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ANIMAL ETHICS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRAXIS

Exploring differential ethical standards toward wildlife

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Animal ethics between theory and praxis

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ABSTRACT

In today's human-impacted landscape with increasing encounters between the human and natural world it is essential to question humans' ethical approaches toward animals to ensure a peaceful co-existence. The presence of wolf and its consequences in Sweden is a well-studied case focusing primarily on conflict, mistrust toward authority and a rural and urban divide, for example. This study aims to reveal other aspects of the issue by scrutinizing the explanatory power of existing perspectives within Animal Rights Theory (ART) and bring in social constructivism to unravel gray-scales in the respondents' ethical codes. Empirics were collected through in-depth interviews with 11 hunters and livestock-owners in the middle part of Sweden. The study investigates how the respondents construct animals and create and discuss criteria for moral status vis-à-vis other animals they encounter. Also investigated, how these ethical codes toward different animals affect praxis, defined as how we relate to, communicate about and manage the animal in question. Key-conclusions include that the respondents are not consistently bound to one of the outlined perspectives within ART when constructing their ethical codes and there seem to be a discrepancy between their baseline-ethics and actual application of those ethics to different animals. When animals transgress from their perceived natural place in the wild closer to human settlement and pose a threat to livelihoods it seems to affect their moral status. Their liminal status may imply the justification of stretching ethics toward the animal. The respondents seem to ascribe a "veto-right" to humans in the negotiations over right to territory. The respondents' valuing of the balance in the ecosystem and idea of themselves as stewards of the ecosystem integrity seem to involve "keeping the wild, wild" and regulating "undesirable behavior". Therefore the wild animals' transgression from the wild may signify a failure in the stewardship role, motivating sanctions toward the animal. Social constructivism has provided the perspective that humans' ethical codes are dependent on context and social interaction, and that language can function as a powerful conveyer of ideas and cast attributions to animals which in turn has effect on praxis. Combined with Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2011) political framework, social constructivism can be used to question the social construction of citizenship - and not the least the citizen as someone human - and the wolves and other wild animals' rights in the political and spatial context. Hence, challenging the current praxis of environmental management. Social constructivism can provide a framework that can open up to accommodate "inconsistencies" in humans' construction of ethical codes by not being as rigid as the perspectives within ART and taking context and communication into account.

Key-words: ART, social constructivism, ethical codes, environmental communication, wolf

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INTRODUCTION

“The history of ethics is to some extent a history of who is and should be part of the moral community” (Gordon, 2015).

“Each generation seems to remake its animals” (Rotfelds, 2002:5).

To this day humans’ relation to wildlife, not the least in management contexts, is far from egalitarian. Apart from often valuing our own needs above those of non-human animals¹, we ascribe high value to species that manifest some essence of our humanity or meet our contemporary aesthetic preferences, and treat them accordingly. Other animals may be given varmint status, seemingly undeserving of our duties of animal welfare, conservation or even peaceful co-existence. This study brings in the concept of ethical codes, which are normative frameworks – thought patterns the person has about an object building on experience and circumstances – that provide guidance for morals at various levels; individual, collective or societal. The process behind this valuation is complex and continues to be approached from multiple theoretical perspectives. The study hopes to contribute to develop the field of Animal Rights Theory (ART) and environmental communication.

Indeed, the thought process leading up to the focus of this study is based in a long tradition exploring societal relations and constructions of “the wild” in different contexts. That which is “out there” and simultaneously a big part of many people’s lives and livelihoods, identities and cultures, a source of both joy and fear, a projection surface onto which humans can attribute perspectives and opinions, and hence a political playing field. With the framework of nature as not a “natural phenomenon” (Robbins, 2004) humans ideas and perception of wild animals is a fascinating area of study. In the book *Wild Ones* (2013) Mooallem tells stories about “a sometimes dismaying, weirdly reassuring story about looking at people looking at animals” (Mooallem, 2013). Looking at people looking at animals is a rather good description of what this research examines. How does the way we look at animals – in this research construct ethical codes – and look at them differently affect how we act toward them? With this focus, the famous “wolf-issue” in Sweden is an intriguing, and well-studied, case. The wolf’s presence in Sweden is a complex issue and the field involves focus on factors that seemingly transcend the animal. For example, greater social conflicts (Sjölander-Lindqvist, 2009; von Essen et al., 2014) the feeling of loss of control over ones freedom and self-determination and mistrust toward authority (Scarce, 1998), rural and urban divide (Skogen, 2003), fear (Linell et al, 2003) and a lot of research has now covered these aspects in some detail.

This research aims to reveal other aspects of the “wolf-issue”. Specifically, it will look at how hunters and live-stock owners living closely to wild animals and are affected by their presence in different respects perceive them, construct them mentally and create and discuss criteria for moral status vis-à-vis other animals they encounter. Particularly the grey areas – the inconsistencies and discrepancies – in such people’s constructions and argumentation is of interest in this study. This is manifested among other things in how animals seemingly fulfilling equal criteria of moral consideration are attributed differential rights, obligations and hence management practices by the affected people. This will be explored by going beyond fixed ethical philosophies to inductively determine ethics of respondents through in-depth

¹ Henceforth the word “animal” will be used to refer to non-human animals, acknowledging that this is a homogeneous and problematic word grouping all non-human animals into one category.

interviews that challenge their standards and arguments for why they prioritize the welfare of some animals above others.

With today's knowledge about the effect human behavior has on our surroundings and the rise in concerns for animals on this planet it is crucial and the right time to scrutinize our behavior. Is what we do right? On which premises do we build these ideas? What are the forces driving behavior we find unethical? There are diverse values leading management of animals and these divergent values can shape practice in different directions. It is critical to not take these for granted but to deconstruct them to show discrepancies and gray-scales. With the perspective of this research I hope to contribute to the wolf debate with exposing and partly explaining differential ethical codes toward different animals – why we treat animals differently – that might be obscured at first glance, and how this applies to the wolf and what consequences it may have in practice. This will hopefully be a valuable finding in the search for a more peaceful coexisting between humans and animals.

ANIMAL RIGHTS THEORY

Introducing theory

Ethical theory is the study of morality, what is right and wrong and from which philosophical perspectives and paradigms it is believed so. According to Bekoff et al. (2006) ethics is both a critique of how we live today and a vision of how we could live. *"Environmental ethics deals with the moral dimension of the relationship between human beings and non-human nature—animals and plants, local populations, natural resources and ecosystems, landscapes, as well as the biosphere and the cosmos"* (Gordon, 2015). Within ethical theory, ART ethics tries to determine what decides value and rights of and obligations toward animals in relation to humans. The questions regarding human-animal relations that form the basis for this study has a long-standing tradition. Human-animal relations have been discussed by philosophers from Aristotel (400 B.C.E), who claimed animals do not have moral status and cannot be treated unethically, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who claimed animals were means to human ends. Indeed, anthropocentrism (see section *Anthropocentrism, Biocentric anthropocentrism and speciesism*) has been the dominant ideology most of western human history and the moral separation of animals from humans have continuously legitimized the utilization of animals for human ends, the *instrumental value* of animals. In Western philosophical history the tradition in ethical discussion about animals has focused on the animal's ability, or lack of, to think, reason and speak, *logos* (Aristotel, 400 B.C.E) (Kristensson, 2015). Animals have in general been categorized as a homogenous group, and not regarded as subjects, let alone moral agents. Although the enlightenment prolonged the rationality thesis where animals were seen as indirectly unfit for moral consideration, Darwin's ideas showed how animals and humans were not different in kind, but only in degree (Gordon (2015). Jeremy Bentham (1823) later shifted the historical tradition regarding ethical discussion about animals focusing on the animal's lack of reason and emphasized that the question one should ask when making moral judgement is if the moral object can *suffer*. Thus, the perspective distances itself from previous theories emphasizing the possession of higher critical abilities like rationality and language as the decisive cognitive criteria for moral consideration (Curnutt, 1996). Inspiring Peter Singer's (1975) *Animals Liberation* (see *Biocentrism*) and many utilitarian ethical theories within ART. An opposing school of thought, drawing from deontology, duty-based ethics, as opposed to utilitarianism, was pioneered by Regan (1983). Although it states that it is not sentience that determines moral consideration, but that of being subject-of-a-life, both utilitarianism and deontology inspired

scholars for years to come. Collectively they helped contribute to a more nuanced view of animal rights (Palmer, 2011; Kristensson, 2015).

Applied to wildlife management, animals that are regarded as problematic in different contexts for example a threat to crops and livestock or the carriers of disease, challenge premises within ART. How does one judge an animal too big of a problem to humans to justify the compromising of their rights? For example protective hunting of wolves due to threat to livestock. There are indeed “*serious moral and ethical dimensions to wildlife management (Leopold, 1949)*” (Nie, 2002:66). An ethical perspective on nature management can stretch beyond for example statistics and biology and shed light on complex normative questions:

“Competing ideas and visions of the public interest are at the heart of wolf politics and policy. While science, for example, can certainly help answer a question such as how much livestock depredation can be expected from a recovered wolf population in a national forest area, it cannot answer the normative question of whether wolves or cows should be in this national forest” (Nie, 2002:67).

Perspectives within the Animal Rights Theoretical framework

The construction of the following perspectives within ART are not self-evident or mutually exclusive but rather can be “*thought of as lenses, each focusing in on a different aspect of what might be ethically troubling about animals as treated by humans*” (Palmer, 2011:22). To maintain a boundary of this thesis these perspectives will be seen as “ideal categories” illustrating different schools of thought within ART. These categories have been constructed with support from existing research within the animal and environmental ethics (see for example Gamborg (2012), Palmer (2011)). Through a critical literature review it will be investigated if these perspectives alone can explain our differential valuing, obligations and practice toward different (wild) animals. The categories that have been demarcated from the literature on ART include *Ecocentrism*, *Biocentrism*, *Relational ethics* and *Anthropocentrism*, *speciesism* and *biocentric-anthropocentrism*.

Ecocentrism

With an ecocentric perspective the balance in the ecosystem is of primary moral value and consideration. In general this perspective is related to the eco-ethical consideration that natural ecosystems have an *intrinsic* value, a worth and end in itself (Swart, 2005). It hence evokes Regan’s deontology but for non-living entities like species, ecosystems and communities. The moral status of individual animals is valued differently depending on their role and importance in an ecosystem. Invasive species that pose as threat to the ecosystems health or native species can within these frames justifiably be removed (Gamborg et al, 2014), According to Waelbers et al. (2004) there is no *obligation* to care for wild animals, and one should let nature run its natural course. Rolston (1994) claims that if pain is not caused by humans we should leave the animals alone, “*pain in the ecosystem is instrumental pain through which [wild animals] are naturally selected for a more satisfactory adaptive fit*” (Evans, 2005:155). Indeed, pain is caused by non-moral agent-less forces. According to Rolston (1994) humans do have obligation to protect species in the sense of the life-line: “*But duties to a species are not duties to a class or a category, not to an aggregation of sentient interests, but to a lifeline. An ethic about species needs to see how the species is a bigger event than individual interests or sentience*” (Palmer, 2011:18). When it comes to humans place within this perspective Leopold (1949) describes it as: “[...] *a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such*” (Bekoff, et al, 2006:138). Within the ecocentric perspective, one can often distinguish two

opposing strands regarding human interference in the wild. While some scholars advocate a laissez-faire approach to nature (Palmer 2011), others defend e.g. hunting and some form of system stewardship on the basis of predation being a natural occurrence by non-humans and humans alike (Evans, 2005).

