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- 1 • We developed a quantitative method of posture assessment
- 2 • We compared the posture of stressed and non stressed pigs
- 3 • We showed that long term emotional states (mood) modify pig posture
- 4 • The tool is promising to assess pig and other animals' welfare

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5 Assessing walking posture with geometric morphometrics: effects of rearing environment in pigs

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22

23 Abstract

24 Rearing social animals like pigs in isolation from conspecifics can have consequences on behaviour and physiology. The aim of this experiment
25 was to determine whether rearing conditions affect body postures. We adapted a method for quantitative evaluation of postures based on
26 geometric morphometrics, developed in horses, for pigs and applied it in different conditions. Forty eight 75-day old females were reared either
27 alone in 2.25 m² pens (IH, $N = 24$ animals and 4 groups) or in groups of four in 4.64 m² pens (GH, $N = 24$) for two weeks. They were habituated
28 to human handling (stroking, speaking) and marking on their backs every day, and tested individually once a day for 10 min in a corridor outside
29 the home pen during the two subsequent weeks. We observed their behaviour and posture during the first exposure to the test (novelty), and
30 the fourth and fifth (after habituation). On the sixth and seventh tests, a familiar stockperson was present in the corridor (human presence).
31 Before each test, the animals were marked with seven landmarks along their length, corresponding to anatomical points and easily located. An
32 experimenter took pictures of the animals walking along the corridor, and these pictures were transferred to tps software for analysis.

33 GH animals were more often active in the rearing pen than IH (median (IQ) 15% of observations [12-20%] *versus* 2% [0-13 %]; $P < 0.05$). All
34 animals except one IH initiated contact with the handler during the last sessions of handling (Fisher's exact test, ns). Principal Component
35 Analyses revealed significant effects of rearing and testing conditions on pigs' behaviour and posture. Novelty led to fewer vocalisations and
36 more exploration for IH than GH animals ($P < 0.05$), but there were no differences between treatments after habituation to the testing situation.
37 The backs of IH animals were more rounded than those of GH ($P < 0.05$; dimension 1 of PCA), independently of the test condition. Human
38 presence had no effect on posture.

39 In conclusion, the method based on geometric morphometrics that we developed to study pig posture detected variations in walking posture in
40 pigs associated with rearing conditions. Postures might reflect affective states in pigs, as shown in other species, but further studies are needed
41 to verify this.

42

43

44 **Keywords**

45 methodology, pig, posture analysis, rearing condition, welfare

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48 1. Introduction

49

50 Body posture is an important aspect of animal behaviour, and would reflect adaptation of postural tonus to the stressful situations for instance
51 (Kiley-Worthington, 1976). However, evaluating body posture is not simple. The simplest methods rely on visual observations by an
52 experimenter, describing variations in the position (e.g. high/low) and/or movement of parts of the body like the ears, tail, legs or back. For
53 instance, in dogs, posture is described according to flexion of the legs, position of the back (lowered or not), whether the dog is crouching or not
54 (Beerda et al., 1998; Schilder and van der Borg, 2004). In stressful situations the posture is lower, with bent legs and lowered tail. Kiley-
55 Worthington (1976) observed that a high level of excitation may lead several species, including pigs, horses and dogs, to hold their head and
56 tail in a high position. Visual observations seem to be simple but have some limitations, in particular that they do not allow an accurate,
57 quantitative evaluation of the posture: for example, the back could be more or less lowered in dogs. In addition, they rely on the observer's
58 subjective evaluation, even if precautions are taken to ensure repeatability of the method.

59

60 Quantitative methods have been developed to provide more detailed assessment. For instance, Lepicard et al. (2000) recorded the elevation of
61 the trunk of mice from videos by measuring the distance between the trunk and a horizontal beam on which the animals walked. They showed
62 that a greater distance confirmed an arched posture, and found postural differences between anxious and non-anxious strains of mice. In cattle,
63 a system to describe back posture has been developed to detect lameness, using video images for analysis and calculations (Poursaberi et al.,

64 2010). This included the contour of the cow's back and curvature from three virtual points located at standard positions. These two studies only
65 considered back posture, without taking into account the head's position. Another possibility is to use kinematics to characterise the geometry of
66 movement from videos, after positioning markers at different places on the body (von Wachenfelt et al., 2009; Gregoire et al., 2013) and neck
67 posture in horses (Lesimple et al., 2012). This approach was used recently to evaluate leg flexion of pigs for detection of lameness (Gregoire et
68 al., 2013; Stavrakakis et al., 2014). Distances and angles between the markers can be calculated from videos to assess the shape of the
69 animal, so the method can provide considerable quantities of information. However, the authors emphasise that it has technical challenges: it
70 necessitates use of high quality, precisely specified materials for recording and analysing; displacement of the markers on the skin must be
71 avoided; use of algorithms for calculations is challenging; and a large consumption of time and money is involved (Gregoire et al., 2013).

72

73 Another method has been recently developed in horses, adapting geometric morphometrics to analysis of body posture from head to tail
74 (Deleporte et al., 2008; Fureix et al., 2011). Geometric morphometrics analyses variation in shapes and is applied in systematics, palaeontology
75 and phylogeny. It also uses markers on the body, relies on instantaneous images (photographs or captured from videos), and can reveal subtle
76 variations in the shape (and thus posture) of animals. In horses, it was used to discriminate behavioural postures (e.g. walking, standing) and to
77 identify the influence of management on posture (e.g. pasture vs. individual stalls, leisure/riding lessons types of equitation...). The authors
78 suggested that the method is promising to assess individual postures, to compare groups of animals and to contribute to welfare assessment
79 (Fureix et al., 2011). As well as a global approach, it may also allow identification of precise aspects of posture that could be useful and should
80 be be more thoroughly examined. For example, the global approach identified neck shape as a major issue, and a correlation between neck

81 shape and back disorders was revealed (Lesimple et al., 2012). The method uses free software (tps, <http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/morph/>) that
82 allows automatic calculation of the shape of animals.

83

84 In the present study we used geometric morphometrics, based on the method of Fureix et al. (2011), to assess potential variations of body
85 posture in relation to rearing conditions in pigs, i.e. individual vs. group housing. The rearing environment influences pig behaviour and
86 emotional state: social isolation is known to induce a high level of stress compared to group rearing, indicated by behavioural, endocrine and
87 immune changes (Barnett et al., 1981; Herskin and Jensen, 2000; Tuchscherer et al., 2014). Isolation and group housing might therefore also
88 affect body posture.

89

90 We also compared the posture of the pigs in different situations intended to modulate their emotional state. We compared isolation in a novel
91 testing environment (a source of stress for pigs: Murphy et al., 2014), with the same environment after habituation, and with presence of a
92 handler previously associated with positive interactions (a possible cause of positive states: Tallet et al., 2014).

93

94 We tested two hypotheses:

95 1/ Rearing animals in isolation with little space compared to rearing animals in a group with more space will produce differences in body
96 posture. More precisely, individually housed animals could develop a rounded back associated with a low position of the head (Kiley-
97 Worthington, 1976).

98 2/ Placing animals in different situations potentially modulating their emotional state will also produce differences in their posture.

