

Ideas for implementing *Zoopolis*

How political experience in the field of renewable energy can be used for the animal rights movement

1 Introduction

The book *Zoopolis* by the Canadian authors Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka was published in November 2011¹. It presents a series of ground-breaking ideas for the political integration of animals and humans. It describes how the theoretical concept of citizenship can also be applied to animals.

This article explains how the experiences from the field of renewable energies can be used for the implementation of the ideas laid out in *Zoopolis*. The background of this approach is that there are a number of similarities between the animal and the energy sector like traditions, strong lobbies or the impact on the climate. Nevertheless, there are also some differences to be considered, for instance that the energy sector would "only" need a transformation, while the commercial use of animals would ultimately have to be abolished. Finally, six policy recommendations which have originally been developed for the renewable energy will be given to support the implementation of political rights for animals.

2 *Zoopolis* – short description

Zoopolis is based on the classic animal rights theory that animals with consciousness must be granted inviolable rights. These universal fundamental rights include protection from killing, enslavement, torture or imprisonment. *Zoopolis* goes far beyond those rights and uses the political theory of group-differentiated citizenship to claim that animals are also entitled to political rights.

To do so, it is necessary to assign animals to different groups depending on their relationship with humans, the same as also humans are divided into groups with different rights – citizens of a country have different rights and responsibilities than immigrants, tourists, asylum seekers or short-term workers from abroad. *Zoopolis* divides animals into three categories: domestic animals, wild animals and so-called liminal animals.

Domesticated animals (dogs, cats, cows, pigs, etc.) should, since they depend on humans, be treated as citizens. This does not mean that these animals have to be able to exert all civic rights and obligations, just as not all human beings are able to do so: for example, children and people with certain disabilities can not vote by themselves, but they are still full members of the society whose concerns and interests must be respected and represented.

On the other side, there are "real" wild animals (wolves, lions, etc.) that in principle avoid humans and therefore should be viewed as members of autonomous societies with their own sovereign rights within their territories. This is similar to the sovereignty of the people of other states or of certain people within national boundaries (e.g. native tribes in North America).

In between, there is a third category, the liminal animals (like sparrows, foxes, rats, squirrels, wild boars, etc.) who are wild but have arranged themselves with humans to a varying extent. These animals can be classified as denizens, i.e. residents of our societies, like certain refugees or seasonal workers.

The book explains the manifold relationships between humans and animals by mirroring them with the complex relations and political rights that exist among humans.²

¹ Sue Donaldson / Will Kymlicka: *Zoopolis. A Political Theory of Animal Rights*, Oxford University Press, 2011 (German version: *Zoopolis. Eine politische Theorie der Tierrechte*, Suhrkamp, Berlin 2013)

² See links the annex for *Zoopolis* reviews, comments, articles and videos.

3 Approach

The introduction of political rights for animals requires a paradigm shift, the same way as the abolition of slavery or the achievement of political equality for women represented paradigm shifts in the course of human history.

This article will examine, which conclusions can be obtained for the animal rights movement from the paradigm shift which is required to transform conventional energy system to a renewable one (using solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and hydro energy). The analysis of the similarities and differences between the animal and the energy sector can potentially lead to new insights for both sectors.

When in the following the word animal sector is used, it essentially refers to the meat and dairy industry and thus the domesticated animals. However, it is the goal to apply as far as possible the experience gained in the field of energy to the introduction of political rights to all sentient animals, i.e. also to liminal and wild animals (e.g. fish, deer, etc.).

4 Similarities between animal and energy sector

4.1 Cultural anchoring, impact on daily life and lobbies

The animal sector is culturally deeply rooted: meat, milk, eggs, fish, leather, etc. are consumed and utilized for centuries. To leave these habits and traditions behind, drastic changes would be required. Whole areas that serve the animal industry could be transformed; shops, restaurants and even certain cities or regions specialized in meat, cheese and fish dishes would need to adjust; the clothing industry would no longer use animal based materials.

The meat and dairy industry has a strong interest not to change or tighten existing laws. Among the supporters of the status quo are also the above mentioned cities and regions that are economically dependent on animal products.

Similarly, the use of fossil fuels has fundamentally influenced the lives of people, especially since the industrial revolution. After a transition towards a full supply from renewable energy sources certain habits (like heating, flying, driving) and sectors such as architecture, urban and landscape planning will have to change fundamentally, even if electricity will probably continue to come out of a socket.

In the energy sector there are the lobbies of the large power utilities, energy-intensive industries and the oil industry. These industries have a lot of money, a lot of employees, strong political influence and are highly intertwined with the lives of all citizens.

