

# **Animal Ethics in Norway**

*Organizations, informal groups and important issues*

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# 1. Introduction

*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated” – Mahatma Ghandi<sup>1</sup>*

## 1.1 The issues in question

This thesis will give an overview of Animal Ethics in Norway and discuss its place in the public debate. Three organizations operating on a national level, centralized around the capital Oslo will be presented. These organizations share the common goal to improve the living conditions for animals, and the thesis will put focus on their key issues, strategies and co operations. In addition, focus will be put on the presence of the radical informal group the Animal Liberation Front. This will be done by first presenting the international group, before focusing on the Norwegian branch.

At the base of this thesis lie three central questions:

The first question addresses the attitudes towards animals in the Norwegian society. Is it possible, I ask, to detect a” national arrogance” with respect to animal protection and the living conditions for animals in Norway, and if so, how has this affected the Norwegian Animal Ethics organizations?

The second question addresses the status and legitimacy of the issue of Animal Ethics in Norway. Has it, as some claim, been excluded from the Norwegian environmental field, and if so - why?

The third question addresses the presence of radical behaviour in society. Does Animal Ethics activists have particularly critical attitudes towards society, and are they therefore also engaged in other ideological issues? Hence, I ask whether

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<sup>1</sup> A famous, however unconfirmed quote, much used by the Animal Liberation Movement.

the field of animal ethics functions as a channel through which to articulate more general system-critical attitudes.

Max Weber (1968) argues that individuals may act on the basis of the importance of a cause, subordinating their own needs. This *value rationalization* occurs even when the immediate consequence may not be success (Weber 1968). The thesis is grounded in my interest in how people continue to stay involved in an issue like Animal Ethics, even though changes are not seen over time. The use of disincentives is society's way of discard of unwanted behaviour by its citizens. I find it fascinating that in spite of the risk of being punished by society some people still find their cause to be so important enough to choose to conduct illegal actions. Even though these actions may not lead to real changes, they are still performed.

## 1.2 Structure and outline

The thesis is structured into four chapters, each addressing different aspects of the topic at hand. This structure will create a separation between the organizational field and the informal actors, and will in effect make a case within the case.

Chapter 2 introduces and defines radicalism, and takes a closer look at two radical directions: Radical environmentalism and Animal Ethics. For the present purpose I will consider Animal Ethics to be a part of the Environmental Ethics field, although I recognize that this is an ongoing debate. Because of the limitations of this thesis, this debate will not be covered. I will in this chapter is to introduce the field of Animal Ethics and present the ideological foundation in which it is based. This is done by describing the field in which the radical organizations and other actors operate.



The thesis then narrows down and chapter 3 give attention to the presence of Animal Ethics in Norway. First, the chapter introduce a Norwegian term commonly used to describe those concerned with issues of Animal Ethics. Then, the chapter will present an overview and mapping of the organizations and other actors on the field. It will be argued that issues connected to Animal Ethics have not gained status as important in Norway, and some possible explanations will be proposed.

Chapter 4 focuses on some of the methodological challenges I encountered in working on this thesis. Following this, my main research findings from interviews conducted in the organizational field and other actors on the field are presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 present the case of the Animal Liberation Front in Norway, discussing that the radical direct actions of this group can be defined as acts of civil disobedience. This chapter concentrates on the results from interviews with the Police authorities and the Norwegian ALF-activists themselves. Finishing off, Chapter 5 will present some of the challenges of defining the direct actions of the ALF as civil disobedient actions.

### 1.3 Brief Introduction to the Methodology

The thesis is an interdisciplinary case study, based on qualitative research method. Information and data have been collected through library studies and fieldwork. My fieldwork has included interviews both central people from the organizations I have chosen to focus on and also other actors related to the field. Because the three main organizations presented in this thesis are situated in Oslo, so have my interviews to a large extent been. The three organizations have all made a conscious decision to position close to what may be called the “power centre” of Norway. The organizations can only be said to represent those living near the large cities, and in a limited way represent the population as a whole.

This could influence how the organizations are perceived, in both positive and negative ways. While the organizations may become closer to the decision-makers, they risk distancing themselves from the people living in rural areas.

My interviews have been informal and open-ended with most questions prepared in advance, and some surfacing as the conversations went on. My personal interest in the issues at hand has been used as an entering point, a methodological challenge that will be further discussed in chapter 4.

