Earthlings

Considering the Status of Animals in Sweden

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Author: Katarina Näslund
Fellow advisor: Helen Lindberg
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Abstract

Animal welfare is a topic subjected to great controversy, mostly within moral philosophy. The moral issue of human behaviour is often dealt with, alongside whether nonhuman animals are eligible certain rights. In our world, how humans behave towards nonhuman animals have fallen into something of political oblivion, which is the departure-point for this research.

The essay’s discourse surrounds nonhuman animals’ political and moral status in Sweden, with the aim of drawing conclusions regarding whether they can be said to possess it. This is done through an analysis of ideas, using dimensions as tools, problematizing the Swedish parliamentary parties' views on animal welfare. A better understanding for nonhuman animals’ situation in Sweden has been provided, showing that there is no animal rights mentality tangible, while speciesist and utilitarian attitudes towards nonhuman animals dominate.

The analysis show that nonhuman animals in Sweden possess moral status, as the parties agree that nonhuman animals should be spared from unnecessary suffering, and their welfare seems to count in its own right. However, human interests tend to take precedence in most cases, and in the end, nonhuman animals cannot be considered to possess any political status, despite their unmistakable presence in our society.

Tags: Analysis of ideas, Dimensions, Utilitarianism, Animal rights, Speciesism, Animal welfare, Swedish politics, Food industry, Experimentation, Bestiality, Status
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1. The Human-Animal Relation

According to the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the estimated number of pets in Sweden was over eleven million in 2014. This estimation did not include the more common pets like dogs or cats, and it did not include the wild animals residing within the country. All in all, we are talking about a nonhuman population that is far greater than the human population in Sweden; a population of sentient beings with needs and interests that must be met.

All political societies today can be said to take up a certain position, or relation, towards nonhuman animals, and most countries have animal welfare policies that govern this relation. How nonhuman animals are treated throughout the world differs greatly, however, and humans’ interests often take precedence to the interests of nonhuman animals. Reality is as such that much of humans’ ways of reaching certain goals are built on the exploitation of animals. World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) latest Living Planet Report shows that the Living Planet Index, which measures the representative population of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, has declined by fifty-two per cent since 1970.

Although most people would oppose direct and intentional mistreatment and cruelty towards nonhuman animals, many still believe that it is not a crime to kill or torture them to promote various human interests. Criticism to the exploitation of nonhuman animals is often brushed off by claiming that nonhuman animals are simply not human. There are still those who argue that this fact does not mean that humans are entitled to treat nonhuman animals in whichever way they please, and the animal liberation movement that seeks to end the exploitation of animals is today becoming more prominent throughout the world along with animal welfare laws in Europe advancing. In the proverbial budget proposal for 2015, the Löfven Cabinet stressed animal welfare in the section on areal industries, rural areas and provisions, and even if the budget was rejected, it does suggest that animal welfare is becoming more current as of late. Still, as a topic it remains a largely politically marginalized issue and there is considerable controversy about the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals within academic circles; whether our treatment of them is wrong and

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1 Swedish Board of Agriculture, 2014
2 Animal Rights Sweden, 2014
3 Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 2
4 World Wildlife Fund, 2014
5 Regan, 2010: 21
6 Singer, 2009: 224
7 Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 1
8 The Löfven Cabinet, 2014: 59, 80
9 Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 2
whether nonhuman animals are entitled rights. For many, how we treat nonhuman animals remains a political non-starter,\textsuperscript{10} and friends of nonhuman animals in Sweden and elsewhere are hoping for the kind of change and the kind of politics that dares to focus on these fellow creatures.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 5
\textsuperscript{11} Björkbom, 2014
2. An Issue of Morals and Politics

Australian moral philosopher Peter Singer argues that Sweden has been one of the leading countries in the world when it comes to the treatment of nonhuman animals. He says that “it is Sweden that is now showing the way forward in animal welfare, as it has often done in respect to other social reforms,”\(^\text{12}\) which suggests that nonhuman animals have been regarded in a fairly good way in our country. The Animal Welfare Authority was despite this shut down in 2006,\(^\text{13}\) and according to Animal Rights Sweden close to 90 million nonhuman animals are killed in Swedish slaughterhouses every year. Some are even subjected to brutal treatment before being stunned and killed.\(^\text{14}\) Nonhuman animals are also used within research, where over a million were used in animal experimentation in Sweden alone in 2008.\(^\text{15}\)

Tom Regan and Peter Singer are today viewed as the most prominent moral philosophers to have tended to the subject on whether our treatment of nonhuman animals is right or wrong.\(^\text{16}\) Political scientists are also not unfamiliar with the issue, as Will Kymlicka has shown in cooperation with Sue Donaldson, touching upon animal ethics in the light of political philosophy. Animal welfare clearly concerns both morals and politics, and what we can say about how nonhuman animals are actually viewed in society within this debate, particularly their status, is what has caught my attention.

2.1 Purpose of Essay

On the background of animal welfare being a “political non-starter”,\(^\text{17}\) the relation between humans and nonhuman animals is worthy more attention. Coupled with the disagreement in academic circles on how nonhuman animals ought to be treated and viewed, as well as animal welfare being mentioned as an important issue in the Löfven Cabinet’s failed budget proposal,\(^\text{18}\) more importance is given for further research.

By placing the Swedish parliamentary parties’ views on nonhuman animals in relation to a set of dimensions, I argue that dominant attitudes towards them can be distinguished. Consequently, a comparative study will help paint a picture of how nonhuman animals are

\(^{12}\) Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: 144
\(^{13}\) Thurfjell, 2006
\(^{14}\) Djurens Rätt, Slaughter, 2014
\(^{15}\) Djurens Rätt, Animal experimentation, 2014
\(^{16}\) Sorabji, 1993: 211
\(^{17}\) Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 5
\(^{18}\) The Löfven Cabinet, 2014: 59
regarded, with the specific purpose to illuminate these views and, based on the dominating ideas, draw conclusions on whether nonhuman animals possess any moral and political status.

2.2. Research Questions
To achieve the purpose of this essay, the following research questions will be answered:

1. How have the eight Swedish parliamentary parties reasoned regarding animals in the food industry, animals used for experimentation, and bestiality?
2. Based on the political parties’ opinions, against a background of a number of dimensions that express different ideas or views on animals, which ideas are most dominating?
3. Can similarities or differences between the parliamentary parties’ opinions be distinguished?

2.3. Acknowledgement and Delimitations
The Oxford dictionary defines “animal” as a noun referring to “a living organism which feeds on organic matter, typically having specialized sense organs and nervous system and able to respond rapidly to stimuli”. I acknowledge that humans in this sense are animals as well, but henceforth when the term ‘animal’ is used, in singular or plural, it will refer to nonhuman animals.

To study the status of animals in our country, examinations of attitudes towards them are needed. An attempt to use the Swedish population’s opinions through surveys or public opinion polls would not have worked regarding this issue; it would have been time consuming, and a fruitful result would have been dependent on people actively choosing to respond to a questionnaire. The essay is therefore delimited to the Swedish parliamentary parties’ views and attitudes regarding animal welfare; an area in which we can distinguish relevant views on animals. The parties’ views can also be seen as reflecting the essence of the Swedish people’s opinions. Focus is moreover on the period between 2010 and 2014; the time in which Sweden has had the eight parliamentary parties that it has today: the Social Democrats, the Moderate Party, the Sweden Democrats, the Green Party, the Centre Party, the Left Party, the Liberal People’s Party, and the Christian Democrats.

