the interests and values that we attach to them; having an inherent value as a person stems from a person's inherent worth, "by virtue of the sorts of beings they are" (Francione 2020). Accordingly, inherent value is the basic requirement needed to be recognized as a member of the moral community (Francione 2000). Animals are sentient beings; they can feel pain, pleasure, happiness, and sadness. They have preferences and dislikes. They can perceive their surroundings and have unique experiences of their own. Most humans accept this reality as they can see how animals avoid painful situations, become social with one another and with humans, and interact with the things around them. As sentient beings, animals have the right not to be used, exploited, and killed.

"Any sentient being has some sort of mind and has interests and is thereby similar to every other being who has a mind and has interests, and dissimilar from everything that does not have a mind and has no interests. Cognitive characteristics may be relevant for all sorts of reasons but are irrelevant to the question of whether we should use sentient beings exclusively as our resources" (Francione 2020, 8).

An individual's right is not tied to their cognitive capabilities but rather their interest in their lives. What concerns us ethically should be our reconsideration of animals' position as properties. According to abolitionist theory, as long as animals are considered as properties and are not given their right not to be used and killed as persons, animal exploitation will continue. What is at stake, nearly in all situations involving animal exploitation, is human beings' preferences and pleasures which are all insufficient reasons for the suffering and killing of non-human animals. Indeed, some animals do not have the same "mental capacities" as humans. They might not be able to make decisions as humans or do not have a similar mental grasp of things, but as humans, we do not make our decisions on whether it is ethical to kill and exploit someone based on their mental or cognitive capabilities.

Colb (2020) illustrates this with an example: if we were to ask you why you do not kill your neighbor, your answer would be similar to saying "they are not a threat to my existence and they have the capacities to experience their life and the physical pain, pleasure, loss, and love... I would not want to deprive them of these experiences". This answer probably would not differ if your neighbor were a mentally

theory.

ill person, a person with severe intellectual disability, or a child who cannot speak. This is because most humans do not consider others' mental capacities as a criterion for hurting, using, or exploiting others. We consider these people as persons and act under their moral obligations and responsibilities towards those persons. Just as we have moral obligations to other humans, we do have moral obligations to non-human animals. In fact, most humans would already agree that it is morally wrong to impose unnecessary suffering on animals. As Francione (2000) calls it, we experience "moral schizophrenia", asserting their interests as morally significant but ignore those interests when it benefits humans. Indeed, most of the suffering that we inflict on animals is not the case of life/death situations; they are unnecessary. Animals are exploited and killed for human pleasure and interests.

Studies show that it is possible to maintain a healthy diet without any animal product, and many vegans are advantageous in terms of being less prone to cardiovascular diseases due to less cholesterol, saturated fat, and more dietary fiber (Craig 2009). Animal testing is proven to be unnecessary since alternative and potentially more useful testing methods, such as in vitro testing with stem cells derived from human tissues, computer models, and simulations, have been developed (Kınıkoğlu and Güven 2020). We do not need animal skin for clothing, their body fluids for cosmetics, or their captivity in zoos for our entertainment. The prevalence of animal cruelty in everyday life makes it convenient and preferable to be part of this exploitation for many humans. Yet, if we agree that it is morally wrong to impose unnecessary pain on animals, then the rights-based approach to our ethical relationship with animals would require us not to be involved in animal exploitation.

Veganism can be defined as not participating in animal use and exploitation in all areas whenever it is possible to do so, with the goal of abolishing animal exploitation altogether. Advocating for animal rights requires veganism as a prerequisite since all other options consider animals as property to be used. If we accept that animals are persons aware of their surroundings, feel pleasure and pain, and have a sense of their experiences of the world, then they should have the right ³ not to be exploited and killed. When we continue to preserve animals' property status, it is not possible to recognize their personhood rights. If we do not recognize their rights, we cannot build an ethical relationship with animals based on justice and equity. Because they are humans' properties, their interests would always be disregarded by humans'

3. For now, I am mainly talking about animals' negative rights which can be defined as rights we are compelled to do through inaction. That is, we must not kill, exploit, and torture animals. Yet, in the next sections, I will include discussions on whether we have other responsibilities towards animals as actions. These positive rights might include creating and maintaining spaces where animals can live, rehabilitating exploited animals, including them in our political communities, and providing them with basic needs and/or other needs.

interests whenever there is a conflict (Francione 1996).

Today, many studies, like my own fieldwork, that narrate themselves from a more situated position and examine human-animal coexistence through the lens of relationality, do not necessarily engage deeply with grand theories such as abolitionism. At first glance, these two approaches, the one grounded in overarching ethical concerns and a rights-based perspective, and the other shaped contextually through practices of co-living, seem to be positioned in opposition to one another. I find this very similar to the tension we often observe in feminist studies between universal ethical and political positions and situated practices. I find abolitionist theory's rights-based stance, its articulation of the political significance of being sentient, and the perspectives it offers on veganism as a way to be in ethical coexistence with animals valuable. At the same time, as Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) also point out in their book, animal rights theory – I am primarily referring here to Francione's framework – does not offer much further insight when it comes to questions of co-living beyond issues such as taking responsibility for companion animals, neutering, and enabling their independence.

For this reason, there is a need for situated studies that emerge from experience, from small-scale contexts, and that bring together practices of co-living through learning, producing, and living together. In this research, while I aim to explain how the practice of life on the farm is motivated by a rights-based and vegan ethical orientation through vegan theory, I also seek to explore how this comes to life as a practice of living and struggling together in the midst of a speciesist reality. Thus, rather than positioning these two approaches as distant or antagonistic to each other, I see them as intertwined and mutually informing perspectives. My aim in bringing these two perspectives together while examining the Vegan Farm practice stems precisely from this understanding.

1.2 Contextualizing the Vegan Farm

I have engaged with the theory of veganism and what it entails in the previous sections. In this section, I will examine the practical aspects of veganism as a social movement and its historical development. Next, I will discuss the political context and the vegan movement in Turkey. Lastly, I will elaborate on the response veganism receives in everyday life and the experience of going vegan in a speciesist world. For centuries, many people have opposed the consumption of meat and other animal products for various reasons. Although there have been people going

vegetarian for their religious lifestyles for centuries, the first known ethical defense for the objection to eating animals goes back as early as the 6th century BCE, by the philosopher Pythagoras (Walters and Portmess 1999). It is said that the first community to call themselves 'vegetarians', in the year 1842, people associated with the Alcott House School, were practicing veganism and following a fully plant-based diet (Davis 2012). However, not until 1944 that a group of people within the vegetarian community in the UK gathered to share their experience of omitting all animal products from their lives and aiming to promote this lifestyle for more people (Batt 1964). In the aftermath, the Vegan Society was founded the same year with the aim of 'advocating living without exploitation' (Cole 2014). The official establishment of the Vegan Society in the UK with the aim of animal rights advocacy, and their adoption of the word veganism by the institution in 1950 (Cole 2014) is a phenomenon that gave momentum to the movement itself.

As veganism rests on the practice of non-violence towards non-human animals, its principles also overlap with ahimsa, an Indian principle found in religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. Ahimsa is embedded in the doctrine "affirming that all forms of life are sacred, and thus prohibiting violence in thoughts, words, and actions under any circumstances" (Bouchard 2010, 18). Although Jainism and Buddhism have included vegetarianism grounded on ahimsa, practitioners of these religions largely kept consuming animal products like milk and eggs, and veganism, as a movement, did not find its way to Indian society until recently (Kumar 2021). According to Kumar (2021), the public awareness of veganism has increased, with the findings revealing animal agriculture's massive impact on ecosystems, leading to an emerging new movement in India.

The influence of the vegan movement in the last century can be observed by looking at the increasing number of practicing vegans and the growing activities of vegan organizations. With their differing approaches to activism, the establishment of organizations such as the Vegan Society, Plant-Based Treaty, and Vegan Outreach, and grassroots movements like Abolitionists Vegans and Animal Liberation Front, is an indicator that veganism is becoming more visible and widespread around the world. With their demand for plant-based products, vegans also aim to change the dynamics in the market and end animal exploitation there as well as everywhere else. In recent years, many brands' initiatives for products with plant-based, vegan, cruelty-free ingredients, and emerging vegan brands and restaurants show that the increasing demand finds a response within the market (BBC News 2020).

For some, this emphasis on consumption choices and the alignment of marketing strategies with vegan goals is despised for not conforming to leftist ideals. However, despite some leftists' portrayal of veganism as a 'liberal project' and a consumerist

movement, veganism’s commitments to interspecies rights ethics are complementary to the leftist objective of social and environmental justice (Dickstein et al. 2022). The use of animals did not start with capitalism, and the deterioration of it would certainly not guarantee animals their rights. However, the enormous impact of capitalism on animal exploitation cannot be overlooked. The practice of using animals as food, clothing, entertainment, and pets has been carried on largely by capitalism today, which has significantly increased the scope and severity of animal suffering (Nibert 2002). Already, one of the abolitionist vegan principles is intersectionality, and abolitionists reject all forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and classism, just as they reject speciesism (Abolitionist Vegan Hareket n.d.b). Therefore, it is possible to resist and combat intertwined systems of oppression, such as patriarchy, capitalism, and speciesism, together.

The movement’s emphasis on animal rights positions it as a new form of social movement in which the premise is grounded neither in legislation nor identity politics, but in major lifestyle changes in everyday actions (Cherry 2006). Because of its emphasis on everyday practices and individual choices, some also refer to veganism as a ‘lifestyle movement’, suggesting that the movement’s focus on ‘individual consumption’ separates it from other political movements (Gheihman 2021). However, I do not agree with this view since all rights-based movements include everyday life practices and consumption choices. The fact that these practices are so visible within veganism is due to the prevalence of speciesism within consumption and everyday life. Just as these discussions surrounding veganism as a movement, arguments against vegan living practice are a common occurrence in everyday life for those who embrace veganism. The fact that speciesism is deeply ingrained in everyday life encourages people to come up with various reasons not to be vegan. These arguments might include critiques of ethical motivation, health concerns, life preferences, and more. I looked into the ethical motivation behind veganism in the previous chapter in great detail. Although it is impossible to answer all other questions and concerns ⁴, I will touch on a few.

Firstly, many people argue that animal consumption is a part of many cultures and traditions, and that being a vegan goes against their cultural habits. However, the fact that some of our actions are cultural or traditional does not make them morally justifiable. Above all, while it is more acceptable to accept and apply an ethical position above all cultural practices for humans, the reason for invoking culture when it comes to animals, but especially those we use to exploit, stems from

4. To look up answers to these kinds of questions, check the video series of Earthling Ed, a vegan educator on: Earthling Ed. “30 days 30 excuses”. YouTube. Accessed on July 14, 2025. <https://youtu.be/7mjVwVDDI8E?feature=shared>

speciesism. Targeting certain cultures and condemning the killing of some animals considered more worthy in some cultures, such as dogs and cats, while continuing to exploit other animals, reflects this speciesism and shows that our cultural practices are not necessarily morally justifiable.

Another argument is based on the saying that in nature, other animals eat each other, so that humans can also eat other animals. However, as humans, we develop our moral commitments not from the actions of other animals but from the ethical guidelines we establish through our reasoning and methods. Another common counterargument made towards veganism is about health concerns. However, the fact that veganism is associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, and total cancer compared to a carnivorous diet (Dinu et al. 2017), that iron levels are no different in a well-planned, balanced vegetarian diet (Craig 1994), and that B-12 levels remain normal with the use of fortified foods or supplements (Craig 2009) supports that veganism can be sustained in terms of health.⁵

As I indicated, veganism, as a movement, has gained momentum over the last century and continues to grow. In a system dominated by speciesism, the fact that medical, veterinary, and many other professions are also surrounded by the same discourse brings concerns about veganism. "Anti-vegan" and "vegaphobia", a term used to describe antipathy toward vegans and derogatory portrayal of veganism, are phenomena that have gained traction, particularly online (Cole and Morgan 2011; Gregson, Piazza, and Boyd 2022).

Activists continue their actions advocating for animal rights in the world and Turkey. Wolf (2015) writes that the abolitionist animal rights movement, which began to rise in Türkiye in the early 2010s, especially during the 2013 Gezi protests, has been quite self-critical, developing tactics for activism and self-improvement, drawing lessons from its counterparts around the world. Wolf (2015) also highlights the presence of animal rights activists in İstanbul who identify as veganarchists and are guided by B. Dominick's (1997) concept of total revolution, advocating for the end of all forms of oppression within societies. Today, animal rights activists in Turkey are either a continuation of these movements or, with different approaches to activism and new ideas, continue their efforts.

A recent example that revealed the urgency of animal rights recognition was the Turkish government's bill allowing the capture and killing of so-called "aggressive"

5. These might be amongst the most concerning issues for non-vegans that I hear in everyday life. However, there can be other concerns based on a person's health history, dietary restrictions, and so on. Since this thesis does not claim to have any expertise on health-related issues, comparing meta-analyses compiled by doctors and researchers like the one I have presented here would provide the most accurate and reliable resource on the health concerns related to plant-based eating.

or “prohibited” stray animals (Medyascope 2025). Framed as “euthanasia” for sick animals, it led to the killing of many, legitimized through fear-based narratives about dog attacks, cases which are statistically rare but politically amplified. The law marked yet another instance of what Yıldırım (2021) calls “decanisation politics,” in which street dogs, and by extension other non-human animals, are situated between the affective politics of care and violence. In the wake of its implementation, many stray animals were killed, and municipalities, with the imposed sanctions (Sayın 2024), have been doing mass round-ups in the streets. In response, animal rights groups such as Yaşam İçin Yasa İnisiyatifi and Dört Ayaklı Şehir mobilized, organizing demonstrations and making efforts for fostering to save as many animals as possible. These efforts are undoubtedly valuable, reflecting a strong mobilization that is reactive to urgent threats. However, such responses often center on companion animals and operate within a framework that does not fundamentally challenge the property status of animals or the speciesist logic embedded in law and culture.

This is precisely why the abolitionist vegan movement in Turkey aims for non-speciesist, all-inclusive activism efforts. While less visible than these mass mobilizations, it grounds its activism in a rights-based framework, advocating for the inherent right of all animals to live free from exploitation. Following this criterion, Abolitionist Vegan Movement in Turkey, for example, has been active in public vegan advocacy, organizing weekly outreach events and engaging directly with the public through street actions such as “I am vegan, you can ask questions,” creating accessible spaces for dialogue, education, and reflection (Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket n.d.a).

Such activities, while sometimes dismissed by some groups as “passive”, a critique that mirrors debates in other countries between welfare-oriented, one-time campaigns and abolitionist approaches, are intentional in their nonviolent and rights-focused methodology. Rather than responding only to immediate crises, which I do not aim to devalue, they aim to foster long-term social transformation by challenging speciesism at its cultural, ethical, and political roots. The contrast between reactive, compassion-driven mobilizations and sustained rights-based activism illustrates a broader difference within animal advocacy in Turkey. Without embedding animal protection within a framework that recognizes animals as individuals with inalienable rights to their own lives, legal “protections” remain conditional and easily overridden by human interests. The visibility of abolitionist vegan activism, though currently limited compared to mainstream animal movements, plays a crucial role in shifting public discourse toward a vision of justice that includes all sentient beings, from street dogs to farmed animals, from liminal birds to wild species. This is one of the reasons that humans have the responsibility to return these animals to their

rights. We are not only living with dogs and cats. We do live with chickens, sheep, horses, birds, and many other liminal and wild animals whose lives coincide with humans in one way or another. What is the common aspect of all these species is that they all have an interest in living, and they all have subjective experiences. This makes it necessary to return their rights not to be treated as things but as persons. From there, we can have a basis to develop a multi-species togetherness and ways of living together.

1.3 Thesis Outline

In the first chapter, I elaborated on the theoretical discussions on animal rights and veganism while briefly referring to the contextual development of veganism as a movement.