## 2. Radical Environmentalism and Animal Ethics

This chapter gives an introduction to the issue of radicalism, which is the red thread that will be seen throughout this thesis. I will present a definition of radicalism, before introducing two examples of radicalism; Radical environmentalism and Animal Ethics. This will provide a platform for the thesis, which then narrows down to the issue of Animal Ethics.

### 2.1 What is radicalism?

“Radical” will in this thesis refer to nonconformist thoughts and behaviour in opposition to the non-radical, conformist thoughts and behaviour most often representative of the majority in society. According to Cambridge Dictionaries, radical stands for “a person who supports great social and political change”, which implies a critique of a system believed to support the wrong values. There are a number of difficulties to run into when defining what is radical and what is “normal”. One problem is seen in how individuals define what is radical and what is not. An action may be perceived as radical by one person while it may not be perceived radical by those performing the acts.

Radicalism can be divided into radical thoughts (ideology), radical behaviour (radical actions), and radical groupings. While radical ideologies are restricted to proposing solutions on a philosophical level, radical behaviour often includes methods that are not accepted by the majority of the population. The methods used may be illegal and seen as a threat by society, represented by the legislative and enforcing authorities. The formation of radical groupings can be explained when people sharing ideological standpoints and forms of action consider their strengths as a group, rather than as individual actors.

This chapter will draw attention to two directions of radical ideology, behaviour and groups, both criticizing the anthropocentric world view. First, I will take a

closer look at Radical Environmentalism which argues for a bio-centric world view. The focus is then shifted to radical Animal Ethics. This direction argues for the recognition of animals' morally significant status, to be taken into consideration in every aspect of human interaction with animals.

Similarities may be drawn between Radical Environmentalism and Animal Ethics. One similarity is their shared belief that at the core of the problems lies destructive human behaviour and attitudes, stemming from the anthropocentric worldviews mentioned earlier. The Western development of ideas and practices has been the same ones that are destroying our environment and enslaving the animals, according to the radical Animal Liberation point of view. According to animal liberation activist Martinsen (2002), both Radical Environmentalists and Animal Liberation activists are fighting against the same destructive systems, with much the same means.

## 2.2 Radical environmentalism

There is nothing new about radical thoughts and behaviour; it has been seen all through the history of humans. Examples of radical ideology, actions and groupings can be seen in radical environmentalism. According to List (1993) the term "radical environmentalism" includes both environmental philosophy and the use of radical tactics and actions within the radical wing of the environmental movement. This is in contrast to more moderate or reformist environmentalism. An operational definition of radical environmentalism is therefore the belief in environmental philosophy and the implementation of radical tactics and actions. This is, at least in part, dissimilar from other forms of environmentalism (List 1993:2). As explained above, differences in what is viewed as radical and what is not will colour the way such thoughts and behaviour are perceived. An industrial advocator will view the thoughts and actions differently than for instance a proponent for radical actions within the environmental movement.

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### 2.2.1 The Ideology of Radical Environmentalism

List (1993) suggests some common features for the concept of radical environmentalism. Radical environmentalism often promotes preservation of wilderness and protection of endangered species, and these fighting causes are backed up by the philosophy of Deep Ecology and a biocentric worldview. Radical environmentalists often argue for no-compromise political action and have a strong activist orientation which favours “unconventional direct action tactics such as environmental civil disobedience, monkeywrenching [<sup>2</sup>], and ecotage” (List 1993:2). In addition, this is a social and political philosophy which emphasizes anarchism and bioregionalism, and “advocates strong, nonviolent environmental tactics plus a new form of ecological living” (Ibid: 2). Radical environmentalism can also be understood as “[...] a cluster of environmental political philosophies, and corresponding social movements, which claim to understand the roots of the environmental crisis and offer effective solutions to it”, and according to Taylor include all from deep ecologists, ecofeminists and anti-globalization protestors to some animal-liberation activists (Taylor 2005:1326). Radical environmentalism gives a critique of “Western” views and attitudes towards the environment, and claims that this view is removing the inherent value of nature and promoting oppression and exploitation of both the environment and of humans.

One of the directions within the radical environmentalist ideologies, or radical eco-philosophies, is called Deep Ecology. In short, Deep Ecology argues for a holistic approach to the environment, acknowledging its intrinsic/inherent value, and opposing the instrumental value placed upon the environment by the anthropocentric view. The Deep Ecology Platform written by Næss and Sessions (1999) contains distinct points about how to think and act in an environmentally right way. Point 8 in the Deep Ecology Platform states: “Those who subscribe to

the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes” (Næss and Sessions 1999:8).

