

Abolitionism versus Reformism

or which type of campaign will lead to animal rights eventually?

Animal welfare and animal rights

Animal welfare and animal rights are fundamentally different things. Animal welfare first appeared in modern history in writings in the mid 18th century. The first animal welfare group, the English RSPCA, was founded in 1824, the first one in Austria, the WTV, in 1846 in Vienna. The first Austrian animal law was introduced in the same year. Animal welfare is motivated by compassion and empathy. The aim is to reduce the suffering of animals to a “necessary” minimum. The first animal welfare groups worked mostly on helping animals in need, especially so-called pets, i.e. animals, who live in human households as companions. Killing of animals is no issue in animal welfare. As long as the killing is done painlessly, it is of no ethical concern. The paradigm that animals are there for humans to be used, is not questioned in principle. As long as this use is done “humanely”, there is nothing wrong with it. Animal welfare does not question the animal-human relationship in society as a whole. The primary aim is to alleviate suffering, hence social, and not to change society, i.e. political. Animal welfare asks humans to be good people, to be kind to animals, to show empathy and compassion.

Animal rights is a very different kind of ideology. Animal rights demand from all humans to show respect for the equal basic rights of non human animals. The value of animals is not determined by their usefulness for humans, by their utility. The individual animal changes from object to subject, from thing to person. The first ideas in this direction in modern society were provided by Lewis Gompertz in the early 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, Henry Salt had founded the first animal rights organisation, the Humanitarian League. The animal rights ideology does not want to minimize “necessary” suffering. Its goal is to achieve basic rights for all animals, to guarantee their autonomy, to determine their lives by themselves. Hence, killing of animals becomes a central issue. There is no act that restricts the autonomy of an animal more than to violently kill him or her. The animal rights ideology wants to change the animal-human relationship at the roots. The movement is primarily political. The demand is justice, the motivation is to fight injustice in this world.

From animal welfare to animal rights

From this analysis we might conclude that animal rights is so completely different from animal welfare that the path leading to the one must be very different from the start, to the path leading to the other. How should thinking in terms of animal welfare, without questioning the basic paradigm that nonhuman animals are there for human needs, ever lead to animal rights? Even worse, doesn't good animal welfare practice, with good animal husbandry and “humane” killing, stifle any further critical thoughts on the issue?

However, things are not as straight forward. The first hint in this direction might be that the first animal rights thinker, Lewis Gompertz, who even demanded veganism from humanity (without giving it that name), also co-founded the first animal welfare society of the world, the RSPCA. But even closer to home: wasn't your first motivation to think on those issues triggered by empathy and compassion, which you felt when you saw animals being abused? Isn't it that the power of those feelings motivated you to think deeper and eventually arrive at animal rights? Aren't still almost all animal rights activists today at least also still influenced by such feelings, help animals in need at sanctuaries and feel incapable of enjoying themselves in leisure activities, because the nagging thought of animals suffering at human hands stops them from switching off? Is it at all possible, psychologically, to sacrifice all your life to the animal rights cause without compassion and empathy driving you? Don't almost all people, who end up living vegan, start by either reducing meat, or switching to free range animal products, or at least by living vegetarian for a while, which is also based on the use of animals? Doesn't that mean that the fundamental philosophical difference between animal welfare and animal rights suggests a philosophical gap that isn't actually there in psychological reality?

A further observation hints in this direction. Today, Austrian animal laws have already left behind the pure animal welfare ideals introduced above. Let's look at a few examples of laws, which ban even the most “humane” use of nonhuman animals in certain areas:

- ▶ §6 (2) Animal law: Dogs and cats cannot be used to produce any animal product like fur or meat.
- ▶ §25 (5) Animal law: It is forbidden to keep any fur bearing animal for the purpose of producing fur.
- ▶ §27 (1) Animal law: It is forbidden to keep or use any animal, apart from domesticated animals, in whatever way in a circus, even if those animals are not used to earn money with.

- ▶ §3 (6) Animal experiment law: It is forbidden to use any ape, i.e. chimp, bonobo, gorilla, orang utan or gibbon, for any purpose in an experiment, if this experiment is not in the interest of the individual ape him- or herself.

Further, a few animal laws actually change the animal-human relationship in society and undermine the paradigm that animals are there for humans to use as they please:

- ▶ §285a Civil Law code: Animals are not things.
- ▶ Constitution: The state protects life and wellbeing of animals as cohabitants of humans
- ▶ §41 Animal law: In each province, animal solicitors funded by the province must be established, who can get involved in all court cases regarding animal law, i.e. they get access to all court papers, can call witnesses, submit expert statements and appeal against verdicts on behalf of the animals involved

And in Austria there are laws already established that explicitly ban the killing of animals, however painlessly and „humanely“ conducted:

- ▶ §6 (1) Animal law: It is forbidden to kill any animal for no good reason
- ▶ §222 (3) Criminal law: It is forbidden to kill vertebrate animals for no good reason
- ▶ Constitution: The state protects the life of animals as cohabitants of humans

Politically, we can indeed provide a continuous transition from laws that do not restrict animal usage at all, to complete animal rights based on an equal value of the lives of each individual:

No restriction of the use of animals

- indirect protection (a ban on abusing animals if that upsets humans)
 - minimal direct protection (a ban on beating animals „too much“)
 - relevant protection of economically irrelevant animals („pets“)
 - relevant restriction of economic use of animals (e.g. cage ban)
 - radical restriction of economic use of animals (only free range)
 - ban on killing
 - „weak rights“ according to Mary Midgeley
 - the only right: to have animal laws executed
 - basic rights for some animals (e.g. Great Ape Project)
 - basic rights for all animals
 - equal value of life and suffering for all animals (incl. humans)

Hence we learn that while there is a deep philosophical gulf between animal welfare and animal rights, psychologically and politically there is a continuum. That means on the one hand that it is at least possible, if not probable, that a person develops psychologically from animal use via animal welfare to animal rights. And secondly it proves that it is at least possible – even if we haven't provided data of its likelihood yet – that a society develops politically from animal usage via animal welfare to animal rights. The least we can say for sure at this stage is that such a development is not excluded in principle.