The second chapter will delve into the methodology. I will explain how I make use of participant observation while referring to the significance of sensory methodology for this study. Lastly, I reflect on my positionality as a vegan activist and how I consider my case as partially an autoethnographic study.

In the third chapter, I will explore how these theoretical and methodological discussions emerge within multispecies co-living arrangements through the example of Vegan Farm. Delving into the motivations and reasons behind establishing such a space, I analyze how interspecies dialogues take place to achieve the goal of rights-oriented co-living. Moreover, making use of literature on multispecies models of co-living, I argue that this rural and micro-scale setting generates knowledge regarding the modes of co-living and offers insights into the how of context-dependent togetherness. Vegan Farm is a trust-based space, aiming to cultivate a place for animal agencies and mutual respect. Their way of living reflects ethical ideals, and the practice of ‘vegan farming’ enacts this through everyday interspecies encounters, positioning care, attentiveness, and relationality at the center of shared life. I use ethics of care as a tool to reconsider the role of caring relations for interspecies communities, and specifically the community within Vegan Farm.

The fourth chapter explores these attentive and caring relations through an analysis of embodied encounters in everyday life at the Vegan Farm. Looking at the significance of routines in building a shared community, I look at the methods through which these routines are formed and sustained on the farm. Moreover, drawing on the potential of senses for multispecies ethnography, I examine the relationality built with animals through seeing, touching, approaching, and listening. I offer an

in-depth analysis of those sensory engagements to reflect on what an animal-rights-centered political and ethical stance looks like in the everyday life of this space.

In conclusion, I reconsider what an ethically motivated vegan farm says about multi-species co-living and how this is managed through a certain form of activism: living together with other species. I will discuss what kind of perspective is needed for this practice to find a place in everyday life under a global speciesism, for more people and animals, evaluating its connection to vegan theory.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this section, I detail the methodological framework of my research, which is based on multispecies ethnography. Drawing on the sensory and embodied aspects of my ethnography, I describe my field site. I reflect on my positionality as a vegan researcher and discuss the challenges I encountered during fieldwork.

For my thesis, I conducted multispecies ethnographic fieldwork at a Vegan Farm located in İzmir for 45 days. Multispecies ethnography is interested in how various organisms' lives are intertwined in a multispecies environment and how they are both shaped by and shape political, economic, and cultural factors (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Accordingly, humans, non-human animals, plants, bacteria, and/or mushrooms constitute cultures together and they are entangled in different ways. This challenges the anthropocentric understanding of the ethnographic methodology and theory, and it opens space for the analysis of the coming and "becoming" together of various species in various networks. Through multispecies ethnography, we can problematize, politicize, and re-construct the given binary categories such as nature/culture and human/non-human.

During my fieldwork, I also had semi-structured interviews with the residents of the sanctuary. Before going to the field, I reached out to the owners of the farm a month ago on their Instagram page. So before going, I already had contact with them and told them about my research, asking if we could arrange a time when I could stay at the farm to do my fieldwork. They were very helpful from the very beginning and accepted me as a volunteer on the farm for two weeks in September 2023, and then for one month in April/May 2024. Yet of course, being a vegan activist was helpful for me in terms of creating and sustaining my networks before and during fieldwork.

During my first fieldwork in September, I also had a chance to participate in the International Animal Rights Gathering (IARG) where animal rights activists from around the world come together and talk about their activist practices, share useful information with one another, and give support. After the event, I stayed as a

volunteer at the farm for one more week to continue my participant observation. I also visited the farm after my fieldwork to participate in a Vegan Short Film Festival that the residents organize every year. During this festival, 90-100 participants watch movies about veganism, camp in the spaces allocated for camping within the farm space, have workshops and discussions about animal rights activism for about 4 days. These gatherings enabled me to observe not only the animals' relation with human residents but also visitors. I also had an opportunity to engage with many activists who I befriended later and got inspiration for the thesis I am currently writing.

Since I also worked as a volunteer in animal care throughout my fieldwork, I had direct participation in the relationships that I wanted to observe and write about for a time. I fed animals, ate with them, and shared early mornings talking to and walking with them on the land. Therefore, this experience was more than observing, it changed how I approach animals, and how I understand them. The physical material features of this space are important since I cannot gather information as such through any other means but through my feeding, walking, and eating in this space specifically. There are feelings and affective moments of realization living in such a space. The farm, located in a rural area of İzmir, has its own unique vibe, and through participating in everyday practices, I experienced that vibe. Accordingly, participant observation was a plausible choice for this fieldwork.

I selected participant observation also as a method to engage critically with various agents, including humans, animals, and space, and to better understand caring relationships in everyday settings in a vegan space. Additionally, the field's hamlet setting exemplifies a rural aspect where complex relationships exist between local government, municipalities, and other animal rights advocates, which can be examined thoroughly through participant observation. The sociopolitical significance of this space is rooted heavily in what people define as "nature", and I directly observe that the farm further blurs the line between culture and nature in this context. The space is reconfigured within nature, the land is full of trees and plants, and most days are spent outside by both humans and non-human animals. However, it is human-made, and arrangements are contemplated by human residents in negotiation with animals. Through participating in everyday settings, I aimed to perceive the complex structures of these arrangements, where there is no clear-cut nature/culture binary in the Vegan Farm space.

Vegan Farm was established nearly five years ago by Sedna (39) and Yusuf (48)¹.

1. The ethical permissions required for this study were obtained from Sabanci University Research Ethics Council (Protocol Number: FASS-2024-16) in advance, and all participants attended the study voluntarily and gave their permission to be identified by their real names in this study.

Before founding the farm, they lived in İstanbul, where Sedna practiced law and Yusuf worked in the film and television industry. They later moved to İzmir to pursue a life more aligned with their ethical and ecological values and began building Vegan Farm together. Sedna's parents had originally owned the land, but they had moved, so she and Yusuf took ownership of it since they already wanted to create such space for themselves and chickens. Her parents were using the area for agriculture rather than as a vegan farm or a sanctuary. Thus, the chickens started to arrive at the sanctuary after Sedna and Yusuf took ownership of the space. Sedna and Yusuf have been vegans for years, and they said it was their dream to live with chickens in an environment free of exploitation like theirs. Thus, they started to open their doors to rescued chickens who were brought there by animal rights activists they knew. The population has increased over the years, and now the farm is home to over 100 animals, including chickens, ducks, dogs, cats, rabbits, and a donkey. Many more animals, such as bugs, ants, birds, snakes, scorpions, and hedgehogs, live on the land, too.

The farm has no legal affiliation with the state. My participants stated that establishing such a place does not require obtaining permission and that, since only a small number of animals live there, a separate legal status is not necessary. The establishment is rather small and private, with a limited capacity and a budget for more animals. This is one thing separating this space from some animal sanctuaries, where they try to host as many animals as they can and have personnel and veterinarians working in the facilities. The animals are free in the terrains of the sanctuary, but chickens, ducks, and rabbits sleep in coops where their doors are locked during the night. The space is vegan, meaning that humans and non-human animals live in this space without exploitation, and that nobody is regarded as the property of another.

2.1 Sensory Ethnography in More-Than-Human Studies

Pink (2015) points to the role of the emplacement of people in ethnographic works, suggesting that the focus on emplacement has the potential to account for relationships between minds, bodies, and the sensoriality of the environment. Sensory ethnography builds on exploring these “multisensorial embodied engagements with others” and expands what we understand from ethnographic works. Expanding this methodology to more-than-human worlds necessitates the reconfiguration of different sensory experiences to account for non-human animals, plants, and things

alongside their environments. If we are to look at how sensory experiences can give more in these worlds due to their communicative potential for more-than-human entanglements, ethnographer needs to delve deep into how animals move, shout, cluck, rub, and smell. In the case of more-than-humans, ethnographers have the risk of anthropomorphizing and giving meaning to every move of animals as if they were humans. Yet, to recognize these acts concerning their positioning with the environment, looking at how humans living with these animals interpret and react to these entanglements, and how different animals learn from these interactions through repetition and attention can be considered key to doing research with them.

Further, the emphasis on *logos* should be challenged when thinking about animals since all our communications can benefit from embodied togetherness. Since language is a major component of traditional ethnographic methodologies, many researchers highlight the inability of non-human animals to speak as a barrier to including them as active participants in research. However, what prevents us from considering alternative inclusive methods is not the animals' deficit. It is our limited understanding of language as the human language (Spiegelhofer 2021). Rather than asking if animals can think and/or speak, or if we *grasp* their thinking; as critical animal studies already put into practice, we can think of these interactions from mouth to leaf, nose to root that we engage through touching, listening, and smelling (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). Thus, ethnographers need to be in tune with sensory modes of communication between different species redirecting attention from verbal language to movements, touch, smell, voices, and beyond. Although I focused on certain senses in different sections, all these encounters are multi-sensorial, and they should be acknowledged holistically. The magic of ethnography lies in the potential of telling these multi-layered stories, from our experiences regarding our reflexivity about certain settings. In the next section, I delve more into how my reflexivity informed the *reality* that I enacted and reported.

I argue that the care relationship between animals and humans is contingent upon sensory connections, where participant observation has a lot to offer. This method provides me with tools to contemplate sensory elements through seeing, touching, smelling, and hearing interspecies entanglements. There are various interspecies negotiations in the decisions of coops, feeding, and the treatment of sicknesses. I will use my fieldnotes to reflect on how these decisions are made through sensorial, affective, and embodied encounters within everyday settings in a multispecies environment. Further, I will discuss how these experiences can be a reference for caring and loving relationships among many species with the potential for creating rights-oriented multispecies communities. As they describe the place as a "Vegan Co-living Space", I will consider the meaning of living a vegan multispecies life for

the residents that is informed by animal rights. How might every touch, every movement, every sound that calls for attention and love, and every walk with a rooster reflect and embody this ethical stance? I will be looking for traces across the farm to find answers to these questions.

2.2 Ethnographer as an Activist

Ethnography does not entail an objective ethnographer just observing and reporting the animal's behavior as it is and as other humans interpret it. The ethnographer is positioned in all these entanglements as an actor; they choose what to include in their fieldnotes, and how to interact with animals, and they do have their thoughts and judgments about what these more-than-human entanglements mean. In terms of my reflexivity, I should point out that this thesis has political and ethical goals to pursue a meaningful dialogue in terms of creating just worlds for animal others. As an animal rights activist, I focus on how animals and humans mutually show affection and care for one another through sensory experiences. What if a chicken, which humans do not know much about their species beyond the "taste" of their bodies, were your best friend, companion, or at least someone you show respect for their right to live? Vegan Farm provides perspective towards alternative ways of being together in this sense.

Kopnina (2017) argues for a more engaged anthropology through a moral commitment to nonhuman suffering which engages with animal rights and ecological justice. My thesis follows this line of thought, where it would be unjust not to mention the massive scale of animal abuse, especially when animals in the sanctuary are coming from such spaces of abuse. Thus, rather than just adding more animals to the research, I aim to delve into a meaningful conversation where I reflect on animal use, abuse, violence, and killing. This would require us to find ways to apply "heretical methods" to the instances of non-human death and suffering (Kopnina 2017). This reflexivity as an *activist* was particularly important in the initiation of communicating with my interlocutors, but also during it. I did not have a hard time explaining my research or being accepted to the field since they knew that I was vegan. I try to acknowledge the way I look at things, the way humans and animals at the farm look at things. This part might be the most challenging part for me since I need to step back from time to time to understand certain things from a different point of view. I do not ever refer to love, care, and/or companionship between animals and humans as relations that *every 'body'* can or wants to maintain. Rather, I follow

these affective traces over the vegan farm space, showing just one possibility of these relations, but also showing how respect for others' lives can be acknowledged with ethical responsibility in general, which must be done.

It is possible to approach my ethnography at Vegan Farm as a practice of autoethnography. Before going to the farm, I had the idea of examining human–animal relations there, mostly through third parties and approaching the practice of care in that way. However, my becoming one of the primary caregivers at the farm, as a volunteer, turned this fieldwork into an autoethnographic one. In this way, I grounded the ethnography in the relationships I built with the animals, shaped by my own positionality as an urban vegan activist. While I acknowledge the political benefits of this perspective, it does indeed have limitations. First, without stepping outside my rights-based stance, positioning the farm perhaps as a political experiment in vegan living limited my ability to see possible instances of neglect, shortcomings, or dysfunctions that might emerge there. Even though I tried to approach the issue of co-living as nuanced as possible, my rights-based perspective meant that I tended to view it more in terms of “enrichment,” “responsibility,” and similar notions, which also restricted my capacity to see the challenges of living together and the points where vegan theory might fall short. As someone who often has the desire and motivation to live with animals, and believes these should be embedded into vegan practice, I was inclined to focus on the significance and positive aspects of co-living. For this reason, I present this work as a vegan autoethnography, one that focuses on the importance of revealing the political potential of such a space with the limited capacity and biases of the ethnographer.

2.3 Lost in Translation: Unpacking the Realities of Writing on Animals

During the fieldwork, I have been trying to understand my position as an insider, or outsider, a researcher, and an animal rights activist. I started to challenge these as in a mere binary of outsider/insider and started to adopt a perspective where I sometimes use some of these categories, and sometimes others, for answering the questions that I have been thinking. After all, I was a human with a limited perspective, and my interlocutors were not only humans. The century-long discussion about being an insider in anthropology was finally hitting me and I found myself trying to “understand” or “capture” the animal perspective. I have come to terms with accepting this perspective as mistaken and how it was coming from the same idea that the colonizer anthropologist had with the “native” as the “savage”, the

“unknown”, to be “discovered” (Gonzalez 2003). The same logic works in interconnected ways where the species, gender, nature, race, and ethnicity all become intertwined, necessitating an intersectional outlook on speciesism. Acknowledging this, then, I continue to try to reflect on my position as a human, who cannot understand an animal “fully” or write about their experiences from their perspective, but as someone who understands all these as a human researcher and as able to acknowledge only other humans’ standing vis a vis the animals’ experience.

Writing about animals and attempting to prioritize their way of living and their rights is both a challenge and a great joy in this sense. It is a challenge because I have been interacting with species that I had no interaction with before, trying to have an insight into their lives, and most importantly, trying to find a *representation* in my work for their way of life. It is sometimes terrifying to try finding a way out of this speciesist hierarchy we have built so strongly that it can be seen as useless, ridiculous, or unworthy of time to write on chicken rights or on the way they live at a Vegan Farm. Our encounters with chickens, however, every time, showed me that I cannot be doing anything worthier than this. Mutual trust of humans and non-human animals, the life they are building at the Vegan Farm, the life they deserve and desire, makes every effort to live a life that is ethically informed by rights worth documenting. Having the chance to observe such life experiences, I would feel greatly honored if I could reflect on a tiny piece from that.

This part is to say that my thesis is not concerned with conveying what animals are trying to say to the reader. In fact, it specifically sets out to question the possibility of such communication while exploring ways of engaging with animals. Undoubtedly, in carrying out this inquiry, I interpret animal behaviors in certain ways as an ethnographer and as a human being. In doing so, I rely on the knowledge of the people in the sanctuary and the information they provide while also drawing from my own experiences as an animal rights activist and my communication with animals. This situation, however, is not specific to animals and writing about animals. As an ethnographer, I navigate my way through specific relations and communicate my knowledge in a *particular way* with all research participants. Therefore, it can be said that anthropological knowledge is not a fixed truth discovered or revealed by the ethnographer, but rather has an emergent ontological status that forms and emerges in a relational state with the ethnographer (Hastrup 2004). The ethnographer’s prior experiences, knowledge, identity, and many other factors engage with the ethnographic object, making the knowledge of that object reliant on the matter of perspective. The fact that animals are the primary subjects of my research does not differentiate this situation but rather offers the possibility of extending the assumed subject of culture, knowledge, and history beyond humanity.