However, in his letter to radical environmentalist Dave Foreman of Earth First! June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1988, Arne Næss argues for the use of the Gandhian *nonviolence*<sup>3</sup> in every form of action. The *nonviolence*, as opposed to non-violence, is critical of the use of sabotage and vandalism in direct actions (Næss 1999:227).

### **2.2.2 Radical Environmentalism: Actions**

While moderate or reformist environmentalism may promote methods like political lobbying or public awareness campaigns, methods that may work on a more long-term basis, supporters of radical environmentalism sometimes employ more radical forms of activism. Radical environmentalism may make use of actions which are breaking the laws in force in order to defend and protect nature. This is often referred to as civil disobedience, and involves direct action, a form of political activism seeking immediate changes to a perceived problem. Direct action can include anything from strikes and sit-ins to demonstrations, sabotage, vandalism or even arson. These activities incur some risk to the people performing them. The words “eco-terrorism” or “eco-sabotage” have been used to label these actions. During the last decade there has been an increase in governmental investigations and prosecutions of these activists. In some countries, such as the USA, the actions of radical environmentalists have led to the entering of particular groups and persons on the terrorist agenda of a number of countries. The tactics and ideology of radical environmentalism vary both in degree and cause, but the common thread for the different activists is the

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<sup>2</sup> Drawn from Edward Abbey (1975): The Monkey Wrench Gang, referring to direct actions conducted by a group of radical activists.

<sup>3</sup> The non-violence derived from Mahatma Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* argues against the use of violent tactics in direct actions. However, arguments are made by groups like the Earth Liberation front (ELF) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) that non-violence does not include property and other “dead things”.

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willingness to execute different actions, to some extent overlooking the possible consequences for themselves.

### **2.2.3 Radical Environmentalist: Activist Groups**

As mentioned earlier the tactics and ideology of radical environmentalism vary in degree. Two of the most radical groups are Earth First! and The Earth Liberation Front. These groups share the belief in the sacredness of nature, and have a history of radical forms of action to promote their view and prevent damaging behaviour towards the environment. Underlying their views is the critique of anthropocentric and hierarchical Western philosophies and religion, which to them are the causes of environmental degradation. The Earth First! and The Earth Liberation Front's solution to the destructiveness of Western development is "lifestyle simplification, a political resistance to the destructive forces, and a spiritual "reconnection" with nature" (Taylor 2005:518).

When founded in the United States in 1980, the Earth First! environmental movement promoted the slogan "no compromise in defence of mother Earth". This slogan implies what in this thesis is defined as radical environmentalism, and suggests the lengths radical environmentalists are in fact willing to go to in the fight for their cause and the depths of their convictions. One of the reasons for founding Earth First! was the perceived need to "introduce and promote sabotage as well as civil disobedience as a means of environmental struggle, whenever possible increasing the costs and removing the profit from environmentally destructive practices" (Taylor 2005:518). The long-term goal was to finally put an end to the exploiting behaviour towards the environment and creating acceptance of the intrinsic value of all nature. Dave Foreman was one of the co-founders of Earth First! and contributed to the discussion with *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* (Foreman and Haywood 1985). Foreman's book gives an overview and an introduction to developments within radical environmentalism and eco-sabotage.

Earth First! expanded to the United Kingdom in 1990. During the 1990s the United Kingdom Earth First! branch actively carried out several direct actions, most often directed towards different road-building projects. Many of these actions were also supported by sections of the public, and the group was successfully making an imprint on the environmental agenda of the United Kingdom. However, in the United States there were elements within the group which argued for even more radical actions, which led to the establishment of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) in 1992. Many of the most radical from Earth First! were drawn towards this new radicalism, and in 2004 the group was claimed responsible for economical damages of over 100 million U.S. dollar. The Federal Bureau of Investigation then labelled the ELF as its number one domestic terrorist group (Taylor 2005:522). When looking at the history of Earth First! and the ELF movements, there are many examples of radicalism, from the use of dramatic civil disobedience to the use of sabotage and even violence in their actions. However, the groups themselves claim to be against violence that could lead to serious injuries or deaths.

During the last 30 years, the use of radical direct action and civil disobedience has become an important instrument for drawing attention to a case. An example on this is seen in Norway, where before 1970 there had been few examples of any radical environmental actions. Some might argue that the environmental protection had been kept on what one might call an administrative level, at least up until Mardøla. With a large group of activists protesting against plans for damming the Mardøla waterfalls, radical environmentalism was launched in Norway. The vigorous non-violent civil disobedience used by the activists had never been seen in Norway before. It was so controversial that it attracted media attention and made news headlines. The Mardøla-campaign is considered a “symbolic milestone” in the development of the environmental movement in Norway, and since 1970 a number of activists have participated in radical direct actions to state their cause and make a change.