The easiest way to live: consumption of factory farmed animal products

Practical experience of decades of vegan outreach shows that it is pretty difficult to reach the average person with the animal rights message. The easiest way to get someone to start living vegan is to expose them to a vegan social environment. Animal rights groups often have the experience that new activists are not vegan, when they start to get active. But generally, even without providing rational arguments, those people being active within a vegan group will soon start to live vegan without outside priming. For social animals like humans, the social environment has a very strong influence on their behaviour. That, however, means on the other hand that in strictly speciesist societies like ours, almost everybody growing up and living there will become speciesist in the way they think and act. And it will be very hard indeed to change that, especially with nothing but rational arguments.

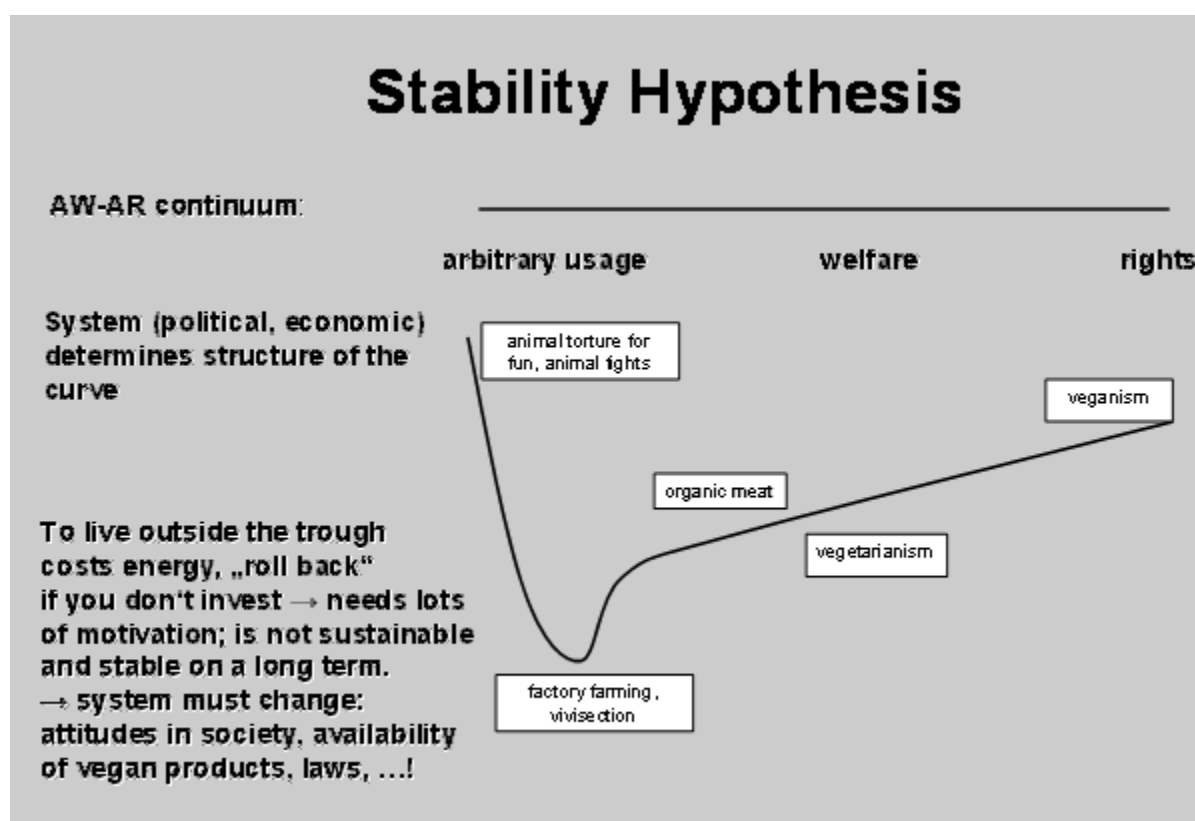
Imagine such speciesist people are suddenly influenced by a media report, or by passing by a vegan summerfest, or by a long chat at a vegan stall etc., and they become aware of the problem and are willing to turn vegan. What frequently happens then is that this effect does not last for long and sooner or later they start eating animal

products again, never mind how convinced they were of veganism at the start. Why is that?

In a society as strictly speciesist as ours, it takes a lot of energy to live vegan. There is the psychological pressure of not being considered “normal” anymore, of sticking out in society. Suddenly you run into conflict with your peer-group and your family. On the one hand, they will consider you complicated or even fundamentalist, when you suddenly watch carefully whatever you eat or buy, when you read every detail on the list of contents of a product. On the other hand they might feel criticized by your mere behaviour: after all, you refuse to eat the same as they do for ethical reasons.

But the problems do not end there. In your working place, in your leisure activities, during your daily shopping, in restaurants etc. all the time your choice to live vegan demands a lot of energy from you to justify what you do, to ask uncomfortable questions, to go on other people’s nerves, not to buy something you would have fancied and not to buy the cheapest and the easiest to get. Permanently you spend more time and energy than you would have to otherwise, and that must erode the original motivation of the most strong-willed person. And in addition, albeit you invest so much, you do not seem to get anything back! The amount of animals slaughtered does not decrease and society does not seem to change even a tiny bit. Slowly, your original motivation dies down until you adjust to the mainstream and go with the flow. Your veganism has ended and is waiting for better days. That will happen especially in times of crises, or when you have big changes in your life, e.g. when you change job, or have a new partner, start a family or move house. The extra stress, or the fact that suddenly some other important issues demand all your attention, might be the trigger away from veganism. You just do not have the motivation of putting so much time and energy into it anymore.