3. VEGAN ETHOS OF SHARED LIVING: THE VEGAN FARM

Most domestic animals have become dependent on humans for their survival, and it is unlikely that they will survive alone in nature because they have been bred to live like this for centuries. It may sound reasonable and applicable for many people to adopt stray dogs and cats. It is a well-known issue that streets are not livable for them, where they can get immune diseases, starve, or be in danger due to human activities (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). However, due to the prevalence of speciesism, we do not consider taking care of cows, chickens, sheep, or many other formerly domesticated animals outside the commodity chains as companion animals. They are considered exploitable, killable, and edible. In the previous chapter, I explained why and how we should recognize these animals' rights over their lives as they are sentient beings who have subjective experiences and an interest in living. However, we also have other responsibilities towards non-human animals we live together, in addition to returning their right to live. We must co-build interspecies communities where non-human animal agencies are recognized.

In its most basic sense, I explained that veganism entails the refusal to consume any animal-derived products as a means to end animal exploitation. However, from the perspective of this practice, how should we live with other species in the world? Is it possible to imagine a reality where we leave nonhuman species to their own, liberated from our domination and domestication, and allow them to determine their own lives freely "in nature"? In this chapter, I aim to critically interrogate the notion of vegan cohabitation by reflecting on our ethical responsibilities toward non-human animals whose lives we have, in varying degrees, intervened in. I will explore the conditions and possibilities of ethically engaging with their lives and consider where and how such engagements might take place.

Living together is one of the most frequently discussed issues, both in everyday life and within the social sciences. How do we live together? What is required to establish a foundation for justice- and rights-oriented cohabitation? How can conflicts be resolved? These questions have been explored for centuries across both global and

contextual frameworks. However, such discussions have predominantly focused on co-living among human groups. When it comes to issues of co-living with formerly domesticated animals, it becomes clear that we must develop more inclusive ways of living together. Especially while envisioning a vegan future that fundamentally rejects the exploitation of animals, it is urgently needed that we consider a more comprehensive, collaborative, and justice-oriented approach to multi-species cohabitation. Vegan place-making is a relatively new concept in our lives, a practice we still rarely encounter. Around the world, vegan sanctuaries, spaces where domesticated animals are rescued from exploitative environments and cared for without being subjected to exploitation, allowing for a form of coexistence, remain few. In Turkey, the only place that currently identifies itself explicitly a vegan space as such is Vegan Farm.

Vegan Farm is a space where multispecies living is built within a network of relationships centered on care, where non-human animals live alongside humans without holding the status of property. Dynamics of the acts of care generally entail separate subjects who are at the giving or receiving end of the act. In the context of a vegan farm or a sanctuary, non-human animals are mostly the residents in need of care, and they receive care from humans. However, the dynamics of care between humans and animals can be more complex than a one-directional act of giving and receiving. At the Vegan Farm, efforts are often made to build relationships that go beyond hierarchical models in which the ‘receiver’ end of the care is considered a dependent subject with limited agency and capacity. Rather than reinforcing this hierarchical model of care, the vegan practice of co-living tries to cultivate mutual forms of presence, recognition, responsibility, and emotional exchange. Following such a model, where animals are not positioned as passive recipients but as active participants in a shared life in which the exploitative inter-species relationships are challenged, is one of the central aims of a vegan ethics of co-living. In this sense, the farm becomes a site of ethical experimentation, where care is redefined as a reciprocal and transformative practice. Such a kind of shared living is what the residents of the Vegan Farm strive to establish within their space. In this chapter, I aim to clarify what the idea of vegan co-living means at the farm, how humans at this place perceive non-human animals, and how they sustain such a way of life through the care, attention, and dedication they show towards animals.

3.1 Why and How to Live Together with Animals

Vegan Farm is established in Foça, İzmir, as a result of Sedna and Yusuf's, the human caregivers and the founders of the farm, years-long practice of veganism and their desire to create a vegan co-living place with animals. Born in İzmir in 1984, Sedna says that she became a vegetarian after the following incident during her middle school years:

In the schoolyard, I saw that horse, which was an animal we love, had died and been torn apart by dogs. I was very upset. That same day, I went to the school cafeteria during lunchtime and saw the same thing. There was a chop, as you know, the chop consists of rib bones. It was not cut into pieces. That was when I realized that the animal I ate and the animal I loved were the same. That was when I decided to stop eating animals.

Coming of age, Sedna did not see vegetarianism as sufficient, seeing that animal suffering endures within all practices that use animals. This is why she became vegan. Her motivation to live with rescued animals has been her dream since childhood:

Since I became a vegetarian, I have had a dream that animals would be saved from exploitation and that we could live together in a nice place, so what I am doing now is something that I have dreamed of since my middle school years. And I planned my life according to this dream. When the time came, we were able to somehow get out of the city and create this life for ourselves.

Born in 1977, Yusuf says he has been sensitive towards animals and an animal lover for a long time. Worked as a scenarist for years and graduated from dramatic writing, he mentions his undergraduate thesis was focused on humans' intervention in animals' nature and ecology. Until he became acquainted with veganism, Yusuf says he realized an inconsistency in his life, loving and exploiting animals at the same time. Living in İstanbul for years, they decided to establish a vegan farm, and as Sedna said, they have researched creating such a space for years. After Sedna's family vacated their land in Foça, they took this opportunity to transform the area into a vegan co-living space.

One thing that encouraged Sedna to initiate their dream was the existence of Angels Farm Sanctuary in İzmir. She says that when she saw their efforts at the sanctuary,

she felt more convinced that such a thing could be done. Founded in Ankara 26 years ago, Angels Farm Sanctuary, declaring itself as the first and largest farm animal sanctuary in Turkey, has been operating in İzmir for the last 9 years (Angels Farm Sanctuary n.d.). Taking care of a total of 6500 animals from 165 different species in need of care, the sanctuary takes in animals who have been victims of violence, are disabled, and are elderly. This type of organization should not be compared to a smaller-scale facility like the Vegan Farm. Vegan Farm is largely managed by Sedna and Yusuf's own economic means and the proceeds from the film festivals they organize every year on the farm. What they have been telling me is that they adjusted the space in accordance with their capabilities, and economic and human capital.

Another key factor that distinguishes this space from other sanctuaries is that the farm is entirely vegan. I have not come across any other sanctuaries that have a stance on being vegan or living vegan. Therefore, Vegan Farm's declaration of being vegan was the primary reason for doing this study there. My starting point for this research was my personal and academic interest in living with animals as a vegan. I embarked on this line of research to learn how vegans, and specifically vegan theory, relate to the practice of multispecies co-living, and the vegan farm, as a field with such a vision, caught my attention from the start. Among all the sanctuaries and other multispecies co-living spaces I had contact with, three in total, to be exact, the most feasible option for me was also the Vegan Farm. I was going to be able to do my research and work as a volunteer while being able to stay within the farm's terrain.

Vegan Farm presents itself as a space for living together with species that require human care and that cannot survive in nature by themselves for several reasons. In their case, the species they live with are mostly chickens. First and foremost, chickens are domesticated animals. They are bred in particular ways to increase human interests. Some chickens are bred in a way that their bodies can 'produce' 250-300 eggs per year. Some, on the other hand, are bred for their flesh to be consumed as 'food'. In the modern world, chickens are "de-natured, de-personalized, and de-animalized," and their value is determined only in their relation to becoming "disposable egg-making machines" (Potts 2012, 139). With monitoring different chicken breeds and selective breeding, chickens are separated for "egg-farming" and "meat" (Potts 2012, 144). All these processes have rendered *the chicken* as a species with various chronic diseases, painful joints, and vitamin D deficiency, debeaked and exploited in every way possible. With this reality in our faces, a domesticated chicken, in today's world, does not have the means to survive in nature on their own.

Like having responsibilities towards any other domesticated animal, Vegan Farm embarked on its journey by acknowledging this responsibility towards chickens, but also ducks, dogs, donkeys, goats, and rabbits on their farm, and they aim for a future where there are more spaces that different species can live together. Sedna tells about their prioritization of chickens on the farm as follows:

When we first established this space, we prioritized chickens. One reason for this is that they are a species that is often disregarded. For example, it is not right to talk through numbers, but there is still the thing: if a thousand cows are exploited, a hundred thousand chickens are exploited. And because cows are mammals, we feel closer to them, empathize with them, and so on. We feel more distant from species like chickens and fish. This is why we wanted to prioritize chickens. Of course, chickens are also easier to rescue in terms of logistics. They are easy to transport. And now, when a chicken goes missing from the farm [exploitative places where animals are rescued by activists], it is no big deal for the farmer. However, when a cow goes missing, the whole village is notified, the gendarmerie is notified, and so on...

Before arriving, I mostly imagined the farm as a hub for interspecies care where relationships are built and sustained through *acts of caring*. While this was indeed true, my fieldwork at the Vegan Farm pushed me to think more about the ethical foundations of these caring relations. Everyone I spoke with, and every interaction I observed, prompted questions not just about how care was practiced, but why it mattered in the first place. Why should one care about a chicken's life and well-being? Why invest so much thought and effort into rethinking co-living with other animals? And more fundamentally, is it even possible to build ethical relationships with formerly farmed, domesticated animals, beings whose histories are deeply entangled with human exploitation?

At the intersection of animal rights theory and the practice of veganism lies the spaces of multispecies togetherness where animals are considered as individuals with rights and dignity in our communities. The "vegan" in the name of the sanctuary denotes the non-exploitative relationship between humans and non-human animals living in this space. "Sanctuary", on the other hand, is a place where animals in need are taken care of. Most animals in sanctuaries are rescued from places of exploitation and death; they are injured, sick, or in any other way in need of human assistance to survive and thrive in a world that is made impossible for them to live in. However, according to Sedna and Yusuf, this way of living on the farm is not a form of co-living that we should maintain forever. Rather, once a vegan future is achieved, it will no longer be necessary for us to intervene in other species' lives.

For now, it is simply a space where animals in need are cared for during what they see as a kind of “transitional period.” Sedna explains this as follows:

But once we reach the ultimate goal, the existence of something like this would, on the contrary, be a bad thing. That’s why such things will gradually evolve into something more accurate, more proper. But for now, this is what we have.

When I asked them about the future they envision, Sedna continued to explain it as follows:

A place where humans do not interfere, where animals can live on their own without human involvement, where some species will go extinct if they are meant to, and others will not if they are not. In the future, of course, there will be no need for something like this.

In the Vegan Farm, animals are considered co-residents of the farm. Their preferences, dislikes, comfort, and health are prioritized as much as, and sometimes even more than, the humans living on the farm. None of the animals are used as property, which means eggs that belong to chickens belong to chickens, donkeys are not used as “carriage”, nor turkeys are seen as an alternative “low-fat dinner”. A vegan co-residency means that no sentient being is considered property, and everyone is a living feeling individual who deserves to experience life under their own interests. Sedna and Yusuf, although declared as a sanctuary, say that their place is primarily a ‘Vegan Farm’ where people and animals live a vegan life. They define a Vegan Farm as a place where animals live freely and in accordance with what their species requires. Sedna describes what this means as follows:

Now. Every sentient being has rights. The right to live, the right to live under conditions appropriate to its species, and the right to reproduce under conditions appropriate to its species. Three of these are included in the right to live. The others are the rights such as not suffering, shelter, and nutrition... Not providing appropriate conditions for their species seems ethically lacking to me...

Indeed, Sedna and Yusuf differentiate their ‘way of living’ at the Vegan Farm from the first day onwards, aiming to achieve those species-appropriate conditions. This includes providing sufficient space for animals to thrive. However, assigning what those ‘species-appropriate’ conditions correspond to is not always easy, and it re-

quires serious time and energy allocation to pinpoint the specific needs of animals. These needs might include providing a safe space, freeing the environment from potential dangers, creating a space to eat, play, and mate, or providing them with an environment where they can socialize with, or can be isolated from, other species on the farm. To achieve this, one needs to gather knowledge not only about species' anatomy, their way of living, and their standing within the broader ecosystems, but also about every individual animal's special needs, since not all belonging to a species require the same treatment. For instance, most of the chickens at the sanctuary are not fond of socializing with other species, including humans. They prefer to keep their distance, often socializing with other chickens unless it is feeding time. Yet, few others love to perch on our shoulders, hang around us, and observe our daily activities. This is why some chickens need more touches, cuddles, gentle talking, and spaces designated to socialize with humans, while some need a quiet space to isolate themselves from the rest of the residents. These individual differences not only shape daily care practices but also influence broader ethical decisions about cohabitation, resource allocation, and the ways humans intervene in animals' lives. This is also significant in understanding the farm's approach to animal reproduction and the ethics of controlling it. As Yusuf puts it:

When we first arrived, for example, we wanted to prevent their reproduction, a matter on which we find ourselves in contradiction. . . . Of course, resources are also an important factor here.

He emphasizes that chickens, and in general, other birds, can live in ways that are appropriate to their species at the farm without any need to intervene in their reproduction. According to him, allowing animals like their donkey friend Karaçi to reproduce would bring about much more demanding responsibilities for them. Bigger-in-size animals like Karaçi, whose needs are harder to meet, require more intensive care work and resources. In addition, reproduction among mammals such as Karaçi might also pose different health risks for them. This is why, for Yusuf, sterilization is a context-dependent process that should be evaluated in light of the needs of the animals, conditions of space, and available economic resources. For instance, he notes that if they were living in a forest where they could offer wider spaces and resources to animals, it would be easier to live with animals like Karaçi without resorting to sterilization or other means of reproduction control.

This is why, except for a few cats and dogs under their care, they do not follow any method of controlling reproduction at the Vegan Farm. For chickens, Sedna notes, controlling reproduction would only be possible through body implants, which are

only protective for a year. According to her accounts, this method is common in Europe and the U.S. but not in Turkey, and therefore, their practices cannot compare to those who have access to these resources. The lack of financial means, the absence of implants in Turkey, and the lack of veterinary knowledge cause this situation. Additionally, the perception of chickens as bodies to be eaten or for their egg production rather than as “pets” dulls this perspective. According to Sedna, in the U.S., especially in areas outside city centers, the term “backyard chicken” reflects a system where chickens are simultaneously treated like pets and exploited. Yet, the prevalence of this backyard chicken-care hobby might be one of the reasons why implants and other veterinary practices are more developed there than in Turkey, as Sedna suggests.

Their perspective on animal reproduction at the Vegan Farm holds a significant place in understanding what can and cannot, or should and should not, be controlled in shared living arrangements with other species. Many sanctuaries, especially when used for the conservation efforts for ‘wildlife’, apply control mechanisms in which animals’ individual needs are disregarded in favor of so-called population management (Tavella 2025). This is why, due to the existence of many modes of multispecies co-living, and due to almost all these methods being in some way focused on human interests rather than animal lives, contemplating the meaning of a vegan space is essential. Welfarist sanctuaries, conservation areas, zoos, streets, and many other places offer instances where humans and animals encounter each other and coexist. However, when we consider which one of these practices incorporates respect and care for animals, the picture we confront is not quite as desirable.

Within vegan literature, our minimum obligation toward animals is cited as removing them from the status of property and returning their right to live and prosper. However, when it comes to living with formerly domesticated animals who are freed from their property status, it becomes evident that we need more nuanced and contextual discussions about what these rights mean in practice, as illustrated by spaces like Vegan Farm. For domesticated animals who are no longer able to survive independently, many animal rights activities argue that we should sterilize them, take responsibility for their care, and work towards reducing their dependency on us as much as possible (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). This idea is more visibly practiced with companion species such as cats and dogs, with whom we are more accustomed to cohabiting. Sterilization is often said to ensure healthier lives for these animals and, in the long run, to increase the chances of their eventual independence from human care. Yet is it truly that simple for all species we come to live with? When health and well-being of animals are not at stake, is controlling the reproduction of animals, and thus, potentially preventing the continuation of their

species in the distant future, a sufficient or ethically sound solution?