The following will present Animal Ethics, and give an overview of the ideologies, actions and groups within this radical direction. As stated earlier, this will provide a platform for the rest of the thesis, which will be concerned with the presence of Animal Ethics in Norway.

## 2.3 Animal Ethics

Philosophical discussions about the moral status of nonhuman animals are at the core of the discussions surrounding Animal Ethics. A central question is whether nonhuman animals have instrumental or inherent value. In other words; is the value of nonhuman animals connected to their possible use for humans, or do nonhumans have a value of their own? Another important issue is where most weight should be assigned in a situation of moral assessment. These questions have been topics of debate as far back as in ancient Greece and in the Old Testament.

Animal Ethics can be divided into two opposing philosophies. Tom Regan (1998) distinguishes between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights, and hence places the utilitarian view under Animal Welfare. This thesis will instead distinguish between Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation movement. This is a suitable distinction because it highlights the main difference between the two; the focus on *humane treatment* in Animal Welfare and the focus on *liberation* (both theoretical and practical) in the Animal Liberation movement. After a short introduction to Animal Welfare in this chapter the remainder of this thesis will concentrate on the Animal Liberation movement, however taking into account a possible blending of these two directions into what Francione (2000) labels “New Welfareism”.

In short, the two directions are separated by their views on the human utilization of nonhuman animals. Whereas proponents of the Animal Welfare position appear to allow some use of nonhuman animals under the condition that the

animals are treated *humanely*, proponents of the Animal Liberation position goes far in not allowing any kind of such use. This thesis will give a short overview of different aspects of Animal Welfare, before taking a closer and more thorough look at Animal Liberation. Animal Liberation will in turn be divided into two main directions: the Utilitarian and the Ethics of Rights (Animal Rights). On closer inspection it is possible to draw out two leading proponents of each view, even though within these two directions there are discussions and disagreements. The Utilitarian view will in this thesis be supported by Peter Singer, who in 1975 published *Animal Liberation: A new ethics for our treatment of animals*. Even though arguing for the liberation of animals, Singer has been criticized for being closer to Animal Welfare than Animal Liberation. The Animal Rights view will be supported by the theories of Tom Regan and *The Case for Animal Rights*, and then emphasis will be put on a contemporary critique of the implications of Animal Rights by Francione (2000).

### **2.3.1 Animal Welfare**

Proponents of Animal Welfare take the stand that no animals, especially those under human care, should be made to suffer unless there is no way to avoid it. This includes where animals are used for food, work, and companionship or research (Fraser 1998). In the eyes of an Animal Welfareist, emphasis should be put on the “humane treatment” of animals, and they argue for the “humane treatment principle”, which states that while human interests may be preferred over animal interests, this should only be when it is necessary and without inflicting unnecessary pain on animals (Francione 2000:xxiii).

The humane treatment principle has been put into force in various animal welfare laws for the purpose of prohibiting the infliction of unnecessary suffering on animals. Examples of animal welfare and legislation to protect animals from unnecessary suffering are seen in the 1822 British Parliament, where a bill was passed to ensure the welfare of cattle, horses and sheep. A few years later, in

1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was formed. In 1840 it became the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) after receiving the blessing of Queen Victoria. Also in other European countries and in North America similar groups were founded.

The Animal Welfare view have had a focus on the well-being and welfare of nonhuman animals, and bettering their quality of life. There is a focus on the “sentiency of animals”, whether or not nonhuman animals are able to experience pleasure or pain (Fraser 1998). Animal Welfare is criticized by proponents of Animal Rights, because it allows for the use of nonhuman animals for human purposes as long as the animals are treated well, and nonhuman animals are not given value of their own.

### **2.3.2 Animal Liberation movement**

In opposition to Animal Welfare is the Animal Liberation position, which I here divide into the utilitarian view and the Animal Rights-view. It could be argued that the Animal Liberation position argue for making deeper political and philosophical changes in the status of nonhuman animals in our society. The Animal Liberation position argues against the utilization of nonhuman animals as a means to an end. They are opposed to the idea that nonhuman animals possess only instrumental value.