4.2 Environmental impacts and need for change

Both the animal sector and the energy sector have extreme effects on the environment and on the climate. Both sectors must therefore fundamentally rethink their activities.

A growing world population cannot be sustainably fed with meat. But apart from the effects on humans, the animal sector disregards the fundamental rights of domesticated animals and restricts the habitat of wild animals, and thus its sovereignty rights on a massive scale.

The animal sector generates large emissions of carbon dioxide, ammonia, methane and nitrous oxide caused by the exhalations and excrement of the animals themselves as well as in agriculture sector for fodder production and the associated energy consumption. Of course, animals would still cause emissions in a *Zoopolis* world, but significantly less because there would be a lot less animals - it is estimated that farm animals make up about two-thirds of the biomass of land vertebrates, while humans constitute about one third and wild animals only 3%.³

The energy industry has to change its model because it can only be based on fossil resources a few more decades, especially when the number of humans and their energy requirements continue to

³ WSPA: *Eating our future – The environmental impact of industrial animal agriculture*, London 2008

rise. The energy sector is responsible for the bulk of carbon dioxide emissions as well as a number of other harmful emissions.

4.3 Receptiveness of parts of the population, but little willingness to change behaviour; alternative offers

Most people generally condemn cruelty towards animals. However, most of people also turn a blind eye to the suffering of millions of farm animals. Many people (although it is unclear whether it is the majority or a minority) have a bad conscience at least now and then, or they are aware of the contradiction between meat consumption and animal welfare.

Meanwhile, there is an increasing number of vegetarian and vegan companies, shops or restaurants which offer appropriate alternatives for animal based products to consumers. In many countries, at least in the larger cities, it is largely possible to conduct a vegan lifestyle.

Similarly, probably most people have understood that the use of fossil energy has negative side effects such as environmental pollution or climate change. Nevertheless, the willingness to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels is still rather low. For instance, notwithstanding the millions of solar systems installed in Germany, the majority of its population has still not changed the electricity supplier; for many it is difficult to renounce the use of cars or airplanes. Lack of information on the impact of energy use plays a role to explain that behaviour, but in particular the lack of (financial and social) incentives or obligations to change consumption patterns.

Renewable energy technologies valuable alternatives as several of them have become mature and are already competitive with conventional energy technologies in a growing number of regions. It is remarkable that the manufacturers, project developers and power producers that apply renewables and drive the change are still relatively young companies that in many cases do not originate from the conventional energy industry. Even individual homeowners can now become power producers (prosumers), and thus represent a challenge to the established companies.

4.4 Importance of political visions on implementation by the individual

For renewable energy, numerous studies have been published that describe 100 % renewable energy economies.⁴ Although this visionary idea was dismissed as largely unrealistic just a few years ago, many regions in the world already pursue this goal (in Germany alone there are over a hundred cities, municipalities and counties). An interesting point is that due to the introduction of the 100 % goal (underpinned by reasonable explanation, facts and figures on how to achieve it), the tedious debate about a gradual increase of the target figure (50 %?, 75%?, 92%) could be circumvented.

This radical approach to define the ideal conditions (and possibly also most realistic ones in the long term) at the very beginning is also a big opportunity for *Zoopolis*. The negotiations about cage sizes could be potentially skipped because the true objective of a just world, which involves both humans and animals, is already visible early on in the debate. However, so far in the animal sector there are hardly any discussions about scenarios that show necessary reduction of the meat or dairy consumption (i.e. there is nothing comparable to the 350 or 450ppm scenarios in the energy sector which show how to keep climate change within the 2° temperature increase).

But regardless of political visions and concrete goals, actions in both sectors can be undertaken by individual persons, for example by not eating meat or by switching to a green electricity provider. Furthermore, municipalities and regions can be active, for instance by adopting laws that prohibit the installation of factory farms or non-approval of coal-fired power plants. Therefore a "bottom-up" change can take place in both sectors. Nevertheless, "top-down" measures and international agreements are needed to accelerate the transition and to prevent that certain industries simply relocate.

⁴ A list of 100% studies can be found under <http://www.go100percent.org/cms/index.php?id=94>

5 Differences between animal and energy sector

5.1 Transformation vs. abolition

A key difference between animal and energy sector is that a humans need energy to conduct a decent life (a modern society without power and mobility is hard to imagine, and also less developed societies need at least basic access to energy), while they can refrain from animal products (except for certain regions of the world where people without livestock and meat or fish consumption are currently not able to survive). This means that the energy industry must be transformed from a fossil/nuclear based industry to a renewable one, but it would not mean its complete abolition; in contrast, the animal industry would be abolished completely if animal rights were consistently implemented in accordance with *Zoopolis*.