Focus has moreover been delimited to three particular areas of animal welfare, due to animal welfare encompassing too many application areas to research. These are three larger

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19 Oxford University Press, 2014
areas that can supply sufficient information and material to work with: animals in the food industry (i.e. animals that are raised and kept to provide us with food), animal experimentation, and bestiality (i.e. sexual abuse of animals).
3. Material and Method

3.1. Material

As the purpose of the essay is, based on the dominating ideas regarding animals, to draw conclusions regarding animals’ status, the Swedish parliamentary parties’ parliamentary bills that touch upon the three chosen areas of animal welfare figures as the research material. These documents are found the most reasonable material in the light of the research problem, and are furthermore deemed as trustworthy in the sense that they represent the views of the political parties, which is what I wish to get a hold of and analyze.

The parliamentary bills are primary sources, which strengthens the reliability of the information they provide. The bills have been retrieved from the Swedish Parliament’s website; a website that aims to, in a simple fashion, provide its visitors with transparency and insight into parliamentary work and decisions. It also aims to increase the interest for and the knowledge of the Parliament and the democratic process in Sweden. Furthermore, on the basis of parliamentary bills being of argumentative nature, one should be able to clearly make out what the different political parties reason and argue regarding animal welfare.

As mentioned in the essay’s second passage, the parliamentary bills used are from the period between 2010 and 2014. When deciding exactly which bills to use, a detailed search was conducted on the Parliament’s website for parliamentary bills using different search words. When looking for bills related to animals in the food industry, the Swedish words ‘djur, slakt’ were used as search words, which translate into ‘animals, slaughter’. In turn, when looking for bills related to animal experimentation, ‘djurförsök’ was searched for, which translates into ‘animal experimentation’. Lastly, regarding bestiality, the search word ‘tidelag’ as well as ‘djur, övregrupp’ was used, which translates into ‘bestiality’ and ‘animals, abuse’. From the search results, the parliamentary bills that expressed relevant ideas in light of the essay’s purpose were chosen. Using the Swedish law of prevention of cruelty to animals from 1988 was considered, but the parliamentary bills provide a more concentrated and rewarding material to work with, due to their argumentative nature.

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20 Hedman, 2014
21 The Swedish Parliament, 2014
3.2. Method

A comparative analysis of ideas will be conducted as it can provide more substantial information on the issue at hand. I argue that it is the method that best suits the material in light of the research objective because parliamentary bills reflect different political ideas and views. Through a comparative study, similarities and differences can be distinguished and therefore the different attitudes towards animals captured and clarified in a more detailed way.

When discussing the method used, we touch upon the issue of validity: the consistency between the theoretical concepts and the operational indicators that are being used. When reviewing previously conducted research, one has reason to clarify and define key concepts and reflect on how the occurrence of those should be measured. It should be made clear what is being looked for and a model of analysis is what is going to help clarify this; to help answer the research questions. I argue that dimensions are the best tool for accomplishing the essay’s purpose, as the aim is not to make statements regarding the political parties’ ideologies, but rather to say something about their ideas concerning a certain issue. The dimensions are useful when doing this as they do not aim to capture perfect matches to the ideas they express, but rather capture nuances of ideas in the arguments being analyzed. Dimensions can, in comparison to ideal-types, be seen as a more general way of distinguishing different claims in a text, or a way of distinguishing different specifications of the same claim. What dimensions have in common with ideal-types is that they make comparisons possible, but they are more applicable for analysis over time and they do not need the same kind of precision.

Dimensions are usually built on the strength of political philosophy, and the choice of dimensions, which a researcher can choose to formulate in new creative ways if he or she wishes, should be well connected to the ideology or debate which the researcher aims to study. Through the help of such an instrument, one should be able to sort and analyze a material at hand with the dimensions figuring as guidelines. Beckman argues that when constructing dimensions, one has to make sure that they are mutually exclusive an exhaustive in order to avoid repetitions and to make sure that the important components of a debate or ideology actually are captured by the analysis apparatus. One has to ensure that loosely formularized

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22 Ekengren & Hinnfors, 2006: 79-80
23 Beckman, 2005: 19, 25
24 Bergström & Boréus, 2012: 156, 167
25 Beckman, 2005: 28
26 Bergström & Boréus, 2012: 158-59
27 Beckman, 2005: 26-27
dimensions have not been created, as that could result in obscure interpretations and inadequate comparisons.28

To ensure good validity, the dimensions for this essay are connected to theories from previous research that is appropriate for the research problem.29 The different views on the treatment of animals that are described in the essay’s upcoming passage served as inspiration for the dimensions, which will be explained further in connection to these ideas.

28 Bergström & Boréus, 2012: 168
29 Beckman, 2005: 23
4. Approaching Animal Welfare

4.1. The Human Earthling versus the Earthlings of the World

“Since we all inhabit the earth, we are all considered earthlings. There is no sexism, racism, or speciesism in the term ‘earthling’. It encompasses each and every one of us: warm- or cold-blooded, mammal, vertebrate or invertebrate, bird, reptile, amphibian, fish and human alike.”

The exploitation of animals is the basis for some of man’s bigger businesses, such as the food and clothing industries. Previous research on man’s relation to animals often examines the consequences that animals suffer due to the common practices of the industries that rely on them for profit. It often deals with the moral question of how we should treat animals, and aims to illuminate man’s dominion over them or provide guidelines for our behavior towards animals. Researchers and philosophers tend to disagree, however, on the moral and political status of animals and whether we owe animals certain rights. Some argue that our complacency about animals is rooted in the Western Christian tradition, which draws on the denial of rationality to animals. That, along with the denial of belief, is usually the most common defense for not giving rights or owing justice to animals. The view of them presented in the quote above, however, is an example of how animals are viewed by those who do feel that we owe them the same respect as we owe humans. The “human earthling” is often described as dominating the earth by treating other creatures as mere objects, which begs to question; how do we as humans actually view animals? Could there be, as Singer argues, something fundamentally wrong with the laws and ethics which control our behavior towards them?

4.2. The Philosophy of Our Species

For some, the human use of animals raises no ethical issues at all; causing unnecessary suffering and harm to animals just for the sake of it is anything but morally problematic. In society today it is however hard to imagine that a person who finds importance in acting morally would not condemn the causing of such extensive harm to animals. But, while society could be seen as moving morally forward on the issue, cruelty is still conflicted onto animals.

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30 Monson, 2005.
31 Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 2
32 Sorabji, 1993: 7, 43, 107,
33 Note: “Earthling” is by Monson (2005) defined as “one who inhabits the earth”.
34 Nation Earth, 2012
35 Singer, 2009: ix
This behavior is not new for society today, but one that can be traced back to the era of ancient philosophy.\(^\text{36}\) In the *Politics*, Greek philosopher Aristotle actually wrote:

> "Plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man – domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (or at any rate most of them) for food and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools. Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man." \(^\text{37}\)

This attitude towards animals was one that the Stoics as well as the Epicureans shared in the 3\(^{\text{rd}}\) century A.D. Christian philosopher Saint Augustine also believed that animals existed for the sake of humans;\(^\text{38}\) he argued that Jesus was trying to show man that our behavior towards animals did not need to be governed by the moral rules that controlled how we acted toward other humans.\(^\text{39}\) Aristotle moreover suggested that animals, apart from lacking any sense of justice, also lacked the sense of good and bad as well as that of harm and benefit. For many modern philosophers or common men, animals are simply not moral agents; they do not possess the concept of a self and they are not capable of reason. The general view on animals has been that they are irrational beings, incapable of judgment and thus not possessing genuine emotion. Rational beings may be subject to certain kinds of suffering or be viewed to have certain needs; something that has not applied to animals.\(^\text{40}\)