Animal Liberation may be interpreted in two different ways. First, Animal Liberation can be understood as a process with the long-term goal to liberate animals from the discrimination and exploitation which is forced upon them by humans. Proponents of this direction see it as necessary to resolve the wrongs in the system, and this is often sought through acknowledging the rights of animals. The second direction can be said to approach liberation of animals in a more direct manner. This practical approach is shown through the liberation of different animals from captivity, as seen in direct actions by groups such as the Animal Liberation Front.

### *Peter Singer and the utilitarian view*

The utilitarian position argues that the human and nonhuman experience of pain and pleasure should be subjected to a principle of “equal consideration” in an ethical deliberation. The utilitarian view, derived from Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, seeks to maximize the amount of pleasure and happiness, and minimize the amount of suffering and pain for as many as possible.

According to Singer any sentient being, that is a being that is able to experience pleasure, pain and suffering and which strives to achieve or avoid these sensations, deserves to be given equal moral consideration. In this lies a presumption that there is a basic interest in all beings to maximize the amount of pleasure, and minimize the amount of pain and suffering. And although nonhuman animals are not able to communicate their experience of pain and suffering in a way that humans understand, they should not be discriminated against (Singer 1975). Singer argues for the extension of moral consideration “to all beings who have interests” (Singer 2003: 58).

Even though Singer argues for giving rights to animals, his arguments differ from the Animal Rights position, which is explored in the following section of this thesis. The main difference between the two views lies in the argument that animals deserve *the right* to be given equal consideration to their interests because doing otherwise is promoting “speciesism”, or discrimination on the basis of the species they belong to. According to Singer it is both arbitrary and morally indefensible to discriminate against a species because it is not a member of the human species and therefore has no intrinsic moral significance (Singer 1975) and: “That one being is more intelligent than another does not entitle him to enslave, exploit, or disregard the interests of the less intelligent being.” (Singer 2003:57). The fact that nonhumans are not part of the human species is for Singer not a good enough reason for failing to take their suffering into account. The fight for animal rights is therefore defined as a fight against discrimination on the basis of race and affiliation to a specific species.

Singer defends his arguments by saying that this is as close as we get to solve the problem of animal exploitation. We have direct duties towards members of other species and these are best protected by taking their interests into account. All beings have at least one right; the right to equal consideration. But according to Singer, this is more a “necessary foundation for having rights, than a right in itself” (Singer 2003:58). The discussion about animal welfare should in the end be a discussion about how we think animals ought to be treated, “and not how we employ the concept of a right” (Singer 2003:59).

### *Tom Regan and the Ethics of Animal Rights*

Although any form of right for animals is “technically Animal Rights”, according to Sztybel, there is a general understanding that the Animal Rights position includes abolishing all use or exploitation of animals (Sztybel 1998:44).

Proponents of Animal Rights argue for an egalitarian and “non-speciesist” society, and at the core of Animal Rights is the basic moral *right* to be treated with respect and not to be valued only as an instrument. Animal Rights theory shares some common ground with Immanuel Kant’s rights-based theories, which argue that humans have a right not to be treated as merely “a means to an end”, and takes the Kantian position a step further by including nonhuman animals (Regan 1998). This view argues strongly against the utilization of nonhuman animals on the basis that this is “wrong in principle and should be abolished in practice” (Regan 1998:42).

Proponents for this view claim that Animal Rights is “the last stance” for a civilized, egalitarian society. According to this view slavery and discrimination based on skin colour, sex, and sexual preferences was the shame of previous centuries. The “New Enlightenment”-view sees the case of Animal Rights as “the next logical step” in a moral evolution of our society (Best 2007[Online]). Following this, Best argues that even though the acknowledging of the rights of nonhuman animals will be extremely challenging for humans, we need to

recognize that the question of animal rights is central to the question of human rights. When we willingly exploit animals, Best argues, we also exploit the relations we as humans have with other humans. “It challenges people to realize that power demands responsibility, that might is not right, and that an enlarged neocortex is no excuse to rape and plunder the natural world” (Ibid.).

When arguing against the Animal Welfare position, Animal Rightists consider the *humane* treatment of animals and inflicting the least suffering necessary to be unfounded, because nonhuman animals should not be used as means in the first place.

As a proponent of the Ethics of Animal Rights, Tom Regan argues that all “moral agents and patients have certain basic moral rights” (Regan 1983:327). A moral agent is defined as any individual that meets the criteria of a “subject-of-a-life”. This implies any being that have a complexity of beliefs and desires, the ability to perceive and remember, and have a sense of the future. A “subject-of-a-life” has an emotional life, and is able to feel pleasure as well as pain, and have preferences and welfare-interests. Moreover, a “subject-of-a-life” has the ability to pursue their desires and goals, and should function as an individual existing for themselves, and not for the utility of others (Regan 1983:243). According to Regan, most nonhuman animals are in possession of these attributes and should therefore not be regarded as mere subjects but as individuals with an inherent value.