However, the animal industry could disappear without serious consequences for the majority of the population. Of course, it would affect the people who work in the animal industry and are economically dependent on it. For these people – similar to those who are active in the conventional energy sector – appropriate measures must be put in place to allow them entering into other jobs.

Animal's products would largely be replaced by vegetable ones. The cultivation of plants for food and other products already takes place today; the need for arable land may even decrease because today much of the arable land is used for animal feed production. Some products, such as leather shoes, may be substituted by petrochemical products for a certain time until more sustainable alternatives have been developed.

5.2 Financial costs of implementation

In the energy industry high investments in renewable technologies are required to replace conventional technologies. Only new power plant capacity, smarter grids, storage solutions, energy-efficient appliances and buildings, etc. make an energy transition possible (but even without an energy transition replacement investments would have to take place).

In contrast, it should be noted that for the abolition of the animal sector no or relatively small new investments are required. Certain assets such as cattle fattening farms, slaughterhouses and fishing boats would have to be written off or where possible converted to other uses (this would also apply to biogas plants whose operation is based on liquid manure). But the bulk would be social transition costs: Tax revenues would decrease and in the workers within the animal industry may have to get financial support during a certain transition period. Comprehensive studies are required to assess the social impact on people dependent of the animal industry.

5.3 Economic incentives and opportunities to influence

Since the energy industry will continue to exist even after a transformation to a renewable industry, there are also opportunities to engage economically in this sector. In this respect, there are companies and other stakeholders who see new business opportunities and thus drive change.

The introduction of political rights for animals, however, will allow no (or very limited) business opportunities. This means that there will be a lack of an important stimulus: money. A just world for animals is only based on ethical motivation; moreover, it is even supported only by humans, not by the animals themselves. In comparison, slaves were able to express their interest in the abolition of slavery themselves, or women could actively support the women's rights movement. Animals, however, are entirely dependent on the will of humans. In this respect, the engagement for animal rights is more comparable with the engagement for children's rights, where there is only an ethical, not a financial motivation and where children themselves have only limited possibilities to verbalise their needs and exert political influence.

6 Six political program points to the abolition of animal industry

How can the process to abolish the animal industry take place? In many respects, the animal rights movement can learn from the renewable energy movement as the debate in the field of renewable energy and their deployment is already further advanced. As said above, it must be considered that the animal industry is expected to abolish itself, which means that the driving actors will not come from the animal sector.

In 2012, the Implementing Agreement of the International Energy Agency on Renewable Energy Technology Deployment (IEA-RETD) published six policy recommendations for large-scale uptake of renewable energy which are summarized in the so-called ACTION Star: **Alliance building, Communicating, Target setting, Integrating, Optimizing, Neutralizing**.⁵

- **Alliance building:** Build alliances and reach agreements among policy makers and with relevant stakeholders including industry members, consumers, investors, and others.
- **Communicating:** Communicate knowledge about renewable energy resources, technologies and issues to create awareness on all levels, address concerns of stakeholders, and build up the needed work force.⁴
- **Target setting:** Clarify the goals, set ambitious targets on all levels of government, and enact policies to achieve goals.
- **Integrating:** Integrate renewables into policymaking and take advantage of synergies with energy efficiency.
- **Optimizing:** Optimize policy frameworks by building on own policies or other proven policy mechanisms and adapting them to specific circumstances.
- **Neutralizing:** Neutralize disadvantages in the marketplace, such as misconceptions of costs and the lack of a level playing field.



These recommendations can generally be transferred to the animal sector. This is to be regarded as a first approach for a wider discussion that by no means claims to be exhaustive or universally valid.

6.1 Alliance Building

Animal rights groups, vegetarians, vegans, informed consumers, progressive politicians, journalists, vegan producers and shops, environmentalists, philosophers, constitutional and other lawyers, etc. should begin to discuss the political and social consequences of the *Zoopolis* approach. From these discussions, groups could be formed which examine certain aspects in more detail, develop initial draft laws or launch pilot projects in certain regions. The exchange of experience between the different actors at local, national and international levels is important to inspire each other and to avoid repeating certain mistakes.

6.2 Communicating

The communication of the theses of *Zoopolis* to the general public should be carried out carefully in order to avoid strong, negative reactions. It is important to base the communication on sound, rational arguments, which should be rehearsed and detailed out among the above mentioned stakeholder groups. In focus should be information and education about the animal sector and the opportunities that political animal rights can offer.