> "Thus in animals there is neither intelligence nor souls as ordinarily meant. They eat without pleasure, cry without pain, grow without knowing it; they desire nothing, fear nothing, know nothing."\(^\text{41}\) This quote is said to embody French philosopher René Descartes’ view on animals, whom in the 17\(^{\text{th}}\) century had great influence over the scientists of that era. Scientists back then strongly agreed on animals completely lacking psyche; that they were incapable of having conscious experiences. Animals were compared to clocks and scientists would simply claim that the cries of animals were the sounds of broken coiled springs. Animals were not believed to be able to feel anything and it was not uncommon that they were vivisected in order to study the living internal structure in detail. Animals were, and still are by some contemporary Cartesians, viewed as not being able to think, and viewed as not being able to think, animals

\(^{36}\) DeGrazia, 2002: 12-13, 136

\(^{37}\) Aristotle, as quoted in Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: 189

\(^{38}\) Sorabji, 1993: 8, 198

\(^{39}\) Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: 192

\(^{40}\) Sorabji, 1993: 57-59, 116, 118, 123-24

\(^{41}\) Malebranche, as quoted in Harrison, 1992: 219
are as a result viewed as completely unaware.\textsuperscript{42} It was not until later in philosophical texts that reason enough for owing animals respect and justice emerged, based on the argument that they could feel pain and suffering. Jeremy Bentham believed that animals could be rational and he emphasized that when owing them justice it was not to be based on whether they could reason or talk, but rather on if they could suffer; something that can be seen as an example of his utilitarian ethics. The two main defenses of animals in the modern debate are moreover held by Peter Singer, adopting a utilitarian approach, and Tom Regan, who abides by a theory of animal rights.\textsuperscript{43}

4.3. A Standing in Society

4.3.1. Moral status

American moral philosopher David DeGrazia argues that an animal has ‘moral status’ when it is recognized that the animal has a moral importance in her own right and not in relation to humans. The animal’s interest or welfare matters and must be taken seriously in this sense, regardless of how the animal’s welfare may affect human interests.

An individual who believes mistreatment of animals results in humans mistreating other humans, and sees this as a reason for opposing animal cruelty; this individual puts human interests as the ultimate basis for refraining from the abuse of animals. Thus, in this case, animals are regarded as having no moral status. When an animal is seen possessing moral status, the animal should be treated well for its own sake. The animal’s welfare counts in its own right, and the animal has moral significance, and we have obligations to animals that are not simply rooted in human interests.\textsuperscript{44} When discussing ‘moral status’ in this essay, this particular meaning just described of it is the one being referred to.

4.3.2. Political status

Status refers to a relative standing or position that an individual possesses within a group, or that a group possesses within a society. It can be viewed as either ascribed or acquired. Status is a relational phenomenon dependent upon others’ valuation of the attributes which distinguishes the individual or group in question.\textsuperscript{45} Political status is intertwined with legal status, which refers to a set of principles; principles like the ability to acquire certain rights and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} Regan, 2010: 52-53
\item \textsuperscript{43} Sorabji, 1993: 208, 210-11
\item \textsuperscript{44} DeGrazia, 2002: 13-14, 37
\item \textsuperscript{45} Brante, 2014
\end{itemize}
responsibilities, the right to self-determination, and the right to make one’s case against others.⁴⁶ When political status is discussed in this essay, it refers to the ownership of the individual right to autonomy, liberty and self-determination.

4.4. Animals as Citizens?

Sue Donaldson, independent researcher and author, together with Will Kymlicka, Canadian Research Chair in Political Philosophy at Queen’s University, Ontario, present an extended theory on animal rights worthy of mentioning. According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, the debate on animal welfare usually takes place within three theoretical frameworks - the welfarist approach, the ecological approach, and the basic rights approach – that they feel are inadequate when dealing with the treatment of animals. Their main argument is that our relationship to animals needs to be understood in more political terms.⁴⁷

Donaldson and Kymlicka’s political theory of animal rights builds upon citizenship theory as they believe that thinking about human-animal relations in the light of more familiar categories can help identify claims that animals owe the right to. Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that there are powerful moral values tied to citizenship, and their central claim is that a citizenship theory is necessary when dealing with animal welfare. Just like in the human case, some animals can be seen as citizens of our political community and in determining the collective good, these animals’ interests should be counted in as well. Some animals are best viewed as temporary visitors, or denizens, whose interests set side-limitations on how we obtain the collective good of the community, while others are best regarded as residents of their own sovereign political communities whose territory we need to respect. For Donaldson and Kymlicka, citizenship is about so much more than political participation; citizenship theory needs to be seen as one that affirms different values such as autonomy, agency, consent, reciprocity and self-determination. Affirming and respecting these values, according to Donaldson and Kymlicka, means treating individuals as citizens; something that ought to be extended to animals.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ströholm, 2014
⁴⁷ Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 3, 12
⁴⁸ Ibid: 50, 54-55, 57-59
4.5. The Case for Animal Rights

Activist and philosopher Tom Regan is abolitionist regarding the human-animal relation; he advocates complete eradication of the human use of, and the relationship to, animals.49 Tackling the case for animal rights, he argues that recognition of these rights are developed out of, and are particularly dependent upon, conclusions he comes to in discussing human rights. The idea of individual rights has had a deep and enduring influence both within and outside Western civilization, and it is a subject that has been debated fiercely. Some scholars deny that we have any rights besides from legal rights affirmed by law, while others claim that we have more basic moral rights, such as the right to life and freedom. These moral rights are viewed as being independent of, and more fundamental than, legal rights.50

Regan argues that when one possesses rights, this endows the individual with moral status. Moral rights are viewed as an expression of equality, so the idea of human rights means if anything that we possess these rights equally. Generally, these rights ought to mean at least two things; that others do not have the moral freedom to harm us, and that others are not free to limit our preferences in whichever way they see fit. Ergo, obtaining moral status would entail possessing these moral rights equally, irrespective of race, gender, religion, ancestry or other preferences. Rights also implicate moral claims of justice; when we invoke our rights, we are demanding fair treatment. The depiction of rights as moral claims, and valid as such, is what for Regan encompasses the entire animal rights debate. Rights represent a treatment that one is entitled to demand, and to say that the claim is valid is to say that it is rationally justified.51

Controversial questions of morals touch upon matters of ‘value’, and what value entails is much-disputed. According to Regan, value is connected to being a subject of life, and a subject of life does not only exist in the world – it is not simply an ‘earthling’ – but it is also aware of the world and what goes on in its life. A subject of life is an individual that can experience a good or bad life, depending on what value others apply to them. According to Regan’s animal rights view, animals are a ‘someone’ and not a ‘something’. When it comes to our inherent value, humans and animals are regarded as equals in this sense, which is one reason as to why animals are owed rights and respect.52 In short, animals have certain value-giving characteristics which makes them our equals; something that in turn requires respect. Equally,

49 Regan, 2010: 9
50 Ibid: 23, 39, 150
51 Ibid: 41-45
52 Ibid: 121, 124-25
we all have the right not to be harmed,\textsuperscript{53} and it is a treatment we are entitled to demand of others.\textsuperscript{54}

4.5.1. The Animal Rights Dimension

In connection to the case for animal rights, we touch upon the first of the dimensions that make up the model of analysis; the animal rights dimension. This dimension asserts that animals have rights in a sense that exceeds utility; animals have a set of vital interests that we must not take precedence over without exceptions. Animals have a right to liberty, which means that we should not confine them in ways that will cause them harm – physical or psychological – even if doing so would bring about more benefits than costs.\textsuperscript{55} Animals possess inherent value, which makes them entitled to certain rights.\textsuperscript{56}