Biocentrism

The biocentric perspective accords individual animals' higher *moral status* than the population, species and ecosystem, since they have capacities these systems or collections arguably do not. The biocentrist perspective covers much ground and diverse ART scholars considering the degree to which we ought to include animals in the moral community differs, but they all share a focus on the individual organism as capacity bearer and moral subject. The capacities include for example Singers (1975) *sentience*, "*the capacity to experience episodes of positively or negatively valenced awareness [...] pleasure, joy, elation, and contentment*" or "*pain, suffering, depression, and anxiety.*" (Gordon, 2015). Capacities also include Regan's (1989) being a '*subject of a life*' which includes having beliefs, desires, sense of future, an emotional life with feelings of pleasure and pain, preferences and psychophysical identity over time (Armstrong, 2003). All animals that possess these capacities have inviolable moral rights and should be treated the same. Given the diversity of the animal kingdom, it is not always certain which animals possess this capacity, therefore Regan argues for a kind of precautionary principle and that we "*should give them the benefit of the doubt in moral decision-making, since they too may have inherent value*" (Palmer, 2011:11). Taylor (*Respect for Nature*, 1986) and Schweitzer (*Civilization and Ethics*, 1923) are often taken as the most radical or comprehensive biocentrists, attributing moral consideration to all of life and to all organisms. In general, a wildlife policy determined by an animal rights perspective would direct us to leave wild animals alone, it is not our *right* nor *obligation* to intervene. We should not take away land or resources they need to live lives natural to them, but we can defend ourselves if being attacked (Gamborg et al, 2014, Palmer, 2011) as a form of self-defense (Regan, 1984).

Relational ethics

Here, human-animal relationship is key in ethical considerations. It is perhaps the only departure from capacity-oriented theories, by seeing basic rights as being determined by specific moral rights and duties that stem from our relations with the particular animal. According to Palmer (2011) there are two accounts on relational importance for animal ethics. The first is emotional relations:

"Even though two animals might have similar capacities, if human emotional relations to the animals differ, their ethical responsibilities will differ too. This [...] does not (usually) extend to wild animals; where bonds of care and sympathy are much weaker (Palmer, 2011:15)

The other account shift the focus from human emotions to humans in relation to animals. According to Palmer (2011), with this lens all animals have the same sentience however we are for example more *obligated* to domesticated animals since we are the ones responsible for their very existence and in control of their living conditions hence creating dependency. Hence, humans do not have the same obligation to help suffering wild animals. This does not imply that we have no obligations to wild, indeed we have *negative duty* not to harm them and in some cases *positive* to assist if humans are responsible for causing them harm (Palmer, 2011). Swarts (2002) outline that we can have *specific care* toward animals ie. animals have more rights and humans are more obliged the more we affect them, and *non-specific care*, ie.

humans are obliged to take care of the environment, not individual animal (Waelbers et al, 2004).

In *Zoopolis: A political theory on Animal Rights* (2011) Donaldson and Kymlicka draw up a political framework of animals rights within relational animal rights theory, in lines with Smith's (2005) words "*a critique of the limit of contemporary political expression [...] the idea of the citizen as someone human*" (ibid:146). The authors present a critique to the ecocentric and biocentric perspective when claiming that the human-animal relationship is more complex than to just "let wild animals be" since we do affect them in different respects. With this perspective animals should be given the same rights as humans in the correspondent category; *Domestic animals* as co-citizens, ie. for example have right to reside in a certain territory and their rights included in political considerations. *Liminal animals*, ie. semi-wild animals close to or in symbiosis with human communities, should have the same rights as *denziens*, such as migrants or temporary workers. The authors argue denziens should have secure residency, fair terms of reciprocity and anti-stigma safeguards and should not be made vulnerable by their alternative status (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). *Wild* should have the same rights as *sovereigns*, that is "*respecting their rights to live where they live, and how they choose, without exploitative or paternalistic interference from outsiders*" (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011 in Henderson, 2009:57), as long as this do not infringe on the rights of other nations. Interaction, assistance and intervention may occur as long as it does not inflict on rights as sovereign (ibid). Other scholars within relational ethics typically employ various takes on concentric circle models, whereby our obligations toward those situated at outer circles decrease according to political relation, kinship or emotional bonds (Midgley, 1983; Mancilla, 2009). Bekoff (2009) claims that we need to consider all perspectives in wolf conservation, and this involves the wolves as well. Recognizing that wolves, and other animals, have emotional lives oblige us to take into account wolves' needs as not just individuals and families but also as members of community (Bekoff, 2009 in Boitani, 2009).

Anthropocentrism, speciesism and biocentric-anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism signifies "human-centered". Here, humans are granted higher moral status than other beings. Anthropocentrism is a legacy of thousands of years' worth of humanist ethics. It remains a paradigm in many contexts today, especially where industry and development is concerned. To this end, there are degrees of anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism is nowadays often put forward as part of a critique toward our society, claiming it is *speciesist* in its treatment of animals. *Speciesism*, at the far end, is an "*attitude of bias towards the interest of members of ones's own species and against those of members of the other species*" (Fjellstrom, 2002:64). Callicott (2003) claim that most of modern western philosophy is anthropocentric and wildlife remain only valued after its instrumental value, for example a bird that is valued for its beauty is not valued in itself but for the humans aesthetic pleasure, in other words fulfilling a human need (connected to Buber's (1937) I-it relationship). As a opposite claim; to truly value something for its intrinsic value is to look past instrumental value and give a worth in itself even to animal that cause us harm or damage and is not aesthetically pleasurable to us (connected to Buber's (1937) I-thou).

Placed in a different perspective Evans (2005) presents an account for anthropocentrism as the prevailing and inevitable order in society. To humans, our species intrinsic value and welfare is valued above those of others. According to Evans (2005), Murdy (1998) present a "biocentrically-based anthropocentrism" with influences from Darwinism taking a step away from traditional anthropocentrism:

“Spiders are to be valued more highly than other being in nature—by spiders. It is proper for men to be anthropocentric and for spiders to be arachnocentric. This goes for all living species. (Murphy, W.H. (1998). "Anthropocentrism: A Modern Version." in Evans (2005:135)

This does not entitle that humans should treat nature disrespectfully. A healthy ecosystem is essential for human's survival, instrumental value, and treating nature with respect and recognizing our place and responsibility toward it is beneficial to us. Hence, the intrinsic value of nature and animals should not be separated from instrumental value to humans. There are hence scholars that argue for a hybrid between biocentrism and anthropocentrism as the best account for human's role in nature. Especially when it comes to humans as hunters. According to Evans (2005) to have a more realistic biocentric view is not to reject humans place in nature but to affirm it. Hunting and killing animals is an expression of humans participating in the process of life, to which human belong and can be conducted with respect for the animals and the system (Causey, 1989). Following the argumentation that pain and death is an ecological fact of life Callicott (2003) criticize the consistency in opposition to pain in the biocentric perspective and highlights that predators inflict pain in their victims and that consistency in the animal liberation direction then would therefore result in stopping both humans and animals from hunting. Although anthropocentrism has not been spared of attack from contemporary animal rights advocates, some scholars defend the framework because of the so called 'so what' clause. Norton's convergence hypothesis (1987) is one theory that observes that as long as the environment is sustained and animals given welfare, it does not matter which ethical branch brought us there. In fact, anthropocentrism and more radical environmental philosophies sometimes aspire to the same goal, though with different rationales in their normativity.

Contextualization and critique

In this section the outlined ethical perspectives' respective fruitfulness in explaining human practice, focusing on hunting and management, toward different animals will be discussed. Here, *The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management* will serve as a focus point given for example the associations' importance and centrality in the wolf-issue in terms of agenda-setting power, active role in the wolf conservation conflicts and their high membership rates.

According to *The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management* (the word "management" is absent from the Swedish name Jägareförbundet) ethics is the most important building block of hunting. The association has as guideline for good hunting ethics to pursue a sustainable hunting and nurture wild animals as a long-term resource and hunting creates an overall benefit in nature (Jägareförbundet, c). This would go broadly in line with the ecocentric perspective outlined above. Though, the code of conduct among hunters to have a "clean kill" would hardly be necessary if motivated with overall benefit in the ecocentric perspective. Taking the perspective that if pain is not caused by humans' we should let "nature run its course" would not give us a sense of obligation to kill for example a fox with mange. Clearly, though, this is the practice of hunters today, who pride themselves on sustained interventions in game populations.

It might be added that with an ecocentric lens humans can be regarded as a disturbing species, given for example our profound effect on the ecosystem through emissions of greenhouse gases. Although, given today's practice in general humans cannot be regarded as a mere member of a community, and we do indeed place humans' needs first, often in conflict with the ecosystem balance. Hence, the ecocentric perspective alone cannot explain the practice within hunting and management of nature today. In addition, in general people care much

more about animal's individual well-being which can be further discussed with the biocentric perspective in mind.

“All animals have equal value. Treat the game with the same respect, from the smallest teal to the largest bull elk, for example as regarding hunting method, shooting (the first shot must kill the animal), search for wounded game, the handling of the animal and transportation. When you talk about the animal, use a language that shows that you consider all species with the same respect.” (Svenska Jägareförbundet, 2014, translated by author).

It is not clear if Singer (1975) would argue if the teal and bull have the same sentience but regardless, the quote incline that we value and treat all animals the same, independent of species or sentience. Arguably, we actively exterminate some animals and we fiercely protect others, even if their sentience levels are comparable and their intrinsic values as subjects-of-a-life are at an equal baseline. The biocentric perspective advocacy of “let animals be” cannot be applied to the instrumental use of animals for human needs such as food, labor and animal testing. As stated by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) it is not a responsible approach given we affect wild animals living conditions. Hence the biocentric perspective does not correspond with practice.