⁵ IEA-RETD: *Renewable Energy Action on Deployment: READY, Policies for accelerated deployment of renewable energy*, Elsevier 2013. (Summary under: http://iea-rettd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/IEA-RETD_SixPolicyActions.pdf)

6.3 Target setting

Although it is probably too early to set concrete dates for specific targets, it is nevertheless important to define targets. Some goals, such as the abolition of factory farming, are already in the political debate. A kind of vision for a period of about 50 years would be helpful to turn people towards a common goal. Also the definition of intermediate targets is essential: For instance it is conceivable to expand animal rights gradually to different animal groups, e.g. citizenship for dogs and cats rights would most likely be easier accepted than for other domesticated animals like pigs and cows; similarly, sovereign rights for bears may be enforced comparatively easier than denizen rights for rats.

6.4 Integrating

Animal rights should be embedded within the processes of policy making and regulation. It is important to benefit from synergies with other areas, such as human rights (in particular with regard to the most vulnerable members of society like refugees, immigrants, people with disabilities, and children; these groups – like animals – tend to be suppressed or exploited and need the help and solidarity of the society), urban development (green areas, traffic and noise reduction are beneficial animals, but also for humans), regional and spatial planning (areas for wild animals), and others.

6.5 Optimizing

Where countries already have good policy approaches for animal rights in place, but also for other relevant areas such as laws for immigrants or disabled, they should be included, copied, further developed and adapted to the specific circumstances. Environmental impact assessments, for example, are often very progressive when it comes to the protection of wildlife species.

6.6 Neutralizing

Many people are either not aware or they try not to think about the violence and suffering humans inflict on animals, or about the enormous external costs and subsidies of the animal industry. As long as it is possible to buy animal products, those must reflect at least the external environmental costs, for instance through additional taxes and strict environmental requirements, in order to neutralize the cost advantages they often have compared to non-animal products.

7 Next Steps

In summary it can be said that especially the first point “alliance building” is crucial in the short term in order to trigger the public debate about the opportunities and impact of political rights for animals. To do so, the ideas of *Zoopolis* should be further communicated to the public, e.g. through discussions on the websites of animal rights and welfare initiatives, political parties, universities or newspapers. The legal, political and philosophical chairs of universities could develop further theoretical foundations. In addition, conferences and workshops can be organized which may already work out implementation concepts. It is encouraging that the first steps in this direction can already be seen.

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8 Annex – Links

8.1 Conference

Animal Politics

Hamburg, 12.-14.03.2014

<http://www.dvpw.de/gliederung/sektionen/politische-theorien-und-ideengeschichte/sektionstagungen.html>

Program

http://www.dvpw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/sek_vp/Politische_Theorie/Animal_Politics_Programm.pdf

8.2 *Zoopolis* Links

http://www.suhrkamp.de/buecher/Zoopolis-sue_donaldson_58600.html

<http://www.zeit.de/2012/28/Interview-Kymlicka>

<http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/Zoopolis-will-kymlicka-ueber-rechte-fuer-tiere-a-928603.html>

<http://www.3sat.de/mediathek/?mode=play&obj=38326>

<http://www.theorieblog.de/index.php/2012/08/das-tier-als-mitbuerger-kymlickas-Zoopolis/>

<http://www.theorieblog.de/index.php/2013/07/cfp-fruehjahrstagung-ueber-animal-politics/>

<http://www.ourhenhouse.org/2012/06/book-review-Zoopolis-a-political-theory-of-animal-rights-by-sue-donaldson-will-kymlicka/>

<http://kazez.blogspot.ca/2012/04/Zoopolis-3.html>

<http://socialjusticefirst.com/2012/07/05/animal-citizenship-animal-sovereignty-a-book-review/>

<http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/book-review-Zoopolis/>

<http://politicsinspires.org/2012/03/votes-for-animals-a-new-book-moves-animal-welfare-from-ethics-to-politics/>

<http://www.thephilosophersmagazine.com/TPM/article/viewFile/15360/12082>

<http://www.oupcanada.com/temp/DOC041312.pdf>

<http://www.utopia.de/gruppen/veganer-innen-167/diskussion/Zoopolis-ein-bahnbrechendes-buch-zur-politischen-theorie-207445>

<http://arsmu.blogspot.com.es/2013/11/Zoopolis-ch-4.html>

Presentation Will Kymlicka: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uv9HMzsl7iY>.