The dimension expresses an abolitionist view regarding animals in the food industry. The fact that animals are viewed and treated as resources is wrong, and creating more space for the animals or bring about better circumstances for them on farms and in factories is not a solution; it is about a complete abolishment of these practices. Regarding animals used for research, the animal rights view is categorically abolitionist. Since animals used for experimentation is routinely and systematically treated as if their worth and value is dependent upon the use which others have of them, they are systematically treated with a lack of respect. This cannot be justified, and we cannot simply create more refined research methods or use a smaller number of animals in research. Here, the animal rights dimension stand for complete abolishment.\textsuperscript{57} There is moreover no room for bestiality. Even if consensual sexually satisfying activities are conducted between humans and animals in seclusion, the animal rights view does not consider it right. It is wrong to adopt such a behavior, as an animal cannot give or deny informed consent; animals cannot say “yes” or “no”. According to the animal rights view, sexual activities with animals must contain the element of force and a lack of respect; hence, it is wrong.\textsuperscript{58}

4.6. Speciesism, and the Principle of Equal Consideration

Australian moral philosopher Peter Singer argues that the world is characterized by “the tyranny of human over animals”; a tyranny that Singer argues has caused and is still causing

\textsuperscript{53} Sorabji, 1993: 212  
\textsuperscript{54} Regan, 2010: 45  
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid: 20, 22  
\textsuperscript{56} Sorabji, 1993: 212  
\textsuperscript{57} Regan, 2010: 128-29  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid: 129
pain and suffering that can be matched to the suffering caused by sexism and racism. The argument is that to discriminate against beings based on their species is a form of prejudice, immoral and unjustifiable in the same way as discrimination on the basis of race and gender is immoral and unjustifiable. The definition of this prejudice, or attitude, of special consideration in favor of the interests of the members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species, is referred to as “speciesism”. Singer argues that speciesism is what allows humans to regard animals more as a means to an end than as living, suffering creatures. Once a certain pattern of treating animals has become accepted within an area, Singer argues that the process becomes self-reinforcing and difficult to end. He believes that “when an attitude is so deeply ingrained in our thought that we take it as an unquestioned truth, a serious and consistent challenge to that attitude runs the risk of ridicule.”

Singer speaks, as Regan does, of equality. Singer emphasizes that equality is a moral idea and that there are no logically convincing reasons for presupposing that a factual difference between two individuals in any way gives good reason for treating them differently when considering their needs and interests. Singer moreover argues that when extending the principle of equality from one group to another, it does not mean that we have to treat the two groups exactly the same, but it does require equal consideration. This is Singer’s main argument, which could be seen as his remedy for speciesism; the ethical principle of equal consideration.

Equality is about our concern for others and our willingness to consider their interests not based on what they are like or what they can do. The principle of equal consideration could be said to primarily focus on whether a being can suffer, and not whether if they can reason or talk. Here we can distinguish the influence Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarianism has had on Singer; the capacity for suffering and enjoyment being conditions for having interests at all. The basic element to the principle of equal consideration, which is that we ought to take into account the interests of the being whatever they may be, must according to Singer be extended to all beings. Singer makes it clear that under extreme circumstances however, using animals could be justifiable if the consequences would be of great value.

Singer commends the far-reaching animal welfare laws of Sweden, a country he sees as showing the way forward in the issue. He also believes that a real breakthrough for farm animals has been made in Europe much due to European Union (EU) policies. He argues

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59 Singer, P.S. Interviews, Insights & More..., 2009: 8
60 Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009:6, 41, 69, 72, 83
61 Ibid: 185, 214
62 Ibid: 85
63 Ibid: 2, 4-5, 7, 85
however, that none of these reforms still give equal consideration to the similar interests of animals and humans, and views the reforms and animal welfare laws as a more “humane form” of speciesism.\(^{64}\)

4.6.1. The Utilitarian Dimension

The utilitarian dimension adapts a consequentialist approach to animals and asserts that an action or behavior is right if it maximizes the balance of benefits over harms. The interest of all those affected, including humans and nonhuman animals, are equally and impartially considered; comparable interests must be given equal consideration, as animal suffering matters just as much as human suffering.\(^{65}\)

Regarding animals used for food, as long as the lives of animals are given the same respect has the lives of humans, at a similar mental level, we shall not go wrong. Minimizing suffering is essential when thinking of animals; animals ought to be able to satisfy their basic needs. If an animal has a pleasant existence in a social group and are killed quickly without pain, utilitarianism can justify raising animals for food. The suffering of the millions of animals that are used for research should also cause concern for humans,\(^{66}\) but these animals can be used in this manner if, and only if, it is to be expected to maximize the balance of benefits over harms and where the interests of all those affected are equally considered.\(^{67}\)

In the words of Singer, being the utilitarian that he is, even if sex with animals is a definite taboo, it does not necessarily have to involve cruelty. Utilitarianism leaves room for the development of mutually satisfying activities in this case, but sexual activities with animals that result in harm to the animal should remain illegal.\(^{68}\)

4.6.2. The Speciesist Dimension

Lastly, we have the speciesist dimension. An indication of a speciesist view is that it often adopts a ‘humans come first’-argument. Humans are viewed as being different from animals simply on account of them being members of the ‘Homo sapiens’ species. This species’ difference is viewed as something that uniquely identifies only humans; something viewed as morally important.\(^{69}\) Any problems regarding animals cannot, as a serious political or moral

\(^{64}\) Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: x, 144  
\(^{65}\) DeGrazia, 2002: 20, 22  
\(^{66}\) Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: 21, 220, 229-30  
\(^{67}\) DeGrazia, 2002: 110  
\(^{68}\) Singer, 2001  
\(^{69}\) DeGrazia, 2002: 23
issue, be compared to problems that regard humans. It does not mean that all speciesists are cruel or prone to animal cruelty; they rather suffer from ethical blindness.\textsuperscript{70}

Speciesists argue that in their natural state, animals kill other animals for food, so we should be able to do this too. It is a part of the general order of nature, and it is something that we have to do to ensure survival of the human race. It leaves no room for moral issues. Furthermore, speciesism allows researchers to view animals used for experimentation as tools, rather than living beings that suffer. Animals are often simply viewed as supplies necessary to use in order to, for example, find cures to certain deceases. The ‘humans come first’-argument comes into play regarding bestiality as well. There is not a moral or ethical dilemma for those who choose to participate in such acts. Similar to the case with animal experimentation, speciesism allows an individual to view animals as a tool, in this case for pleasure.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{70} Singer, Animal Liberation, 2009: 71, 219
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid: 69, 224-25
5. Analysis of the Parliamentary Bills

In this passage the aim is to answer the research questions. For each political party, their ‘first glance’-opinions regarding the treatment of animals are described before presenting the analysis made by using dimensions. These were as previously mentioned shaped in the light of relevant philosophy, and furthermore designed to make it possible to draw conclusions regarding the political and moral status of animals in Sweden. The positions of utilitarianism, animal rights, and speciesism have guided the search for relevant attitudes towards animals in the food industry, animal experimentation, and bestiality.

5.1. The Social Democrats

The Social Democrats argue that Sweden ought to be world-leading when it comes to animal welfare; animals should not be subjected to meaningless suffering, and animal welfare in our country should be characterized by an ethical approach that allows for animals to behave naturally.  