The different obligations presented by Palmer (2011) toward domesticated and wild animals in terms of dependency can give some clues to why we treat those animals differently. But not why we treat different wild animals, for example wolves and moose, differently. What can be questioned here is how far our responsibility stretches and if there are any animals that we do not exert some direct or indirect influence on, given today's human-impacted landscapes. The categorization of animals presented by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) can also be questioned in the same sense. First and foremost in the intuitive way that it fail to describe reality, which on the other hand is not the purpose with their framework. Another question that can be raised is how one categorizes animals. Is any animal really sovereign or have we managed nature to the point that most animals are de facto dependent on us for their survival, though in indirect ways. Not the least when it comes to that we have final say in where animals can live and how many we can tolerate (and anthropocentric perspective). Is for example the wolf a fully wild and sovereign animal or have we managed it to the point that it is dependent on us for its survival and has crossed over to a form of liminality? What happens to the wolf's rights if not a wild animal? This is indeed a complex idea. As a construct adopted from humanist political theory, is sovereignty even a helpful or honest attribution to the animal case (Horta, 2013)? It can be questioned how we decided when an animal moves from sovereignty to liminality and how to draw up such boundaries. The status of sovereignty given to wild animals does not correspond with the very hands-on way in which we manage for example the wolf today, from ‘adopt-a-wolf-pup’ schemes (The Swedish Carnivore Association) to helicopter transportation for migrant wolves. Clearly, the wildness insofar as it means autonomy, must be questioned in this case. It can also be noted that Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) fail to account for individual relations such as emotional bounds to certain wild animals, for example endangered species or animals we have special attraction to which is not embodied in the sense that they are our domestic pets.

Anthropocentrism does in many cases explain our values, sense of obligations and rights and practice. Though, to problematize the anthropocentric perspectives it can be argued that some people would save their dog from a burning building rather than an unknown person. It could also be argued that some people would claim that it is morally justifiable to protect endangered species from poachers, with violence if necessary which is manifest in the shoot-on-sight enforcement policies for poachers in Kruger National Park (Messer, 2010;

Filosofiska rummet, 2012). Furthermore, anthropocentrism must be questioned when people seemingly altruistically aid animals in need for which they stand to gain nothing. In the hunting context, the anthropocentric ethic is mitigated by the fact that hunters generally treat their quarry with principled codes that are not immediately explainable by anthropocentrism. Indeed, standards of ensuring a quick kill and of giving the prey fair chase would seem to indicate a respect for animals beyond their material use for human ends. Causey (1989) describes ambivalent feelings and guilt when hunters killing an animal they admire and respect. Hence, the anthropocentric perspective is not followed consistently either. If following the biocentric-anthropocentrist perspective it would signify a much more sustainable relationship with nature and animals. Given the current use and state of the environment in general this is not a description of our practice.

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIM

There appears to be a discrepancy between the ethical perspectives provided by ART scholarship and human praxis. As argued, perspectives within ART are both descriptive and normative but cannot alone explain why humans are not consistently bound to these perspectives when it comes to ethical codes toward different animals with seemingly equal moral status. While some scholars have attempted to resolve this by adopting moral pluralism or pragmatism, ie. work with peoples existing values rather than changing them and bringing together a harmony of various interests (Kupper and de Cock, 2010). This may be better conceived as a conflict-mitigating approach that tells us little about the criteria behind attitudes and morals toward animals. As a complement there is a need for frameworks that can explain the differential, and sometimes contradictory, ethical status and obligations we perceive to have toward different animals. Hence, the phenomenon to be investigated in this research is how different social constructions and consequently ethical codes toward different animals affects praxis, defined as how we relate to, communicate about and manage the animal in question. The discourse is a dialectic relationship with practice, and the construction appears somewhere there. This will be conducted by mapping the nuances that exist in the social constructions of hunters and live-stock owners living closely to wild animals', and the wolf in particular, and investigate contradictions. Following the critical review of ART outlined above, the research asks: *are the ethical philosophies within ART helpful to explain the ethical codes of the respondents in this research? Or do ART lack in explanatory power in this case as well? Moreover, what can help explain inconsistencies and blurring of boundaries between these categories?* To do so, the research will go outside of the ethical terrain in the analysis to look to social constructivism to sort out contradictory codes toward animals.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

In this section the social constructivism framework and its application to the construction of nature, animals and the wolf will be presented. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the reality-creating process of social construction can create differential ethical codes and hence differential practice depending on context toward wild animals.

Introducing theory

Social constructivism discuss how humans, through language, participate in the shaping of how different phenomenon are perceived. Language enables meaning and make it possible to share that meaning among people hence creating shared knowledge and construction of reality (Berger et al. 1966). The constructions has effect our practice in relation to the phenomenon

(Lindgren, 2007). Multiple meanings of the same phenomenon can exist, these divergent meanings can depend on social structural forces such as norms and social institutions (Scarce, 1998). *"A person's view might not be scientifically complete or correct, but it is both real and true for the person speaking the words"* also *"social construction are lasting, integral products of social structure, much more so than volatile values or attitudes"* (ibid:33, 44). Although Burr (2003), taking an actors perspective, highlights that people are capable of reflecting regarding their own constructions and praxis. Hence, knowledge is historically and culturally conditioned and social interaction decide what is perceived as true.

State of the art on the social construction of the wild and animals

Social constructivism *"puts less emphasis on the intentional and strategic use of ideas and narratives about nature, and is more focused on how "naturalization" occurs"* (Robbins, 2004:117) which is appropriate for the focus of this research. With the social constructivist framework the essence of what can be perceived as natural, nature itself, is an expression of the human imagination shaped by context convention, enforced by taken-for-grantedness and has effects on practice and politics (ibid). In today's human-impacted landscape we affect nature and animals direct, in form of for example infrastructure and farming, as well as indirect in form of nature reserves and national parks. With this framework the taken-for-grantedness of animal categorization, roles, space and use is questioned and judged socially and culturally conditional. Pets, livestock, game, wild animals and pests are all categories constructed and reproduced by people that prescribe actions. Some categories have evolved during many years and others are reached through political decisions, such as when animals that were previously focus of eradication are given status of endangered, such as the wolf. Also inspired by the aforementioned Bentham (1823) is the pioneer within deconstruction Jaque Derrida. In *The Animal That Therefore I am* (2008) he takes departure in an episode where his cat's gaze affected him and therefore, acknowledged "it" the cat as a subject, a thou, taking a deconstructivist perspective of man as the metaphysical subject. Also, criticizing the word "animals" as a coherent category failing to acknowledge differences between species both as a theoretical category as well as that the separation place humans above non-human animals and legitimize unethical treatment (Kristensson, 2015), ie. speciesism.

Animals can serve as projection surfaces onto which humans can attach human characteristics, conflicts and ideas. According to Bekoff (2009) few animals evoke such a wide range of emotions as the wolf. Studies regarding the construction of the wolf has been conducted around the globe in diverse contexts; conflicting constructions in Yellowstone national park (Scarce, 1998); regarding symbolic power in France and Norway (Krange et al, 2008); attitudes toward the wolf return in Sweden and the questioning the idea of hunters having a more negative attitudes toward large carnivores than others (Ericson et al, 2003), social representation of wolf in Norway (Figari et al, 2011) to name a few. Nie (2002) illustrates the diverse constructions of the wolf existing in different contexts: *"the wolf is wise (Irish folktale), the wolf is ferocious (a Pennsylvania legend), a wolf is foolish (German folktale), a wolf is friendly (Japanese folktale), Peter and the wolf, the story of the three little pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, the werewolf."* (Nie, 2002:66) The construction of the wolf is hence culturally determined and context-specific: *"humans-as-hunters often saw wolves symbolizing skill, intelligence, teamwork and courage. Those in agriculture, on the other hand, often saw wolves symbolizing danger and posing a sinister threat to their livelihoods and well-being."* (ibid:66).

During centuries the wolf was constructed as a pest in Sweden and the eradication was a political action when provincial laws obliged people to participate in the extermination. This led up to its extinction in the 1960's. By the 1980's the wolf had begun returning to Swedish woods (Sjölander-Lindqvist, 2008). The wolf is now a protected species and listed as Vulnerable (Artdatabanken 2015). In 2010 limited protective culling was introduced (albeit legally contested for years to come, see Epstein and Darpö (2013), according to Danell (2010) this will with time likely lead to a change in values and attitudes toward the wolf. Hence, the status of the wolf, and other animals, is not something consistent but changes with time and context through social interaction and in extension policy.

Urbanization and subsequent alienation from the wild is often put forward as a profound influencing factor on our conceptions of animals in modernity. Scruton (2000) states:

“As city-life became the mode of living for a majority of the population, the power to define animals increasingly came to rest with urban people. Consequently, urbanites were, and are, met with the charge that their lack of everyday contact with animals other than the “honorary member[s] of the moral community” (i.e. pets, Scruton 2000: 83), engenders a too narrow, and too sentimental, view of animals”. (Svendsen Björkdal, 2005:8)

Hence, people's constructions of wild predators are not necessarily supported by direct experience (also found in for example Danell (2010), Flygare (2006), Ericsson (2003), Karlsson and Sjöström (2007) but can be built on collected experiences narrated by others such as families, the media and opponents referring to these animals. A finding from Luchtrath (2015) is that *“actual presence of carnivores is not a prerequisite for the conflict about them”*. Frequently a polarized understanding is portrayed between hunters versus nature conservationists (Scarce (1998), Luchtrath (2015) and the debate about the wolf in Swedish media is a rather well-covered area painting a polarized image between “wolf-lovers” in the city and “wolf-haters” in the countryside (Krange and Skogen, 2011). Scarce (1998) illustrates a different perspective when investigating the social construction of wolves by different groups in communities bordering Yellowstone National park. It was concluded that there are not two easily identifiable sides in the debate and that people who were seemingly on opposite's sides in the debate expressed similar concerns about wolf introduction processes and the construction of their, and the wolves', situation as lacking of self-determination and power exercised from government.

Luchtrath's (2015) state that we do not use the same criterion and argument to justify the existence of different animals. In the study it was found that hunters perceive that nature conservationist have double standards and pursue more actions toward *“a favorite”* animal. In the study, hunters claim that they care for the less attractive, endangered species for unselfish reasons. Luchtrath interpret this as an *“attempt to recreate their self-respect and a positive social identity, by elevating their own reasons for protection above the reasons of nature conservationists.”* (Luchtrath, 2015:114).