The right to be treated with respect is defined by Regan as “the principal basic moral right” (Regan 1983:327). Also, Regan considers *freedom* to be another one of the absolute basic moral rights for any “subject-of-a-life”; humans as well as nonhumans. An individual’s basic moral rights are inherent (not acquired), universal, possessed by all relevantly similar individuals, and equally possessed by those who possess them (Ibid.). Arguments are made towards the need for changing a system which allows for the discrimination and exploitation of

animals. The implications of recognizing animals as individuals with equal rights are numerous.

This moral and ethical approach focuses on changing the attitudes towards the use of animals among the public as a whole, and “the rights view will not be satisfied with anything less than the total dissolution of the animal industry as we know it” (Regan 1983:395). The consequences of introducing Animal Rights can be seen as long-term as well as short-term. As we will see in 2.4, Regan argues for liberation of animals as a specific instrument. As a final result, introducing Animal Rights should put an end to all exploitation of nonhuman animals.

The contemporary animal liberation movement is criticized by amongst others Gary Francione (1998), and the main part of his critique will be presented below.

### **2.3.3 New Welfareism**

Gary Francione argues that “there is a significant chasm between the theory of animal rights and the social phenomenon that we call the “animal rights movement” (Francione 1998:45). There has been an acceptance of the rights position within this movement, but “the modern animal-protection movement has failed to translate the theory of animal rights into a practical and theoretically consistent strategy for social change” (Ibid: 45). In consequence, the modern animal-protection movement should be placed under the Animal Welfare view, and Francione argues for labelling this *New Welfareism* (Ibid, Francione 2000).

Francione takes a closer look at the disparity between how humans believe our relations to nonhuman animals are, and how we actually treat them. He calls this our “moral schizophrenia about animals” (Francione 2000: xxi). The problem, according to Francione, lies in the status of animals as human property. As long as humans claim ownership over animals and treat them as “things” and “means to an end”, the animals will never be able to be considered as morally equal to us (Ibid: xxv). The solution is to apply the principle of *equal consideration*, where

in a situation of equal interests, the interests have to be treated equally unless there is a very good reason not to do so. In considering this Francione uses an example of a burning house, and who you should save from this burning house; your child or the dog? (Ibid: xxv/xxvi). Francione goes on to argue that this is such an extraordinary situation, and most of us will never be in the position that we have to decide upon this. Therefore, it should not be used as an argument in the discussion on whether or not animals should be given rights, Francione maintains (Ibid.).

Francione argues against the “property rights” humans claim over nonhuman animals, and he believes that “We are obligated to extend to animals only one right – the right not to be treated as the property of humans” (Francione 2000: xxxi). He gives a critique of the indiscriminate use of “animal rights” by animal protection organizations, particularly in the United States, to describe any position, including purely regulatory or animal welfare measures, that are thought to reduce animal suffering (Ibid.).

## 2.4 Animal Liberation: Actions

Like radical environmentalists, members of the Animal Rights movement have also been labelled terrorists, much because of their choice of action to make the changes they believe are necessary. In the words of Animal Rightist Tom Regan:

Today we are ‘fanatics’, ‘extremists’, or – the most frequently used verbal bomb, the one favoured by the highest ranking public health official in the United States, Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan – ‘terrorists’ (Regan 2003:65).

Further, Regan argues that there is a need for changing the system, which is exploiting and discriminating nonhuman animals. But, according to Regan, reform is not enough. There is a need for fundamental changes, and these changes can only be successful through the abolition of the unjust system and the creation of a new. This new system will be one where animals have rights. They should, according to the Animal Rights view, have the right “to be free, the right



not to be treated as another's property, to not be used as mere means to another's end". These rights are seen as "basic moral rights", and there is a "call for Animal Liberation on the recognition of the rights of nonhuman animals, including in particular their right not to be treated as mere means to human ends." (Regan 2003:69).

When taking a closer look at Regan's argument, the "call for Animal Liberation" stands out. As mentioned earlier, there is a practical approach to Animal Liberation, which has been seen in the actions of amongst others the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). Their targets have ranged from the fur-industry and laboratories, to slaughterhouses and circuses, which in the eyes of the Animal Liberationists is such a serious situation that there are no other methods to put a stop to it.