The living conditions of animals, how we should live with them, and where and how we apply protective control over their lives are issues that demand a deeper, more nuanced process of thought and action. This is especially true when we envision a vegan future where animal exploitation is abolished. In their influential book *Zoopolis* (2011), Donaldson and Kymlicka develop a political model of multi-species cohabitation that seeks to address such complexities, emphasizing the need to rethink our responsibilities toward animals in ways that go beyond simplistic one-size-fits-all solutions. According to their model, citizenship must not be based on cognitivist restrictions, which were already challenged by disability studies (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). They reject the cognitivist approach because it restricts agency to a narrow existence where participation in a political community is only sustained through rational thinking and reflection on political goals and aspirations. If we were not to challenge this, people with intellectual disabilities would not be included as citizens in political schemes either. Rather, what their political model focuses on is the diversity of practicing agency other than rational reflection, especially through the practice of trust:

“At the heart of these new accounts of the capacities for citizenship is the idea of trust-based ‘dependent agency’. In this view, even the severely cognitively disabled have the capacity for agency, but it is agency that is exercised in and through relations with particular others in whom they trust, and who have the skills and knowledge needed to recognize and assist the expression of agency” (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, 104)

Similarly, animals and humans form cooperative and participatory relationships through ongoing relations of trust (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011), which constitute a basis for animals’ inclusion in political communities. They differentiate their model of citizenship from a wardship where animals are treated as passive recipients by humans, offering a possibility of “co-writing of the community’s laws and institutions” through an embodied and relational citizenship model (2011, 102). Thus, this model enables a future where animals are included in the decision-making processes for their rights, and it allows us to listen to more-than-human subjectivities. These mutual relationships already exist in everyday life. Domesticated animals can communicate their preferences, interests, and dislikes to humans. They show happiness, excitement, anger, disinterest, or sadness in ways that humans recognize. Yet, what this political model offers is an answer to the need for systemic political recognition, extending these rights to all animals, including domesticated animals whose exploitation is normalized.

The establishment of these political institutions and inclusion of animals as co-citizens in our political communities cannot be thought of as only related to macro-political spheres but rather exists in everyday life politics where we observe and interpret each other's acts, connect, and form trustworthy relationships with non-human animals. Vegan Farm is such a space where they enable a locally rooted network of relations that offers both hope and knowledge regarding the viability of such a community. After all, it is one small-scale Vegan Farm, but its aim aligns, perhaps closely, with what *Zoopolis* envisions. They are building and sustaining the community through embodied relations, where animals' desires and preferences, fluid, communicative, and evolving, shape their multi-species collective life. Such initiatives are essential for fostering multispecies communities, and political models of co-living. The way people at the farm live with chickens, donkeys, goats, and turkeys transforms the farm into a hub of practical knowledge and experience, a model for how we might take steps toward, or within, a vegan world, whether animals are recognized as citizens or as individuals with an agency, in the future.

I repeatedly talk about how the animals on the Vegan Farm are not treated as "passive recipients" but rather as active participant subjects in daily life, and how the people at the farm consider their agency. As in *Zoopolis*, animals are like 'co-citizens' within everyday politics. First, it is a fact that the animals living here are species mostly dependent on humans, and that humans have a dominant role in decision-making within the terrain. After all, chickens are not building their own coops and living in them independent from humans. To formulate what kind of dependency is at place, I first want to discuss the concept of *dependence* as we understand it and then talk about the routines at the farm to explore how animals practice certain forms of agency.

Building on Martha Nussbaum's *Frontiers of Justice* (Nussbaum 2007), Taylor (2017) examines how traditional social contract theory fails to account for groups like disabled individuals, nonhuman animals, and people from different nationalities. Accordingly, the social contract assumes that individuals enter into agreements as equals in a "state of nature," where no one dominates another due to equal physical and mental capacities. Yet this assumption ignores the real-life asymmetries between men and women, the disabled and able-bodied, and between humans and nonhuman animals (Nussbaum 2007). It also disregards how individuals are dependent on each other in the making of this so-called social contract. The social contract, accordingly, is portrayed as a pact between independent, able-bodied individuals with articulated preferences. In this picture, everyone agrees on the contract with the expectation of mutual benefit, which disabled individuals and non-human animals may not necessarily provide. Thus, Nussbaum (2007) suggests a more com-

plex understanding of the cooperation of communities, which depends on things like love, respect, and compassion rather than mutual benefit.

In this sense, communities consist of interdependent *bodies* that entangle with each other through mutual trust. However, trust can only occur through a complex process and requires a certain degree of relationality within these communities. Building relationships with animals, whether at the micro or macro level, takes time. In particular, the dependence of formerly farmed animals on humans makes these relations more fragile and renders building trust an urgent matter for interspecies community-building. At Vegan Farm, many animals have traumatic experiences; some are rescued from fires, some from exploitative environments, and some from roadways where humans have abandoned them. It is particularly essential to attend to their needs when they arrive at the farm.

Unfortunately, the three dogs at the farm, Tofu, Tarçın and Winter, had an experience like that when they were found by Sedna and Yusuf as puppies, stuffed into a sealed sack abandoned on the roadside. When I first got to the farm, it was clear from their anxious barking that they were feeling uneasy when someone they did not know arrived at the farm. In their early days at the farm, Sedna says they did not even approach them the slightest, as they did not feel safe due to what they had been through. Gradually, they began coming closer during feeding times, and eventually started to interact with humans, seeking affection and moving around with them. As I said, when I first arrived, they were very hesitant toward me as well. I was the one feeding them, just like other animals, during my time there. It took a few days for them to get to know me and trust me enough to eat the food I prepared. In the beginning, Yusuf and I would call them together at feeding times, and at the end of my stay there, they were coming straight to my voice at meal-times. We would play and run around with Tofu and walk on the farm together. Knowing that it took them time to trust people, I felt honored to have earned that trust. Despite the human cruelty they faced, they still trust people, reminding us that when there is a will, it is possible to create the necessary conditions for living together. Yet, what kind of will is needed to establish this space?

As said before, chickens, but in general, all animals living on the farm, do not have much to ‘offer’ for humans at the Vegan Farm through the lens of benefit. Many people have been asking me, ‘then why?’, ‘why keep chickens at the farm if we are not going to take their eggs, kill and eat them for dinner?’. Sedna and Yusuf’s statements for this question seem to align with Nussbaum’s social contract theory. It appears that their motivation to live together with the chickens primarily stems from a sense of social justice we owe to animals, as well as the joy and satisfaction they derive from caring for them and coexisting with them, and the love they feel

for them. Sedna says that they have been feeling the urge to initiate a place to take care of animals:

And I mean, I just said I want to do something for them. By getting involved in something, somehow, at least... You know how we always say, 'What would even happen if we got them out of there [exploitative spaces]?' I thought it was something that *could* happen, and that we really need to start making it happen now...

In this sense, their way of cooperating with non-human animals is motivated by a sense of social justice and an urge to be a part of that as soon as possible. This stems from a respect for the animals as individuals who have the right to their lives without exploitation. Yet, non-human animals' vulnerability renders them dependent, which humans use as an excuse for exploitation (Taylor 2017). Dependency, in this way, is a factor sustaining our exploitative relationship with other species. The exploitative dynamic between animals and humans is mostly portrayed as mutually beneficial because animals' lives are said to be dependent on animal agriculture. The happy cows in advertisements seem quite pleased to give us their milk, and the chickens who are graciously allowed to 'roam freely' are portrayed as 'offering' us their eggs. In our discussions, many non-vegan friends have been telling me how it is beneficial for cows to be milked, justifying the situation, as if they have extra milk for us, and this process will make them feel better. Many I spoke with did not know that cows produce milk after giving birth and that their milk belongs to the calves. Various similar arguments are made for the justification of animal abuse.

This problematic portrayal legitimates animals' property status by showing as if animals' welfare and happiness are not compromised under exploitative conditions. Their dependency on humans and vulnerability are used for human interests. If the living conditions of animals are to be improved, it should not be through ways that people consider their own interests, but from a place where animal rights are prioritized. Because a little exploitation is still exploitation. Trying to benefit from chickens by taking their eggs in an area where they are said to roam 'freely' shows that we still see them as property, and it is not possible to restore their right to life under these circumstances. Yet, it is also not completely sound to sterilize all formerly domesticated animals, and they should cease to exist in the end. It is true that formerly domesticated animals are rendered dependent on humans and cannot live without our assistance in nature. However, this dependency can also be shaped in a way that does not harm the animals nor take advantage of their vulnerability in a vegan setting, by showing how interdependent living between humans and animals

can be enriching for both.

Because domestication of animals entailed their capture, enslaving, and breeding to fulfill human needs, many animal rights theorists argue that domestication represents a violation of animals' negative rights (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). Humans domesticated these animals according to their own desires and for their benefit, making them dependent on humans. From this perspective, it is not possible to reform our relationship with domesticated animals; instead, the focus should be on ending their dependence on us. All animals should live "in the wild," out there, freely and independently from humans. In contrast, Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2011) model does not see dependency as inherently negative. Rather, they emphasize that it can be interpreted contextually and that relationships of dependency can be reformed into non-exploitative relationships. Even animals considered "wild" may be among those most affected by human activities. By recognizing these different situations, they argue, we can develop more nuanced interpretations of dependency. Yusuf explains their approach to this as follows:

You know, there is always this question asked: What will happen to all the animals if we do not exploit them? Suggesting that they will go extinct. I mean, they won't go extinct because we can build a happy life together while living with them. I think this place, through exemplifying this, shows one of the positive aspects of activism.

Providing a space for ethical interspecies relations, Vegan Farm shows the *way* towards a vegan world, in this way. One of the aims of the farm is to set an example for the rest, showing a way *out* of the slaughterhouse. Whether they are individuals, civil society, or political bodies working to better our relations with animals, living with animals without exploitation is an urgent topic that needs action. This is why I evaluate this space as a micro-political model with the potential to guide our interspecies relations, encourage building vegan spaces of co-living, and an activist method through an embodied everyday practice of living.

Just like Yusuf says, focusing on the inevitability of animal-human interaction all around the world, including the 'wild nature', what Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) offer is to think about the relational duties and our interdependence in cases where it is impossible to 'leave animals alone' in nature out there. Our lives are much complexly entangled with domesticated animals, and also with 'liminal' animals as they suggest, so we can build an ethically informed community where animals' positive rights are also considered. Through such a perspective, it is possible to think of a rights-based option for multispecies co-living which is informed by human-

animal relationalities. This is an ever-changing process where our ethical reality is not only based on the sensibility of animals but also is inspired by the way they sense this world, how they engage with humans, and our entangled togetherness. I consider the changing dynamics within the Vegan Farm as exemplifying these entanglements.

Sedna and Yusuf have been vegan for almost 10 years, and Sedna says it was her dream to live in a space with non-human animals who are rescued from exploitation since then. However, from what they say, I infer more than just an individual and maybe a ‘private’ attempt at having rescued animals as ‘pets’ at their farm. Their efforts to live with chickens also set an example for the possibility of building multi-species communities for others. Twice a year, Vegan Farm organizes a Vegan Camp and Film Festival, providing an opportunity for nearly 75–100 individuals to experience the space, observe daily routines, and interact with non-human animals in a setting free from exploitation. They also accept volunteers who want to undertake care responsibilities. They also build various networks with animal rights groups that rescue animals. Thus, their space becomes a home for hundreds of animals, but also their attempt to create such a space can serve as a model or inspiration for others.

Beyond being a site of encounter and encouragement for other vegans to embrace this practice, the farm also has the potential to shape its surroundings. As the farm is located in a rural area, there are small and large-scale livestock farms in the surrounding area. While each of these farms is mostly isolated, neighborly relationships and daily encounters within the village can serve as an informative model for others. Some people do not initially realize that eggs are not being used. Although Sedna rejected them before, some neighbors even requested and wanted to buy eggs of geese or chickens for themselves. Discussing these issues opens up space for explaining veganism and why they do not use animals’ eggs. This renders the farm, beyond its goal of coexistence, as a transforming hub through activism for the place they live in.

These discussions can also facilitate negotiation with other farmers. In one of their Instagram posts (Vegan Çiftlik 2023), they mention a goat living on a neighboring farm, just like the only goat who used to live at the Vegan Farm, Tapir. After introducing this duo, they started visiting each other’s farm, wishing that they would become friends. Regular encounters like these with neighbors can foster conversations about animal rights, and by providing a direct example of how animals live on the farm, they can also inspire those living and farming around the farm to engage in similar relationalities. So, Vegan Farm has the potential to directly impact practices in its surrounding area, beyond the visitors of camps and festivals within the farm.

Apart from contributing to social justice for animals and presenting a micro-political model for vegan co-living, there is also the joy and happiness Yusuf and Sedna feel for living in such a space simply because they love animals and they enjoy being with them. On several occasions, both Yusuf and Sedna talked about how they feel loved by animals and that they feel good when they take care of them. Whenever we speak about specific memories they have with animals, they smile, different stories cheer them up, and they give nicknames to animals with particular characteristics. As Sedna puts it:

I feel like there's something in this for me too: to be honest, it feels like a way to redeem a darker part of myself. And living with them here doesn't just bring them joy, it brings me joy too. I mean, when I step outside in the morning, I have a reason to smile. That's the inner side of it. When I see them digging around under the sun, I feel happy. That's the inner aspect for me.

During our chats, Yusuf also points to this 'inner aspect'. Just like being friends with humans you live with, you just become friends with a chicken or with a donkey, he says. Rather than perceiving non-human animals as merely individuals they take care of, they see them as 'housemates' with whom they share the land. Further, for Yusuf, living together is not only beneficial for the animals they live with but also for themselves. Living with chickens has extra benefits. Yusuf and Sedna not only live with animals in this space, but they also grow olives, figs, and other plants. Chickens, as Yusuf says, aerate the soil when they dig to find food and have a soil bath.

This is probably one of the reasons why they often emphasize that their space is not so much a sanctuary, but rather a farm where humans and animals live together in a vegan way. They mention their goal of co-existence with other species within the farm in several of our chats. According to their accounts, this renders them different from other animal sanctuaries. Animal sanctuaries commonly serve as places of rehabilitation and care for animals who are in need. Although all animals in Vegan Farm are rescued from exploitation and are all in need of care from humans to survive, the farm does not claim to be rescuing as many animals as they can. They suggest Vegan Farm is a place where they open a space in their home for other species to live according to what their species requires. Yusuf had the analogy of a hospital emergency or a nursing home for other animal sanctuaries, while referring to Vegan Farm almost as a private hospital. While doing this, they generally point to the material capacities they have on the farm. Sedna explains the difference between a Vegan Farm and a sanctuary as follows:

I think the dynamics are different. In a sanctuary, the goal is to rescue animals, from death, from suffering, sickness, or exploitation. However, the rest, living together, comes later there. Here, the priority is to live in a vegan way [veganca yaşamak]. Without benefiting from them, without harming, without intervention, or with minimum intervention. After all, we live with a species that we altered drastically. We need to have a little intervention for chickens to sustain their lives. Otherwise, this is not possible. So we aim for a vegan way of living without excessive intervention at the Vegan Farm, meaning that the motivations of the two are different.

Other animal sanctuaries, such as Angels Farm, also get donations (Angels Farm Sanctuary n.d.), which makes them materially more capable of caring for more animals in their area. Further, they seem to have a different philosophy where they focus on rescuing as many animals as they can, which sometimes can have different effects on the living conditions of the rescued animals. On the other hand, only two humans live and care for animals in Vegan Farm, which limits the number of animals residing on the farm. However, this kind of arrangement makes it easier for them to take care of animals who need special care more thoroughly. Although there are activists who are aiming to help through buying food or volunteering at the farm, they do not actively get donations. Usually, animal rights activists are aware of such a space from activist networks, and they know they can reach out to the farm in case of an emergency or if they are looking for a place to stay for an animal they rescued.