Studies have shown that when wild animals cross the perceived border from wilderness areas into human landscapes they are perceived as breaking their “natural state (Philo et al. 1998). When moving from the place they are perceived to belong the construction of the animal change, as Tambiah (1969) puts it: *“[...] the notion of animals ‘out of place’ follows the logic of Mary Douglas’s well-known statement: ‘dirt is matter out of place’”* (Tambiah 1969:450 in Benavides, 2013:67). According to Benavides (2013) it is a re-emerging theme that wild animals are seen as alien and harmful invaders of human cultural space in studies from around the: from the wolf in Sweden (Ericsson, 2003) to snow leopards in Pakistan (Hussain, 2002). Based on Campion-Vincent (1992) research regarding the development of both negative and

positive polarities regarding felines Benavides (2013) speculate that the “wilder” the feline is, dependent on cultural distant to humans, the more intense the associations with positive or negative attributes become. According to Figari et al. (2011) study in Norway the wolf’s taken-for-grantedness as a fundamentally wild animal is essential to understand negotiations over the animals’ belonging in Norwegian woods. Animals we cannot control are frightening, and this affects our constructions about them: *“In addition, they might also be characterized as dangerous because they respond only to nature and not to human domination (Le Bras-Chopard 2003, 157–58 in Benavides, 2013:66). Mooallem (2013) puts it: “Zoom out and what you see is one species--us--struggling to keep all others in their appropriate places, or at least in the places we’ve decided they ought to stay” (Crist, 2013).* In the context of regulatory measures toward wolves Marvin (2000) states:

Hunting wolves is conceived as a measure that will help re-establish control over animals’ inappropriate and “unacceptable” behavior, such as killing livestock (Marvin 2000). In this sense, controlled hunting can be viewed as a means to reconfigure the boundary between the human social domain and the wilderness (Marvin 2003 in Sjölander Lindqvist, 2015:145).

Another phenomenon emerging from research that also affects construction of animals is the physical attributions of animals as well as the projection of human attributes on animals and vice versa. de Pinho et al. (2014) show that human esthetics appreciation play a role in attitude toward wild animals and hence the management and conservation actions we favor toward them. In their study in Kenya ugliness was the strongest variable influencing support for removal and beautiful the strongest variable for their protection. This is a finding reemerging in industrialized countries (see Knight 2008).

As been illustrated so far, humans do not have a cohesive ethical code toward animals as a coherent group, we value and treat animals differently depending on contextual, cultural, historical and physical factors. These values are based in our social constructions of the animals building on experience and circumstances which in turn affect praxis, ie. it is crucial to understand the constructions underneath the values that underlie action. What ART fails to explain is how the ethical codes emerge and differ toward animals with the same sentience, dependency relationship and place in ecosystem for example. It can be problematic to focus on a coherent approach to animal ethics. A discrepancy between the idea of ethics, establishing right and wrong, and reality, a plurality of rights and wrongs. It is of importance to understand the nature and the roots of the stories humans tell about animal in any given context and to find ways forward in problematic situations regarding animals, such as the wolf-issue in Sweden. Investigating local constructions of animals is hence of utmost importance since those are the ones living side by side with these animals.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this section the design of the study focusing on empirical data, method of data collection, and method for data analysis will be outlined. The section contains reflections regarding methodological constrain. This study build on two literature reviews and empirical findings from 11 semi-structured interviews with hunters and livestock-owners in a geographically limited context in the central part of Sweden.

Point of departure

The method applied implies a methodological choice, which has its base in ontological assumptions, the understanding of reality, and epistemological assumptions, understandings of knowledge and how this knowledge can be acquired. Following the social constructivism

framework a qualitative approach with long interviews is appropriate when the aim of the thesis is to acquire knowledge about a perceived reality rather than an “objective”. This is in line with the premises of phenomenology, which focus on the lifeworld – the reality experienced and created by the respondent – and their practice can only be understood from their perception of a phenomenon, ie. the understanding about the phenomenon and not the phenomenon itself (Fejes, 2015). Advantages of a phenomenological research approach is that it generates in depth understanding of a certain phenomenon. The researcher should aim at experiencing the lifeworld of the respondents without interpreting it with his² pre-understanding. This is indeed a challenge with this framework.

Empirical data

The empirical data is comprised of two blocks. First, a study of wild-life management, hunting and the wolf in Sweden (see Danell, 2010, Sjölander-Lindqvist (2008), with purpose to acquire a broad understanding of the issue and the perspectives involved and to identify themes, issues and respondents. In addition two literature reviews regarding the effect social constructions have on humans’ ideas about and praxis toward animals as well as a literature review of environmental ethics and ART. This has been presented in the chapters *Animal Rights Theory* and *Social Constructivism*.

Second, phenomenology aim to acquire the respondent’s subjective perceptions, which come from their experiences, their ways of reasoning and their everyday encounters with animals, therefore in-depth interview were conducted. The respondents were chosen according to the criterion *having livestock (sheep) close to or/and hunting in a wolf-territory*. The criterion for *centrality* is to ask the most important people (Esaiasson, 2007). According to Danell et al. (2010) the most important actors in the wolf-issue are hunters and landowners among others. Although earlier research stated attitudes towards for example the threat of wild predators are not necessarily supported by direct experience, Figari et al (2011) claim that a significant amount of research regarding wolves focus on negative attitudes and that “*little is known about local conceptions and understandings of the phenomenon ‘wolf’ itself. [...] But rather than to presuppose conflicting attitudes, we start by asking which associations, ideas and images wolves evoke*” (ibid:319). The thesis aim at looking past the seemingly polarized debate (between for example animal rights NGO:s and hunters associations) investigating citizens beyond such professional, organizational roles, to admit of grey areas, nuances and perhaps contradictory ethics by deconstructing their ethical codes. These respondents can be argued to be affected directly by the wolf given that they live or frequently reside in areas with wolf, something valued as important for the aim of this research.

A snowball technique was utilized to identify and recruit respondents for the interviews. Snowball sampling starts with contacting a small number of respondents that potentially can forward to other respondents that meet the criteria’s for the study. The “springboards” chosen was for example the head of local hunting organizations, municipalities with wolf-territory, local groups of the sheep-breeding association and acquaintances with contacts in areas with wolf-territories. The criteria for the respondents was also attached with a wish to speak with them in terms of their “citizen roles” and not in a professional capacity, though about half of the respondents were connected to *the Swedish Sheep-breeding Association* and *the Swedish Association for Hunting and Nature Management*. One professionally and the other respondents as members of one of the organizations. This could have an effect on their answers in some respects. Though, only one of these were interviewed in another location than their home, hence framing the interview in a private setting. The respondents’ knowledge

² Gender-neutral her/his

about the aim of the thesis varied. Some were aware beforehand that I sought to discuss the wolf in particular and some did not. A trade-off between purposive sampling finding the respondents that matched my criteria's the best and not revealing too much to influence their pre-understanding and answers. I tried to seek openness as far as possible and be very restricted with what the respondents knew beforehand. This is due to the divisive nature of the wolf issue and a reluctance on the part of members of the public to speak out positively or negatively toward the wolf in certain areas, for fear of social sanctions. When using snowball technique, my springboards themselves constructed an idea of who I should talk to. For example, some potential respondents were presented as "people that have a lot to say" or "people that are active in this question" or "people that have sane reflections". This is a *disadvantages* of this technique insofar as I lose some of the control in choosing participants. This is something to consider when reading the results.

When faced with difficulties to interview enough respondents fulfilling the criteria *having livestock (sheep) close to or/and hunting in a wolf-territory* some respondents were chosen according to a second criterion; *has previously had livestock close to or/and hunted in a wolf-territory*. The modification and relevance of this data can be motivated with that they do have prior experience of the knowledge I am seeking. Also, those areas can be relevant as future wolf-territories and therefore important to map these people's conceptions and constructions. This could perhaps motivate a study in some years' time. Six of the respondents belong to the latter category.

Study area

The middle part of Sweden has the densest population of wolf. This is due to an exception of wolf presence in the North of Sweden where reindeer herding is practiced by the Sami, and the relatively high populated south whose carrying capacity for wolves is lower. Nevertheless, the concentration of wolf packs in the central areas of Sweden has generated criticism. 11 semi-structured interviews of 45 minutes to 1,5 hours were conducted in March 2015 with respondents in this area. Six interviews were conducted on location and five interviews were conducted by telephone.

Table 1: Interviews

Location	Hunter	Livestock-owner	Livestock-owner and hunter	Total
Stockholm county	-	3f	1f	4f
Södermanland county	-	1p	1f	2 (1f+1p)
Uppsala county	1p	-	1f	2p
Värmland county	1p	-	1p	2p
Västmanland county	-	1p	-	1p
Total	2p	5 (2p+3f)	4 (3f+1p)	11 (6f+5p)

p: Phone-interview

f: Face-to-face interview

Method for data collection

In lines with the phenomenological methodology, in-depth interviews were chosen to collect the respondents own understanding and description of the phenomenon. Conversation interviews is fruitful with problem statements that involves to make visible how a phenomenon manifests itself, how people experience their everyday life and understand the world (Esaiasson, 2007). Long semi-structured interviews gives opportunity to acquire a more complex understanding and nuances. It is also appropriate due to the delicacy of the wolf-question and it has been an essential focus to build trust and create a safe conversation environment.

The two theoretical perspectives leading this thesis were operationalized by structuring the interview-guide (see *Appendix*) into broad themes. Regarding *ART*, questions were asked concerning for example the premises for the value of nature and animals, obligations and rights depending on animal and questions focusing particularly on predators and the wolf with the earlier themes incorporated. In regard to the *constructivist* framework, questions were asked concerning difference in context and time, taken-for-grantedness and attributions projected onto animals. The aim of the interviews was to first establish the respondent's ethical standpoint towards animals in general (with focus on wild animals) insofar as this was possible. This led to the acquisition of a baseline "data-set" to be compared to their reflections regarding what emerged as differential values and obligations toward species. The interview commenced with this general theme in large part due to the delicacy of the issue and that having the wolf in mind from the beginning could alter their openness and compromise their ability to reflect on animal ethics in a general sense. By introducing ethics, value and dilemmas regarding differential value and obligations early in the interview the respondents had the possibility to create a deeper reflection during the interview. The respondents were challenged on some of their constructions and attitudes, encouraging them to display reflexivity in relation to these questions. The hunters and live-stock owners respectively received some customized question based on their circumstances. All the respondents were prior to the interview informed that the interview was confidential and asked if they approved that the interview was recorded. The respondents were told that I was interested in their thoughts and perceptions and no answers where right or wrong. I was looking for openness, grey areas and nuances, however unpopular and politically incorrect they may be. Due to the controversy of the wolf-debate, respondents have been fully anonymized in this research. Due to restricted resources I could not cover all wolf-dense areas.

Method for data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three iterative steps where the material was reduced at every step guided by theory. The analysis was then facilitated by mainly asking the guiding question "*What is it that seems to affect how the respondents value animals and value them differently and how does this seem to affect their practice*" to the material to gather cluster of text. The clusters where analyzed guided by the theoretical framework to pin-point discrepancies and grey-scales in the respondents ethical standards.

