



# From Property to Family: American Dog Rescue and the Discourse of Compassion

*Andrei S. Markovits, Katherine Crosby*

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Markovits, Katherine Crosby

In the wake of the considerable cultural changes and social shifts that the United States and all advanced industrial democracies have experienced since the late 1960s and early 1970s, social discourse around the disempowered has changed in demonstrable ways. In *From Property to Family: American Dog Rescue and the Discourse of Compassion*, Andrei Markovits and Katherine Crosby describe a “discourse of compassion” that actually alters the way we treat persons and ideas once scorned by the social mainstream. This “culture turn” has also affected our treatment of animals inaugurating an accompanying “animal turn”. In the case of dogs, this shift has increasingly transformed the discursive category of the animal from human companion to human family member. One of the new institutions created by this attitudinal and behavioral change towards dogs has been the breed specific canine rescue organization, examples of which have arisen all over the United States beginning in the early 1980s and massively proliferating in the 1990s and subsequent years.

While the growing scholarship on the changed dimension of the human-animal relationship attests to its social, political, moral and intellectual salience to our contemporary world, the work presented in Markovits and Crosby’s book constitutes the first academic research on the particularly important institution of breed specific dog rescue.



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