Animal Liberation-actions are often illegal. Many Animal Liberationists argue, however, that because of the pressing situation of the matter, the actions can be justified. As Singer puts it, the actions are illegal, but the duty to be law-abiding is not absolute (Singer 1975). While Best and Nocella II (2004) to some extent support the need for radical direct actions in order to achieve the necessary changes, others, even within the Animal Liberation field, may see these actions as totally unacceptable. The methods used by Animal Liberation activists can be said to resemble the methods used by radical environmentalists in their direct actions, and range from the symbolic releasing of caged animals and laboratory animals, to vandalism and arson. Activists have been known to use "whatever means necessary" in their "war" against the exploitive system (Webb 2004). The liberation of animals may be seen as a "symbolic action" towards the system. Depending on the form of action, the consequences of such actions can be severe both for the activists themselves and for the industry that is affected. The industries however, because of different insurance-agreements, both private and governmental, often get compensated financially. A central theme of this

thesis is the liberation of animals under the Animal Rights-flag, which in chapter 5 will be discussed as acts of civil disobedience.

## 2.5 Animal Liberation: Activist Groups

As mentioned earlier, the will to treat animals in a decent manner has not been unique to this century. This was shown by the establishment of the Animal Welfare organization RSPCA in 1824, and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in 1866. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain the anti-vivisection movement was rising, with a number of anti-vivisection congresses held from 1898 to 1909, which drew activists from all over Europe (Bekoff 1998). The movement was, however, stopped by the diminishing public support after a number of successful developments of vaccines and treatments against infectious diseases.

Not until 1975, with the publication of Peter Singer's book "Animal Liberation" as a catalyst, the Animal Liberation Movement began its pursuit of what they believe to be an egalitarian society where nonhuman animals are not discriminated against and exploited by humans. Several new groups were founded on the basis of this book (Bekoff 1998). The Animal Liberation Front is one such group. The following section provides a brief overview of the establishment of the group.

In 1976, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) was founded in the United Kingdom, as a network of activists sharing ideological positions and performing illegal direct action. The group soon spread to many other countries in Europe and also to the United States and Canada. ALF and other radical groups are said to be the display of a "violent face" on the animal protection-field. The actions from these groups have been many and diverse, ranging from animal liberation and vandalism to sabotage and arson, and even bombs and kidnapping. In 2001

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one of the leaders of ALF UK, Barry Horne, died as a result of voluntary starvation in a British prison, where he was serving 18 years for arson.

In Scandinavia too, ALF has had its impact. The Swedish SÄPO has included the Swedish ALF in the annual reports of homeland security (SÄPO Rapporterna) since 2000. Around ten pages have been devoted to this “new form of terrorism”. As we will see in chapter 5, the Norwegian branch of ALF was especially active throughout the 90s. In 1997, people claiming membership to the Norwegian ALF conducted several acts of vandalism, sabotage and arson in the Bergen area. In strong contrast to this, and with a focus on compassion rather than radical acts, the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) started up with only a few members in 1980, but during the 1980s grew to over 250,000. PETA can be said to have been most successful in getting media attention, mainly because of the group’s ability to attract various celebrities to front the different cases. Although promoting Animal Rights, PETA is criticized, maybe rightfully, for being more of an Animal Welfare organisation. PETA encourage people to join their Activist Network<sup>4</sup>, which consists of people or groups “actively promoting animal rights” (Ibid.).

Several other Activist Networks exist, supporting Animal Liberation and Vegan lifestyles, both as a part of the ALF and independently. Most of them are working through the Internet, and some of these are worth mentioning in this context. Vegan.com, BiteBack, KeepOnFighting and NoCompromise<sup>5</sup> are all Activist Networks that in addition to informing the public show their support of activists currently being punished by society for their actions, with their Prisoner Listings<sup>6</sup>. According to NoCompromise.org, this is a way of supporting prisoners and letting them know that they are not forgotten. NoCompromise.org also offers

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.peta.org/actioncenter/activist-network.asp> [Cited 08.08.2007]

<sup>5</sup> [www.directaction.com](http://www.directaction.com), [www.keeponfigting.net](http://www.keeponfigting.net), [www.nocompromise.org](http://www.nocompromise.org)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nocompromise.org/resources/prisoners.html> [Cited 08.08.2007]

tips on how and what to write to the prisoners<sup>7</sup>. Chapter 5 will present one activist's experience with these Activist Networks.