Those observations can be made clearer with the following picture:



The way society is organized, the system, changes the straight line continuum from unrestricted animal use via animal welfare to animal rights (above) to a structured surface (below). Single human beings can be considered as balls on this surface. Without any additional energy input, the balls swiftly roll into the trough. In our society that means consuming factory farmed animal products. Say, someone wants to enjoy watching illegal animal fights or the torture of animals, then s/he moves up the left branch. Since those activities are illegal and have a bad reputation, it takes a lot of energy to stay up there, this branch is very steep. You need to be highly motivated to

sustain staying there. If you lose interest, you will soon roll back into the trough.

On the other hand, if someone develops towards using organic free-range animal products only, or even vegetarianism or veganism, then s/he moves to the right. It also goes upwards in this direction, and if you want to stay there, or develop even further to the right, then you need an increasing amount of energy input. Those, who cannot sustain that energy loss, who lose the motivation to invest so much and constantly swim upstream, will simply roll back. If you go with the flow, you end up square in the trough and consume factory farmed animal products like everybody else. Its by far the easiest and least time consuming way to live.

Towards a vegan society through system change

If a singular event like one person turning vegan is to have a political effect on society at large, it would have to happen en masse. In Austria, every year 80.000 people die and equally about 80.000 people are born or migrate into the country. In order to change society at large this way, there would have to be a rate of people turning vegan well above and beyond this number per year. In reality, we are very far from that. The first ethical vegetarian restaurant opened in 1878 in Austria. Since then, and especially around 1900, there were many individuals and groups, who tried to turn people towards a plant-based diet. But, with all their efforts, they failed, up until today. 130 years of campaigning for humans becoming vegetarian or vegan did have no large impact on society. It seems that the social pressure in our speciesist society prevents enough people to turn vegan and stay vegan long enough to change society at large. After 130 years of trying it, no vegan revolution is in sight. And there are no signs that this will change anytime soon.

There is a study commissioned in 2004 with the IFES institute in Austria that supports this observation. When people were asked whether they agreed with a ban on caging laying hens for egg production, 86% said that they want a ban on this practice. But at the same time, 80% of eggs being bought in Austria were from exactly such battery farms. Clearly, while most people were already persuaded that caging hens is animal abuse and unethical, they kept buying exactly those products they apparently disapproved of. And this is not because they were not aware of that. They were, for example when asked in supermarkets. After all, eggs from cage systems are nowadays clearly marked as such, on the egg as well as on the packaging. The explanation simply is that eggs from cage systems were available everywhere, they were the cheapest, they were in all products like noodles and cakes, and they were served in restaurants and hotels. To avoid eggs from cage systems would have taken a lot of energy, and people were just not prepared to invest that. Especially since many of those who did, saw absolutely no change in society and soon gave up for that reason alone. If you choose the easiest way of life and go with the flow, you had to consume battery eggs, never mind your opinion whether it is unethical or should be banned.

But the animal rights movement can also use this attitude of most people, to rather go with the flow and live the way of life of least resistance, to its benefit. We have already observed that the easiest way to turn people vegan is to expose them to a vegan social environment. Religious sects use that characteristic of social animals by forming close-knit groups, cut off from the outside world, where the sect can sustain a way of life the rest of society considers utterly weird. Were the members of the sect still imbedded in "normal" society, they would not be able to sustain their way of life. The animal rights movement, however, is not satisfied with establishing some small vegan communities within larger society. The movement wants to change society as a whole. How to achieve that then?

Let's look at the data. In 1996, the Austrian animal rights movement decided to start a campaign against wild animal circuses. At that time, the majority of people probably didn't care either way, but of the remaining minority, a majority surely supported wild animal circuses and saw no reason why to find this tradition unethical. Media, similarly, reported favourably on those circuses. But in 2005, a ban of wild animal circuses was introduced. In consequence, there were neither wild animal circuses left in Austria, nor were any coming into Austria to perform. Since that year, nobody in Austria can visit wild animal circus shows anymore.

But nobody misses them nowadays either! The campaign had a 100% success rate changing the behaviour of Austrians. But during the campaign, nobody tried to change the minds of individual people. That never was the strategy. Instead, the campaign just removed such circuses from Austria. While having not changed the minds of people, this changed their behaviour. Instead of going to the circus, people started spending their time with their kids in another way. The system change – no wild animal circuses existing – led to a 100% change in behaviour. In the above picture that would mean moving the trough to the right towards more animal welfare. The easiest way of life becomes living without wild animal circuses. If you still wanted to go to one, you would have to leave the country for that purpose. To sustain that way of life, i.e. to keep going to wild animal circuses, would mean a lot of energy investment, which neigh nobody is willing to do.

But the effects of the system change go even further than that. Already now, media have started to report negatively on foreign wild animal circuses. The rules of socialisation, as sketched above, imply that after 1 or 2 generations have grown up in a society where wild animal circuses have been banned for ethical reasons, their attitudes change as well. Wild animal circuses start to be considered as animal abuse of times gone past, when there was much less respect for animals. Such an opinion we find ever more frequently in Austria today.