99

100 2. Material and methods

101 The design of the experiment was approved by the local ethics committee (Comité Rennais d'Ethique en Matière d'Expérimentation Animale,
102 case R-2010-CT-01).

103

104 2.1. Animals and rearing conditions

105 We studied 48 75-day old female pigs (*Sus scrofa domesticus*) randomly allocated to two different treatments, in three independent but identical
106 replicates (January to March 2010). They were born at the experimental unit of Saint-Gilles (INRA, France, GPS: 48.1452, -1.830114) from 30
107 Large White x Landrace sows inseminated with Pietrain semen. Piglets were weaned at 28 ± 2 days of age, then spent 5 weeks in a post-
108 weaning environment and were moved to the finishing building for the experiment at 75 days of age. In the finishing room, the temperature was
109 automatically set at 22°C. The animals had *ad libitum* access to food (standard fattening diet, Cooperl Arc Atlantique, Plestan, France) and
110 water and troughs were replenished every morning (around 08:00h).

111

112 The two treatments were variations in the social and spatial housing conditions. *Individually-housed (IH) animals* (N = 24) were reared alone in
113 2.25 m² pens (0.85 x 2.65 m). Pens were separated by opaque walls. Animals could not see each other but could hear and smell their
114 conspecifics. *Group-housed (GH) animals* (N = 24 individuals in 6 pens) were reared in groups of four in 4.64 m² pens (1.75 x 2.65 m, 1.16 m²
115 per animal). All the animals were reared in the same room. The mean weight of IH animals was 31.5 kg \pm 0.3 and that of GH animals was 32.6
116 kg \pm 0.4 at the start of the experiment.

117

118 2.2. Familiarisation to human handling

119 Morphometrics necessitates handling the animals to place landmarks, so all pigs were first habituated to handling. Pigs received 14 sessions of
120 handling over a period of two weeks (D1 to D12, excluding week-ends, Table 1). During the first week, they received 2 sessions per day (08:30
121 and 13:30 h, excluding the first morning when they were transferred to the finishing building). During the second week, sessions occurred once
122 per day (08:30 h). Troughs were replenished 1h before the sessions.

123

124 In the familiarisation sessions the handler stood motionless at the entrance of the pen for 30 s, then sat on a bucket for 30 s (IH animals) or 1
125 min (GH animals); the duration was longer for GH animals to allow for the larger space available and make sure that all animals had time to
126 access the handler. Finally he/she interacted with each animal for 2 min, using a process adapted from Tallet et al. (2014). First, the handler
127 held out a hand towards the animal. If the pig did not move away, the handler tried to touch it. If it accepted being touched, the handler softly
128 stroked the body from head to back with the palm of the hand. If it accepted this, it was stroked with two hands. During the second week, the
129 last minute of contact was modified to habituate the pig to being marked, simulating marking by pressing a marker on its back in different
130 locations, from head to tail. Handling sessions were performed by three stockmen wearing green overalls and boots, and three female students
131 wearing blue or grey overalls and boots, so that the animals were used to being handled by different people. All animals received handling from
132 all six people.

133

134 During each session, the handler observed the reactions of the animals. When they entered the pen, it was noted whether each animal
135 approached within 50 cm. During handling, the handler noted whether each animal accepted being touched without signs of avoidance
136 (squealing, moving back). When they left the pen, they noted whether each animal followed, with its head less than 30 cm away. We calculated
137 the number of animals expressing each of these behaviours per treatment for each session.

138

139 2.3. General activity in the rearing pen

140 To determine the effect of housing conditions, we recorded behaviour during 2 h (11:00 to 13:00 h) on a Saturday (Day 20, Table 1), when there
141 was no human disturbance after animals were fed in the early morning. Cameras (Panasonic, PC25-2230P, Japan) were fitted above the pens,
142 linked to a multiplexor (Advanced Technology Video, DPX9, Washington, USA) and a recorder (Panasonic, AG-TL500, Japan). Videos were
143 analysed with The Observer XT 9.0 (Noldus, Netherlands). Scan samples were taken every 5 min, giving 25 observations per animal. Two
144 categories of behaviour were observed: position (standing, sitting, lying) and activity (feeding, drinking, exploring the pen). Social interactions of
145 GH animals were also observed (including sniffing, nibbling, licking). It was not possible to see all animals in every scan (e.g. the view was
146 sometimes blocked by another animal), and overall we missed an average of 2 (range 1- 4) scans per pig. We calculated the number of times
147 observed in each behaviour as a proportion of the number of scans obtained.

148

149 2.4. Behaviour and posture expressed in isolation and during human presence

150 *General test conditions*

151 Behaviour (from video records) and posture (from photographs) were observed during three different test conditions: in a novel environment
152 (novel condition), after habituation to the novel situation (habituation condition) and in the presence of a human (human interaction condition).
153 All these situations were obtained in the same experimental corridor (Figure 1) and all animals were subjected to this test the same number of
154 times. We proceeded differently for GH and IH animals. To test GH animals, the whole group was first moved to a waiting area (Figure 1) by a
155 stockperson who was involved in handling sessions. From this area, one pig was selected and put into the starting zone of the corridor for the
156 test. Each pig was tested and then the group was led back to the home pen. IH animals were directly moved from their home pen to the starting
157 zone by the same stockperson as GH animals.

158

159 In the starting zone, the same familiar stockperson marked the animals at different points along the body (left and right side) with a non-toxic
160 blue marker, to analyse their posture (see description below). After marking, the stockperson opened the door so that the tested animal was
161 free to explore a 4.2 m corridor for 10 min. The corridor was wide enough (0.62 m) that the animals could turn back. The outer wall of the
162 corridor was of Plexiglas® so that videos and photographs could be taken. The inner wall was opaque so that GH test animals could not see
163 their group or *vice versa*, but could hear and smell them.

164

165 Videos were obtained with a video camera (Sony, HDR-XR200VE) on a stand. The behaviour was subsequently analysed by one trained
166 experimenter using handheld computers (Psion WorkAbout ProG2) equipped with Pocket Observer (Noldus, Netherlands). Pictures of the
167 profile of the animals were taken with a camera (Canon 1000 EOSD, 50mm objective, Japan) by another experimenter. We only considered
168 animals walking and excluded those standing because this was uncommon.

169

170 *Positioning of the landmarks*

171 Six landmarks (solid circles, diameter 3 cm) were drawn on each side of the pig's body with a marker pen, with the eye as a seventh landmark
172 (Figure 2):

173 1: Above the corner of the lip

174 2: Eye

175 3: Flat zone behind the ear

176 4: Head of the *scapulum* (shoulder)

177 5: Twelfth dorsal vertebra

178 6: End of the furrow of the thigh

179 7: Base of the tail

180 These were chosen because they corresponded to anatomical points, were easy to locate. They were put by trained experimenters on each
181 side of the animals, so that they were visible regardless of the direction in which the animal was walking.

182

183 *Responses to novelty and habituation*

184 Each animal was subjected to the situation once a day from D15 to 19. The first session (D15) was novel, while by the fourth and fifth sessions
185 (D18-19) the animals will have been at least partly habituated to the situation.