First, the interviews were transcribed. To reduce the material, key-word that summarized the core in the text were written in the margin, open-coding, and quotes attached to some of the key-words were underlined. Second, the key-words were used to trace and categories according to the *ART* perspectives by coding the four perspectives in color and a letter. At this point I went beyond the respondent's words and understandings and applied my theoretical framework to code findings. Utterances that seem to affect the respondents valuing and construction of different animals that could not be traced to the ethical perspectives was

also highlighted. Third, using the key-words the quotes were categorized into themes and subthemes that reemerged in the material. To keep the material on-point the proto-themes were distilled to four themes, representing the strongest emerging in the material guided by the aim and research question; *are the ethical philosophies in ART similarly unhelpful and inconsistent in praxis? Moreover, what can help explain inconsistencies and blurring of boundaries between these categories?* and theoretical framework, social constructivism and ART. Data that could not be categorized within the themes was removed. The analysis has been an abductive process, moving back and forth between theory and empirics. Following the social constructivism framework there is no true interpretation. The researcher cannot be objective and take a step out of one's head completely, one can strive to achieve that as far as possible guided by established theory and methods. It should be noted that the translation of the quotes from Swedish to English is a delicate work and may incline slight changes of meaning. This is important to keep in mind when reading the results. In some cases when proper translation is complex the Swedish word has been kept within brackets.

RESULTS

In the following section, findings from the eleven interviews with hunters and livestock owners are presented under four themes that emerged from the empirics; *Baseline ethics*, *Stewards of ecosystem integrity*, *Duties toward animal categories* and *Attributions*.

Baseline ethics

This section outlines the respondents' baseline values regarding animals in general.

Nature and animals are profoundly valuable to the respondents and the majority considered themselves as “*nature-people*” ie. part of nature in different respects. Overall, the respondent's expression of the value of nature and wild animals were of an instrumental character. For example, valued in economic terms and as a source of meat, and as “*recreation*” and “*experience*”. The majority stated that all animals have equal value and right to exist as individuals, in rare cases the respondents claimed that humans and animals have the same value. Though, many of the respondents showed signs of valuing animals differently and most frequently expressing a different valuing of pests and choosing human welfare above those of other animals. A few respondents claimed that all animals have value, but some not as much as others. An example reappearing was rats and in one case the wolf. Some stated that what decides the value of animals is that they are feeling individuals, in rare cases intelligence was highlighted. Some questioned and problematized the animal's ability to feel pain, and if they feel pain like humans. Most concluded that it is likely and therefore they ought to be treated with respect. Others pin-pointed that it is a difference between human feelings and animal feelings. In connection to a discussion about “*wolf-haters*” one hunter said: “*They have no human feelings and values, they do what is in their instincts. It is very stupid to hate an animal at the individual level*”. One sheep-owner and hunter said:

“Now I almost have to become a philosopher. They are living beings and you have to respect that. They are not humans. But we do not know for sure what they feel or do not feel. [...]. We have a responsibility since we have received a brain that works differently than theirs”.

Hence, an animal's lack of rationality was not a limitation insofar as it made them less morally considerable; rather, their lack of cognition seemed to make it more important for humans to extend tolerance to them not in spite of their vulnerabilities but *because* of them. In this way, the fact that animals lack moral agency and cannot be held accountable for harms in the same way as humans was hinted. Despite the anthropocentric and instrumental refrain, the

majority of the respondents highlighted that a respectful treatment of all animals is core. As a counterpoint several of the hunters, and some off the livestock owners, described a negative jargon among hunters which they discussed with great involvement and condemnation; *“I killed that bastard”* and *“That damn pig got away”*, when referring to the wild boar. Some believed that this did not reflect the hunters valuing of the animal but was an expression of frustration and bad manners. A few of the respondents connected the perceived jargon directed toward the wolf as an expression of hatred of the wolf. None of the respondents themselves used that type of language and this behavior was regarded as very bad hunting ethic and disrespectful.

Stewards of ecosystem integrity

This section outlines how the majority of the respondents frame their role in relation to nature and wildlife management, which is seen to be a matter of ecosystem integrity.

Several respondents regarded themselves as part of nature in the sense of managing nature sustainably, being an *“architect”*, a *“caretaker”* and saw great value in that role both in regards to the feeling it gave them and as a service to nature. Several saw nature and animals as a *“renewable resource”* that they should *“utilize”*, and take out a *“yield”* from each season. A majority of the respondents value animals headmost as part of an ecosystem with the criterion if they co-exist or disturb the balance in the system, and hence showing characteristics of the ecocentric perspective. In this context the wolf was described by the majority of the respondent as an important, and impressive, top-predator and a sign and symbol of a functioning and prosperous ecosystem. Many respondents that stated the equal value and right to exist of animals as individuals based this on the animal's value in the broader system in which it formed a part. The majority believed humans have right to remove or kill invasive species if it benefited the system. One sheep-owner and hunter said;

“What was it Einstein said? The theory of relativity. I value the diversity, so of course most animals have absolute entitlement to live. Even the predators have an absolute entitlement in our fauna. But, if there is over-establishment... (silence)”

Several of the respondents state that they value the Swedish fauna and flora's higher than invasive species. Rats, racoon-dog and Canadian geese emerged with several of the respondents as invasive species and a threat to the native fauna and flora, arguing they were not “natural” ie. not a result of evolution but placed here by humans. Though, to many the animals as individuals had some form of intrinsic value as sentient organisms, even though the species had less value in the Swedish ecosystem. In rare cases the respondents did not value the invasive species as individuals. In the following quote by a hunter it is note-worthy to observe the choice of word describing the animals showing a different construction of the animals: *“All animals have the same value. Everything from the disgusting rats to the magnificent bull elk. They fill a function in one way or another.”*

Several respondents also described it as *“homo sapiens have put on a Gods roll”*, *“we have put the rules of the ecosystem out of play”*, that *“no ecosystem can function without us”*. Moreover, humans have responsibility to manage it, nurture it and control over-population since humans are responsible for the imbalance in the first place, in lines with accounts within relational ethics. The majority saw humans role in nature as complex, and that we perhaps do not have right to control nature and animals but that it is inevitable due to competition over land and resources as well as the aforementioned disturbance of ecological balance. Some hunters agreed that as a hunter one have more responsibility toward wild animals since

hunters affect their lives to a larger extent than others, e.g. urban residents and passive observers of nature. One hunter said:

“It’s some sort of disneyfication [...] to believe that humans do not affect regardless of if we are hunting or not we kill them, we take their land [...], put up fences. To remove humans from the equation is a utopia. [...] We should not put ourselves first but we are part of the equation”.

As a counter-point, some respondents regarded the stewardship narrative regarding nature foreign, criticizing mostly hunters but also land-owners as not seeing themselves as part of nature and lacking the “*big picture*” regarding balance in the system. Viewing nature as a possession and as a “*breeding place*” for animals they could shoot or capitalize. A few of the respondents expressed negative rights toward wild animals, ie. only obliged not to harm or kill animals and otherwise leaving some areas “*untouched*” or “*unmanaged*” to the best of one’s ability today.

Many claimed humans are valued the most in the system, but should not be. The ones arguing that humans’ needs should be prositized hesitate when reflecting further and expressed that their most profound concern was that the animals were a threat to their way of living. If predators stayed in “*their territory*”, co-existing would be possible and there would be higher acceptance toward predators in general and the wolf in particular. Several of the respondents expressed that the middle part of Sweden would be ideal for wolf packs if humans had not settled there and had not had the type of hunting tradition, animal-keeping and infrastructure there is today. The majority claimed that wolf should not be concentrated in a small area but rather spread out so that one area did receive all the negative consequences. The importance of territoriality, sovereignty and keeping within expected boundaries to maintain co-existence was articulated in one’ sheep-owner observation that:

“If they are very nice (Swedish slang: jättebussiga) and can reside in their territory and I can reside in my territory [...]. The ones that were here first, in our case the farmers, should have it undisturbed without it being totally self-evident that we should move because wolves are coming instead”.

When faced with questions comparing the wolf with other predators in Sweden and foreign the respondent who claimed that s/he³ did not believe the wolf had the right to exist admittedly claimed that s/he could accept the wolf if it lived somewhere else:

“Now I am digging my own little grave (laugh) Yes, the tiger is a fantastic animals too and exotic to me just like the wolf is exotic for someone else. And if one can find a place somewhere where they can live in a moderate scale of course they should”.

Several hunters described a change in the hunting community. Factors described as affecting this was shorter training to acquire a hunting license nowadays and that hunting has become a status-activity. Several of the people who hunt come from the city and are disconnected from nature in their everyday life, lacking a holistic and sustainable thinking and have a consumptive thinking related to maximizing yields. For example, hunters without land of their own pay a significant amount of money to hunt and want “*their money’s worth*”. This affects the ethical code of the hunters toward animals and leads to disrespectful and “*predatory*” behavior. Some stated that these hunters do not conduct the search for wounded animals themselves which disconnects their actions from the suffering of the animal. One hunter stated:

3 Gender-neutral she/he

“My generation hunters have been doing this for 50 years and is taught with the mother's milk. But now, in some sense it has become a consumptive hunting. Hunting has taken over golf's role as the “it-thing”. And then you have people that are educated fast and do not have the long-term acquired knowledge and emotions, then you become a consumer in a wrong way, instead of being a hunter that is one with nature.”

All the hunters highlighted a fast kill and fair chase as crucial, something that cannot be directly derived from the ecocentric perspective. Respondents claiming one should let nature has its course claimed that if they saw a wild animal suffering due to for example disease they would kill it, of compassion for the animal, but also of egoistic reasons such as it being painful to watch the animal suffer. Hence, not in line with the ecocentric perspective.

Duties to animal categories: wild, domestic, liminal and pest

This section outlines duties the respondents perceive to have toward different animal categories.

When it comes to obligations all respondents agreed that humans' responsibility toward animals is a function of how much we affect them and how dependent they are on human care for their survival, echoing perspectives within relational ethics. All respondents agreed one having more obligations toward domesticated animals. The reasons being that humans control their circumstances, dependency, the law, and personal feelings and family-bounds. When challenged in their values toward different animals, several respondents claimed that they valued their domesticated animals higher than their wild cousins, due to the aforementioned emotional relationship and in rare cases the owner-ship and monetary value aspect. One respondent reflected regarding the ambiguity between acknowledging the individual value and right of domestic animals vis-à-vis controlling their freedom, but expressed that these circumstances on the other hand are prerequisite for them existing at all.

Some respondents claimed that landowners have an obligation to take care of wild animals that linger on their land and manage them in a sustainable way. By such animals are meant synanthropic species that make use, symbiotically or parasitically, of human settlements. Though, all animals are not acceptable to have lingering closely to humans. Some respondents spoke about a deviance behavior of the wolf, told anecdotes of wolves lingering too close to humans and that it did not behave in their natural, “*shy*”, way that one associated with a wild animal. One hunter admittedly claimed that this was probably a natural behavior, but in the eyes of humans not a *desirable* behavior. Some of the respondents claimed that they had a “realistic” idea of the wolf and that it had not changed over time or with context. While some agreed that their image of the wolf had changed with time due to the advance closer to human settlements. One sheep-owner that had moved from Stockholm to Västmanland said:

“Even I walked around with a small brooch with a nice wolf-head 30 years ago (laugh). Before reality caught up with me. And with my relatives that are big-city people I can see that they are totally chocked when they come here and understand that this thing with the wolf is something that actually affect our life-style every day”.