Another example supports this view. Let's look at the campaign against battery eggs. In 2005, the animal rights movement decided to start a campaign to remove battery eggs from the shelves of all supermarkets in Austria. Remember that at this time 86% of the population opposed battery farming as unethical, but only 20% actually did act correspondingly and did not buy battery eggs. The campaign, again, did not aim to change people's minds. That would have been useless, since, after all, most people were already opposed to battery farms. So, the campaign attacked supermarkets and shops selling battery eggs. And it succeeded. By 2007, it was impossible to buy any battery eggs, including from enriched cage systems, in Austria.

What happened with the consumers? They quickly adapted. Nobody was missing battery eggs. The easiest way to live was now simply not to buy battery eggs. And exactly that happened. The campaign, again, did not change anybody's minds, but the system change had a 100% success rate in changing people's behaviour: nobody bought battery eggs anymore.

The data provide clear evidence: while trying to change people's minds has very limited success and even less influence on their behaviour, system change leads to a 100% success in behavioural change. Applying these findings to veganism, we have to conclude that political animal rights activists should primarily try to change the system and not people's minds. The latter is simply hopeless as a strategy to change society. If it is being pursued exclusively, it will have no effect on society at large.

Let's look at an example. Say, we want to gain some land from the shallow sea to establish new living space. Trying to change people's minds is like trying to remove the water from the sea with a spoon. You might succeed in removing some drops, but the larger picture will not change. You could never have enough people removing water with spoons to actually get the land dry. A system change now would be for example to drive in with a digger and to build a dam. Now the water in our area is isolated from the water in the sea. The system is changed. We don't have to remove the water now, we just let nature take its course. And after so and so long, the water will have dried out and we can use the land. The system change did not remove single drops, but it led to a lasting change of the whole.

In our picture above of the structured surface, a system change would mean moving the trough to the right. If we succeed to do that, then people will follow, will roll into the new trough, and live differently, without you having to persuade them one after the other. That battery eggs are not available anymore is for example a move of the trough to the right towards barn eggs becoming the norm, which are better animal welfare. Ultimately, we need to aim for moving the trough all the way to the right towards animal rights and veganism. When there are no non-vegan products available anymore, then people will automatically become vegan and in a few generations it will be the accepted attitude in society as a whole.

System change by weakening animal industries

How can we move the system towards veganism? In parliamentary democracy, in principle the population can decide how the system is run. In reality, especially since our society is a representative and not a direct democracy, that is not so easy. People can only vote every 5 years, and only one of a handful of parties, i.e. by voting they must support a whole host of opinions and not just one.

But still, we do elect parties into government. They will not exactly do what we would most prefer, but if their decisions deviate far enough from our opinion, then we will kick up a fuss in society. The larger that fuss, the larger the dissatisfaction of people and the more likely the party in government will not be re-elected. Hence governments are very wary of conflicts in society. They want to avoid that. If one arises, they want to resolve it. On the other hand, if there are no conflicts, if everything is calm, if criticism is brought up in a friendly and tolerant tone, then there cannot be much dissatisfaction, so the government will not risk to change anything to be safely re-elected.

Hence, system changes only come through conflicts in society. It starts with a segment in society being decidedly unhappy with the status quo in a certain issue and kicking up a fuss. If the fuss increases to a fully blown conflict, government will have to react. They need to keep the lid on it so that it does not escalate and eventually remove them from office. That means, in a conflict between two sides, the government will side with those, who are more

capable of deepening the conflict, of kicking up more fuss, of producing more political pressure. If the public takes the side of one or the other party in the conflict that can obviously also be of vital importance. A fuss kicked up by one side will create much more political pressure, if in the eyes of the public theirs is a just cause.

In animal issues, the conflict is between the movement and those exploiting animals. Let's call the latter animal industries. The conflict in society for a system change towards the end of the exploitation of animals, i.e. veganism, hence is a direct conflict between the animal rights movement and animal industries. The side that is capable of producing more political pressure will win at the end. The public stands indifferent at the start and is the target of the propaganda war between the two fractions. Each tries to pull the public on their side. Since animal industries are very powerful and influential, politically, a system change against their will is very difficult, but possible. It is very important to distinguish at this point between animal industries, which are the enemies of change, the public as an observer, whose sympathies both sides are wooing for, and the government, the judge so to speak, who both sides try to impress with their political pressure.

In thinking about political theories, it is vital to ground your thinking on data and direct experience to see whether we are still based in reality and not dream and fiction. Politics is the art of changing society. Politics are purely consequentialist, i.e. its value must be judged solely by its consequences. Good politics lead to a better society, bad politics to a worse one. For political change, there are many unknown parameters influencing the outcome. Hence strictly theoretical thinking can very easily lead astray. How should I know, for example, that a certain factor, pointing in one direction, will have more or less effect than another, pointing in the other? Only through practical experience. What kind of experience can we provide in this context? What do the data say about the theory presented here?

The campaign against wild animal circuses in Austria was directed against the circuses themselves, only marginally towards the public. The tactic was to permanently protest outside each and every show of all wild animal circuses in Austria, in order to spoil the fun of visitors of the circus. This confrontational approach very soon led to an escalation of the conflict. The circuses resorted to violence and physically assaulted many activists on a number of occasions, sometimes very seriously and premeditatedly. The movement retaliated with 3 arson attacks. In addition, the circuses started a number of law suits against the campaign, while the activists reported breaches of any regulations to the authorities. After 6 years, every single wild animal circus had gone bankrupt. The government had not reacted so far, since the conflict never reached societal proportions, neither the public nor the media did take much notice.

At the end there were no wild animal circuses left. And without any opposition, it was easy to introduce a ban. By weakening and eventually completely destroying animal industries in this conflict, a ban and a lasting system change was achieved.

