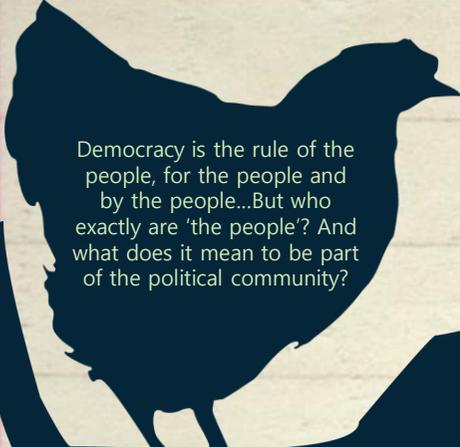


# THE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF ANIMALS

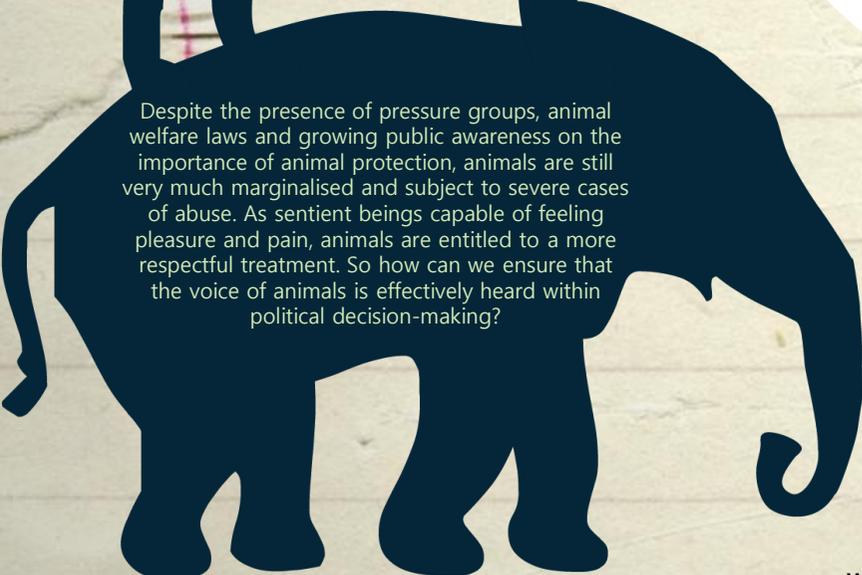
## GIVING ANIMALS A VOICE IN POLITICS



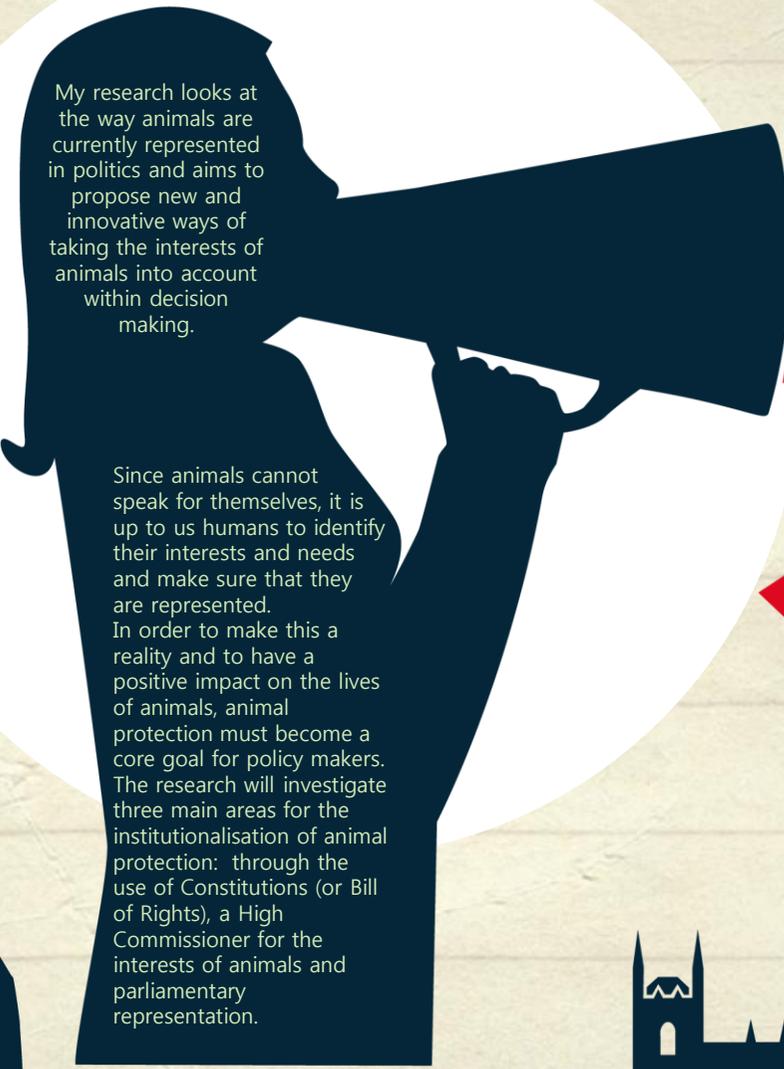
Democracy is the rule of the people, for the people and by the people...But who exactly are 'the people'? And what does it mean to be part of the political community?