5.1.1. How have they reasoned?

The Social Democrats argue that anesthetics are very important in relation to slaughter, regardless of religious or general slaughter; anything but is viewed as suffering. Slaughter is viewed as a necessary evil in light of humans wanting to eat livestock products, but it is noted that even if we have taken the right to use animals for the sake of our survival it does not mean that we have the right to treat animals in whichever way we please. That animals should be subjected to anesthetics before being slaughtered should be a given, as slaughter without sedatives brings about completely unnecessary suffering for the animals.

On animal experimentation, the Social Democrats believe that there are reasons for considering how well it harmonizes with the law of prevention of cruelty to animals’ second paragraph, which states that animals are not to be subjected to unnecessary suffering. The party furthermore believes that we need to find alternatives to animal experimentation, not only to reduce the number of experimentations but also to reduce the suffering that the animals are subjected to. Alternatives are also necessary as animal experimentation comes with

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72 The Social Democrats, 2014
73 Bråkenhielm, Motion 2010/11: MJ307 Religious slaughter, 2010
74 Bråkenhielm, Motion 2011/12: MJ358 Slaughter without anesthetics, 2011
75 Lundgren, Motion 2011/12: MJ215 Animal experimentation, 2011
76 Lundgren, Motion 2013/14: MJ394 Plan in order to decrease the number of animal experimentations, 2013
insecurities when products tested on animals with positive results are to be given to humans. Sweden needs a so called 3R-center, which would work to replace, reduce and refine animal experimentations.\textsuperscript{77} The essential point is that animals should be protected against unnecessary suffering and that the interests of science need to be balanced with the demand for good animal welfare.\textsuperscript{78}

The Social Democrats find the lack of prohibition on bestiality objectionable in light of the fact that animals suffer both physically and psychically from it. Animals are completely defenseless and have to be protected against sexual abuse, as it is a form of animal cruelty;\textsuperscript{79} bestiality should be forbidden and be punishable with prison time.\textsuperscript{80} Animals should never be subjected to meaningless suffering, and the legal protection for animals is inadequate in this sense.\textsuperscript{81}

5.1.2. What ideas are expressed?

I argue that the animal rights dimension is not very prominent in the Social Democrats parliamentary bills, even if animals are believed to have a set of vital interests and that humans should not confine or treat them in harmful ways. We do not have the right to treat animals in whichever way we please, which in itself says that animals have the right to fair treatment. I argue that when it comes to the ideas regarding bestiality, the Social Democrats embody the animal rights dimension as such acts and relationships are argued as wrong and should be prohibited. However, the party speaks of us having taken the right to use the animals for our survival, which expresses speciesist ideas.

Most of the ideas expressed are captured by the utilitarian dimension; it is the dominating one. Even if equal consideration is not mentioned, the capacity to suffer is, and is viewed as an important reason for treating animals better. The Social Democrats believe that minimizing suffering is essential when dealing with animals. Whatever suffering the animals are subjected to should be as mild as possible; unnecessary suffering is not something an animal should ever be subjected to. Also, if there are alternatives to animal experimentation, then experiments on animals should not be allowed.

\textsuperscript{77} Ernkrans, et al., Motion 2013/14: MJ483 Expenditure area 23..., 2013
\textsuperscript{79} Bråkenhielm, Motion 2010/11: MJ308 Sexual acts and abuse of animals, 2010
\textsuperscript{80} Carlsson, 2011
\textsuperscript{81} Hoff, 2010
5.2. The Moderate Party

The Moderate Party argues that Sweden has one of the world’s strongest laws of prevention of cruelty to animals. The Party claims to prioritize animal welfare, and argues that animals should be of good health, be able to behave as naturally as possible, and that they should to be treated with respect.82

5.2.1. How have they reasoned?

The Moderate Party highlights the conditions under which broiler chickens meet the end of their lives, and argues that the slaughter methods they are subjected to are incredibly stressful and that it is not uncommon that some chickens meet their deaths without being stunned prior. Therefore, the Party argues for a change to the Case for Controlled Atmosphere Killing-method (CAK), which would involve replacing oxygen in the birds’ atmosphere with a nonpoisonous gas that puts the animals to sleep, killing them in a less stressful and painful manner.83 The Moderate Party also wants to facilitate for small-scale slaughter and support local produce. Animal welfare in Sweden should be strong in relation to slaughter, the demand for hygiene strong as well, but conditions should be made easier and more profitable for smallholders at the same time.84 The Party acknowledges that errors in transportation of slaughter animals has been paid more attention to and resulted in more awareness: more people are anxious about animals’ welfare but also about food quality, food’s origin and the environmental impact that transportations cause. The Moderate Party argues that mobile slaughterhouses could reduce the number of animal transportations and environmental impacts. The animals would be less stressed, which would result in better meat quality.85

In relation to animal experimentation, the Moderate Party criticizes animal rights activists for often delaying research that aims to find cures and remedies for illnesses such as Alzheimer and MS. The Party argues that animal experimentations are always carried out after careful controls and are meant to follow rules that aim to minimize the pain that animals can be subjected to. Hence, the actions taken by animal rights activists are not justified due to the importance of the experiments.86 The Moderate Party states that the law of prevention of cruelty to animals provide important advice for how animals should be taken care of, kept and treated.

82 The Moderate Party, 2014
83 Ericson, 2011
84 Andersson & Rådhström, 2010
85 Plass, 2010
86 Widegren, 2014
§ states that animals used for experimentations should not be subjected to unnecessary suffering or illness during procedures, and makes up the foundation for the animal welfare that the Party strives for.\textsuperscript{87} An action plan for how to reduce the number of animal experimentations is however needed, argues the Party; this, also to reduce the suffering that animals are subjected to.\textsuperscript{88} There are moreover not just ethical reasons but also strong scientific, practical and economic reasons as to why animal experimentations need to be replaced. Animal tests are not reliable enough at predicting the risks that certain chemicals can cause human health.\textsuperscript{89} Lastly, regarding bestiality, the Moderate Party agrees with the animal welfare report from 2011’s suggestion that sexual abuse of animals should be prohibited, as it relates to the well-being of animals.\textsuperscript{90}

5.2.2. What ideas are expressed?

Just like in the case of the Social Democrats, the animal rights dimension is not very prominent in the Moderate Party’s reasoning regarding animal welfare. In the Party’s take on bestiality there is a hint of it, as it is agreed that such abuse of animals should be prohibited. This suggests that animals are viewed to possess the right to liberty in this sense.

There is a balance between the utilitarian and speciesist dimensions regarding the dominating ideas; they are expressed, more or less, equally in scope. When the Moderate Party discusses animals used for food, it argues that current slaughter methods cause unnecessary stress and suffering, which needs to be minimized and reduced. Unnecessary suffering is unacceptable and for ethical reasons, animal experimentation should be replaced with alternative methods. This externalizes utilitarian ideas in my opinion. Even if equal consideration is not on the table, animals are viewed as capable of suffering, and that is reason enough for treating them better. However, there is an emphasis in the Party’s arguments on making circumstances easier and more profitable for those who keep animals, which expresses speciesist ideas. Stressing development of alternative slaughter methods has a lot to do with ensuring good meat quality and not just looking out for the well-being of the animal. Research carried out on animals is moreover justified by arguing that it is important for finding cures to certain deceases. When the Party questions animal experimentation, it seem to focus more on

\textsuperscript{87} Pourbaix-Lundin, Motion 2011/12: MJ388 Penalty sanctions of 2 and 4 §§ in the law of..., 2011
\textsuperscript{88} Pourbaix-Lundin, Motion 2011/12: MJ438 Decrease of animal experimentations, 2011
\textsuperscript{89} Pourbaix-Lundin, Motion 2011/12: MJ453 Regarding the need for alternatives to..., 2011
\textsuperscript{90} Pourbaix-Lundin, Motion 2013/13: MJ385 Global animal welfare, 2012
practical and economic reasons as to why we need alternatives because humans can suffer from uncertainties that some tests entail.