Another example to study is the campaign against battery farms. In this sector, animal industries were very powerful and could not be challenged directly. By threatening with economic disaster, unemployment, removal of locally important industries and a massive reduction in tax payment, their influence on local, regional and hence federal governments was enormous. The animal rights movement was no match for them. But regarding battery farming, the movement did not have to start from scratch with regards to the public. Over decades, the public had been fed the view that battery farms are the epitome of animal abuse. Even children's books covered that issue and in all schools battery farming was a topic. That was why, in 2004, there were already 86% of the public in favour of a battery farm ban.

But that alone would have changed nothing. As stated before, 80% of the people still bought cage eggs and the government had no reason whatsoever to act, since there was no conflict apparent. In this situation, the animal rights movement decided to start a campaign for a ban on battery cages, i.e. a ban on all cages, including the so-called enriched ones. In parliament, the situation was advantageous, since with the socialists and the greens in opposition, almost 50% of MPs could be won as allies. Against this coalition, only the conservatives in government stood firm, pushed by the political pressure of the mighty battery farm industry.

This is why the movement started to focus on the conservatives and attacked them at each of the following 3 elections (2 provincial elections and one presidential election). Conservative election placards were removed in large numbers, or defaced, and many anti-conservative placards appeared everywhere. It went so far that the conservatives paid security to guard their placards in the night, and indeed a number of conflicts with animal rights activists were had. In addition, activists started to disrupt all conservative election rallies and organized an anti-conservative campaign with the clear message: those voting conservative vote for battery farms. At the height of this conflict, on the day before the election in one province, the head of the conservative party jumped from the stage where he was holding his last election speech and attacked a nearby animal rights activist, punched him in

the face and ripped his banner. On the next day, it was headline news in all newspapers: conservative party leader punched animal activist! And the conservative party did lose 50% of the votes in this election!

In the other province, where the conservatives had been in government, they lost the majority to the socialists. And in the presidential elections, the mounting pressure became so large that their presidential candidate felt obliged to say in her last press conference that she, personally, does favour a ban of battery farms. When the conservatives lost this election as well, they gave in. The political pressure from the animal rights movement had exceeded the political influence of animal industries. In 2005, a complete ban on all cages for laying hens, including enriched cages, was decided on in parliament and took effect 2009. Those, who have experienced this campaign first hand, all agree that it was the amount of political pressure that led to this decision. In an open conflict, with the help of broad sympathies within the public, the movement beat animal industries and forced the influential egg industry into submission. That opened the way for a system change. Today, as said before, no-one is buying eggs from cage systems anymore.

A number of other examples could be provided here, like the campaign against the caging of rabbits, where the government was forced to recall their „compromise“ of enriched cages and agree to a complete ban by 2012 eventually. But one other example is worth looking at in more detail. In a region in the province Upper Austria, the trapping of songbirds is a deep rooted tradition. Hence this province exempted bird trapping from the general ban of trapping animals. When animal law became a federal matter in Austria, the provincial bans on trapping animals were extended to Upper Austria too. The government overlooked that this would ban the practice also in this region, where it was such a strong tradition. The trappers are very powerful and influential in their region. All political parties are really scared of them there. That influence extends to the provincial but not to the federal government. On the other hand, the animal rights movement is much more capable of producing political pressure on the federal level than on the provincial level in rural Upper Austria.

Now, when the provincial governor of Upper Austria realized that the new law would ban bird trapping in his province too, he intervened and tried to get the animal minister to put an exception for songbird trapping in Upper Austria into the law. Without any other influence, the minister was willing to do that and proposed it. But then the animal rights movement stood up and started a very confrontational campaign against the minister, with daily demos in front of her office for months and disruptions of all her public appearances. She succumbed to this pressure and did not put this exception into the law. But the provincial government is responsible for enforcing the law in the province, and they, being under such influence of the bird trappers, decided simply not to execute it.

We see: solely the political conflict in society between the animal rights movement and animal industries determines the laws and their execution. The side, which can muster more support and political pressure on an issue, wins. The corresponding law determines the system in society, which eventually defines how people behave and how animals are being treated. The opinion of the majority or of single people in society is of secondary importance. Even a large majority against battery eggs did not ban battery farming or stop them from being sold. It was only political pressure and the system change that followed, which changed society and how animals are treated.

Do incremental system changes lead to animal rights?

The data presented so far prove that a system change can be achieved through a political conflict against animal industries. If a system change, however, was to bring global veganism, it would have to mean the end of the whole of animal industries. Can animal industries be made to completely disappear by step for step victories, which bring incremental reforms?

From a purely theoretical point of view, the psychological-political continuity from animal use via animal welfare to animal rights suggests that indeed it is possible. A society without any restrictions on animal use sees non-human animals as commodities for the benefit of humankind without any ethical value. Such a society will not have any empathy and compassion for animals. The historic example of Austria before the first animal laws serves as a good example of such a society.

Historically, from that starting point, slowly compassion, animal welfare and animal laws developed. At this stage, ethical vegetarianism could get a foothold at the end of the 19th century. Slowly, the first ideas of animal rights developed and from the 1980s onwards, there is a lively and thriving animal rights movement. The ideology of animal rights and the animal rights movement have their psychological and political roots in animal welfare.

Similarly, the development of single people generally advances from compassion and animal welfare feelings, which might have led to less consumption of animal products (probably rather of the free range variety), to

vegetarianism and eventually to the full animal rights vision and veganism. Psychologically, compassion and animal welfare form the basis for animal rights too.

We can provide further data for this observation. In 1998, after a long and hard fought for campaign, Austria introduced a ban on fur farms in 6 provinces. In the remaining 3 provinces, a new animal law restricted the use of "fur animals". It became only legal to keep foxes on a natural floor and mink with swimming water, i.e. bare cages were banned. However, this classic animal welfare law based on the idea of "humane" exploitation gave way 7 years later to a complete ban on all fur farming, i.e. on keeping animals for their fur in whatever way. This law obviously goes beyond animal welfare and towards animal rights. It does say that non-human animals are not there for human benefit only, since the benefit of getting fur does not justify to keep and to kill animals even if in the most humane way. This complete ban on fur farming is therefore a good bit further towards animal rights on the continuum from welfare to rights, than the ban on bare cages only. And it came on the basis of an older welfare law.