186

187 Behavioural observations were performed by one person, and consisted of continuous sampling for:

188 • Motor activity, including:

189 ○ Sniffing¹ the floor or walls: snout less than 5cm from the substrate,

190 ○ Nibbling the pen: taking part of the pen in the mouth,

191 ○ Licking the floor or walls,

192 ○ Lying¹ down without exploratory activity.

193 ○ Locomotion¹, noting the position of the animal in one of four zones (Figure 1), the zone in which its front legs were, and recording the
194 number of zones entered during the test.

195 • Vocalisations¹, divided into two categories (Reimert et al., 2013; Tallet et al., 2013).

196 ○ Low-pitched vocalisations, *i.e.* grunts,

197 ○ High-pitched vocalisations, *i.e.* squeals, grunt-squeals, screams, usually in response to stress or pain.

198

199 The experimenter had been trained to discriminate these categories during a pre-experiment. Data were transferred to The Observer XT 9.0
200 (Noldus, Netherlands) for calculation of the duration of each activity, the number of zones entered and the number of vocalisations of each type.

201

202 *Response to human presence*

¹ We used definitions from the ontology ATOL: <http://www.atol-ontology.com/index.php/en/>

203 On D22 and 23 (Table 1), animals were moved again to the testing pen where an experimenter was present. The experimenter was a
204 stockperson who handled the tested pigs during the first two weeks of the experiment for familiarisation, and was in charge of their daily care
205 (feeding, cleaning). He wore the same overalls as during the familiarisation sessions in the home pen. He sat at the far end of the corridor from
206 the start, and kept this position for 2 min. The total time the animals spent in contact with the experimenter was recorded, including sniffing,
207 nibbling or jumping on him. Then, the experimenter walked along the corridor several times (5-10 times, depending on the animals' willingness
208 to follow him), so that we could take photographs of their walking posture. The test lasted either until the animals stopped following or a
209 maximum of 10 min had elapsed.

210

211 2.5. Preparation of the photographs and shape description

212 Two landmarks could not be used: Landmark 1 because its position was not homogeneous due to movements of the pigs; Landmark 3 because
213 it was often hidden behind the ear. We selected 1083 photographs that fitted two criteria. The animal had to be perpendicular to the camera,
214 with the five remaining landmarks visible. Pictures of an animal moving to the right were reversed horizontally so that in all pictures the head of
215 the pig was on the left. Shape was then described using Tps software (<http://life.bio.sunysb.edu/morph/>) following the method of Fureix et al.
216 (2011). Landmarks were digitised by one trained experimenter via "tpsDig2" positioning the landmarks on a grid to obtain their coordinates.
217 Then files were loaded into "tpsUtil" to define the links between landmarks and create the shape, and the links file saved. Finally, the data were
218 analysed by Generalised Procrustes Analysis (GPA) using R (version 3.0.1, The R Foundation for Statistical Computing, [http://www.r-](http://www.r-project.org/foundation/)
219 [project.org/foundation/](http://www.r-project.org/foundation/)). GPA allows comparisons of shapes after filtering out effects of location in space, rotation and scale (for more statistical
220 details, see Zelditch et al., 2004). Zelditch et al. (2004) explained the rationale and applications of GM methods in detail, so we only summarise

221 below a basic principle. The theory of shape underlying GM (Kendall, 1986) enables a clear distinction between the notions of shape and of
222 scale (size): two objects of different size are considered similar in shape when they appear identical after filtering out effects of location in
223 space, rotation and scale. Superimposition methods (e.g. with generalized least squares Procrustes superimposition) eliminate non-shape
224 variation in configurations of landmarks by iteratively translating, rescaling them in a common size, and optimally rotating to minimize the
225 squared differences between corresponding landmarks. This means in our case that shapes of living individuals differing in size (e.g. because
226 of inter-individual variation in body conditions, or if the pictures were taken from slightly different distances) can be compared easily.

227

228

229 2.6. Statistical analysis

230 We could not obtain any good pictures for one IH animal because it did not walk into the test corridor and it was therefore excluded from all
231 analyses. Behaviour in the home pen is presented with descriptive statistics: medians and quartiles are reported.

232

233 Data were analysed with R (version 3.0.1), with the 'geomorph' library for GPA, lme4 and predict-means library for ANOVA. Normality was
234 tested with the Shapiro-Wilk test, and statistical analyses adapted to the results; ANOVA for normally distributed data and Mann-Whitney U test
235 for non-normally distributed data. In the rearing pen, we tested the effect of housing condition on the number of animals expressing each
236 reaction to human handling (e.g. approaching when the experimenter entered the pen) by Fisher's exact test. The effect of housing conditions
237 on behaviour in the rearing pen and time spent in contact with the experimenter in the test corridor was analysed by Mann-Whitney U test.

238

239 Behaviour in test conditions novel and habituation was analysed with a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) followed by mixed ANOVA on the
240 coordinates of each individual for each condition on the PCA's first two dimensions. The model included the effect of housing condition, test
241 condition and their interaction, and the individuals as random factor. For the post-hoc comparisons P values were corrected with Tukey's
242 method.

243

244 Shape was analysed with a PCA on the GPA coordinates. For the first two dimensions of the PCA, the median and interquartile (IQ) of the
245 coordinates of each individual in each test condition were then calculated. Mixed ANOVA was then performed on these data. The model was
246 similar to the one used for behaviour. This procedure was repeated twice, first by including only novel and habituation conditions, to have
247 results comparable with behaviour, and second by including all three test conditions.

248

249 Shape during condition Hum was then analysed separately in the same way (PCA and post analysis), to test the effect of the time spent
250 interacting with the human on posture. Taking into account the continuous distribution of the values from 27 to 105 s, we decided to compare
251 the animals that spent a longer time in contact with the experimenter (above the third quartile, 90.6 s) to those that spent a shorter time in
252 contact (below the first quartile, 51.7 s). This included 9 animals in each category, 5 IH and 4 GH in each. The effects of housing condition and
253 of the time spent interacting with the experimenter in the test (low *versus* high) were then calculated with Mann-Whitney tests.

254

255 3. Results

256 3.1. Pre-test observations

257 3.1.1. General activity in the rearing pen

258

259 The animals spent most of the time lying (GH 73%, range 67-81, IH 87%, 72-94, Mann-Whitney $U = 43.5$, $P = 0.18$). IH animals spent less time
260 standing (12%, 5-22 *versus* 26%, 19-32; $U = 107.5$, $P = 0.04$) and exploring than GH (2%, 0-13 *versus* 15%, 12-20, $U = 108.5$, $P = 0.03$). There
261 was no difference in time eating/drinking (8%, 4-14 for both, $U = 69$, $P = 1$). GH animals spent 3% (2-3) of their time in social interactions.