A word that was mentioned by several in discussing the wolf was “*hemortsrätt*”⁴ and this entitled the wolf with the right to exist in Sweden. In one case a respondent claimed: “*The wolf does not have the right to exist*” based on the threat to livestock.

Another aspect of the liminality of animals is the concept “pest”. Several of the respondents had a complex relationship with the word “pest” and acknowledged that it is a construction by

4 In english approximately: right of domicile

humans and a line we have drawn when animals affect us too much in a negative way. The status of the animal as an individual can be pest or varmint in one context and a resource in another context. A few claimed that the environment in which the animal reside at the moment does not affect their status, *“a roe-deer is always a wild animal”*. The majority agreed that the status pest did not affect the value of the animal as an individual, though overpopulation, traffic accidents, destruction of forests makes it justifiable to regulate the amount of animals as these forces mediate the status of pest. One sheep-owner said: *“So they become pests when they break down what we are trying to build up”*. The majority of the respondent’s highlighted rats as *“unlikable”*, *“pest”*, *“sanitary inconvenience”*, in rare cases the respondents ascribed the rat value in the ecosystem, though attached with a discussion if one could really claim that they did any good in the ecosystem. Some respondents connected this way of thinking with the stewardship-narrative and that the animals constructed as pest were a threat to their ownership relation to nature. One sheep-owner reflected regarding *humans* role in nature as a potential pest. A hunter stated:

“There should be an intrinsic-value but no one wants to reintroduce the black rat. So it is a bit ambivalent here. You look at completely other aspects than the purely scientific in the weight bowl, there are unpleasant game that we do not whatsoever try to get back while we are very protective of other game species”.

A sheep-owner reflected:

“We often argue that everyone has equal value, then they fill in a gravel pit here where there are American grind. Then you are completely brutal and ruthless then they do not have value at all, but merely a threat [...]. It is a remarkable gradation of what different animals are worth”.

All respondents agreed that distance is a determining factor that affect both value and obligations. Several described that distance has a positive effect on positive feelings toward animals. Several highlighted urbanization, that people move further away from nature in their daily life, both physically and mentally, and the fact that people have fewer direct, embodied encounters with wild animals. One hunter stated: *“[...] there is an arranged image where you gladly see the wildlife through the TV with fine string music kind of”*.

Some respondents highlighted that animals as individuals have the same value, but as a species humans have more obligations toward an endangered species since humans are responsible for their vulnerability, again correspondent with relational ethics.

Some hunters reflected regarding that society decides which animals have more value and which we have more responsibility toward. The wolf was described as being discriminated in favor of when it comes to value and treatment for example due to the more rigid measures set in when a wolf, and other predators or big game, is hit by a car in contrast to other smaller animals. The restrictions on protective hunting toward the wolf was also highlighted .

Attributions

This section outlines the socially conditioned values regarding animals.

Physical attributes and aesthetics were factors the respondents claimed effected the value of animals. Deer and raptors emerged as examples with several of the respondents as beautiful, in some cases fox and wolf came up as beautiful animals. Only one respondents expressed: *“I cannot say that I think that the wolf is worth as much as the other beautiful red deer”*. Rats and wild boar emerged as uncharismatic animals in several cases. The majority described that they still believed that “ugly” and “beautiful” animals was worth the same and ought to be treated the same, but are for a fact treated differently by society as a whole. When asked,

size, big eyes and soft fur were highlighted as advantageous attributes. Attributes that were considered disadvantageous was “slimy”, “cold” and “smelly” (an attribute ascribed to the wild-boar by one respondent). One sheep-owner reflected:

“We have a very beautiful fox who lives down our coastal meadows. But I also know that it eats up all our baby deer so knowing that makes me know that we must remove it. But it is still beautiful to look at, it becomes a little double, it is not all negative”.

Human attributes on animals as well as animal attributes on humans appeared from the interviews. One respondent described humans as sometimes having a “*predator-mentality*” when building society, a hunter described that “*roe deer are more like us in a sense*” when describing how hunting ethics is sometimes neglected when it comes to birds in contrast to for example deer. One informant highlighted the gaze of the animal as the explanatory factor to why humans value some animals higher than others: “*No one have any major feelings for fish. You do not get a gaze. That could be a reason for that mammals affect humans. Because they have a gaze it is easier to see emotions in a mammal. Bird more difficult. Fish impossible*”. The wolf were described by a few as often being attributed with words such as “*insidious*” and “*smart*”. One sheep-owner described:

“[...] I’m fonder of ungulates than predators for example, and it might be the hoof-animals peaceful contented mentality that I feel is soothing and missing perhaps a little bit on the human side and is a balancing contrast to the brutality and violence and poverty”.

The aesthetics of the wolf, both in its appearance and the methods by which it kills, were characterized with colorful attributions like “bloody” and “brutal”, contrasting it with the bear and lynx that killed fewer animals in a “fast” and “tidy” way. Many respondents expressed that this affect the way they perceive the animal. On sheep-owner said:

“You can imagine how it feels to have a lamb that has lost its mom and running and screaming and looking for mom and no mom is there because there is only a pool of blood. It is purely emotional. But if you do not feel deeply with animals, you shouldn’t have any”.

This opinion was for the most part accepted as legitimate but in rare cases the respondents did not believe in the killing method described, saw it as exaggerated or did not see the difference between the wolf and other predators. One sheep-owner and hunter reflected regarding the construction of the wolf as blood-thirsty in contrast to other predators, such as the lion, which were not attributed with blood-thirst: “[...] *it has to land somewhere in this hatred: it takes my game goes on my skin and it’s nasty*”.

Several highlighted the symbolic power of the wolf, as a capable apex predator and as representative for a particular part of the world and compared it to the status of the elephant and tiger as symbol for their part of the world. Several highlighted the wolf as a symbol for evil, blood-thirst in folklore and fairy-tales, the majority of the respondents brought up “*Red Riding hood*”, where the wolf often is narrated as an enemy and threat to lives and livelihoods. A few compared the wolf and the symbolism of bear as a soft and kind teddy-bear. Some reflected regarding how significant these stories and narratives are nowadays, but agreed that it had to have some effect on our construction of the wolf. Although not being the determining factor but rather the fear people experience from the threat to livelihoods the wolf signify.

ANALYSIS

In this chapter the ethical codes emerging from the *Results* will be analyzed taking departure in ART and social constructivism. It will be discussed in what context the respondent stretch their baseline ethics, show inconsistency and make exceptions. The ethical codes that are not consistent with solely one of the perspectives within ART will be scrutinized with the social constructivism framework.

Baseline ethics

When analyzing the baseline ethics of the respondents a sequences from George Orwell *Animal Farm* (1945) comes to mind. The farm-animals in the novel conquer the farmer and take over the management of the farm themselves. After the conquest the animals construct the *Seven Commandments of Animalism*. The commandment “*all animals are equal*” is later changed by the pigs in charge to “*all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others*” (Orwell, 1945). The majority of the respondents stated that all animals have equal value. Nevertheless, dependent on for example a perceived threat to livestock and hunting dogs, physical attributes, their ability to coexist with humans and emotional closeness, the animals were valued differently. Hence legitimizing different praxis, in form of for example sanctions toward animals causing negative consequences to humans or the ecosystem. But still, with the ethical code that “*all animals are equal*” intact in the respondents minds. The respondents’ social construction of themselves as a “*nature-person*” seem to come with an identity of threatening all animals the same. When the respondents where challenged in their reasoning the respondents found ways to legitimize the behavior. This shows a discrepancy between their baseline-ethics and actual application of those ethics to different animals. Hence, showing the lack of explanatory power of the perspectives within ART, given for example that two animals of equal sentience legitimately can be treated differently. The respondents do not seem to have a consistent ethical code toward “animals” as a coherent group. Rather than being fully rational individuals having all the relevant information, fixed ethical codes and making perfect judgements we build our moral arguments in interaction with other people. We negotiate our baseline ethics.

No respondent showed ethical codes following solely one of the outlined perspectives within ART. Overall the respondent’s expression of the value of nature and wild animals were of an instrumental character, both explicitly in economic terms and as a source of meat, and in more subtle terms, taking Callicott’s (2003) definitions of instrumental and intrinsic value into account, such as “*recreation*” and “*experience*”. The majority of the respondents see themselves as being part of a shared interspecies community that has certain principles for fair interaction across categories, but appeared to ascribe a “veto right” to humans. The veto-right stems from the fact that in the end placing human needs in the center, this as outlined according to some of the respondents coming from a natural order of species placing themselves first. An account following biocentric anthropocentrism. Animals that have a negative function in regards to our values become subject to suspended ethics, here valuing humans’ interest above those of animals. The most obvious example is animals we regard as pests or having an “undesirable” behavior where undesirability typically centers on transgressing political territory. When it comes to the wolf the majority valued the wolf as part of the Swedish fauna, both symbolically and ecologically. This baseline value was stretched when the wolf moved to close to human settlements and posed a threat to domestic animals and in extension livelihood and a way of living. When a human interest is at stake and by extension a domesticated animal’s interest. Taking Donaldson and Kymlicka’s (2011) framework into account; when citizens interests are at stake, it is legitimate to intervene.

When it comes to the wolf, some respondents claimed that an inherent historic hatred, or as claimed by some of the respondents as consequence of the damaged or perceived damage the wolf can cause, different moral status of the wolf is constructed. According to some of the respondents this results in an unethical behavior toward the animal, such as illegal hunting. On the other end, some informants claimed that society discriminate in favor of the wolf as a result of distance to the negative consequences the animal cause. In lines with Luchtrath (2015), the wolf can be perceived as that “favorite animal” nature conservationists pursue more action toward. The hunters and landowners living closely to “reality” perceive that they have a more realistic, unselfish, view and “*elevating their own reasons for protection above the reasons of nature conservationists.*” (Luchtrath, 2015:114). This construction of the wolf show inconstancy in not just praxis toward the animal, but also an inconsistent construction of reality regarding the perceived ethical status of the wolf.

“The nature they think they love and want to become nearer quickly becomes and annoyance about which something needs to be done” (Evans, 2005:154). Some respondents had moved from an urban area in search for the “simple” and “calm” life close to nature. Being in that context now differs from their construction of it, when faced with consequences such as predators killing livestock. Perhaps it can also apply to hunters, having an image of what it was like to hunt in the past, constructing the image of an abundance of game. Some respondents described a change in the traditional moose-hunt, now with less moose and wolf as the newly emerged threat toward their hunting dog. Nature is not behaving as it “should” based on constructions with deep cultural and historical roots.