The ban on fur farming means that the fur industry is weakened, since at least in Austria their production sector has been completely wiped out. On the other hand, the ban on fur farming did not reduce the amount of fur being sold in Austria, since the furriers just switched to imports. Does that mean, a fur farm ban cannot be considered progress towards animal rights?

The Austrian animal rights movement can only directly change things in Austria. But the Austrian fur farm ban indeed was an example to follow for a number of other countries, and now we have some form of bans at least in England, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Croatia, Holland and Sweden. If the fur farm bans are being picked up in ever more countries and one day in the whole of the EU, then an import ban could be introduced, like today's import ban on cat and dog products, or possibly seal products in the near future. That would be a system change so that all EU citizens would stop using fur at all. There is no reason why other continents could not follow suit, so that their animal rights movements master enough political pressure to get fur farm bans there too. Eventually, fur production could end in the whole world. In that sense, a ban on fur farming in Austria is no doubt a first step towards the end of fur as a consumer product altogether, i.e. the end of the exploitation of any animal for their fur.

Let's look at the ban of battery farms. In contrast to the fur farm ban, the ban on battery farms did not mean the end of egg production in Austria. But, nevertheless, this ban directly led to a reduction in the number of eggs produced (and the number of hens exploited) by 35%! Since the ban was introduced, the number of laying hens being used in Austria has gone down by 35%. The reason for that is twofold. Firstly, a barn egg production unit of the same size fits only about half as many hens as a battery unit. That is because barn hens have much more space and the number of floors stacked above each other is limited. In addition, since barn hens can move freely inside the shed, they use much more of the energy they take in through their food in movement and heat production. So, a barn hen needs twice as much food than a battery hen, who cannot move at all, for producing the same amount of eggs! That means that egg production with the new system has become more than twice as expensive.

The ban on battery farming brought with it a drastic reduction in the amount of hens used and a dramatic increase in production costs per egg. So far, the egg industry did not dare to put that cost increase directly onto the price of the egg. They know that the single most important factor determining which products consumers buy is the price. If products get more expensive, fewer of them will be bought.

But it is exactly this effect, which the animal rights movement can use to for its purposes. If the movement succeeds against the resistance of animal industries to introduce strict new animal laws, which reduce production capacity and increase production costs, then that will dramatically weaken animal industries. Consumers will buy less of the more expensive products, even if they did not change their opinion on its ethical justification. Very expensive meat and very expensive eggs will become luxury items, which can be consumed even less frequently. The surviving animal industry will have shrunk immensely. That means, in a next conflict with the animal rights movement, the reduced animal industries will have even less influence and power to resist further reforms and further tightening of animal production restrictions, so that the vegan alternatives will have much better chances to win out on the free market and remove animal products further still.

Regarding meat, the biggest hope for vegan alternatives lies in plant based meat substitutes and tissue engineered meat, i.e. in-vitro produced muscle cell cultures. Details to such products can be found here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_vitro_meat or <http://futurefood.org>.

If this kind of future food can establish itself on the market, it will be in direct competition with animal meat. When strict animal laws make the production of animal meat much more costly, then the ground is set for tissue

engineered meat to win out. That would further accelerate the abolition process of animal production, since weakened animal industries mean harsher animal laws. If tissue engineered meat manages to completely eradicate animal meat, then a ban on animal farming of any kind will be coming by itself. And that we managed to achieve without having changed people to vegans first. In fact, most people could still eat the same sort of meat, consisting of the same cells. But because of the psychological continuum from animal welfare to animal rights, a shift in public attitudes towards animal rights and veganism will be expected in practice. When all animal usage is banned, then animal rights will be established in no time.

Do animal welfare reforms serve to establish the attitude that animals are only there for humans to use?

Through the work of the animal movement, animal welfare has received a positive image, which is being used for advertisement purposes. Animal industries have started to use this fact to market their products, often without their way of dealing with animals having anything to do with animal welfare at all. Consequently, weak animal laws, like a little more space in the battery cage for the hens, could provide a basis for such advertising without costing animal industries much, since such changes do not increase production costs significantly. However, that effect should not be overestimated, since animal industries will advertise regardless, and such advertising effects usually do not last.

But another aspect of this is often recited as an argument against animal welfare reforms. If certain products are sold as "animal friendly", especially when animal welfare and animal rights organisations promote those products in some way, consumers, who are concerned about animal issues and could have been reached by animal rights arguments, might calm their consciences and consume more of those products without a second thought. In this way, such reforms might stand in the way of spreading the animal rights message that the exploitation of non-human animals must be questioned at a fundamental level.

Whether this effect exists, though, and how important it is, is purely a question of psychology and must be answered by studies on the effect of messages in advertising. As a matter of fact, at the moment there are no data, which are supporting this idea. There is no empirical indication that this effect actually has a significant impact on society. Indeed, there is an opposite effect, which might as well have a more profound consequence. A positive image for animal welfare, after all, means that compassion and empathy for animals get a higher value, and that means there is more support for further animal welfare reforms. And if people do open up to the idea of animal welfare and its underlying motives, then the experience shows that they are more likely to be prepared to think about animal rights. Animal welfare and empathy form the psychological basis for animal rights.

