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Sympathetic Reactions to the Bait Dog in a Film of Dog Fighting: The Influence of Personality and Gender

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Abstract:

Media sources brought international attention to dog fighting during the Michael Vick case. Although a significant number of people who watched footage of the abused dogs used in the Vick case may have felt sympathy for them, the characteristics associated with those types of individuals are not known. The current study examined personality and gender as predictors of sympathetic reactions to the mistreatment of a bait dog depicted in a film clip. The results supported the predictions that animal-oriented sympathy, trait sympathy, agreeableness, and gender would predict sympathetic reactions to the bait dog. The analyses showed that trait sympathy could not explain unique variance beyond animal-oriented sympathy, but that agreeableness fully mediated the relation between gender and sympathetic reactions to the bait dog. Unexpectedly, emotional stability was also a unique predictor. Implications and limitations of these results are discussed.

Keywords: [dog fighting](#); [film](#); [gender](#); [media](#); [personality](#); [sympathy](#)

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