262

263 3.1.2. Familiarisation to human handling

264 In the first familiarisation session almost no animals, from either rearing system, approached the human when he/she entered the pen (Fisher
265 test, $P = 0.49$, Figure 3a), kept in contact during the session ($P = 1$, Figure 3b) or followed the experimenter when he/she left the pen ($P = 0.61$,
266 Figure 3c). The number of animals attracted by the experimenters increased over successive sessions, slightly faster for GH animals. More GH
267 animals approached the human when they entered, between sessions 5 and 9 (Figure 3a). From session 7 all GH animals did so (GH vs IH: P
268 = 0.002), and kept contact during the session (GH vs IH: $P = 0.0497$, Figure 3b), and from session 8 all GH animals followed the experimenter
269 when they left the pen (GH vs IH: $P = 0.02$, Figure 3c). There was no significant difference between GH and IH from session 10, in their
270 response when the experimenter entered ($P = 0.49$, Figure 3a), from session 8 during the session ($P = 0.11$, Figure 3b), and from session 10
271 when the experimenter left ($P = 0.23$, Figure 3c). In the last session, all animals except one IH approached the experimenter throughout, so
272 there was no difference between treatments ($P = 0.49$).

273

274 3.2. Observations during the tests

275 3.2.1. Behaviour and posture in novel and habituation conditions

276 *Behaviour*

277 The first two dimensions of the PCA contributed 49% of the total variance (27.2% and 21.9% respectively, 1.9 and 1.5 respectively for the
278 eigenvalues, Figure 4). The first dimension, which could reflect the level of comfort, represented exploration (left hand side of the axis) and
279 vocalisations (right hand side of the axis). The second dimension reflects “movement” and opposed lying (negative value) to physical activity
280 (nibbling, locomotion). Vocalisations were mostly low-pitched ($96\% \pm 1$). ANOVAs on the coordinates of the animal showed significant
281 interactions between housing and testing conditions (dimension 1: $F_{(1/45)} = 8.3$, $P = 0.006$; dimension 2: $F_{(1/45)} = 4.76$, $P = 0.03$). In the novel
282 environment, IH explored significantly more than GH animals (dimension 1, negative values, $P = 0.002$). They also tended to move more
283 (dimension 2, $P = 0.099$) than GH. After habituation GH animals explored significantly more than in novel condition (dimension 1, negative
284 values, $P < 0.0001$) while there was no effect of the testing condition for IH animals (dimension 1, $P = 0.61$). However IH animals moved
285 significantly less after habituation than before (dimension 2, $P = 0.001$), while there was no effect of testing condition for GH individuals ($P =$
286 0.90). In condition habituation, IH and GH animals did not differ on either dimension 1 ($P = 0.93$) or 2 ($P = 0.99$).

287

288 *Posture*

289 After selection, we obtained 13 (quartiles 10-28) pictures per animal. The PCA performed on the GPA coordinates of pictures from each
290 individual during novel and habituation conditions is presented in Figure 5. The first two dimensions contributed 33% of the total variance
291 (17.0% and 16.2% respectively; 1.2 and 1.1 respectively for the eigenvalues. On the first dimension the left hand side was characterised by

292 rounded back (minimum) while the right hand side was characterised by a flat back (maximum, Figure 5b). On the second dimension the most
293 negative values were characterised by a stretched back between scapula (landmark 4) and twelfth dorsal vertebra (landmark 5) while the most
294 positive values were characterised by a more contracted back (maximum, Figure 5c).

295 ANOVAs on individuals' coordinates showed no significant interaction between the housing and testing conditions (Figure 5a). The housing
296 conditions had a significant influence on the median of dimension 1 ($F_{(1/45)} = 5.43$, $P = 0.02$): The backs of IH animals were rounder ($-0.14 \pm$
297 0.12 , $N = 40$) than those of GH (0.24 ± 0.09 , $N = 47$), but there was no effect of housing conditions on dimension 2 (IH 0.06 ± 0.12 , GH $0.07 \pm$
298 0.11 , $F_{(1/45)} = 0.33$, $P = 0.57$) or on the variability on either dimension ($P > 0.10$). Variability (IQ) of dimension 1 was higher for habituation ($1.37 \pm$
299 0.10 , $N = 46$) than for novel condition (0.83 ± 0.09 ; $F_{(1/38)} = 15.53$, $P < 0.001$, $N = 41$), but there was no effect of testing condition on dimension 2
300 (1.17 ± 0.07 versus 1.05 ± 0.54 ; $F_{(1/38)} = 1.06$, $P = 0.31$) or on the median of either dimension ($P > 0.10$).

301

302 3.2.2. Behaviour and posture during human presence

303 There was no effect of rearing condition on time spent in contact with the experimenter in the testing area (median 78s [52-91 s], $U = 163$, $P =$
304 0.94). All animals except two GH spent more than one third of their time in contact. After selection, we obtained 7 (3-26) pictures per animal
305 during the 'human condition', Hum. The first two dimensions of the PCA contributed 35% of the total variance (19.4% and 15.9% respectively,
306 1.4 and 1.1 respectively for the eigenvalues, Figure 6). Distortions explaining the positive and negative values of the two dimensions are similar
307 to those derived from the PCA on postures during novel and habituation conditions.

308 There was no effect of rearing condition on the posture of the animals ($U < 293$, $P > 0.24$), nor any association of time spent near the
309 experimenter (first vs. third quartiles) with posture ($U < 52$, $P > 0.34$, $N = 9$ for each quartile category).

310

311 3.2.3. Comparison of shape between test conditions

312 In addition, we compared shape in conditions novel, human interaction and habituation. The first two dimensions of the PCA contributed 39% of
313 the total variance (14.6% and 14.5% respectively; 1.0 and 1.0 respectively for the eigenvalues). The distortions carried by the two dimensions
314 were again similar to the other PCA. There was no significant effect of test condition on medians of dimensions 1 and 2, nor on variability in
315 dimension 2 ($F < 2.78$, $P > 0.05$). Variability in dimension 1 was higher in habituation (1.24 ± 0.10) than in novel (0.82 ± 0.10) or human
316 interaction condition (0.92 ± 0.10 ; $F_{(2/80)} = 5.80$, $P = 0.004$). IH animals had more rounded backs than GH (median on dimension 1; $F_{(1/45)} = 4.59$,
317 $P = 0.04$) whatever the situation.

318

319

320 4. Discussion

321

322 *Influence of housing conditions on behaviour and posture*

323 We found clear differences between group-housed and individually-housed pigs, both in their rearing environment (behaviour), and in the
324 testing pen (posture and behaviour). Individually-housed pigs were less active than group-housed pigs in their home pen (14% vs. 41% of
325 observations). This may suggest that individually-housed animals had developed apathy due to stress (Fureix et al., 2012). It occurred even
326 though human presence linked to the experimental procedure may have been perceived as an enrichment by the pigs, and thus may have
327 rendered the situation less stressful. The differences of activity may be explained by the social and spatial environment. There may have been a

328 social facilitation of activity, animals from the group no-being independent in terms of movements. Social deprivation is known to induce the
329 chronic stress reaction of increased cortisol (Barnett et al., 1981; Tuchscherer et al., 2014). Even though social deprivation was partial in our
330 experiment, as individually-housed animals could hear and smell each other, these pigs were potentially stressed by their rearing conditions.
331 The space allowance may also have modulated their general activity. On the one hand, individually-housed pigs had more space per animal
332 (2.3 vs 1.2 m²), which might be expected to result in higher exploration and general activity (Vermeer et al., 2014), whereas activity was actually
333 lower. On the other hand, individually-housed animals had only 2.3 m² in total while group housing provided 4.6 m². The ambiguous effects of
334 relative space per pig and absolute space per pen have previously been emphasised by Hörning (2007).