But let's look at the data. In Austria, every year the animal laws are being tightened. The speed of these reforms, and the degree to which they increase the restriction on animal use, had a tendency to increase in the last years. Certainly in the last 10 years, new animal laws have been introduced, which restrict animal use to an, until now, unknown degree. Remember the restriction of fur farms in 1998, which was then followed by an outright ban in 2005. A rather weak regulation on how wild animals can be kept and used in circuses was followed by a complete ban 15 years later. The law governing animal experiments from 1988 was updated in 2006 to include a complete ban on all experiments on apes. Regulations on how to keep rabbits for meat production were introduced in 2005 and tightened to a ban on all cages by 2008, to come into effect by 2012. The regulations on keeping laying hens were tightened in 1999, again in 2003 and then came a ban on all cages in 2005 to take effect by 2009. Clearly, the development of animal laws shows in practice, that they are being tightened regularly and ever more severely. That supports the above suggestion that there is a political continuum from animal use via animal welfare to animal rights, and that banning certain particularly revolting aspects of animal use leads to more bans and more animal welfare and even towards animal rights, when a certain use is banned completely (like fur farming) or when even the most "humane" kind of killing is banned.

A more restrictive animal law in one sector can also trigger more restrictions in other sectors, when for example the ban on cages for laying hens in 2005 was used to justify the introduction of a ban on cages for rabbits in 2008.

Is it possible that when a certain standard of animal welfare has been reached, suddenly this process stops and no further tightening of animal laws can ever be achieved so that the ultimate aim of animal rights cannot be achieved this way? There is no indication for that. After the ban on cages for laying hens in Austria, half of the larger farms just closed down and the other half changed to barn egg production. The latter, still, is a classic factory farm with 9 hens per m² (even if it was 16 hens per m² in the battery cage). But since all battery farms have closed down now, immediately the criticism of the new and more expensive barn system has already started. Newly formed animal rights groups, who have never seen battery cages, have already broken into barn egg farms and released the shocking film material to the media, who have broadcast it. The animal rights group most instrumental in achieving the ban on battery cages has published a new 40 page booklet on animal agriculture in

2008, which explicitly, and with graphic footage, criticises the barn egg system among all the other forms of production and demands law changes as well as suggesting veganism. Even the manager of a large supermarket chain, which has removed all cage eggs from their shelves 14 years ago, has already approached animal groups and told them that he wants to remove barn eggs in the future as well. The experience hence is that the move to attacking the newly established barn system has started much earlier than expected. Even though there is not much scope, politically, to introduce a new ban very soon, that topic might become a matter of serious debate within 10 years. If the whole process is being repeated then, i.e. instead of a cage ban, a barn egg production ban, and barn eggs are being removed from the shelves in supermarkets, what should stop the movement to continue this process until all laying hen farming is banned? Like it happened with fur farming?

If becoming critically aware of the aspects of particular animal abuse in animal agriculture, and supporting animal welfare per se, are psychological preconditions for individuals to move on to animal rights, it is to be expected that societies with higher animal welfare standards will have larger animal rights movements, more animal rights thinking will prevail and more vegan options will be available. And societies with much less animal welfare standards should show the opposite tendency. And indeed, that is the case. European countries like England, Sweden or Austria have high animal welfare standards and a thriving animal rights movement. On the other hand, countries with very little animal welfare like China seem quite disinterested in all animal issues and veganism as an ethical choice is unknown.

If we include all aspects, the data suggest that very restrictive animal law reforms are not just no obstacle for animal rights, but they actually promote the development of society in this direction.

Additional aspects of the incremental reform process

Which reforms are being called abolitionist and which reformist, seems to be rather arbitrary and dependent on a particular ideology. Gary Francione defines 5 criteria in his book *Rain without Thunder* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1996), which determine when a law is to be called abolitionist. A full cage ban is being cited by him as an example of an abolitionist law in contrast to a law merely enlarging the space per hen in the cage. A cage ban means the interest of the hens in free movement is being respected, he observes, albeit respecting this interest brings no advantage for the industry exploiting the hens. Francione, though, argues purely theoretically. He does not provide any data to support his suggestions, and his definition of abolitionism seems to be deontological and not consequentialist, although it is hard to see how a theory on how to act politically should not be solely concerned about whether the action actually does promote the political aim in its consequences or not.

Even more radical is Lee Hall's opinion, published in the book *Capers in the Churchyard* (Nectra Bat Press 2006). For her, every law, regardless what it says, as long as it does not guarantee fully equal rights to all animals at once, is a reformist law and must be rejected. Her reason for that position is that any such law would in some way implicitly condone some form of animal use. A ban on fur farming, for example, condones leather production, rights for all apes condone the view that all non-apes should have no rights and so forth. Hall even says that any campaign that has a goal that falls short of complete animal rights and veganism for all, is reformist, because it suggests that all forms of animal use outside this goal are legitimate. She subsumes even ALF activity under reformist campaigning. For her, friendly vegan outreach is the only path towards animal rights, the only truly abolitionist activity. But Hall does not supply any data that support her ideas, neither in the book nor on enquiry. But without data her theory seems highly dubious. Animal law reforms generally improve the quality of life for the individual animals, who are protected by the law. A laying hen in a cage surely has a much worse life than a hen in a barn or free range system. This aspect, however, as much as it might be of central interest to the animals themselves, plays no role in politically evaluating whether a campaign goal will lead towards animal rights or not.

Worldwide, more than 2000 activists have been locked up in prison cells for their animal rights actions so far, because they have broken speciesist laws. From the ethical point of view, their incarceration is unjust and a breach of their right to freedom. A number of groups therefore support those prisoners, but not just individually, also with political campaigns. People are asked to sign petitions to improve the prison system, like ban isolation cells and allow for vegan food provisions. Those groups, albeit they disapprove of locking up animal activists altogether, have decided that they would rather campaign for a realistic goal that might be achieved and that will improve the lot for the prisoners. Such campaigning must be called reformist and not abolitionist by any standards, but nevertheless, radical abolitionists will not disapprove. Nobody asks, surprisingly, whether such campaigns do not legitimize incarceration of animal activists in the minds of the public, and whether their success in achieving better prison conditions will not serve to strengthen the habit in society to lock up activists, who have liberated animals.