Sedna mentioned that most of the chickens arrived at the farm during fires in Milas, Muğla, in 2021. As a result of Animal Save Turkey's rescue efforts, approximately 150 chickens and roosters were brought here by activists. Animal Save Turkey, being part of the global Save Movement, is a non-governmental organization carrying out activist efforts on animal rights, the climate crisis, and food security (Animal Save Turkey n.d.). They have established branches in İstanbul, İzmir, Eskişehir, and Ankara since 2019. Animal Save activists not only brought animals from the Milas fires, but they have continued to bring rescued animals from all around Turkey. Sedna says that, through Animal Save's posts on social media and their continuous networking, new people got to know Vegan Farm, resulting in more activists being in contact with the farm. Accordingly, activists involved in animal rescue efforts are aware of Vegan Farm and they contact them in case of need. This is how most animals arrived on the farm. This is why Vegan Farm also serves as a safe hub for vegan activists, who know that the animals they would bring here would live in safety and comfort.

In this section, I explored the motivations behind establishing the Vegan Farm

and their ethical rationale for multispecies shared living in the farm. Looking at the farm’s relationship with its rural setting, activist circles, and individuals, I focused on the potential benefits of encounters with and within the Vegan Farm. I demonstrated that Vegan Farm, within its context, serves as a knowledge hub for both its residents and those outside the farm. Thus, through the everyday practice of vegan place-making, Vegan Farm provides guidance for co-living. At the same time, from a micro perspective, it serves as an example for larger models of political coexistence.

3.2 Caring as Knowing a Chicken

Human-animal relations within the Vegan Farm occur mainly through the act of caring. In its most general terms, Tronto and Fisher (Tronto 2020) define care as “a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible”. Through continuous interspecies care, the Vegan Farm extends the speciesist discourse surrounding our communities and considers non-human animals as sharing members of our communities and, thus, recipients of care. Accordingly, in this chapter, I aim to make use of the ‘ethics of care’ as a political tool for building trusting relations with non-human animals. I will analyze how care is positioned within these relations as a catalyst to get to know the unknown “other”, non-human animals, and share a life with them. I argue that care, in all these meanings, has the potential to make us closer in multispecies communities and build solidarity with animals.

Care is assigned to “femininity” and placed against the normative notions of masculinity (Larrabee 2016), and it is associated with the potentiality of ‘certain bodies’ which are capable of caring for others inherently by nature. By this association, care is despised and its overarching capacity for more-than-human worlds is disregarded within patriarchy. Rather than abiding by these constructed associations of care with the body of the woman or with femininity, feminist thinkers acknowledge and reclaim this potential critically. To do this is to first expose the constructedness of this terminology through the assumption of the ‘nature’ of sexed bodies. The physical cues and behaviors that we use to determine what constitutes a man or a woman are already entwined with our gender concepts (Fausto-Sterling 2000). Attributing affective components such as care, empathy, and sympathy to women and aggressiveness and intimidation to men is already embedded in the construction of those binary categories, as such, in the first place, which tries to naturalize and

justify certain gender hierarchies that are used in favor of patriarchy. Yet, care can be positioned outside of those relations that patriarchal systems establish. Care can be given to or received from any ‘body’.

Focusing on the everydayness of embodied experiences for human and more-than-human experiences has the potential to expand the spectrum of who we care for (Gillespie 2014). Care, with empathy and sympathy, establishes us as affectively responsible individuals towards one another and opens space for alternative ways of being together. Rather than positioning in opposition to rational thinking, I conceptualize care as emerging with and reliant on reasoning, which challenges the binary of reason vs. emotion. Jasper (2008), similarly, considers emotions as part of rational thinking and action, suggesting that emotions are socially constructed in the sense that they have meanings only in particular circumstances, they are bound up with beliefs and contexts, and are open to change. In this way, rather than ‘preventing’ rational action, emotions exist with and through them in a web of complicated entanglements.

The notion of empathy and sympathy lies at the center of this conceptualization, where who we choose to care, who we perceive as ‘good to care’, or how we care lies at the center of contemplations based on historical, cultural, and personal complexities. Thus, in interspecies care, there are various ways of contemplating how to be together with and how to care for other species. As Donovan (2017) says, we do understand and *know* that animals “do not wish to be slaughtered, eaten, tortured, or otherwise harmfully interfered with”. This *knowing* can inform many decisions that we make about the lives of animal others and how we care about them. Vegan Farm is such a space of negotiations for meaningful interspecies dialogues.

Tronto (Tronto 2020) differentiates care from *protection* on one level, suggesting that care is grounded in others’ needs and concerns, while protection does not inherently entail considering the concerns of others. When Sedna feeds chickens as they come and ask for food through various gestures, e.g., running behind her when they see a vegetable in her hand, Sedna thinks about their hunger needs and the show concerns about the type of food they would like. Here, care is performed through the consideration of another’s needs, which entails listening to their voice, hearing what they say, and acting accordingly. On the other hand, we might *protect* animals without necessarily taking into consideration their needs. This is especially true for the context of animal exploitation, in which animals’ safety is protected as a means to human profit and interests. If a cow goes missing, this affects the whole milk-production process, jeopardizing the farmer’s profits. In Turkish, we have a word used for when a farmed animal, as someone’s property, passes out. The word *telef* is used not only to indicate that the animal is dead but also that there is something,

a property, that has been “wasted” or “frittered”. The word is also used in everyday life to describe something that is wasted. Here, there might not be genuine *care about* the actual well-being and safety of animals, but the thing that is wasted is the money of the property owner. However, in some contexts, we witness care and violence at the same time. Those giving names to cows they milk, or becoming friends with chickens before killing them, pose a dilemma just like that. What Francione (Francione 2000) calls “moral schizophrenia”, seeing animals as morally significant but still exploiting them, fits this situation. Thus, care and protection together do not entail an ethical relationship between caregiver and receiver.

In some contexts, protection may also be an inherent condition for care. Sometimes, we think of animals’ safety when they are not even aware of certain dangers or do not show any indication that they want to be protected. However, it is still their need for safety that Sedna and Yusuf consider when they build fences around the farm so that chickens won’t be able to walk away and get hit by cars or harmed by predators. In these contexts, protecting becomes part of the caring process. However, the meaning of care, here, also becomes caring about someone else, their safety, and their needs. What is also different in these contexts is that animals’ way of communication might not be clearly understood or interpreted by humans, and they also might not be good at expressing their needs to us or contemplating them as we do. However, we already know from various other interactions that animals avoid harming themselves, and they move away from danger when they perceive one. Just like human infants cannot convey their every need and concern to grown-ups, we have some barriers to our communication with animals, too, in which we need to interpret, step up, and speak on their behalf. Nevertheless, for this ‘stepping up’ to occur in an ethical and trustworthy togetherness, the caregiver should always prioritize concerns for the well-being and safety of the care-receiver. Sedna and Yusuf continuously engage with the needs of the animals on the farm to ensure they feel safe and happy. This makes it essential to pay attention to what animals say and what the surroundings, living space, and other animals’ presence tell about the situation they are in.

Through various interspecies negotiations, care practices in the Vegan Farm comprise a large portion of the day. The care given to animals by humans goes beyond being just a part of the daily routine. It is a process that serves as a communication tool between humans and animals, and through care, all species contribute to interspecies dialogue, knowledge production, and transfer. In the farm, tasks like feeding the animals, caring for sick animals, and closely monitoring their conditions are generally Sedna’s responsibility. Yusuf, on the other hand, is more involved in tasks such as ensuring the animals’ food is provided, preparing meals for the dogs, and handling

maintenance and repair work. In different ways, all of these responsibilities involve different care work. While I was volunteering there, tasks were carried out based on the needs of the day, with the person doing them trying to address the tasks according to their capacity, preference, and knowledge.

The way these processes unfold, where the actors, whether non-human or human, come together collectively on how to work through the care process, aligns with what Barad (2003) refers to as agential realism. She argues that the processes of knowing and being are inseparable and that reality is not something to be discovered but rather something enacted through the entanglement of human, nonhuman, and material forces, shaped by interactions between material and discursive elements. Therefore, there is no subject, agency, or matter prior to the interaction, and we do not acquire knowledge by standing apart from the material world; rather, we come to know it as being an intrinsic part of its becoming (Barad 2003). In the Vegan Farm, what kind of knowledge about chicken care is produced and enacted cannot be separated from how the human and animal residents of the sanctuary actively, through their embodied encounters, shape its existence. Knowledge, in this sense, is incorporated in everyday life through an ongoing process of remaking the world we live in (de La Bellacasa 2017).

Yet, Barad's emphasis on the *matter* is not limited to human and animal subjects; it encompasses matter's physical, biological, and discursive elements as well as how they are all dynamically involved in the process of becoming (2003). I will try to illustrate this through an everyday morning routine at the Vegan Farm. From the outside, and sometimes as part of these rituals, opening the doors of the chicken coops in the morning seems like a simple routine. However, on any given morning at the farm, the time you wake up and open the chicken coops can determine your entire day. Temporality, beyond just referring to the time chickens can go outside, is a crucial element that shapes your entire relationship with them, determines their trust in you, and perhaps even decides how your relationship with them will unfold throughout that day.

The chickens waking up with the sunrise and craving sunlight can offer some clues about how they feel that morning. For me, walking about 400-500 meters from my warm bed, from the volunteer house where I stay, to open those doors meant something different for them: eating, basking in the sun to get their vitamins, and being able to roam freely outdoors. The previous day's feeding time, how much they ate, whether there is a sick chicken in the coop that morning, which is about the relationality of microscopic forces in their bodies, the time I closed the coop the night before, and so on, all determine what will happen when I open that door on that particular day. This reality cannot be imagined separately from my own, the

chickens', or any other discursive and material forces at the sanctuary.

What moves me, physically and emotionally, to get up and open the doors of those is my feeling of responsibility. I am rendered responsible, not simply by someone or something, but as an ongoing process of responsabilizing myself, the chickens, the sanctuary, and Sedna. Barad (2010) emphasizes the relational entanglements giving rise to the responsibility, suggesting them as inherent aspects of *being*, and preceding the intentional conscious decisions we make. For them, thinking is not a disembodied activity in this sense, and touching, through all inanimate or animate life forms, renders us as response-able (Barad 2012). This relationality is a complex and evolving engagement, one that perhaps began even earlier, but was notably that day when Sedna first chose to become a vegetarian, when she associated the horse with the body of a cow on her plate. It is present today in her acts of care, when she is preparing medicine for the sick chickens she encounters.

Upon arriving at the sanctuary, Sedna becomes fully attentive to the animals, observing them intently with curiosity and care from the first day onwards. She tries to get to know them, first approaching carefully, trying not to cross any boundary or make a move that can scare the new members of the sanctuary. After their arrival, many chickens look uneasy and scared, especially those who have never had the chance to be with their own species. For some, this is the first time they have ever seen another chicken. If she had the chance to know where chickens come from, Sedna would act accordingly. It is crucial at this stage that she reads their behaviors and reactions so that they can experience a smoother integration. This is something she acquired, something she now does intuitively, as I observe.

Before their integration, chickens are kept in a separate quarantine area to ensure they are healthy and ready to live with others. This is crucial to prevent any epidemic at the farm but also makes it easier for newcomers to adjust to the space before interacting with others. Thus, they only interact with Sedna for a few weeks. As she feeds animals two times a day, she spends a considerable amount of time around new residents to get to know them and to be able to notice anything unusual, such as a loss of appetite or a change of behavior. Sedna's manners, posture, and voice are different around these newcomers. She acts timidly, taking slow and careful steps while approaching the chickens. She does not want to disturb or scare them, so she speaks in a gentler, lower voice.

During one of my stays on the farm after my initial fieldwork, Sedna asked me to take care of newcomers as I was familiar with the processes. In the first couple of days, I was feeling nervous as I was meeting these new chickens, not knowing their attitudes, but also afraid of carrying an infection risk from those to the other

chickens. The chicken was also acting timidly since I was a new person for her in the sanctuary. As she was kept in quarantine, she was staying in a separate coop with a small yard far from other chickens. Sedna had fixed the chicken wire around this garden to the wall with a heavy iron rod. When I arrived there, I first lifted this rod, carefully opening the wire so that the chicken would not be able to escape.

These interspecies encounters always made me face the power inequalities that we had throughout our interactions with other species. We were making decisions on behalf of this chicken, telling her where to stay and sleep, at least for a while, and feeding her whenever and whatever we wanted. However, these power hierarchies are not as simple to interpret as they seem and cannot be read out of context. It is their responsibility to take care of animals, even if they do not request to do so in a certain way, while prioritizing well-being in the long term. The key to building ethical relationships lies in these small, mundane details and our perspective about them. If we are to challenge these hierarchies, we need to acknowledge, take action, and create trustworthy relations of care with others through time.

Showing care is also one way of getting to know newcomers at the sanctuary. A crucial part of their integration process to the sanctuary is to provide them with enough space – both physically and temporally – to allow them to act as they desire. Newcomer coops are mostly arranged in a big space and chickens, during their first days here, stay alone or with a friend if there are few other newcomers from the same farm. Sedna was usually telling me about some characteristics she notices when she gets back from them: “This new friend has feathers just like Erika”, “Have you noticed how she was walking?”, “I think there might be something specific about these white roosters, just look at how Hayati and Çokobo act so similarly around humans!”. Ruminating about these mundane details about the chickens’ lives was not only for their adjustment to space but also for Sedna’s adjustment to her new friends. She needed to provide them with the necessary needs in accordance with their behavior. However, she was also getting much enjoyment from these explorations, equipping herself with any kind of information she could get about chickens from books, blogs, and well, from chickens. Thus, every interaction of chickens with Sedna involves processes of knowledge-making or knowledge exchange.

Unfortunately, Sedna suggests, this process usually does not include veterinary knowledge, as most veterinarians’ knowledge on chicken health is limited to their commodity status. She says that on farms, if a chicken is sick, it is more profitable for the chicken owner to let them die rather than worrying over their recovery. They might take some precautions so that the illness would not spread to the rest of the chicken flock, but that is mostly it. Rosenfeld’s (2021) example about how the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank in the US inhibits the use of antibiotics for

chickens, since they aim to reduce antibiotic resistance of farmed animals. Many veterinarians do not have hands-on experience with chickens, as one veterinarian suggests that their closest interaction might be with pet birds (Rosenfeld 2021). Sedna experiences this especially with chickens, since they are not a mammal species, but other animals on the farm also face veterinarian negligence. Sedna also said they had lost many animals due to veterinarian errors. Unfortunately, Tapir's passing was partially due to misguidance by the veterinarian they consulted. When Tapir got so sick in a very short period, Sedna and Yusuf took Tapir to a veterinarian without knowing what was going on with her body. The veterinarian gave them medication and sent them away without providing any information on how to care for Tapir's illness properly. They took Tapir into their own home, thinking she would be better in warmth. Unfortunately, being in the heat worsened her condition, but no doctor told Sedna and Yusuf this. Because of her rapidly developing illness, they sadly lost Tapir on the third day.

Whenever I ask Sedna for veterinarian or book knowledge about animals, those formerly farmed animals, the answers I got from Sedna were always, with a grin, "What knowledge? There's no such information. We are trying to find everything by searching here and there one by one, by trying." This lack of knowledge, with the risk of costing the lives of animals, demonstrates the urgent need for animal-focused knowledge production that prioritizes their health in co-living spaces just like this farm. While Sedna tries to prevent chicken diseases with herbal homemade medicines she finds from people on social media from the other side of the world, she always mentions this kind of veterinary negligence and ignorance, lack of medicines, and health equipment.