335

336 We also measured the consequences of social and spatial deprivation on posture. Individually-housed animals had more rounded backs than
337 group-housed animals while walking in all test conditions, without interaction between housing and test condition. Beerda et al. (1999) showed
338 that individually-housed dogs express lower postures when compared to group-housed, with rounder backs, and that this was a consequence of
339 stress (Beerda et al., 1999). Similarly, a rounded back associated with a low position of the head has been described during negative situations
340 in pigs (Kiley-Worthington, 1976), such as pain, sickness and fear. We may thus hypothesise that individual housing of pigs is associated with
341 stress or other negative emotions. To confirm the hypothesis, the internal state of pigs will have to be measured by cortisol assay, or
342 behavioural tests like elevated plus maze or cognitive bias (Murphy et al, 2014) will have to be used. This rounded posture seems to be
343 adaptive for the animals, as a high elevation of the trunk would be associated with an increase of postural tonus (Kiley-Worthington, 1976) and
344 would allow faster, easier mobilisation of the limbs to escape a stressful situation (Lepicard et al., 2003). An alternative hypothesis is that limited
345 locomotor activity of individually-housed pigs may have modified their musculo-skeletal system and gait. Indeed, confinement of swine for long

346 periods has been reported to affect the incidence and severity of structural leg weakness, with potential effects on gait and/or body posture (2
347 months: Sather and Fredeen, 1982; all gestation: Schrenck et al., 2008). However, in our experiment space reduction without walking lasted
348 only for two weeks, which seems too short to have such strong consequences on gait. These results should be checked by measuring posture
349 before the experimental conditions are applied, to be sure that there are no conformation differences before the experiment, even though we
350 used only females of the same breed reared in the same conditions so that conformation differences were unlikely.

351

352 The method we developed was sensitive to variation in posture related to daily living conditions. In horses, this approach has enabled focus on
353 key components of posture that reflect physical problems and altered welfare (Lesimple et al., 2012). Applications to pig welfare therefore seem
354 possible, while requiring further validation.

355

356 *Postural changes with test conditions*

357 We compared behaviour and posture of pigs subjected for the first time to an individual test outside the home pen (novelty), and after four
358 repetitions of the test (habituation). Group-housed pigs were also separated from their penmates for the first time, while individually-housed pigs
359 were used to social isolation. Correspondingly, isolation in the test had different effects. Group-housed individuals explored less and reacted
360 mostly by vocalising (PCA dimension 1), and moved less (PCA dimension 2) than individually-housed pigs. We interpreted this as showing that
361 they were less comfortable. Individually-housed pigs explored the corridor more and moved more. Low and high-pitched vocalisations were
362 correlated to each other, but not to motor activity. Isolation is known to induce different types of vocalisations (Weary et al., 1997; Tallet et al.,
363 2013), reflecting different emotional or motivational states, e.g. seeking for social contact, stress. Group-housed animals were thus apparently

364 stressed by the situation. Individually-housed animals would have been less stressed by the situation, and thus started to explore the pen
365 (sniffing, nibbling, licking) from the first test (PCA dimension 1). After four tests, there were no longer behavioural differences between groups.
366 Motor activity and vocalisations were lower, and exploration higher than for the first test. These are expressions of habituation (Kanitz et al.,
367 2014). These behavioural data confirm that we were able to compare posture in situations with different meanings for pigs. There was no effect
368 of the test situation, nor interaction between the situation and rearing condition, on posture. The only difference was an increase after
369 habituation in variability of dimension 1 of the PCA (roundness of the back). This variability increased again during human presence. This
370 variability may be linked to individual differences in posture – we did not study these, but they have been observed in horses (Fureix et al.,
371 2011) – or in perception of the situations. Variability did not reflect differences in the size of the animals (procrustes analyses were done to
372 make the animals comparable). The higher level of arousal in the two other conditions may have decreased these individual effects.

373

374 Posture is modified by negative situations like pain and fear in pigs (Kiley-Worthington, 1976), rats (Lepicard et al., 2000) and dogs (Beerda et
375 al., 1998). The fact that our isolation test did not affect pigs' posture may result from methodological issues. For example, changes in posture
376 might have been too detailed to be detected using only five landmarks. Fureix et al. (2011) used eight landmarks in horses. It might be
377 worthwhile to use more landmarks in pigs, as we unsuccessfully tried to do. One possible solution to this problem could be to describe the
378 outline of the body rather than using landmarks, a method currently under development (Sénèque, personal communication). We may also have
379 missed some information by studying walking posture. Fureix et al. (2011) studied standing posture, when horses were either motionless or
380 observing the environment. We focused on walking because our pigs were rarely observed standing, only in 11% of pictures. However, walking
381 involves movements that may modify posture sufficiently to obscure variations due to stress. Moreover, pictures were not all taken at the same

382 stage of the pace, introducing additional variability, although taking many pictures for each animal and studying the median posture will have
383 decreased the importance of this. It remains true that the situation may not have been negative enough (especially for individually-housed pigs)
384 to induce postural changes, even if it was sufficient to induce behavioural changes.

385

386 Finally, we wanted to determine whether posture varied in the presence of a familiar handler. Most animals spent more than one third of their
387 time in contact with the stockperson in the test pen. This person was thus attractive and the situation was probably considered as positive by
388 the animals (Tallet et al., 2014). We found no significant effect of this situation (subject again to the methodological limits described above).
389 While Kiley-Worthington (1976) reported postural variation between animals showing greetings and fear, for instance, differences between
390 negative and positive situations were not clear in her study. Similar postures were induced by frustration or greetings, and by aggressiveness or
391 threat. Despite their recognition as crucial for good welfare, little is known about positive affective states in almost all animal species (Boissy et
392 al., 2007), and the influence of positive states on animals' posture needs further investigation.

393

394 Furthermore, the amount of contact with the human did not influence posture. A major factor may have been that almost all animals approached
395 the stockperson rather than showing fear. Variation in the positivity of the event may have been too low to be detected by our method. One way
396 to increase differences might be to test responses to an unknown human.

397

398 5. Conclusion

399 The method based on geometric morphometrics that we developed to study pig posture detected differences in walking posture between pigs
400 housed with different socio-spatial criteria. Individually-housed animals adopted a rounder back outside the home pen. This is in line with
401 studies in other species, showing associations between this posture and negative, stressful conditions. However, we could not detect any
402 influence of different test conditions on posture, evaluated outside the home pen. This may indicate a need for methodological improvements, to
403 detect more subtle variation in body posture, and potentially to study the impact on posture of emotions..

404

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410

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473 Figure captions

474

475 Figure 1. Schematic representation of the testing area.

476

477 Figure 2. Landmarks for posture evaluation.

478

479 Figure 3. Changes in the number of animals (a) approaching the human when she/he entered the pen, (b) keeping contact with the human
480 during the session, (c) following the human when she/he left the pen. GH = group-housed animals (N = 24), IH = individually-housed animals (N
481 = 24), * = $P < 0.05$ between GH and IH (Fisher's exact test).