Running campaigns to achieve realistic animal laws has produced a number of very large animal welfare and animal rights societies, which became powerful and politically influential. The larger such a society, the

more mainstream and tame it will be. In Austria, though, there is a clear move of large societies to become more radical and pro vegetarian. All those groups together earn 30 million euro per year in Austria in donations alone, and even if only a small part of that money is spent on spreading compassion and empathy for animals amongst the public, it will serve to build fertile grounds for animal rights. Some of those societies actually explicitly promote veganism in their literature. If all animal groups would have to change to purely abolitionist campaigning, they would drastically shrink to the size of vegan societies and would lose all their influence and ability to promote veganism too.

In principle, using film material that shows particularly shocking animal abuse, must be called reformist propaganda. After all, those pictures suggest that keeping these animals without the cruelty is alright. That means, those pictures do not question animal use, but animal abuse. By rejecting such films, though, the movement would be stripped off the most powerful weapon in the propaganda wars. In reality, since there is a psychological continuum from animal welfare to animal rights, those films actually do produce vegans and animal rights activists, which once again shows that the abolitionist argument is false.

Reformist campaigns bring successes. The last 10 years of reform campaigning in Austria produced a formidable list of such successes, which clearly make the Austrian animal law the best in the world. But successes are the lifeblood of activism, because activism costs energy and to sustain activism for long, you must be highly motivated. If you can see that your activism actually changes society that boosts morale and your motivation to stay active rises. But for vegan outreach, there is no similar feeling of success. Many people, who did turn vegan, fall back to consuming animal products. And society at large does not seem to change at all – after 130 years of such campaigns. It is extremely unlikely that a significant amount of activists can sustain friendly vegan outreach without recognizable successes for a very long time.

Summary

The analysis of political activism for animals together with data on experiences so far, suggests the following approach for achieving animal rights in the long run:

The primary aim of the animal rights movement must be to produce political pressure to achieve incremental reforms towards animal rights. A reform is a step towards animal rights if it significantly damages animal industries, i.e. if it weakens them and/or forces them to use more expensive production systems. That is so, because the only enemy in the political conflict to achieve animal rights is the animal industries. Without them, animal rights would be reality. Weakening animal industries through tough animal laws serves a purpose in two ways. Firstly, it weakens the opponent for future animal laws, and secondly it makes animal products more expensive so that fewer people will buy them and the vegan alternatives will have a better chance when competing on the free market. Stricter animal laws do not hinder people becoming aware of animal rights issues, but they actually promote that, because animal welfare is the psychological basis for animal rights.

To produce enough political pressure, a large number of activists and the sympathy of the public are advantageous. But both of those aims are secondary aims, because they only serve to help achieving the primary aim, to weaken animal industries.

To try and convince individual people, person for person, is a tactic which cannot but fail, as long as the system is not changed. That is so, because the system in society determines the behaviour of people in it. In an extremely speciesist society, to live vegan costs an enormous amount of energy, so that only a tiny minority will ever have enough motivation and resolve to be able to sustain it for longer. On the other hand, a system in society that does not provide animal products, will automatically make people lead a vegan life, and latest in one or two generations of young people growing up in a vegan society, the awareness of animal rights will follow.

Using purely rational arguments, we can argue convincingly that animal rights is the ethical ideal. We do not need to use empirical data of human psychology or concern ourselves with the political situation at a particular time in society for that. The ethical ideal is founded on deontological and not consequentialistic justifications.

But if we want to put that ethical ideal into practice and change society, we do depend entirely on psychological input. Politics are good, if they change society successfully towards the ethical ideal. That means, in contrast to the situation before, the value of politics is solely measured consequentialistically, i.e. only by its consequences. There are no politics, which are right or wrong by themselves, like Immanuel Kant claimed for example for lying, which supposedly was unethical by itself, even if lying in certain circumstances could save lives or move society towards the ethical ideal.

It is basic knowledge on human psychology that humans are much more social than rational animals. If humans

were purely rational animals, we could ignore psychology in politics and solely argue rationally, without the use of empirical data. Theory and practice would be the same. But humans are indeed much more social than rational animals. And that means for the animal rights movement:

Social entities like compassion, empathy and suffering are very important factors to motivate humans to change their behaviour. In contrast, abstract-rational entities, like personhood or rights, do not. One of the most important aspects determining human behaviour is their social environment. Humans want to be well integrated into their society and live in harmony with it. Humans have a strong need for social security, i.e. they generally want that things stay as they are and that change happens slowly and in a controlled way.

The animal rights movement must adapt their political campaigning strategies to these psychological facts. That means, political campaigns must incorporate the following aspects:

Centre your campaign material on presenting suffering and stimulate compassion and empathy in people. Abstract-rational phrases using terms like rights or personhood should play no significant role. The goal of the campaign should be presented to the public in a way that it seems to them that if it was achieved, a certain clearly distinguishable aspect of suffering of animals will be totally alleviated. The aim of the campaign must be to change society, the social system in which people live, and not individual people's minds. The campaign should not demand huge changes in society. The goal must be realistic and should not lead into the unknown. The whole development of society must be slow and continuous.

Hence, it is of vital importance to distinguish between the abstract-rational philosophy on a deontological basis in theory to justify the ethical ideal, and applied-social psychology on a consequentialistic basis in practice to justify campaign politics.