This neglect in veterinary care reflects a broader societal undervaluing of caregiving to animals itself. Overlooking the importance of care allows those in power to devalue caregiving and caregivers, distracting us from rethinking political and moral values and the inadequacy of care in our societies (Tronto 2020). In this sense, while some subjects are shown as entitled to caregiving, their labor going into that process is mostly condemned and unseen. Interspecies care is often dismissed as trivial, unusual, or merely an act of 'kindness.' People who care for stray animals are seen as well-meaning 'animal lovers,' yet the deeper reasons behind the animals' need for care, and the significant time, energy, money, and resources provided, often without sufficient means, are overlooked. When it comes to "farmed" animals, this inattentiveness deepens, as caring for chickens without profiting from them is often seen as a mere backyard hobby, a marginal pursuit, or something funny. Whenever I share the subject of my thesis with people and the care provided to chickens on a Vegan Farm, the puzzled or condescending faces I receive perfectly showcase this

attitude. In the end, the stories of care at the farm are not isolated but symptoms of a systemic disregard for the lives of animals who fall outside profit-driven frameworks. They reveal that without a shift toward knowledge systems and practices that center animals' well-being, multispecies co-living will remain compromised. Recognizing care as a political and ethical necessity—rather than an optional act of kindness—is essential if we are to imagine and sustain truly just relations across species.

3.2.1 Caring for Humans as a Chicken: Çokobo

Figure 3.1 Çokobo the rooster, perched on author's bag, photo by the author



The choice of this title may initially appear unusual, however, understanding the story of Çokobo might provide clarity. While interacting with chickens at the farm, this was my first time learning so many things about them at once. However, one thing that I kept hearing about and won't forget was, before and during my stay, how chickens do not like human company that much. Throughout my stay, I have observed this in detail. Other than the times to feed or when we were eating, chickens were not coming around us or showing much care for what we did. It seemed like the only thing they wanted from us was food. We used to talk among ourselves about whether they saw us as robots carrying food buckets.

Most of my close interactions with the chickens were during the mornings. I needed to open the doors of their coops and feed them. As I approached the doors, their

voices were growing louder and louder. If I were even a few minutes late, their voices took on an impatient, perhaps an angry tone. Eager to bask in the sunlight, roll on the ground, and eat, they were crowding toward the door as I got closer. I will elaborate on these routines in the next chapter, but what I want to emphasize here is that outside of these moments, in the morning and their feeding time around 5 p.m., I rarely heard much from them during the day. They tended to keep their distance at other times, not coming around us much.

A few, however, were more friendly toward humans, occasionally settling near us or even perching on Sedna's lap, head, or shoulders. Çokobo was, however, the most sociable with humans among them. When I first arrived at the farm, it was Çokobo's first week there. Çokobo was a one-year-old rooster who used to live in an apartment in İstanbul with his human adopters. According to Sedna and Yusuf, his adopters had found him as a tiny chick on the highway in İstanbul and decided to take him in. Having been raised indoors, Çokobo had never encountered another chicken, but as he grew, so did his voice. His loud crowing began to disturb the neighbors, especially in the morning, but beyond that, he needed to socialize with his species. Thus, adopters decided to find a place where Çokobo could live a better life than the apartment could offer him. Upon contacting Angels Farm Sanctuary, the staff there told the adopters that Çokobo required special care and that, due to their responsibilities in the sanctuary, they would not be able to care for him as closely as he needed. They suggested Vegan Farm, and this was how his adopters decided to bring him there.

As they said, Çokobo was highly sociable with humans, having only ever interacted with them throughout his life. This, however, made it difficult for him to adapt to the other roosters and chickens at the farm. As Sedna says, he had little understanding of what it truly means to be a rooster, and everything he knew was fragmented. He was attempting to mate with slippers and was overly attached to and dependent on humans. Here, he would be learning how to live like a rooster with the help of another species, *humans*. During his first few weeks, Sedna and Yusuf took him into their homes, letting him sleep in a cat box at night. He would wake up so early, crowing relentlessly until every living being near him was awake. Sedna would take him out of his box, ideally outside the house, so he could dig in the sunlight and enjoy his breakfast. She made sure no one else, neither the other chickens nor the ducks, disturbed him. This was necessary, as the other roosters often bullied and pushed him aside to eat more. Yet, after just a few bites of his meal, he would mostly wait in front of Sedna and Yusuf's door, wanting to be with them. He would crow eagerly for them to let him in, waiting a few minutes and exploring his surroundings, and then come and crow again. Day by day, he grew bolder and

explored his surroundings more, gradually venturing farther from the house.

No matter where we went, Çokobo was following us, keeping us company. He would fall asleep in our arms or on our heads. When we hold him in our arms and caress his feathers under his head, just like a cat, he would tilt his head forward and close his eyes slowly, sometimes falling asleep there just like that. Sedna kept saying that she had not witnessed such a thing in her life, caring for hundreds of chickens here. Çokobo was not a fan of other chickens. He almost always followed humans and stayed beside them. He ran away from other chickens and roosters and took shelter with people. One day, I was sitting outside, and Çokobo was near me as always. A chicken, Bulgur, was following him around the table. It looked like she was trying to introduce herself to Çokobo. As Bulgur was getting closer, Çokobo was getting closer to me. He was looking panicked and as if not knowing how to communicate with Bulgur. As he got closer to me, he was crowing as if asking me to help him get rid of Bulgur. Çokobo was trusting me more than he trusted a chicken.

Figure 3.2 Bulgur, the chicken, following Çokobo, photo by the author



Çokobo's trust in humans strengthened his relationship with people. Unlike other chickens, you could feel that Çokobo wanted to be with you, that he was interested in you, and cared for you. He was very curious about the activities we did; he would walk around us while we were doing some work on the farm, observe us, and climb onto our arms or our slippers. However, Çokobo's constant presence with us was restricting his relationship with the chickens and other roosters. The reason Sedna wanted Çokobo to socialize with others was that she thought Çokobo would

have a more comfortable life if he were with his species, who would have a better understanding of his way of living. Eventually, they would aim for Çokobo to live a happy life with his species but not be *this* dependent on humans.

Dependency, although it is not necessarily portrayed as good or bad by the farm's residents, its existence is frequently acknowledged as a reality. One of the primary goals here, anyway, is to reduce dependency as much as possible, encouraging animals to socialize with their species and become more dependent on each other than they are on humans. Not allowing Çokobo to come inside their home, perhaps at the cost of his trust in them to diminish, is because of that. When I have mentioned people in my life about Çokobo or talked to the people coming to the festival for the camp, some have expressed pity for his dependency on humans, while they have lapsed into deep silence, pondering the factors that make him dependent on humans. Most vegans I have spoken to, like me, envision a world where these dependencies are reduced as much as possible.

Çokobo's story reveals the relationships between care, dependency, and autonomy. How much does his choice to socialize with humans imply that he exercised his autonomy, at what point did it jeopardize his life, and at what point would that make him unhappy? We do not know. The lines between agency, dependency, and relationality, just as in humans, are complicated. As I did in the previous chapter, I wanted to complicate this image a bit more, not taking dependency as something evil, but somehow including it, playing with it, so that we can build more meaningful interspecies communities. This was Çokobo's way of living and relating, and as humans, we were there to learn from him and guide him as much as we could.

This chapter aimed to tell a story of a different way of *chickening*, one about a courageous little rooster who wanted to explore all the worlds we were in. Unfortunately, last summer, a fire happened on the farm's land. During the evacuation of animals, there were two, Çokobo and Karbeyaz, who could not be rescued. Bearing witness to his memory, and all other memories of many more, is one of the aims of this thesis. May these stories of living, experiencing beings contribute to a future in which living together means learning and seeking ways to simply be with one another.

4. EVERYDAY LIFE AT THE VEGAN FARM

4.1 Multi-Species Routines

Figure 4.1 Chickens and roosters during feeding time, photo by the author



Much of what happens on the Vegan Farm revolves around routines. Routines strengthen and sustain established interspecies relations and facilitate the production of interspecies knowledge. Compliance with routines is essential for most animals, and disruptions to these can affect the trust built between humans and animals. Decisions are mostly made by humans, with attention to the interests and needs of animals. These decisions include the basic needs of animals, such as what to eat, when to eat, who provides the food, where to serve it, where and with whom animals sleep and play, and where they are free to roam safely. Throughout my

stay, one of my main responsibilities as a volunteer was to walk the farm, feed all the animals, check if anyone needed anything, and inform and consult Sedna about those needs, thus being part of the everyday routines. Sedna was taking care of sick animals, feeding them, and gathering knowledge from various sources about taking care of them. She taught me some of that knowledge during the month I was staying there and assigned me easy, doable chores at the farm. Through these routine interactions, with Sedna and animals, I have come to learn about showing care in a particular way and got myself immersed in everyday life on the farm.

Sedna and Yusuf gave me their old space, which they were now using to house guests and volunteers. I lived there alone for a month, but with cats, spiders, scorpions, and mosquitoes that came in and out of the house from time to time. The practice of living with animals, but those that I had not lived with, and at times had not interacted before, was an experience that reminded me of my limits precisely at these points, pushing them in some places, questioning which of those limits were obligatory and which were arbitrary, and from which I learned a great deal about co-living. At that point, this helped me position myself in a place where I could situate conflicts, boundary crossings, and the messiness of a life practice, and through engaging with everyday routines, generate knowledge about living with other species. The routines at the farm follow a rhythm: they are repeated acts throughout the day, and although they are not strict, they are mostly planned. Through these continuous interactions, animals and humans together build a way of co-living and generate knowledge regarding that way of life. Furthermore, these routines exceed the physical borders of the farm and reach out to its surroundings, neighbors, visiting volunteers, and many more by delivering that knowledge.

Animals are fed two times a day, once in the early morning around 8 a.m., and once around 5 p.m. Chicken food is kept in two locations, in big barrels, near the chicken coops, to be handy, at the two ends of the farm. Both pre-packaged foods and the ingredients of mixes to be prepared on-farm are kept in stock to ensure that food is almost always ready. Chickens' and ducks' feed bought in 5- or 10-kilogram packages, rabbit feed consisting of mixed plants, and ingredients of dog meals such as grains, lentils, and oil are kept on hand. As the stocks of food run out, the person responsible for feeding the animals for those days frequently checks the inventory and restocks from the animal feed shop in the village center. Because they are bought in bulk and the farm is in the outer area of the village center, Yusuf generally goes there with his truck to pick up those ingredients. After researching books and online sources and considering the daily nutritional needs of animals, but also living with dogs and cats for years before coming to the farm, Sedna and Yusuf have devised this eating routine, which appears to be effective for everyone.

A classic morning routine at the farm takes around 20-30 minutes, depending on how much time you spend with some animals and how fast you walk. In the mornings, the first thing is to open the doors of those coops so that chickens, roosters, and ducks can go out. You need to be quick because the doors must be opened as soon as possible. The roosters' place was at the far end of the farm, just on the right corner of the house where I was staying. In this coop, there were around ten roosters, who had been chosen to be placed here due to their history of disturbing other chickens and roosters. Sedna and Yusuf decided to arrange a space where they cannot reach the rest because of that. Because some escaped and got lost or hurt before, they were often only allowed in the outer space of their coop when there was no human around, in the garden, so that they could not go farther away.

Except for the nights, chickens, roosters, and ducks are free in the farm space, although they do not leave much of the surroundings of their coops. To open the doors of the coops made of stone and wood, by Yusuf, Sedna, and other volunteers, you need to first enter through the outer door, which opens onto something like a garden surrounded by chicken wire. This was the case both for the area where most of the chickens were staying, the area where ten roosters live, and the small coop where newcomers stay alone for a quarantine when they first arrived at the farm. The purpose of these gardens was to keep mother chickens with their newly hatched chicks inside, protect them from other animals, and prevent them from getting lost on the land. Chickens were also staying there, doors closed, when Sedna and Yusuf had to leave the farm for a few hours, preventing them from potential dangers.

At the farm, I changed my morning and night routines, getting up way earlier than I normally do. As they had also migrated from an urban area, Sedna and Yusuf had to adjust their way of living upon arrival to the animals that inhabited the space, the weather, and the flora and fauna of the farm. Because chickens wake up early, the person feeding them had to get up early. At least one person needed to stay on the farm throughout the day to safeguard the environment from potential dangers. This was, at times, a demanding task. Sedna and Yusuf, if there were nobody on the farm knowing how to take care of animals, could not leave the space. If they were to go to the city for a few hours, they were keeping the chickens in the outer space of their coops, locking the outside doors. Having a volunteer or a friend to trust, thus, was important, and enabling them to go somewhere else for a few days. When I asked them about difficulties they face while living with chickens, Sedna also mentioned this, saying that they had to be here from the opening time of the coops until closing time.

This situation, like certain other responsibilities, is positioned in a place that can restrict the movements of the caregivers on the farm. Sedna and Yusuf mentioned

several times in our conversations that they had been unable to leave the town for a long period because of this. Since I stayed on the farm for more than a month and they felt that I had by then learned the key tasks, we arranged a time when they could travel abroad together while I was there. During this period, I took full responsibility for the farm for four days, with the occasional assistance of a friend who came by to help and the support of Sedna's family, including all aspects of care, security, meal preparation, and ensuring that everyone slept safely at night.

Although I had already been volunteering on the farm for quite some time and was familiar with most of the routines, being the main, and often the only, person in charge was a completely different experience. It brought me closer to understanding what Sedna and Yusuf experience in their daily lives, beyond the perspective of an assisting volunteer. Constant worrying, counting the coops four or five times each night, regularly messaging Sedna to check on things, and seeking support from my loved ones who live far away were some of the ways I coped with this responsibility. Because the farm is situated in a large area, I was continually thinking about potential threats that might endanger the animals or me and how to take precautions accordingly. Being an overthinker and an anxiety-driven person did not help me much in this regard.

I was doing this entirely voluntarily and willingly, and it was only for four days, but this situation sometimes became a challenging and tiring reality for me. Besides, the fact that the routines on the farm take place almost at the same time every day means that even details like when you wake up, when you go to bed, and how you care for yourself are crucial for the individuals you care for on the farm. When a caregiver is sick or simply cannot wake up on some days, this can mean that the animals do not get fed in the morning, and the routines are disrupted. Although the farm has a small number of animals and the practices carried out are not very intense or exhausting, this type of experience opens up an important area of reflection for larger multispecies communities. Factors such as the number of caregivers, their health condition, and their abilities also affect what the care provided looks like and how it is carried out. For example, if we were to perform the regular spraying in the coops carelessly, it could lead to an uncontrollable mite outbreak and make the animals sick. Or if I consistently opened the coops late for several days in a row, it could lead to the animals feeling resentment or anger towards me, or to a breakdown of their trust in me. These are elements that need to be considered before providing care, but they happen throughout a process of learning what affects the animals and how, and by including them in this mutual process of learning and caregiving.

Around 5 p.m., we humans—Sedna, Yusuf, and I—would be preparing our own meal. During those hours in the kitchen, we would also be tossing out leftover

vegetable peels and scraps, ones that chickens could eat, through the door of Yusuf and Sedna's one-room home. When it was time, chickens would know that we were cooking, come towards the front door of the house, and wait for food. They would come running in flocks, hurried and excited. There would be a festive atmosphere all around. During those hours, I would also be feeding the chickens, either before our meal or while it was cooking. We usually did the second feeding of the day around that time. I would get food from the barrel near Sedna's house and make my way around the whole farm once more for the day.

During nights, when it starts to get dark, chickens, roosters, and ducks go inside the coops where they sleep, and the doors of those coops are locked. According to Sedna, the chickens tend to return to wherever they left in the morning in the evening. This is why she does not consider herself as locking the chickens at night; they go in, and she closes their doors, it is a kind of "learned consent," as she puts it. At times, however, some chickens prefer to perch on trees and do not want to go inside. Sometimes, a few go further into the field than they normally do, for brooding. In such cases, Sedna, knowing how many roosters and chickens are in every coop, counts them inside before closing their doors at night. There are still times when they forget to count or count incorrectly, cannot find those who brood far away, or who go unnoticed higher in the trees. Speaking of a group of chickens who once insisted on perching on trees, Sedna said:

We tried everything for them to come down, but they would not come in. So we said it is up to them now... Some chickens brood in very ridiculous, unsafe places. It is dangerous. Yet, these chickens go outside of our intervention...