482

483 Figure 4. Results of the first two dimensions of the Principal Components Analysis performed on the behavioural reactions to the testing
484 conditions, novel and habituation. (a) Variables (voc = vocalisations). (b) Individuals. Individually-housed animals in novel condition (Inovel, first
485 day of test), and habituation conditions (Ihab, fourth-fifth day of test), Group-housed animals in novel (Gnovel), and habituation (Ghab)
486 conditions.

487

488 Figure 5. The first two dimensions of the Principal Components Analysis of the shape coordinates of the individually (I) and group-housed (G)
489 animals observed in novel and habituation conditions. (a) Individuals, each represented by a point (labels and colours as in Figure 4b). (b)
490 Schematic representation of the shape at the extremities of dimension 1 (grey dotted lines) and pictures of animals with extreme positions on
491 the axis. The mean shape is represented by red points. Arrows represent distortions compared to the mean. (c) Similarly for dimension 2.

492

493 Figure 6. Representation of individuals according to rearing conditions and time in contact with the experimenter, for the Principal Components
494 Analysis of the shape coordinates. Quartile 1: animals that spent less time in contact than the first quartile; quartile 3: animals that spent more
495 time than the third quartile.

496

496 Tables

497

498 Table 1. Timeline of the experiment

499

Week	Day	Event / observation	Place	Measures
1	1	Moving to the finishing room One session of handling	Rearing pen	Behaviour
	2-5	Two sessions of handling per day	Rearing pen	Behaviour
2	8-12	One session of handling per day Habituation to being marked by a coloured marker on the back	Rearing pen	Behaviour
		Habituation to salivary sampling		
	12	Salivary sampling at 08:00 and 16:00h	Rearing pen	Cortisol level
3	15	Isolation in an unfamiliar corridor	Testing pen	Behaviour and posture
	16-17	Isolation in the same corridor	Testing pen	-
	18-19	Isolation in the same corridor	Testing pen	Behaviour and posture
	20	Video recordings from 11:00 to 13:00h	Rearing pen	General activity
4	22-23	Presence in the same corridor with an experimenter	Testing pen	Behaviour and posture

500

Figure 1

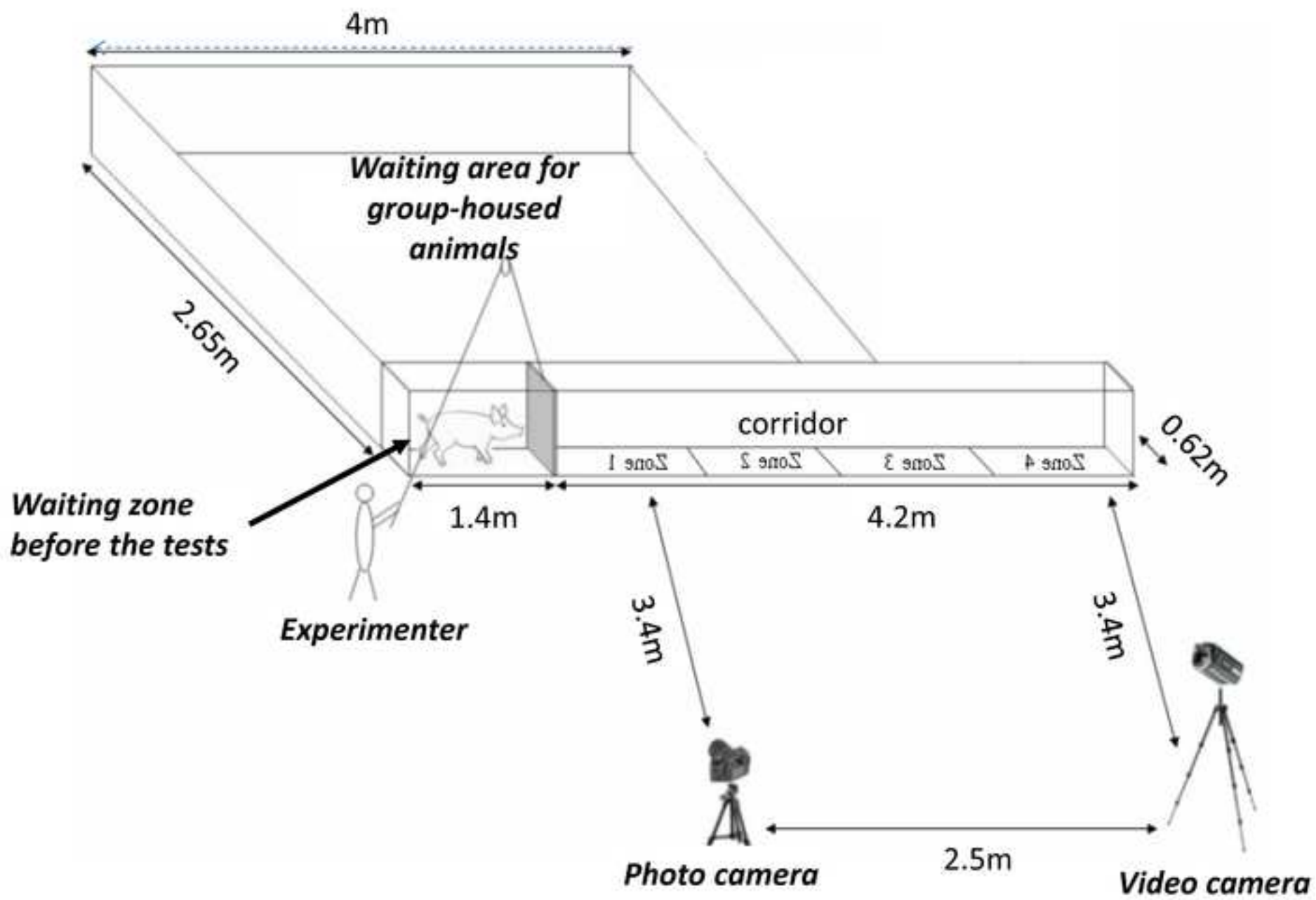
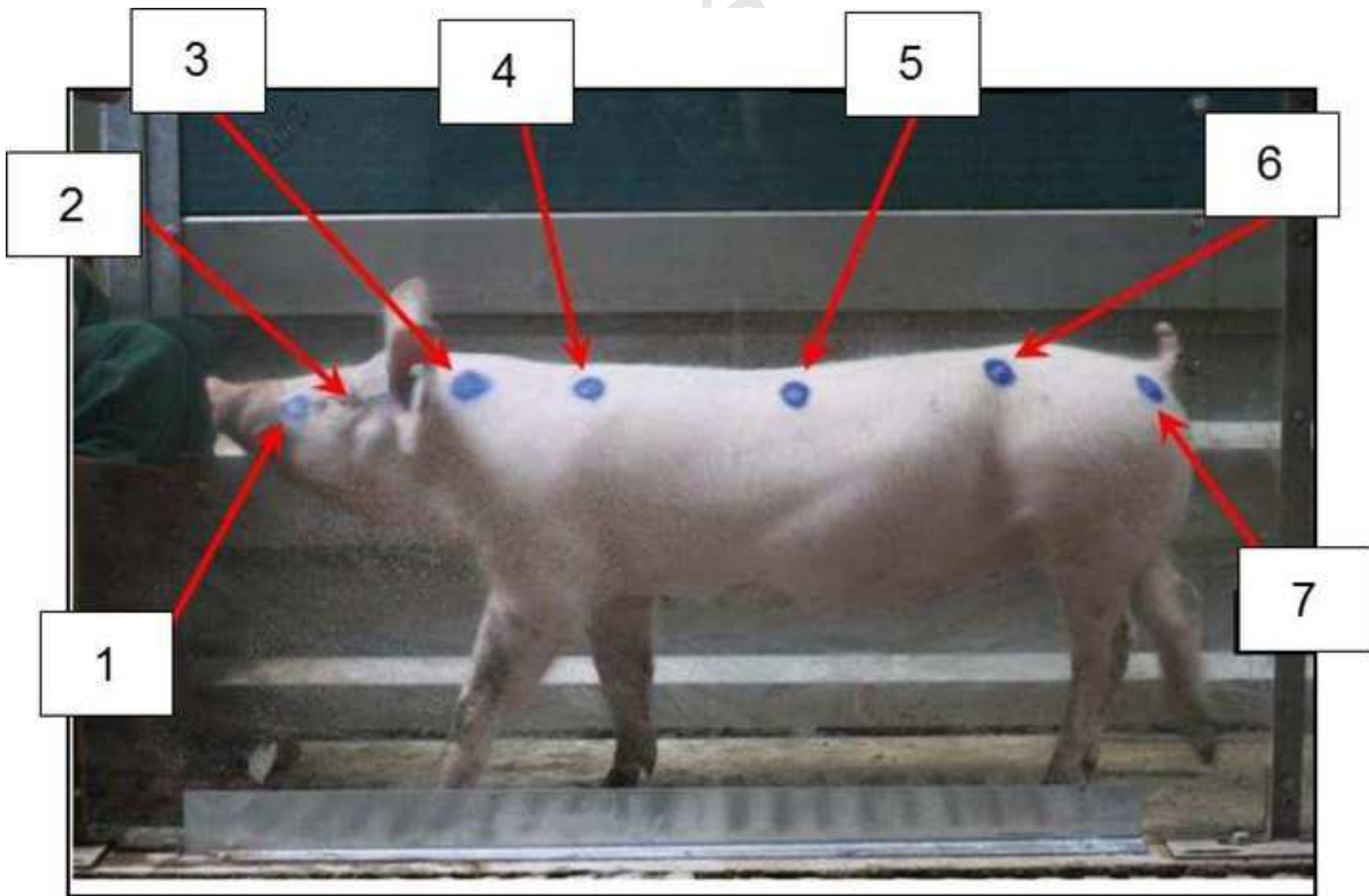
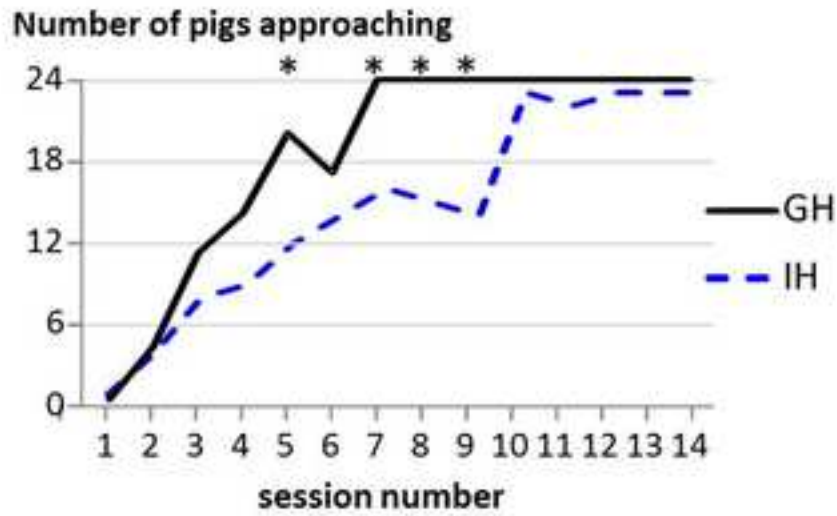