Stewards of ecosystem integrity

A shared perception of the participating hunters was that they see themselves as ecosystem managers. They control and impact wildlife stock and habitat as they protect, use and reduce specific species and shape their habitats (Luchtrath 2015:113).

Indeed an account supported by this study. Humans as hunters and managers are perceived as a manifestation of them taking part in the ecosystem, also echoing the aforementioned Evans (2005) biocentric anthropocentrism. Many of the respondent saw themselves as closer to nature than others, e.g. urban residents and passive observers of nature, who they believe have detached themselves from nature. Also, the stated “*disneyfication*” of nature mentioned goes in line with research regarding that urbanization is perceived to distance urban residents from nature, having a “*too narrow, and too sentimental, view of animals*”(Svendsen Bjorkdal, 2005:8). Furthermore, in lines with Sjölander Lindqvist (2015) hunting predators where perceived as a duty that would regulate “undesirable” behavior such as killing livestock. Using Marvin’s (2003) words: “*reconfigure the boundary between the human social domain and the wilderness* (Marvin 2003 in Sjölander Lindqvist, 2015:145)

Although, several respondents described an emerging hunting culture with more focus on individual consumption, rather than a holistic management orientated toward an ecosystem good, failing the perceived role as stewards of the ecosystem balance. Hence, hunters are expressing a critique that capitalization of hunting following commercialization, purchase hunts and high land leases are creating different ethical codes. “New hunters” are stretching hunting ethics to a breaking point since they fail to think ecocentrically. This has been a common claim among hunting ethics in modernity (see for example Posewitz (1996), Causey (1989), but there may be reason to be skeptical toward the account. For one, it is increasingly questioned whether there is such a thing as an ecosystem good determined from an outside perspective and that which should set the standard for management. Given the plurality of ecosystems globally and their differential peak conditions. Simply stated, it is easier to

establish the good of an animal than it is of a system (Gudorf, 2003). A consideration on part of the respondents for the suffering of the animals, departing from the ecocentric perspective, also come in and a fear of that the “new hunters” value animals in solely instrumental terms, as a “product”. It was hinted that this can be argued to disconnect the hunters from the animals as sentient individuals and lead to unethical behavior. That hunters dislodge from ethics when money enters the equation has been suggested by literature (Causey (1989), Loftin (1984). The emotions and suffering of the animals is of crucial importance in the ethical codes of the respondents not following a conservative ecocentric perspective similar to for example Leopold’s (1949) land ethics. In the meantime, the system is regarded as of highest value according to the respondents. This shows the lacking in explanatory potential in either of the ART perspectives on its own.

It has emerged from the results that the respondents are ambivalent toward that society decided the value of animals. And as it appear from some of the respondent’s perspective that the wolf is valued higher by society than other animals and that this is expressed in management practices, resources, discourse and policy. As a potential critique toward Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011), if a political framework were to decide animal’s value and rights citizens might feel omitted, that their perspectives were not taken into account, even more than it seems today. Especially worth consideration since the majority of the respondents perceive themselves as managers and caretakers of nature themselves. Knowing the best approach toward wild animals with their local perspective and through embodied experience being “*more ecologists than the ecologists*” (von Essen, 2015).

Duties toward animal categories: wild, domestic, liminal and pest

A separation between “the wild” and “society” emerged among the majority of the respondents, moving away from the idea of themselves as part of nature, expressing accounts for “their territory” (animals) and “our territory” (humans). The majority find it troubling when animals leave their assigned place. First, it involves a direct material threat to livelihood and property. Second, liminality is generally troubling due to uncertainty and unpredictability. The shift destabilizes existing, possibly ancient perceptions and constructions that have long since provided premises for co-existence and interaction between our species. In research by for example Figari et al (2011) the wolf is perceived as a fundamentally wild animal, therefore it is threatening when the wild which is out of our control comes to close. The idea of humans being, or not being, in control seem to be essential. In addition to the aforementioned emotional bounds and dependency in relation to the dog, perhaps this could be part of why dogs and wolves, being physically and behaviorally alike, can evoke such different feelings. The dog is within our control, the wolf often is not. To add, in a similar sense a domesticated dog out of our control is very frightening. Humans exert power over animals in that we control, or try to control where they reside, how they act, indeed, we sometimes even control animal bodies. One can ask if stewardship involves “*keeping the wild, wild*” these situations signify a failure in the stewardship. If a wild animal, a sovereign, moves too close to other sovereign it crosses its’ assigned place and “desirable behavior”. This transition may be perceived to legitimize sanctions and “stretching ethics” to restore balance in the human system since the animal in a sense “breaks the contract” for co-existence. The boundaries and the animal’s assigned place in “the wild” and the status of the animal as wild is to a large extend taken for granted by the informants. However, to repeat the claim in *Contextualization and Critique*: are any animal really sovereign or have we managed nature to the point that most animals are de facto dependent on us for their survival, though in indirect ways. The idea of the wolf having an ascribed territory is held strongly by the respondents. The idea goes more with the sovereignty idea of having a territory and stay there,

rather than being included in a community, not infringe on other sovereigns ie. humans. The wolf is by many perceived as being that disturbs the peace in the community, a being that does not play by the (human) rules: transgress boundaries, does not act “natural” or “desirable”. Again, consolidating the critique that it can be difficult to categorize animals into the categories suggested by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011). It ought to be highlighted that this idea of ascribed territory and breakage of contracts presupposes that animals can consent to such agreements and enter into contracts. It seems unfair to bind them to these obligations they cannot fulfill, and sanction them thereafter (Scruton, 2000).

Some of the respondents stated that humans have more obligations toward endangered species, tiger reappeared as an example. This was not a discussion that emerged in relation to the wolf, although being listed as vulnerable. With the majority, the discussions was overshadowed by the damage the wolf causes, something most respondent showed awareness of. Hence, the ethical code is not consistent even though given a similar scale of vulnerability caused by humans, similar sentience or subject-of-a life and also a similar function as apex predator in an ecosystem as the tiger. Here, distance to the problem seem to play a role. In a similar sense as distance to the wolf in urban areas can obscure the negative consequences for humans.

Attributions

The attributions ascribed to animals through language seem to play a role in the justification of certain behavior toward different animals. Aesthetic features of animals, being it is not described with a negative disposition, seem to have an effect on acceptance of them linger closer. Though if posing a threat to human or livestock it was legitimate to remove it.

The findings in this research seem to support *phylogenetic resembles*, ie. animals that we see ourselves in are easier to understand and this affect our ethical code toward them (Mooallem, 2013), for example “*the hoof-animals peaceful contented mentality*” and regarding dogs as “*family member*”, regarding the animals as subjects, a “*thou*”, rather than an object, an “*it*”. As said by an informant “*fish impossible*” to receive a “*gaze*”, from in lines with Derrida (2009) and the gaze from the cat evoking a sense of being a *subject* to him. When we see an animal as a subject our construction of their moral status seem to change. We seem to understand their motives, or lack of motives ie. many of the informants expressed that “*the wolf does not mean to do this*”, “*it is their instincts*” and that they do not have human thoughts and emotions. Animals that we recognize the suffering of also seem to have an effect on our ethical code, for example the sheep, and sanctions are legitimated toward the one causing the harm. Many informants also reflect regarding that we project characteristics and also interpret animals’ actions through the lens of human behavior, *anthropomorphizing* (Mooallem, 2013). Applied to predators and the wolf we do seem to see some aspects of our humanity in these animals as well, but in this case it seem to be mostly the negative sides; “*predator-mentality*”, “*insidious*” as mentioned by the respondents.

In lines with de Pinho et al. (2014), beautiful animals seem to evoke an ambivalence to kill them. The wolf is placed in a grey-scale of sort. Constructed as both fascinating, beautiful but also blood-thirsty, an attribution one could categorize as ugly. It cannot be ignored that wolves can be a real threat to human lives and that this effect our construction of the wolf. Though, this blood-thirst was repeated as a reason for a different moral status of the wolf in contrast to other predators with equal sentience and ecological position. Aesthetics in both method of killing and in appearance, ie. socially constructed attributions, seem to matter to these animals’ worth, and as a result how we act toward them. Hence, showing social

constructivism fruitfulness in saying something about the mechanisms behind our discriminating ethical codes toward different animals.

Final discussion

In this section findings from the *Results* that can provide new angles of approach in ART and social constructivism will be discussed. The status of the wolf will be discussed using Donaldson and Kymlickas' (2011) political framework, focusing mainly on the wolf's status as sovereign or denzien as well as the emerging idea of the wolf having "*hemortsrätt*". In this section the function of language as a reality creating tool as well as conveyer of constructions in relation to hunting-team jargon will be discussed.

To bring the discussion regarding transgression of boundaries further, when moving closer to human settlements it could be argued that the wolf can be perceived as a *denzien*. Based on Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) a wildlife policy determined by their citizenship-theory would give denziens *secure residency*, which entitles liminal animals with right to reside in human communities increase if their possibility to reside elsewhere diminishes. Taking the off-limits north and the expansive agricultural landscape the diminishing space can be applied to the scenario with the wolf. The practice of license and protective hunting ought to be fiercely questionable if given the status of denzien. *Fair terms* of reciprocity entitles taking their interest into account, but the state have right to intervene in the area in which the denzien reside and for example put up fences. This goes in lines with the current management of the wolf given today's political actions with both protective and regulatory measures toward the wolf (the quality of these policies remain questioned by both "pro" and "anti"-wolf as well as the respondents in this study) and for example the fences put up by the CAB (the quality of these is also a subject of critique). Denziens should also have *anti-stigma safeguards* which entail changing people's perceptions of liminal animals from alien pests to denziens and not made vulnerable by it alternate state. Taking the human denzien equivalent into account there are profound issues with stigma attached to for example EU-migrants begging for money in Sweden. Also, there remains ambiguity regarding rights to healthcare and education, taking expression in practice with threats and violence and brutal intervention methods as well as at times a racist debate. The liminality is attached with unsafety both in regards to humans and animal, something that need forceful political action to safe-keep their moral rights.

If regarding the wolf as a sovereign it would entail "*respecting their rights to live where they live, and how they choose, without exploitative or paternalistic interference from outsiders*" (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, in Henderson, 2009:57), as long as this do not infringe on the rights of other nations. Interaction, assistance and intervention may occur as long as it does not inflict on their rights as sovereign (ibid). In lines with Horta (2013) one could discuss what a legitimate reason for intervention toward sovereigns is. Could protective hunting as result of a wolf killing livestock in other sovereigns' communities be? Does this also apply to license hunting or is this not a legitimate reason giving that this might entail shooting wolves that has not killed livestock? License hunting may be problematized with this perspective. We attack human sovereigns as a precautionary principle. But this remain complex and questionable. Illegal shootings of wolf will remain unacceptable. When we give aid to sovereign nations in times of need. i.e. emergency relief in response to natural disasters, are we really violating their 'sovereignty'? Regarding for example moving wolfs' with helicopters, are we aiding or infringing on their sovereignty? Are we assisting or are we moving them with base in human interests and exertion of hegemonic power primarily? It should be noted that we do not have clear rules of conduct when it comes to the human

equivalent to denziens and sovereigns, and it could be questioned if the status of denzien would benefit the moral status and rights of the wolf.