If they infer that there is no way to prevent these kinds of situations, especially after a certain level of insistence, Sedna and Yusuf do not implement a control mechanism beyond existing measures. Because after that, to prevent them from missing or running out, they need to get chickens under tighter control, perhaps getting them under constant human supervision or keeping them at coops most of the time. While the dose of this control is shaped by the animals' attitudes, needs, and desires, the boundaries of what can be controlled are also shaped by vegan ethics. Control beyond this level opposes the principle that Sedna and Yusuf have been advocating from the start, that animals should live according to their interests under appropriate conditions and that human intervention should only be made where seen as crucial. The decision of what is crucial is made through the process of getting to know animals and familiarizing oneself with what works and

does not work under certain circumstances. At different times, Yusuf emphasized his approach to this space as a co-living place where minimal intervention, for the safety of animals, is made. He says:

We take care of them, we feed them, but what we do here, essentially, is not a favor that is done by one species to another. This is a shared living space, brought about through living together.

They aim to have minimum intervention over other species' lives, just in cases of need. However, it is not always easy to make up one's mind about where to intervene in a situation. For instance, for roosters' fights, Sedna suggests that the fight is something they need to establish authority among each other, something special to the way roosters socialize. During such fights, they monitor the situation and intervene only if they sense it will lead to a serious injury for someone. Although it is not necessarily a routine, these kinds of fights happen at the farm regularly. As a human caregiver, one might think that intervening from the beginning, even if it is not that serious, would be better, but according to Sedna and Yusuf, that would be bad for the roosters.

This is why, at the farm, human intervention is informed by a continuous process of knowing, observing, failing, learning, and re-learning with every animal arriving at the farm. During the first days of the farm, as they suggest, it was harder to predict things, as this was the first time they had started living with chickens and turkeys. They encountered illnesses they were not familiar with and did not know how to deal with, and they were not aware of some of the dangers as much. Through time, they learned about potential dangers, about the land farm is built and the animals that were already living there, bugs, wild boars, foxes, ants, snakes, hedgehogs, weasels, and many others.

The emphasis on co-living not only meant living with the rescued animals, but also with those who are the owners of those lands long before, whom they needed to negotiate with, to understand, and to get used to. For weasels, they put extra safety precautions, built sturdier doors to the coops, and surrounded all the farmland with wires. During the day, however, there are still risks of chickens getting caught by foxes or by hawks. It is not possible to tighten already existing precautions, though, because Sedna says that the only thing to do about foxes is to put razors around the wires, which is a cruel thing they would never think of doing. For the hawks, it is impossible to do something, as they can fly anywhere.

These times, as part of the feeding routine, would make me and the animals closer

every day. Sharing food, having a scheduled routine every day around the same time, walking together, and trying to build ways of communication were rendering us part of a shared community. Day by day, I familiarized myself with animals, got to know them better, and tried to solve problems with them, for them. During our conversations with other activists visiting the farm, I heard about a rooster named Bruce. He had a history of messing with some of the humans coming here. As Sedna says, he was the ‘alpha’ rooster within the coop he was staying. Accordingly, he used to fight with other roosters for that ‘title’, protecting chickens around him from potential dangers, and bringing them food. When I first heard about him, I knew I was going to meet someone special, got excited to be friends, and see if these stories were ever true. When I met him, I recognized him immediately. He was always walking near other chickens, trying to jump in front of me, sometimes towards me. Sedna told so many things about him, both to answer my questions and towards Bruce, saying “You grew old be Bruce, you used to be so active and protective over those chickens... Now you lie down with them”. One way of building a way of life with these individual animals was to witness their life, tell about it to others, and write a different kind of history where animals’ characters, movements, and way of living are at the center. Sedna always had a memory or a story to tell about, sometimes with joy, sometimes with sorrow. They, in this way, not only immersed themselves in everyday life with chickens and many more animals, but got to talk about it, spread it, and encourage others to build other life-stories around this. Further, they got to tell these stories to people who had never engaged with these species, nor had they thought about them differently, with characters, sensibilities, and minds.

These stories, which are mostly based on everyday life at the farm, reach out to many non-vegans. Although the farm is vegan, it must interact with its non-vegan surroundings and people constantly. While the speciesism of the village it is in, and in fact the world we live in, makes such interactions inevitable, there are still moments where being a Vegan Farm can create disruptions and find cracks within these contexts. For example, the places where feed is purchased are typically geared toward selling products to those engaged in animal farming. Most people who buy chicken feed do so to raise chickens as property, for their own consumption. When a Vegan Farm purchases these same feeds for animals they live with, it repositions the animals in a fundamentally different way. This is also an example of the transformative power of practice that unfolds over time. That is why I argue that even small-scale daily routines have the potential to influence, and even disrupt, their surroundings. Beyond being a vegan living space, there is an ongoing activism through their everyday routines; they exemplify how veganism is practiced in this farm, an

alternative way of being and living with chickens.

4.2 Navigating the Farm Through Senses

In describing the everyday routines on the farm, highlighting the role of the senses in these interactions and how they function as a form of language between the animals and humans living here is essential. Understanding a vegan way of interspecies living lies in attention to ordinary, everyday sensory experiences at the Vegan Farm. Using multisensory methods is essential in ethnographies conducted with animals, as senses hold a far more significant place in the lives of animals than verbal language, enabling us to engage with the sensory nature of human-animal relationships (Hamilton and Taylor 2017). In this chapter, drawing on fieldnotes grounded in sensory experiences at the Vegan Farm, I aim to show what attending to these aspects and being open to learning from them can provide in such a space. I argue that the value of conducting a sensory-based ethnography on the Vegan Farm lies in the potential it holds for community-building. In communication, all beings, animal or non-animal, generate knowledge about co-living through the senses. Opening oneself to the sensory aspects of a relation also creates space for utilizing this knowledge of interspecies co-living in the future. Information regarding the movements of animals, what time they open their eyes and look outside, or how they *speak* when they want something from humans, is the only way to learn about living together and expand these enabling spaces through an ongoing, shared process.

During my time there as a volunteer/ethnographer, I walked around the Vegan Farm to feed all the animals in the mornings and evenings. This is why my ethnographic notes about non-human animals' everyday routines and sensory experiences are mostly based on my direct communication with them, without any other human beings involved in our encounters. Before going to the field, I sketched the farm space as an environment in which I contemplate interspecies relations, including animals, humans, plants, and all other things. Going to the field, being a volunteer, the 'human' in question turned out to be me, in most cases. This situates a part of this fieldwork as a multispecies autoethnographic study, as I write about my interactions with animals and the way I engage with sociality on the farm as an urban person. Gillespie argues that multispecies autoethnography, with attention to non-anthropocentrism, can offer political and ethical engagement with the reality of animal violence and exploitation (2022). Utilizing this approach, I aim to show how our relationality at the farm is informed by my personal experiences as

an urban vegan. I aim to detail how an ethical obligation and motivation to live together, with attention to care, love, and respect, come to life on the farm through co-sensing.

As I detailed in the last chapter, our daily walks on the farm were quite important for all residents, and at the same time, they were quite ordinary and part of the everyday scenery at the Vegan Farm. If we look closely, our steps, our voices, and the way we move throughout space reveal how and where we, as human caregivers, listen to animals during our interactions and how we communicate their needs, pointing to ways of building a life that also considers their rights and well-being. On my first morning, I woke up and spoke with Sedna to meet at the front door of the house I was staying at. As I got up, I heard nothing but the sound of animals: roosters, the old cat at the house I was staying at, birds, and the footsteps of Karaçi the donkey. We set out towards the roosters' coop. While walking, Sedna showed me the space where we take chicken feed, fill the water bottles, where to put them, how to keep them clean, and when to change or fill them. As we got closer to their space, the roosters' voices got louder because all the animals heard us coming and raised their voices for us to hear. They were waiting for their doors to open, get the sunlight, and of course, eat. The only thing they focused on was probably the sound of our footsteps and the distance between us. From that moment onwards, hearing roosters' insistent voices every morning, I was trying to wake myself up and hurry; they were asking something from me.

I was taking notes as we walked with Sedna, writing down whose food is where and which door should be open and when and why, how to lock them at night, demonstrating visually for Sedna to get confirmation. This was part of our knowledge exchange concerning the way of living at the farm. I was learning how to take care of myself in this space, adjusting my perspectives on certain things to a rural multi-species environment, and at the same time learning how to take care of other species that I did not know much about before. I was asking ridiculous questions, watching Sedna closely to see how she moves within the space while she was answering, and trying to learn. Knowing everything now, Sedna seemed quite relaxed about the things she does, unlike me, whose body was full of stress due to not knowing anything about some of the animals I met just a second ago.

Going to the roosters' coop, I had some preliminary knowledge about the roosters living there. I heard from previous volunteers that there is one individual, Hayati, who has a reputation for being aggressive. It is very funny that I have been afraid of interacting with chickens before coming here; these reputations made me even more timid and nervous. I stood there with my body closed off and tense, trying to learn and memorize what I was being taught mechanically. Even taking on a

small responsibility stirred a sense of fear in me. The only being I had ever cared for, apart from myself, was my cat companion Vicky, with whom I had lived for five years. In those moments, I recalled our very first encounter and how not knowing her and never having cared for a cat before had made me uneasy at that time, too. I did not know how to approach her, how to walk near her, what to say, or how to adjust the tone of my voice. I knew this anxiety stemmed from entering a process in which I was making decisions on behalf of someone I cared for and was constantly responsible for meeting their needs, combined with my lack of knowledge. On a more personal level, as a woman, I felt an added resistance to opening myself up when taking on the care of another, as a way of pushing back against certain norms and stereotypes. Going vegan, reading various feminist care theories, and having the experience of caring for another species had made this experience with caring for animals at the farm undeniably easier.

Carrying all these feelings with me, I continued listening to Sedna. She nudged some stones in front of the wires outside with her foot, unwrapped a chain they use for a lock, and stepped inside the door. To get to the coop, we had to duck under the trees and climb upward through a space with several layers. Now we had arrived at the door of the roosters' coop, and the first encounter of the morning was about to happen. I waited, slightly anxious, with chicken feed in my hands. Opening their doors, the sudden rush of everyone coming out at once, and my scattering the feed quickly in a panic as the roosters hurried toward me, all of it took only 30 to 40 seconds. While they ate, we watched them. Sedna introduced me to some of the roosters and told me their stories. Opening these doors, they wanted to get through, was, for them, as for everyone else on the farm, part of how the morning began at the Vegan Farm.

On the other corner, I saw rabbits running around behind a wire net. I thought they had escaped since their place was in the garden of the house where I was staying. Panicked, I told Sedna that I think they had escaped. Laughing – she responded with laughter whenever I said something unusual, making my position here as an outsider very obvious in her eyes – she told me that rabbits dig the ground they were staying on, and they were able to come this far, but these wire nets were protecting them from going farther. My eyes were amazed by this picture, various species that I had not interacted with before, coming and going before my eyes, communicating with each other through those nets, some taking ownership of the place they stay, and some being careless about it. I was feeling very alert with every new information I got; everything was so new for me.

Sometimes I felt like an alien here because I did not know anything about these animals apart from common knowledge. I did get angry at myself at times because

of this. I was vegan for years, but my first interactions with a rooster, a rabbit, or a donkey were always out of place; I know *nothing* about living with them, although I perceive living with formerly domesticated animals as a responsibility. The conversations we had, my approach to their way of living, is informed by this, *not knowing*, as I had a hard time adjusting to the space and the animals living there. Sedna was very patient; sometimes she answered the same questions over and over for me. I relate this patience, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, to their motivation to inform other humans about the ways of living and get them familiar with animals living there, to provide a dialogue between them. In these first days, she got me introduced to all animals, and she looked very much enjoyed, talking about animals' characters, likes, dislikes, and unique stories. My curiosity about living together, just like other campers' and volunteers', was something they aimed for, to show alternative ways.

My ignorance about how these animals live here was partly due to my urbanity and the fact that I had rarely seen chickens beyond the peripheries of the city. But it was also, in part, due to prevailing speciesism. My knowledge about chickens was already very limited and based mostly on relationships shaped by their status as property. Since the early days of being vegan, the things I learned about them have broadened my perspective. Before, I had never seen these animals as individuals with their own way of living; they were simply the source of eggs and animal flesh produced for my breakfast or dinner. Still, becoming vegan did not undo overnight the speciesist relations I had immersed myself in for years, nor the speciesist biases I held about them. It was precisely at this point that I witnessed the importance of being together and co-living for building an ethically shared life. The potential frequently emphasized in migration studies, of establishing contact and creating spaces of cooperation, is something we can also observe in interspecies relations. As I have mentioned before, rights-based literature and both the theory and practice of veganism can be expanded to include more contextually informed realities that emerge in these spaces of contact.

The effects of this positionality were also perceivable in my interactions with animals when they crossed the boundaries that I was setting or at least was trying to. Especially with Karaçi, the donkey living on the farm, I had some problems with setting those boundaries. As I got up and got outside one morning to feed animals, Karaçi was waiting right on my doorstep. I needed him to move so I could get out of the house. "Karaçi, could you please step aside? Come on, Karaçi, move," I said as I gently nudged him through his neck with the water bottle in my hand, trying to guide him to the other side of the door. At the same time, I was scanning my surroundings carefully, making sure there were no other threats around. I was not

used to farm life, thus any unfamiliar animal sound, even just a snap, could easily startle me, especially in the mornings when there is no human around. Karaçi also scared me sometimes, because we had a hard time setting boundaries with each other. He was right next to me, even when I did not want him to be. I had the luxury of saying, “Karaçi, go away, I don’t want you here,” but he would answer with a stubborn stare and a nudge of his nose, as if saying, “But *I* want this.”

Karaçi, hearing the door closing, quickened his pace; he needed to be there when I arrived at the feed barrel. I held a container to take feed from the barrel and a five-liter water bottle to fill with water. I put down the bottle to pour some food for Karaçi. Karaçi was feeding himself throughout the day with all varieties of plants growing around, but he always enjoyed the chicken feed, which was why he did not leave my side for a minute this morning. I had to use that time he was eating efficiently, I had to be back from the roosters’ area after feeding them, before Karaçi finished his food. Yet as I arrived, he was done with his food. I was using the tools in my hand as a means to keep my distance from Karaçi, as his nose was getting closer and his eyes were curious about the feed that I was holding; he wanted more. If I resist giving him food once more, he would insist, with his angry, low-pitched voice, a little, unhappy neigh for me. I say, “No, Karaçi. That’s enough food for today, you need to go away now...” or “Karaçi, please, just leave the chickens alone...” In a very decisive manner, he would hit the ground with his left front paw to insist. Sometimes, Karaçi’s neighs and footsteps were cute, but sometimes they were frustrating and overwhelming for me.

Figure 4.2 Karaçi the donkey, looking inside the house from the doorway, photo by the author



As an impatient person, it was hard for me to come to terms with Karaçi's stubbornness and attempts to cross those boundaries I try to set as an urbanite who has not interacted with a donkey before...Sometimes, I even felt reluctant to get out of bed and feed the chickens, afraid of encounters with Karaçi, which, if he were human, might easily be described as bullying! These nonverbal dialogues I had with Karaçi were interesting in every sense. He had a unique character; he was rubbing his face at us, showing his need for affection, or just scratching his nose; he was at times very aggressive, biting, chasing after us, or probably he was just wanting to play games. Karaçi was probably just bored, being the only donkey at the Vegan Farm, and he needed friends, someone to socialize with. It was maybe because of the traumatic experiences he had before coming here, and this might be a way of showing his discomfort to us. What we accepted was that Karaçi was like that; whatever the reasons were, we needed to show the care he deserved and desired, which meant we needed to compromise on some of the "boundaries" we had, especially me.