5.3. The Sweden Democrats

The Sweden Democrats argue that attacks on animals that are unable to defend themselves are upsetting and interpreted as signs of a rougher and more brutal society. The Party argues that an important measurement of a good society is how well it cares for those who are weak and vulnerable, and claims that Sweden needs an animal welfare of world-class standard.91

5.3.1. How have they reasoned?

The Sweden Democrats argue that in order for Sweden to strengthen its animal welfare, it needs to take a stand against animals being slaughtered without anesthetics or tortured to death in other countries.92 The Party also argues that many Swedes today, without knowing it, are eating meat from animals that have been slaughtered according to halal or kosher; that is to say, argues the Sweden Democrats, meat from animals that have been tortured to death. Such slaughter entails a prolonged death process with unnecessary suffering, pain and anxiety, and it is something Sweden must take a strong stance against.93 The Party argues that all animal products should be origin labeled at each stage of the production chain in order to give consumers the power to cherish the well-being of animals.94 Improving small-scale business could enable the killing of slaughter animals whilst they are on pasture, which would be a more merciful way to die and it would meet the demand for ethical treatment of animals. This procedure would also guarantee the best meat quality.95

An important part of a strengthened animal welfare in light of animal experimentation is, according to the Sweden Democrats, the work to provide alternative methods. These would reduce unnecessary suffering and, in best case scenarios, erase suffering altogether.96 The Party argues that reducing animal experimentation is important both out of consideration for the animals but also for humans. The experiments do not always result in the necessary knowledge regarding the effect they may have on humans,97 and are often both expensive and ineffective.

91 The Sweden Democrats, 2014
92 Jomshof & Wiechel, 2014
93 Hedlund & Jomshof, 2014
94 Kinnunen et al., Motion 2014/15:2784 For a strengthened animal welfare, 2014
95 Larsson, 2013
97 Kinnunen et al., Motion 2014/15:2784 For a strengthened animal welfare, 2014
for their purpose. The need for a 3R-center is emphasized, with a goal to minimize experiments without using animals as tools to the greatest extent possible.  

Regarding bestiality, the Sweden Democrats argue that it needs to be criminalized under the current systematic of the penal regulation on sexual crimes. The primary purpose of a law that punishes sexual acts with animals, argues the Party, would be to prevent animal suffering; therefore, a prohibition should be placed in connection to the existing law on animal cruelty as well.

5.3.2. What ideas are expressed?
The animal rights dimension is not very distinct in the Sweden Democrats’ arguments regarding animal welfare; only in connection to the discussion on bestiality where the view that bestiality is wrong and should be forbidden can it be distinguished. It is a sentiment that the Social Democrats and the Moderate Party share as well. Apart from this, the dominating ideas found in the Sweden Democrats views on animals are captured by the utilitarian dimension. There is a hint of speciesist ideas when the Party mentions that changes to animal welfare should be carried out not just for the sake of the animals, but for humans as well; animal welfare is viewed as important for the well-being of the people. However, most ideas expressed regard the issue of suffering. Nowhere in the Social Democrats’ parliamentary bills can ideas be detected that say that we should stop using animals altogether or that they require complete equal consideration, but it is argued that animals should not be subjected to unnecessary suffering. Minimizing suffering and pain is important and animals should never be subjected to prolonged and brutal death processes, which is in line with utilitarian ideas.

5.4. The Green Party
Too many animals are today subjected to suffering argues the Green Party, and animal welfare needs to be taken seriously. The Party demands a serious animal protection program and an end to unnecessary animal experimentations. The Party wants the demand for natural behavior in the law of prevention of cruelty to animals to be followed in practice.

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98 Kinnunen et al., Motion 2014/15:2890 Expenditure area 23..., 2014
99 Fransson, Motion 2013/14: MJ5 Bill in response of prop. 2013/14:41..., 2013
100 The Green Party, 2014
5.4.1. How have they reasoned?

The Green Party argues that no matter what one’s opinions are regarding the ethics in killing animals, most people would agree that the animals should at least meet a worthy death. Many animals die painful deaths however, and live stressful and undignified lives from birth to slaughter. Some animals are gassed to death, which may spare the animal from painful and stressful transportations but one which instead entails distressing suffocation by aversive gas. This and other distressing techniques should be discarded as new knowledge about how animal welfare is affected by slaughter arises.\textsuperscript{101} Broiler chickens’ living situations need to be revised and developed in a way that provides the animals with reasonable living conditions, and the Party also argues that mobile and local slaughterhouses are desirable.\textsuperscript{102}

The Green Party argues that experimental use of animals needs to be reduced and the collection and circulation of information regarding alternatives to animal testing improved. In connection to this, the Party claims that a 3R-center should be established at the earliest date. The ultimate goal would be to replace all animal experiments for scientific and educational purposes as soon as it is possible to do so; something that ethical reviews could help accomplish. The Party argues that the Board of Agriculture should be tasked to develop an action plan for how animal testing and the suffering of animals can be reduced.\textsuperscript{103} The Green Party moreover claims that animal experimentation is not qualified at predicting the risks that chemicals can cause human health. Due to physiological and anatomical differences between the species, alternatives to these methods are therefore advantageous not only from an ethical perspective, but from a scientific perspective as well.\textsuperscript{104} Because so many animals are subjected to great suffering, the Green Party wants all animal experiments to be abolished at the earliest date, and for them to be replaced with animal-free methods. Also, in education animal experiments should only be used after careful consideration has deemed it absolutely necessary for the profession that training is aimed at.\textsuperscript{105}

Regarding bestiality, the Party welcomed the proposals announced by the Government to prohibit sexual acts against animals in 2013. Sexual abuse of animals can cause both physical

\textsuperscript{101} Ferm & Leander, Motion 2011/12: MJ219 Animal welfare in slaughter, 2011
\textsuperscript{102} Ferm, Leander, Lillemets, Nordin, & Nordqvist, 2013
\textsuperscript{103} Leander & Nordqvist, Motion 2013/14: MJ7 Bill in response of prop. 2013/14:41...., 2013
\textsuperscript{104} Leander, Motion 2011/12: MJ335 Animal experimentations, 2011
\textsuperscript{105} Leander, Nordqvist, Lillemets, Nordin & Ferm 2013
and psychological suffering that the Party does not see any reason for society to accept. The Party also argues for a prohibition on animal pornography.106

5.4.2. What ideas are expressed?
I argue that hints of utilitarian ideas are most prominent in the Green Party’s parliamentary bills connected to the issue at hand. The Party emphasizes reasonable living conditions, worthy deaths, and the reduction of suffering, which to a certain degree coincides with the utilitarian view that if an animal has a pleasant existence and is killed quickly, then it can be used for food. The Green Party states that animal experimentations should only be carried out after having been ethically reviewed and when it is absolutely necessary, as many animals are subjected to suffering by these practices. This coincides with the utilitarian dimension’s emphasis on suffering needing to be a human concern.

There are a few speciesist notions in relation to animal experimentation, however, when the Party claims that reducing these is not needed by ethical reasons alone, but because the results of these experiments are uncertain and potentially harmful to humans. There are also a few vague hints of the animal rights dimension, and similar to the previous political parties it is in connection to the issue of bestiality. The animal rights dimension clearly considers bestiality wrong, and the Green Party argues that it entails physical and psychological suffering which is why there ought to be a complete prohibition on such acts.