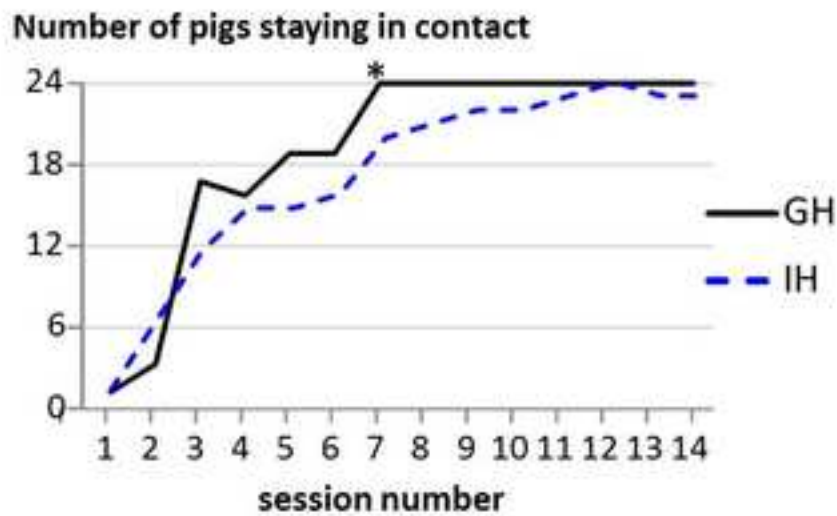
Figure2



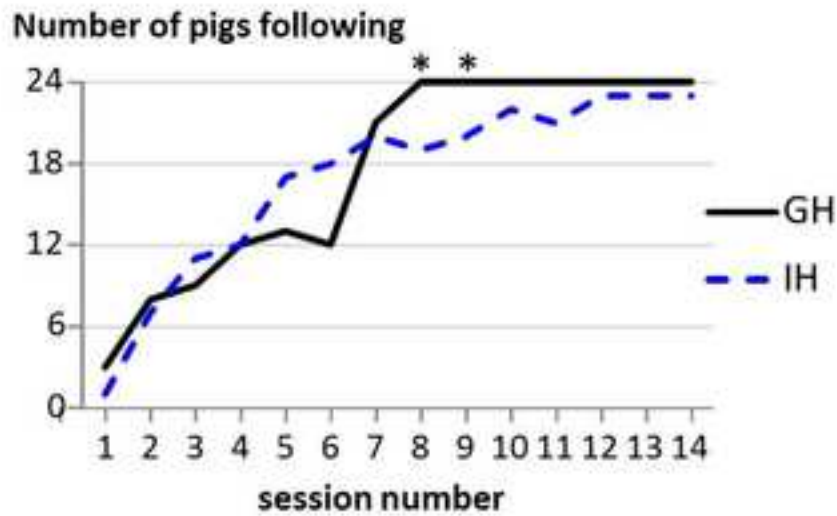
(a) At human entry

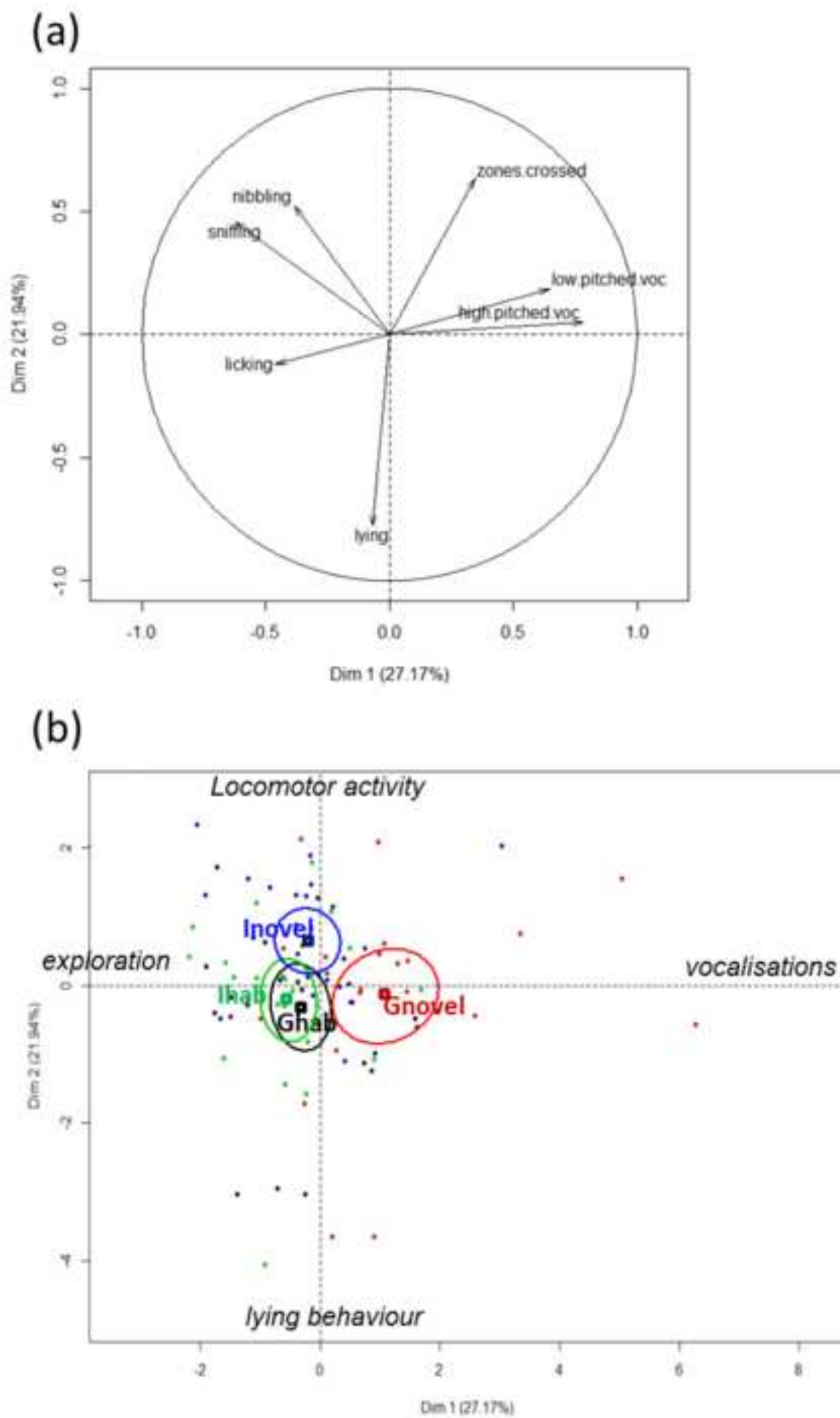


(b) During contact

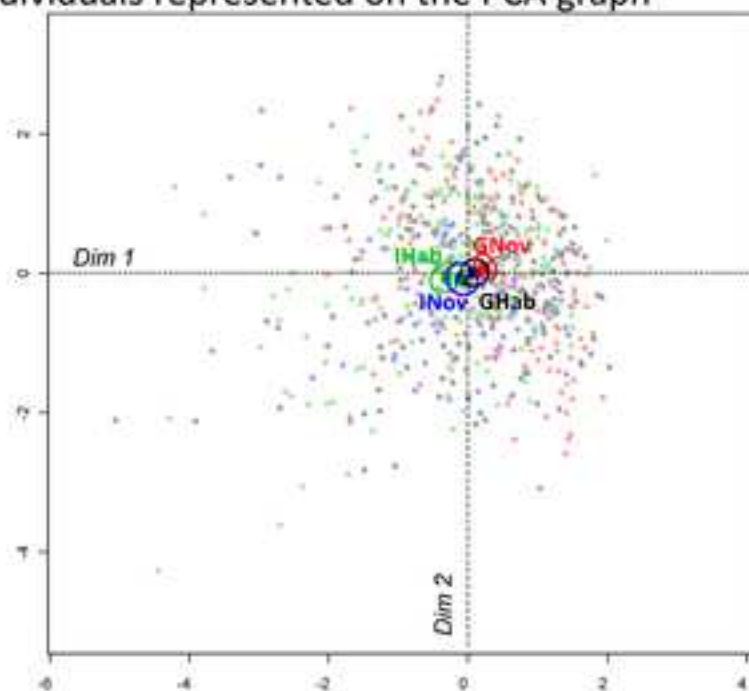


(c) At human exit

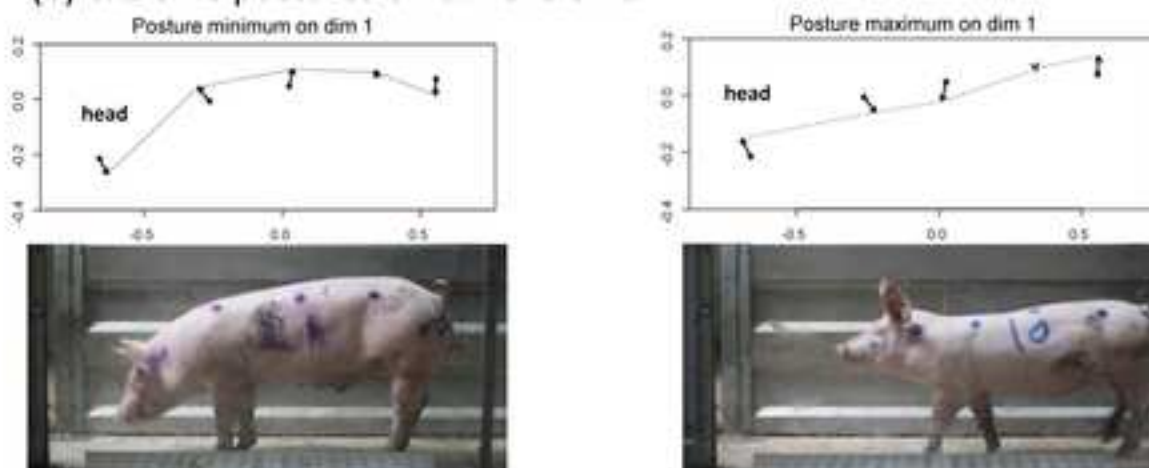




(a) individuals represented on the PCA graph



(b) extreme postures on dimension 1



(c) extreme postures on dimension 2