Recent debates within academia, civil society and in politics have suggested that since animals, like the environment and future generations, are affected by the actions and choices of humans, they should be able to have their say and therefore be included within the political community.



Despite the presence of pressure groups, animal welfare laws and growing public awareness on the importance of animal protection, animals are still very much marginalised and subject to severe cases of abuse. As sentient beings capable of feeling pleasure and pain, animals are entitled to a more respectful treatment. So how can we ensure that the voice of animals is effectively heard within political decision-making?



My research looks at the way animals are currently represented in politics and aims to propose new and innovative ways of taking the interests of animals into account within decision making.

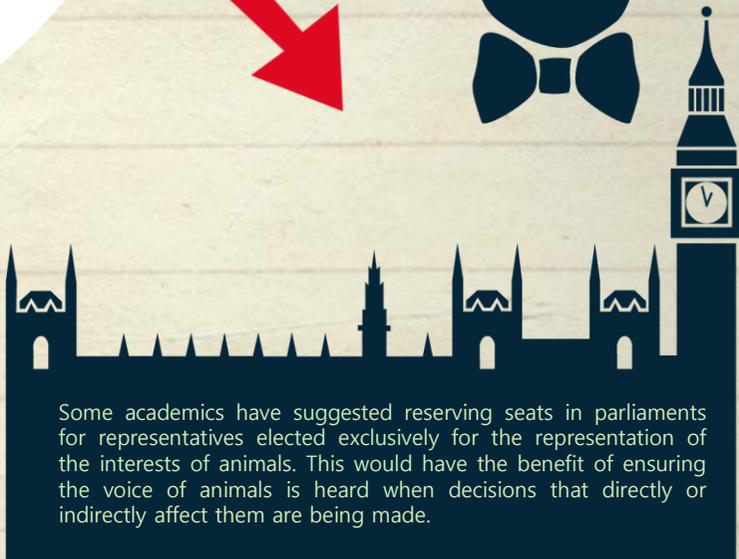
Since animals cannot speak for themselves, it is up to us humans to identify their interests and needs and make sure that they are represented. In order to make this a reality and to have a positive impact on the lives of animals, animal protection must become a core goal for policy makers. The research will investigate three main areas for the institutionalisation of animal protection: through the use of Constitutions (or Bill of Rights), a High Commissioner for the interests of animals and parliamentary representation.



By making animal protection a Constitutional principle, as is already the case in countries such as Germany, animal protection would have strong legal foundations and would require policy makers to take the interests of animals into account during the legislative process.



A High Commissioner for the interests of animals would have the power of investigating cases of animal abuse and would play an important role in putting animal protection on the political agenda



Some academics have suggested reserving seats in parliaments for representatives elected exclusively for the representation of the interests of animals. This would have the benefit of ensuring the voice of animals is heard when decisions that directly or indirectly affect them are being made.

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