5.5. The Centre Party
The Center Party believes that Sweden has one of the world’s best animal welfare laws and that it pays off not only for the animals but for the environment and for the public health as well. The Party argues however that this does not always pays off for the Swedish farmer due to the costs of providing better living conditions for animals. The Party does want animals to have good lives, protected from suffering, and that they should be able to follow their basic instincts and behave naturally to the greatest extent possible.107

5.5.1. How have they reasoned?
The Centre Party discusses emergency slaughter; something it views as pure carcass handling today. An animal has to be healthy and verified as alive by a veterinarian for a farmer to be

106 Leander, Nordqvist, Lillemets, Nordin & Ferm 2013
107 The Center Party, 2014
able to send it to the slaughterhouse in Sweden. The Party says that there are different factors that make ordinary transports to the slaughterhouse impossible but which do not necessarily affect the meat quality, and that it used to be handled through emergency slaughter, but nowadays the animal simply gets passed off as carcass. The Party argues that it is not fair that the farmer should bear the transportation costs of the animals rather than obtaining compensation for a slaughtered animal. This, the Party argues, is far from anything that resembles animal ethics and good environmental management. Emergency slaughter should instead be seen as a part of a good animal protection, and the Centre Party argues that the regulatory framework should be revised so that effective emergency slaughter is made possible in order to protect animals, the environment, and the well-conditioned use of food. Animals should furthermore be transported to slaughter in the best way possible but the biggest issue is for the Party, however, that oblique competition for the Swedish agriculture is a reality and needs to be improved.108

The Party argues that the stress and suffering that animals are subjected to by being bled without having been stunned first does not favor the meat quality; rather the contrary. If an animal is conscious during the slaughter process, pain and stress can produce cramps that causes the blood to lock up in muscles and blood vessels, which affects the meat in a negative way.109 The Centre Party furthermore argues that labels of origin is important with because consumers want this in order to be able to make conscious choices. In order to allow consumers to make informed choices and to protect livestock and the environment, the Party argues that Sweden must work to ensure that the same rules that exist for the origin of beef applies to pork, poultry, lamb and goat as well.110

5.5.2. What ideas are expressed?

The parliamentary bills provided by the Centre Party have not discussed animal experimentation or bestiality. There were no bills to be found regarding these issues from the time period 2010 to 2014, and a revised search did not provide more information. I argue that the lack of reasoning and discussion on these issues, in the light of the research problem, can be caught by the speciesist dimension. By not debating these issues, I argue that the Party states that the issues are not serious enough political or moral problems to require detailed discussions.

108 Bäckström & Lindahl, 2014
109 Torstensson & Qarlsson, 2012
110 Ahlgren & Lindahl, 2014
Regarding what was discussed, the speciesist dimension is very prominent as well. Even if the Party presents a small hint of utilitarian ideas by stating that an animal is to be handled in the best way possible and that certain treatment of them involve stress and suffering, the majority of the arguments the Party presents focus on human interests. They want to make it more profitable for the farmer and ensure ensuring good meat quality for the consumer, which connects to the speciesist idea that it is humans’ right to kill animals for food; that this is the general order of nature. The moral issues that can come with killing animals for human gains are not discussed.

5.5. The Left Party

The Left Party works to strengthen animal welfare as well as the respect for animals in Sweden. The Party argues that humans have assumed a specific responsibility for animals’ living conditions, and all keeping of animals must proceed from animals being sentient beings. Animals should be given a good life and the possibility to behave instinctually.  

5.5.1. How have they reasoned?

The Left Party has argued that changes need to be made for the animals in the food industry. The Party wants to ensure that the law of prevention of cruelty to animals’ emphasis on natural behavior, and the opportunity to go outside, is implemented for these animals in order for them to live bearable lives. The Party argues that long and painful transportations of animals that entail great stress and suffering are unacceptable; therefore, the Party wants to work for fewer and shorter transportations. To the extent that animals are slaughtered, the Party moreover believes that it is better if the killing is done in the environment where the animals have grown up and lived, so that transportation can be avoided.

The Left Party is very concerned about the fact that the number of animals used for experimentation has climbed sharply; pursuant to the Swedish definition of animal experimentation, which includes all animals that are killed in order so that their bodies can be used for scientific research, about one million animals are killed each year. The Party argues that it is urgent that this number is brought down to a minimum, and that the animals are given the utmost protection as to minimize suffering. It is not uncommon that an animal may be

111 The Left Party, 2014
112 Holm, et al., 2014
113 Björklund et al., Motion 2012/13: MJ312 Respect for the animals, 2012
used in the same experiment in the range from a period of hours to several years, which needs to change.\textsuperscript{115}

On bestiality, the Left Party claims to agree on the need for a ban on carrying out sexual acts on animals. It is something that the Party claims to have pushed for in order to create more respect and consideration for animals.\textsuperscript{116}

5.5.2. What ideas are expressed?

The ideas in the Left Party’s parliamentary bills are mostly captured by the utilitarian dimension. The ideas are no perfect match to the ones that the dimension externalizes, but out of the three dimensions, the Party’s ideas fit the utilitarian one the best. The Left Party wants to ensure that animals can behave naturally and that if they are to be killed, they should be done so in a familiar environment in order to minimize suffering. As animals are also subjected to suffering when used in experiments the Party insists on minimizing the number of animals used, as well as the pain they are exposed to. Focus is on the fact that animals are capable of pain and suffering, which is consistent with the utilitarian dimension, even if the principle of equal consideration is not explicitly mentioned as a requirement.

5.7. The Liberal People’s Party

The Liberal People’s Party believes that animals should be treated with great care, and that should not be exposed to suffering. Sweden should aim for a society that preserves the well-being of animals because that is the kind of society that also preserves human well-being. The Party argues that the law of prevention of cruelty to animals should be strong and clear and that Sweden ought to support research regarding animal welfare, as well as research regarding alternatives to animal experimentations.\textsuperscript{117}

5.7.1. How have they reasoned?

There were not many parliamentary bills motioned by the Liberal People’s Party to choose from regarding animals from the period of 2010 to 2014. More precisely, there was only one relevant bill for the essay at hand; one that more or less relates to the issue of bestiality. In this bill, the Party argues that there is a hidden connection between the abuse and violence against

\textsuperscript{115} Holm, et al., 2014
\textsuperscript{116} Björlund et al., 2013
\textsuperscript{117} The Liberal People’s Party, 2014
animals and violence against humans; a connection that has not been paid enough attention to. The Party furthermore argues that we cannot set the various types of violence against each other; they should rather be understood as a whole. Animal welfare, claims the Party, may be an indirect measurement of women’s situation, which is reason enough for veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and cat or dog daycare staff to take abuse and violence against animals very seriously in order to protect animals as well as women and children.118

5.7.2. What ideas are expressed?
I argue that the fact that there are no parliamentary bills by the Liberal People’s Party regarding animals used in the food industry or for scientific research is an expression of speciesism. Just in the case of the Centre Party refraining from discussing bestiality and animal experimentation, I argue that the Liberal People’s Party by not addressing animal welfare is stating that some issues are just simply not significant enough to discuss. When the Party does discuss it, it is essentially not about animal welfare but rather the welfare of humans; more precisely, the well-being of women and children. I argue that by claiming that violence against animals needs to be taken seriously in order to protect women and children, the Party expresses the idea that violence against animals is a sign of a more brutal society, which needs to be prevented in order to protect women and children from the violence of men. The Party mentions that animals need to be protected, but there is no explicit mention of the pain and suffering of animals. The emphasis on them needing protection is based on speciesist ideas of wanting the best possible for human kind. Human interests are the basis for animal welfare in this sense.