There used to be a goat named Tapir on the farm, and she would usually wander around with Karaçi. During my first time at the farm, Tapir was there. This hungry and stubborn duo would follow us wherever we went, and maybe, in their own way, they had become friends. It was usually us, Tapir, Karaçi, and sometimes one of the dogs, hanging together and doing chores around the farm. When we were picking olives, Tapir was helping herself with the most delicious ones. Karaçi was there to show us around, eating whatever grass he wanted, and running around. Without

them, it was just me, Sedna, and the true crime podcast that Sedna was listening to lately. Their presence, Tapir's endless hunger for olives, and Karaçi's scurry rendered our days and activities enjoyable; they were our companions in life.

Figure 4.3 Tapir the goat, during olive picking, photo by the author



Karaçi and Tapir were individuals with whom we shared our troubles, joked around, laughed, and had so much fun. Like every relationship involving two people, it was necessary to try different methods if you wanted to set boundaries and build trust between different species. As human beings, we have a different understanding of boundaries. It was hard for me to communicate these to some animals. On the other hand, I observed that many animals at the farm were really good at communicating where they wanted others to stop, not to touch, speak, or approach them. I keep saying how Karaçi and Tapir were crossing the boundaries I wanted to establish. However, they had their preferences for when and where others should touch them. If we tried to caress Karaçi's fur, it was all fine; he especially liked to be scratched with his special comb. Some days, I watched Sedna combing his fur for minutes and minutes, Karaçi was just staying still, his face looking enjoyed. If Sedna stopped, he would follow Sedna with his head, asking for more. He also liked to be caressed on his nose, putting his head forward to encourage us to keep caressing. If we were too near but outside of Karaçi's angle of view, he would get stressed, and if we had stayed there too long, we would probably get one of Karaçi's strong kicks in the face.

Although it is easy to observe the clues about Karaçi's or other animals' boundaries, as humans, we always have the privilege to ignore or undervalue them. Despite the context, the asymmetrical power dynamics within human-animal relationships persist everywhere. The well-being of animals under care completely depends on human caregivers. This also clarifies why, in exploitative settings, we often encounter scenarios where care and violence are entangled and overlap. Some farmers, for instance, may show affection toward or give names to the cows they treat as property. Gaining the trust and affection of those animals under care can make the situation even more fragile, turning into a scenario where this asymmetry is exploited for human benefit, while the needs and interests of the animals are constantly neglected. This fragility, although leaving gaps within the ethics of care, has the potential to shift through the expansion of rights-based approaches to care in which animals are at the center of practice. Showing care at a Vegan Farm or a sanctuary does not necessarily mean that these power dynamics are demolished. Therefore, a vegan living space, rather than being a place where the powers of animals and humans are equalized, can be defined as a place where equal opportunities are sought and the interests and needs of animals are at the center.

Encounters with Karaçi not only teach others around him how to communicate with him but also encourage us to open space for more interspecies dialogue. These one-on-one interactions render the communicating parties more knowledgeable about living together and capable of sustaining that community. For sure, after a time, Karaçi's adaptation to the farm space changed the way he approached others; he gathered information about them and deliberated on how safe the environment was for him. Likewise, Yusuf and Sedna got to know Karaçi, the first donkey they take care of, his character, likes, and dislikes. With every animal coming, farm space, routines, and the way of care change. Listening to Karaçi's neighs, the pace of his footsteps, and the way he moves across space made them adjust the space, their voice, and movements accordingly. They also became knowledgeable about taking care of a donkey, which in return, encouraged them to open their space for two other donkeys after my return from the farm.

After Tapir, the goat, fell ill and passed away, Karaçi had to roam the farm alone. Sedna said, after the arrival of two other donkeys, they cannot even recognize Karaçi anymore; "he has become a completely different being". When I was there, we used to talk with Sedna and Yusuf that Karaçi needed someone from his species. They were then afraid of accepting too many mammals on the farm since they had limited space and resources at hand. Learning how to live with and take care of a donkey thanks to Karaçi, they must have felt capable of taking care of two more friends now. The practice of co-living with animals, especially if it involves

our responsibility toward them, genuinely can leave human caregivers in a state of hesitation. Due to the importance of providing proper care, any decision that involves this responsibility may challenge caregivers to adopt animals. However, getting to know animals, through everyday sensory encounters as I have tried to convey, encourages caregivers and renders them more knowledgeable and willing to sustain this practice. I feel like this with my cat companion Vicky. After adopting her, I felt much more encouraged to care for and communicate with more cats, but also with other animals, and I became far more willing to live with and take care of other companions at home.

Getting to know non-human animals is a process that changes how we see our responsibilities; it is a mutual adaptation that happens as we spend more time together. The sounds guided me; I was the only one awake on the farm in the mornings. All the animals, probably hungry and waiting for their doors to open, were being guided by my sounds as well. Over time, I learned what those sounds meant, whether it was for food, affection, indicating roosters' fights in the coop, boredom, or joy. I was emotionally and physically moved by those sounds, heading toward the coop feeling alarmed, panicked, curious, or happy. If there was a fight, I had to watch closely to make sure no one got hurt. Because the roosters' place was near, I got to hear how their fight sounds. Their wings were flapping fast, and they were making a deep, guttural sound that I was not familiar with. Going over to look at what was going on, I saw two roosters going back and forth towards each other. They were focused intensely. They tried to look intimidating for their rivals, puffing out their chests, spreading their wings, and trying to appear as large as possible. Sometimes, when they spread their wings, they would leap into the air and jump over their opponents. The sound of their wings flapping rapidly was a little louder than usual as they tried to take off and clash.

During those fights, their movements were so fast that I could never really understand what was going on, and a million questions ran through my mind. Why were they fighting? Why were they fighting like *this*? What should I do to stop it? I came across rooster fights about three times while I was on the farm. The first one was quite frightening because I was the only person around, and I panicked about what I should do, or whether I should even do anything at all. Later, I learned from Yusuf what they usually do in these situations. He said that if the blows do not seriously harm the roosters and the fight is not too violent, they do not intervene, because most of the time, it usually seems implausible to intervene. I kept this in mind during my later encounters. Each time, I wanted to step in. Each time, I was afraid of what could happen during those fights. I tried to distract them by making noises. Yet the roosters who usually reacted to my voice even from far away in the

mornings, now, while they were fighting fiercely and showing off, completely ignored me, even though I was right next to them. The other roosters standing around were also doing nothing, just watching like I was.

I found this encounter very strange—it made me think of the industries that make a profit by making roosters fight. Making animals act in certain ways for entertainment, turning them into properties for fun, and forcing them to fight. Even the fact that I am writing these lines right now feels strange, as if I have not fully freed myself from the grip of that speciesist culture. It is a completely different context, I feel concerned about their well-being, and feeling concerned about chickens and roosters is not something I was used to, like most of us. I did not think of myself in a context where I had to feel the urge to stop a rooster fight that the roosters I took the responsibility to care for had. Through these encounters, this space has enabled me to care for animals I had no contact with before in a way that I did not think of doing. In all our encounters with chickens, I was feeling obliged to think of what I was supposed to do next. It was all a different world for me, and I felt the urge to do everything for them as a caregiver. Yet, they were guiding me, teaching me in all those instances how to act. With their voice, you were getting the immediate clue to their disturbance. Through a high-pitched, long grumbling, they were signaling that they needed you to leave their space. They are capable of telling, in various ways, their needs and desires to us. Sometimes, it is harder to get those clues, but through time and with effort, you get to learn how to interpret their clues.

Senses, together or not, can shed light on completely different potential relations we form with each other. If you look at how chickens behave sensorily at mealtimes and what kind of response they evoke in you, you can see this. When it was time to eat, all the animals reduced their distance, and they moved *faster*. It was mostly calm and silent at the farm. The most dynamic and lively times on the farm were usually mealtimes. Those were the hours when everyone either followed one another for food or fought over it. In fact, even the faintest sound I made would send the hungry chickens racing after me. Some would run ahead, jump onto the barrel, showing their impatience in ways that only made my job harder. After a whole day spent sunbathing and scratching around in the dirt, their burst of energy made it clear that, for them, it was definitely the mealtime. They would leap over one another, run toward me, and try to jump into the bucket I was holding. The hardest part was taking the first scoop of feed from the barrel and giving it to them. I would try to throw the feed calmly and far enough so they would not fight, but most of the time, it was hard to do. While everyone was eating, things would calm down a bit. Like me, chickens at the farm were “hangry”; tolerance for hunger was not one of their virtues.

Just like knowing how hungry they get, I know how they dig in the sun, in which hours they sunbath, how they communicate with each other, who prefers to walk with whom and many more. What strengthened our relationship was the fact that I was there, trying to open all my senses to the things non-human animals at the farm communicated. Just like Sedna, who now seems to be able *to sync* with what happens in her surroundings at the farm, I have now taken the responsibility of fulfilling the animals' needs. That responsibility, thus, meant listening to the sounds, really listening to, knowing where to touch, where to speak, where to distance oneself. Calling this a mere responsibility would do an injustice to what is going on between animals and humans at the farm. It was a companionship sometimes, as Çokobo was a chaperone for my morning walks. Sometimes it was solidarity, like Sedna did with the hens who were disturbed by some of the roosters. Sometimes it was the feeling of an unwanted relationship that perhaps felt obligatory to some animals and humans. In short, all the embodied encounters here point to more than responsibility, but they also change the way we imagine responsibility.

In this chapter, what I tried to convey was that attending to senses, on various occasions, can facilitate and sustain interspecies togetherness. I argue that looking at daily encounters through the senses, examining how everyone living here moves, speaks, listens, and touches, opens a space for a dialogue of living together, much like the vegan way of co-living practiced here already does. Before arriving here, most of the animals did not have someone caring for them like individuals with unique needs and interests. Ruminating on what Karaçi's left heavy footstep or how chickens would walk in the mornings might be seen as an unimportant detail for some. Yet, engaging with that everydayness, in its mundane occurrence, is what makes our relations possible. As a caregiver there, Sedna is already familiar with all these details, and this is how everyday life at the Vegan Farm sounds like. Getting to know the animals and conveying life with them lies in the details that may seem insignificant, or even silly, to some of us, and I find it necessary to make an effort to tell and experience at least a part of that.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to explore the ethics and practices of multispecies co-living through the case of Vegan Farm in İzmir, Turkey, situating these practices within the broader framework of animal rights theory. The Vegan Farm operates as an animal sanctuary and a micro-political setting, highlighting the need for multispecies communities for a vegan future. This study seeks to explain the *how* and *why* of an alternative way of living together with other species, those we mostly know through exploitation. By integrating theoretical debates with empirical observations gathered during forty-five days of fieldwork, I sought to show how everyday life in such a space challenges dominant speciesist structures, while at the same time revealing the opportunities and limitations inherent in creating alternative multispecies communities.

Focusing on everyday practices and embodied relations, I aim to show how such shared life becomes possible within a space that identifies itself as a Vegan Farm, a co-living space with formerly domesticated animals, mostly chickens. From the outset, I have aimed to denote the potential of a co-existence informed by animal rights, its capacity to foster interspecies justice, and to reconstruct human-animal relationships. I have examined how this can be done through recognizing animals as rights-bearing individuals, making decisions with and on their behalf, and sustaining all of this through a process where animals are placed at the center of knowledge and where interspecies trust is built.

While examining the abolitionist theory's account of veganism, this thesis also draws attention to the limitations of what the theory proposes for co-living, and discusses what a shared life, rooted in the everyday, the sensorial, and the bodily, could generate if combined with this theoretical framework. I deliberately brought together two bodies of literature that are at times in conflict and even in opposition to one another, particularly a rights-focused perspective such as abolitionist theory and multispecies ethnography, which centers on more everyday, context-dependent relations. Due to the theoretical limitations of abolitionist thought on co-living, often not extending

much beyond statements like “taking responsibility for formerly domesticated animals’ care,” I discussed, through ethnographic observation of lived practices, the potential of combining these perspectives for a rights-oriented approach to living together.

The founding purpose of the Vegan Farm, as well as the motivations shared by its founders, encouraged me to approach these two perspectives together. Being vegan, living a vegan way of multispecies life, and building the farm based on veganism, they see this practice not as a result but as a transitional stage requiring responsibility, one that envisions a future where animals will no longer depend on humans and relationships will exist without human intervention. Thus, starting from a rights-based perspective, they view animals as individuals with intrinsic value and problematize the hierarchical position of humans within these relationships. Veganism is the primary factor in informing their practices. On the other hand, within everyday life, through multispecies coexistence, knowledge production, and the weaving of networks, this rights-focus is strengthened. It gains the potential to enrich vegan theory by providing practical examples of more comprehensive multispecies living. For this reason, I argue that at Vegan Farm, multispecies co-living becomes both a site of knowledge production and a lived example of interspecies relations, while simultaneously serving as a knowledge hub that prompts reflection and action on veganism-centered co-living.

In addition, I argue that the practice of living together is a form of vegan activism, as expressed by Sedna and Yusuf, who said they did not start this journey as a form of activism but continued it in that way. I have discussed how the residents of the farm, motivated by a commitment to living without exploitation, enact a distinct form of vegan activism. Through their way of activism, they transform their surroundings and pave the way for future rights-based practices of co-living by others. In this way, as a micro-political setting, Vegan Farm has the potential to inform other practices and people and exemplifies an alternative for those who seek to understand and engage with this kind of alternative political reality against ongoing global speciesism.

I further discussed the transformative potential of care and attentiveness on interspecies companionship at the farm, and the significance of knowledge production within the process of care for those relations. I explored how the hierarchy between caregiver and care-receiver is positioned within a space that aims to dismantle such hierarchies and questioned the disruptive or constructive role of caring relationships for an ethical way of co-living. By analyzing the place of routines for interspecies togetherness, I examined who disrupts these routines, how and why they do so, and what such disruptions mean. My observations revealed that life in a vegan, mul-

tispecies setting is both rewarding and deeply complex. Animals at Vegan Farm, primarily chickens, but also ducks, cats, dogs, rabbits, and others, demonstrate diverse needs, preferences, and personalities. Care for these individuals cannot be standardized, but it is built around the specific context-dependent processes of getting to know and giving attention to each animal arriving at the farm.

Overall, this thesis aimed to bear witness to what multispecies life in an exploitation-free space looks like and how everyday boundaries develop and shift through the embodied relationality and ongoing processes of negotiation. While I have described life on the farm through everyday routines and reflected on the possibilities of multispecies living centered on rights and care, it is important to recognize that this practice is not without its difficulties. Living together with animals and humans involves complex and often painful realities, including illness, death, and conflicts. Sedna's words, "I guess there's nothing harder than losing them," capture the emotional weight of these experiences. This acknowledgement of imperfection and struggle enriches our understanding of vegan multispecies living not as an idealized or flawless reality, but as a dynamic and evolving practice grounded in responsibility, empathy, and resilience.

This study, being an M.A. thesis with resource and time limitations, could not cover the broader perspectives within the animal rights movement and among other vegan activists in Turkey beyond the Vegan Farm. Future studies examining the integration of co-living within the practices and methods of different branches of the animal rights movement in Turkey will contribute to this line of research about multispecies co-living. Methodologically, centering on autoethnographic fieldwork enriched the analysis by embedding the researcher within the lifeworld of the farm as both an activist and a caregiver. This reflexive stance allowed me to witness the farm's dynamics from an insider's perspective, but it also introduced certain limitations, most notably, a tendency to focus on the positive, politically inspiring aspects of co-living, which may have obscured less visible forms of constraints.

In conclusion, building on this political stance, I suggest that multispecies co-living informed by a rights-based vegan ethic is both possible and politically potent, as shown by Vegan Farm, but also fraught with ongoing negotiations, compromises, and ethical dilemmas. Vegan Farm illustrates that alternative human-animal relations can be built on mutual respect, attentiveness, and care, yet scaling such models beyond small, intentional communities will require significant structural transformation in law, education, and political systems.

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