Negotiating right of domicile

The word *hemortsrätt* used by some of the hunters could be considered as a type of citizenship in lines with Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011). Using the term “right” in lines with Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) rather than the duties perspective. One could reflect that the word duty seem to imply superiority and caretaking duties while rights give a more equal framing. The word stems from older Swedish legislation and expresses the relationship between municipality and citizen and the responsibility on part of the municipality to fund poor relief for people who had *hemortsrätt* in the municipality. The word connects to the word *naturligt hemmahörande* (in english natural domicile). In terms of the wolf this could be connected to that we owe welfare because we are partly responsible for their existence in their current vulnerable state in a similar vein as the municipality ow assistance to a deprived citizen.

The idea of *hemortsrätt* incorporated with Donaldson and Kymlicka’s (2011) framework could be used to question: the social construction of citizenship and not the least the citizen as someone human, the assigned places we have constructed and view as naturally given for animals, the wolves, and other wild animals, rights in the political and spatial context,. It could also challenge the practice of environmental management; if animals can be considered citizens what implications would that have on practice? Will this imply that humans and animals become (more) equal to humans if using political parallels? One can question on what criteria an animal is assigned for example “hemortsrätt”, ie. received the right to remain within a nations boarders and have right to assistance. One can also question if the assigned right to remain within a nations boarders should exclude individuals from assistance and rights in that territory, taking the denzien debate into account. This could indeed be an interesting idea for further research.

Language as conveyer of ethical codes

Through social interaction and language knowledge is constructed, language is crucial for sharing meaning among people and creating shared knowledge and therefore central within social constructivism.

Regarding the negative jargon expressed among hunters one can argue that this language concerning animals shapes the construction of it and contributes to the down-grading of its value in that context. Hunting as a social institution becomes a powerful conveyer of jargon that has the power to cast attributions to animals. The jargon becomes normalized and reproduces the perception of the animal at least locally, hence affecting discourse. As mentioned in the section *Contextualization and critique*, the hunting association mentions language as part of a good hunting ethics, ie. it can be interpreted that by mentioning this it has been problematic in the hunting community. Some of the respondents believed that this language was an expression of a hatred directed toward the wolf and indeed affected hunting practice, while others regarded it as bad manners and an expression of emotion in the heat of the moment, not something that could be connected to the quality of the hunting in itself. As mentioned in the results the respondents claimed that they themselves, it could be a way of stating that the jargon exist without admitting responsibility for the jargon themselves. Therefore, they take a step out of the language culture that seem to exist among hunters and speak up and criticize the behavior in the context where it happens and are part of reshaping

the norms. In this context, but somewhat outside the focus of this thesis, to further understand the extent of the wolf conflict some of the respondents described the jargon when it comes to the wolf as a manifestation of the culture within hunting teams and the urge to belong to a social group. To acquire access to hunting grounds entails fitting into the general norms of the group. In a few cases respondents described the hunting team as the “glue” and the uniting force when the rural areas are depopulated and other meeting places has vanished (Mischi, 2013, Krange & Skogen, 2011). If excluded from the hunting team it can lead to social exclusion.

To add, none of the respondents had themselves experienced a wolf-attack (though by lynx). The knowledge that wolves exists nearby, the present possibility of an attack, is still very present in their everyday lives and affect their praxis. The stories about the wolfs (“unnatural” or “undesirable”) behavior, anecdotes about bloody and brutal attacks is spread through interactions with other people which in turn shapes a shared construction, knowledge and truth about the animal. This phenomenon is indeed at core of social constructivism. As Luchtrath (2015) states: *“this suggests that social factors in conflicts about large carnivores operate somewhat independently from the animals”* (Luchtrath, 2015:117).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has aimed at bringing in an ethical dimension in the search for an answer to humans differential approaches and praxis toward animals and the moral status of the Swedish wolf. The study begun in a literature review of perspectives within ART and stated that the perspectives are not satisfactory to explain humans’ differential, and sometimes contradictory, ethical codes toward animal seemingly fulfilling equal standard for moral consideration. When it comes to the case study the questions was asked: *are the ethical philosophies within ART helpful to explain the ethical codes of the respondents in this research? Or do ART lack in explanatory power in this case as well? Moreover, what can help explain inconsistencies and blurring of boundaries between these categories?* The research has been conducted by not merely adopting a fixed ethical philosophy through which findings are framed, but by inductively determine ethics of respondents through in-depth interviews.

The study has implications to ART by illustrating that a fixed ethical perspective does not explain our differential, and inconsistent, ethical approaches toward animals. The study finds that none of the perspectives within ART isolated can explain the ethical codes of the respondents. Social constructivism can provide a framework that can open up to accommodate “inconsistencies” in our ethical codes by not being as inflexible as existing schools of thought within ART. The framework can illustrated that our ethical codes toward animals are based in our constructions of the animals, through language as a powerful conveyer of ideas, which in turn affect praxis. Humans value and treat animals differently depending on contextual, cultural, historical and physical factors. In regards to a social constructivist perspective on ethics and as a potential critique toward the constructivist approach: if all is constructed, if all is an interpretation, then all can be questioned. Can we then say that anything is right or wrong? But then again that is the point. The construction of reality is a process, our constructions change and so will our constructions of animals and hence the praxis we find ethical or unethical. Social constructivism as a theoretical tool can unravel the complex web of underlying constructions that determine our ethical codes toward animals, question the taken-for-grantedness of our praxis, and perhaps give some clue to explaining what we consider as unethical behavior and why we threat animals differently. Perhaps by doing so it can contribute to a change process and steps toward a more egalitarian co-existence between humans and non-human animals.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following is a template, the questions were customized depending on context. The questions have been kept in Swedish to maintain the meaning of the questions and words the respondents received intact due to eventual changes in meaning when translated.

Introduktion

Jag och mitt projekt. Syfte. Jag är intresserad av dina tankar och din bild så det finns inga rätt eller fel svar.
Anonymt, spela in?

Bakgrund

Om personen.
Berätta om området där du bor
Hur länge bostad här?
Vilka vilda djur finns här/där?
Möter du vilda djur i din vardag? Hur?
Vad har naturen för värde för dig?

Berätta om dig själv och bakgrund med fokus på ditt intresse för jakt.
Berätta om området där du jagar.
Vilka vilda djur finns här/där?
Vad har naturen (det vilda) för värde för dig?

Vilt, vilda djur

Vad har vilda djur för värde för dig? / Vad är skillnaden mellan vilda och inte vilda djur?
Tror du att det spelar någon roll för ens uppfattning om vilda djur beroende på om en bor nära eller längre bort från det? Hur?
Varför?

Djurens värde, etik

Är alla djur lika mycket värda? (Vilka mer/mindre?) Finns det vissa vilda djur du känner har mer värde än andra? Varför?
Vad är det som bestämmer ett djurs värde?
Har vi större ansvar för vissa djurs välbefinnande än andra? / Har vissa djur mer rättigheter än andra djur?

Vad är god jaktetik?
Finns det någon skillnad i det etiska beteendet mot olika vilda djur inom jakt? Kan du komma på några djur som exempel?
Varför?
Vad är hållbar jakt för dig?
Finns det vissa typer av vilt som är populärt att jaga just nu? Vad beror detta på?

Jämförelser i etiskt förhållningssätt och bild av djur

Finns det skillnad i värde mellan:

- Mellan djur som finns i Sverige naturligt och djur som vandrat in? (planterats in)
- Svenska och utländska djur samma värde?
- Utrotningshotade och icke-utrotningshotade djur samma värde?

Påverkar djurets utseende dess värde?
Påverkar djurets utseende hur vi förhåller oss till djuret?

Vad betyder ordet skadedjur för dig? Vilka djur?
Var går gränsen för mellan skadedjur och vilda djur?

Tycker du att människans intressen bör gå före vilda djurs? Hur ser det ut i verkligheten?
Har vi rätt att kontrollera vilda djur, exempelvis antal? Varför?
Ska man döda ett djur om det lider för att göra slut på dess lidande? Döda ett djur om det gynnar människan? Döda ett djur om det gynnar arten/ekosystemet?

Fåragande/ människans beteende mot djur

Påverkas vilda djurs värde av att de har en negativ påverkan på människors liv? Behandlar vi djur som har negativ påverkan på människor annorlunda? Bör vi behandla dessa djur annorlunda?

Diskuterar du vilda djur med människor i din omgivning.
Upplever du att det skett en förändring i samtalet om vilt i din omgivning på något sätt? Över tid? Varför tror du?
Diskuterar ni varg med varandra? Håller ni med varandra?

Har du påverkats negativt av rovdjur?

- Diskuterar du rovdjursangrepp med andra?
- Varg vs havsörn vs räv? Jo?

Förvaltning

Tror du att hur vi värderar djuret påverkar hur det jagas/förvaltas? Bör det vara så?

Har vi samma ansvar i förvaltningen av alla djur, exempelvis vad gäller att se till att de inte svälter, inavel osv?

Kommunikation och konstruktion

Upplever du att det skett en förändring i samtalet om vilda djur i din omgivning? Över tid? Vilka djur? Varför tror du?

Upplever du att samtalet förändrats nu när det finns varg här? Hur? Hur beskrivs vargen?

Upplever du att det är någon skillnad i samtalet om exempelvis varg "öppet" och "privat"? (Exempelvis i möten med föreningen, jaktlaget, "i mataffären") Vilka skillnader finns? Varför?

Har du mött varg eller påverkats direkt på annat vis någon gång? Hur skulle du själv beskriva din bild av vargen hur du upplever, känner för den? Varifrån tror du din bild kommer?

Har den förändrats nu när det finns varg nära dig? Skulle något kunna förändra/påverka din relation till vargen? Skiljer sig ditt förhållande till vargen sig från andra vilda djur/rovdjur?

Har du förändrat ditt beteende/djurhållning nu när det finns varg?

Om du skulle få få dödade/skadade av varg hur skulle du reagera? Vad skulle du vilja skulle hända?

Påverkas vargens värde av att den kan ha en negativ påverkan på människors liv? Bör vi behandla vargen annorlunda?

Örebro/Värmland: Har samtalet om varg förändrats på något sätt över tid? Hur?

Hur tänker du kring de frågor om värde och etik vi diskuterat angående varg? Gäller samma etiska förhållningssätt mot varg som mot andra djur? Följs detta?

När jag säger: varghatare och vargkramare vad tänker du då på? Stämmer detta? Hur ser det ut då? Har de något gemensamt?

Finns det något du vill tillägga eller prata om som inte har tagits upp? Något du vill utveckla?