5.8. The Christian Democrats
The Christian Democrats argue that the responsibility for animals’ well-being rests with the owner of the animal. Animals should be treated with respect and care, and that they should never be subjected to unnecessary suffering.119

5.8.1. How have they reasoned?
For the Christian Democrats, long and often painful transportation of animals are unacceptable, and the Party promotes the development of mobile or small-scale slaughterhouses while maintaining food safety. The rules that regulate small businesses should be simplified along

118 Brodén & Steele, 2013
119 The Christian Democrats, 2013
with efforts to facilitate farm abattoirs and it is moreover important for the Party that consumers have access to accurate and clear information on the requirements for animal welfare and animal health. The fact that Sweden has good animal welfare legislation is something that the Party considers positive, but argues that it at the same time entails additional costs for livestock producers due to lower standards abroad. To ensure that Swedish farmers are not at a disadvantage, the Christian Democrats argue that it is important that animal welfare legislation is harmonized within the EU, so that the keeping of animals and slaughter methods, etcetera, are at the same level.

The Party does argue that all animals should be able to behave naturally, and animals’ lives are claimed to have intrinsic value. The Christian Democrats argue that it is very difficult to meet these requirements for laboratory animals, whose lives are engineered to optimize experiments. So, unlike the breeding of animals for consumption purposes, the Party argues that the use of animals in experiments must be reduced. In the absence of better options, however, animal experiments can continually be accepted in some cases in order to meet people’s legitimate concerns in life and health.

5.8.2. What ideas are expressed?

In the Christian Democrats’ parliamentary bills, I claim that the ideas expressed can be caught by the speciesist and utilitarian dimensions almost equally, with the speciesist dimension having a slight upper-hand. Even if the Party states that animals do have intrinsic value, which is a small notion of the animals-rights dimension, that is not sufficient enough to state that this is the dominating dimension. We get hints of speciesism when the Party argues that good animal welfare entails extra costs for Swedish farmers, as animal welfare must look to the well-being of humans as well. Good animal welfare should not be disadvantageous for Swedish farmers, and in the way the Party expresses itself, the number of animals that are used for consumption does not have to be decreased. However, the number of animals used for experimentation does, and it is in connection to this issue that the utilitarian dimension is most prominent. The Christian Democrats argues that the number of animal experiments must be decreased, but that it can be accepted as long as there are no alternative methods in order to satisfy human gains in life and health.

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120 Gustafsson, 2010
121 Henriksson, 2011
122 Ibid: 2011
5.9. Similarities and Differences between the Parties

Small similarities can be distinguished between the parties’ arguments and way of reasoning. A majority seems to agree on the fact that animals are capable of pain and suffering, and that this is something that should be avoided; pain, anxiety and suffering are all things that should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Some parties emphasize the importance of natural behavior, and most would agree that the use of anesthetics is vital along with shorter transportations. However, a few parties have nothing to say on certain issues, which could be seen as problematic for the essay. This lack of discussion can however be interpreted and analyzed in the light of the research problem, connecting it to a dimension.

Some parties chose to take on animal welfare from a human perspective, focusing on meat quality or the insecurities of animal experimentation, but most do agree on the need for a 3R-center or the development of 3R-methods. The Party that differentiates themselves the most from the rest is the Liberal People’s Party. From the period between 2010 and 2014, the Party has not had much to say regarding animal welfare, and when it has, it has been in connection to men’s violence against women, meaning that the animals’ welfare can be an indirect gauge of the situation of women and children in society.
6. It All Comes Down to Pain and Suffering

Kicking off this research, I was intrigued by the fact that animal welfare has largely remained a politically marginalized subject despite the animal population evolving alongside us. I argued that the treatment of animals seemed to have become a more current topic, however, and interest lay in figuring out the status of animals in Sweden today. The aim was to illuminate the different ideas regarding how animals are viewed in Sweden and draw conclusions regarding the status of animals, and the comparative analysis of ideas as a method has served its purpose in the light of the research objective and the material used. The dimensions provided a picture of what to look for and helped differentiate what was relevant, even when reading between the lines.

6.1. Final Discussion & Conclusions

The dimensions can be seen as representing different views on the treatment of animals, and they captured the political parties’ positions on the issue. Proceeding from the parliamentary bills, Sweden cannot be viewed as a country where animal rights ideas are very prominent. Animals are confined and treated in ways that cause them harm and based on the analyzed bills, the country cannot be said to move towards complete abolishment of the human-animal relations that the animal rights dimension argues for. In the end, it was a close race between the speciesist and utilitarian dimensions and the ideas that they convey. Notions of speciesism have been expressed by the parties by stating practical and economic reasons for pursuing better animal welfare; it would result in better meat quality and reduce potentially harmful risks for humans. Utilitarian ideas are moreover prominent in relation to the suffering of animals, which is mentioned frequently throughout.

Based on the similarities and differences between the parties, the conclusion can be drawn that the dominating dimension, the one that captures most ideas, is the utilitarian one. The ideas expressed by the parties may not be a perfect match to the ideas that the dimension conveys, but it was never the purpose to find a perfect match. The parties’ ideas as a whole bear the closest resemblance to the utilitarian view on animals. None of the political parties explicitly deny that animals are suffering beings who should be able to live bearable lives with the possibility to behave naturally.

Regarding the political and moral status of animals in Sweden, I argue that animals do possess moral status, as the parliamentary bills show that not everything that regards animals’ well-being is rooted in human interests. Swedes would seem to agree that even if we have taken
the liberty to use animals to satisfy our needs, it does not mean that we can treat them in whichever way that we please. We cannot inflict suffering onto animals just for the sake of it. When deciding if an act is wrong or not, Sweden can be said take up a position that finds irrelevance in whether hurting an animal affects humans in any way: if an animal suffers, the act is simply wrong. Animals’ welfare in Sweden therefore counts in its own right, which means that animals have moral significance.

Coming to terms with animals’ political status in Sweden is trickier. Animals are still, for all intents and purposes, subject to the power of humans. There is nothing that indicates a shift towards an abolishment of the utilization of animals for various means. This in turn points to animals having a lower standing than humans in Swedish society; a position that humans have assigned to them. One could claim that animals have a hint of political status due to the law of prevention of cruelty to animals, but they do not, however, have ownership of individual rights to autonomy, liberty or self-determination like humans do; the rights that endow us with political status. A majority of animals are not free; they are not endowed with the ability to decide their lives for themselves within the areas analysed in this essay. Regarding bestiality, there is nothing that provides necessary protection for animals. What does that say about their political status, but them suffering from a lack of it?

6.2. Thoughts for the Future

To take the discussion further, the next step could be to analyze Sweden’s law of prevention of cruelty to animals. The law was issued nearly 30 years ago now, and evaluating changes made or not made could continue the discussion on animals’ status, perhaps building on Donaldson and Kymlicka’s political theory of animal rights. Conclusions on the actual degree of status could be reached; something this essay does not saying anything about, due to the delimitations made.

Even if the results are not astonishing or mind-boggling, this essay has contributed with better understanding of animals’ situation in Sweden, and for what kind of ideas and thoughts about them that are most common. The views have been dealt with in a way that shows that even if we do care about animals, we have a tendency to prioritize human interests in most situations. The question of wrong or right was not meant to be answered; rather, the question regarded the status of animals, and they have been found to possess moral status, while greatly lacking political status. The question for the future could be; what can, if anything should, be done about that?
Bibliography