## 2.6 Summary of chapter 2

This chapter has presented a definition of radicalism, and given examples of two fields in which radical ideology, radical actions, and radical groups are seen: Radical Environmentalism and Animal Ethics. Both oppose the anthropocentric world view, although for different reasons.

The overall aim of this chapter has been to give an introduction to the field of Animal Ethics. Within this field, two opposing directions have been discussed: Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation. As shown, the two directions within the field of Animal Ethics have in many respects different views on the value of nonhuman animals as instrumental or intrinsic.

The findings in this part are drawn from literature. There is little Norwegian literature concerning Animal Ethics. It would therefore be interesting to see to what extent international literature can be applied to conditions in Norway.

In the following chapter, the issue of Animal Ethics in Norway will be explored. As discussed above, there is a sharp distinction between animal welfare and animal rights. However, below I will show how this may not be the case in Norway. The organizations working with Animal Welfare and Animal Rights in Norway do not always operate with this sharp distinction. In addition, explanations will be presented as to why the Norwegian movement does not seem to have gained a status and acceptance in Norwegian society, similar to other Western countries.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nocompromise.org/resources/23writing\\_prisoners.html](http://www.nocompromise.org/resources/23writing_prisoners.html) [Cited 08.08.2007]

## 3. Animal Ethics in Norway

### 3.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis is the presence of radical Animal Ethics in Norway. As one of the most developed countries in the world, Norway has the best possible living conditions for its increasingly richer population. Is this also reflected in how the Norwegian animals are treated? Many will claim that the Norwegian animals have the world's best living conditions, while others disagree. This chapter is concerned with those who disagree, and will take a closer look at the presence of radical Animal Ethics in Norway.

As discussed in Chapter 2 there are theoretical and ideological differences between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights. This distinction is mainly grounded in their views on the instrumental versus the inherent value of nonhuman animals. However, this chapter will show that the separation is not that distinct in Norway. This chapter starts with a discussion of the term “dyrevern”, a term widely used to as a label describing the field of interest in which these people work. Next, the attitudes towards animals in the Norwegian society will be covered, represented by the Norwegian government and a selection of public polls. In the main part of the chapter I map the various organizations on the field of Animal Ethics in Norway. Because of the small number of organizations concerned with Animal Ethics in Norway, I have chosen to take into account also private actors and actors visible through informal groups. Finally, the chapter takes a closer look at the status of Animal Ethics in Norway. Here, I discuss why Animal Ethics is not a part of the environmental field in Norway as well as presenting a view shared by many of the people involved in animal ethics in Norway, which is that animal protection is perceived as “low status” and “dishonourable” by the public.

## 3.2 “Dyrevern”- The meaning and use of the word in Norwegian context

In the Norwegian context the terms “dyrevern” (animal protection) and “dyreverner” (a person dedicated to “dyrevern”) are being used, both by the public and the activists themselves, even though in many cases further investigation will show that there are many differences in the ideologies behind. Still, in Norway it seems that the term “dyreverner” is used to describe actions ranging from relocating homeless animals, to demonstrating and distributing pamphlets on the streets, or even to the liberation of fur animals or acts of vandalism or arson for example towards slaughterhouses or sabotage directed at shops selling fur.

Looking at the media coverage of the various actions, this becomes clearer. National newspapers like Dagbladet, VG and Aftenposten use the term “dyreverner” uncritically, describing every case in which animals and animal well-being is mentioned as an act of “dyrevern”. As I will show below, however, some elementary differences exist, both in ideology and tactics, between the different organizations and private actors committed to “dyrevern”. It could be argued that locating every organization under the same label has an impact on how the organizations and groups are perceived by the public. Moreover, uncritical use of the term “dyreverner” could have a negative effect on the issue of animal welfare and animal rights, because it implies an emotional and sentimental attraction to animals which, as argued by Singer (1975), would lead to the issue not being taken seriously. This point that will be further discussed throughout this thesis including the views of various animal protection and animal rights activists on this matter.

### 3.3 The status of animals in Norway

This part will go deeper into the status of Norwegian animals, by focusing on the attitudes of the official and the public society. This will provide insight into possible explanations to the status of Animal Ethics in Norway.

#### 3.3.1 Official attitudes

The first Norwegian Animal Protection Act was put into force in 1935, and made Norway one of the first countries in the world to have legislation concerning how to treat animals (White Paper No 12 (2002-2003)). Forty years later, in 1974, the new Animal Protection Act (Lov om dyrevern) was put into force<sup>8</sup>. Since then, the development of Norwegian society and agriculture has been towards increased mechanization which in turn has effected the relations between humans and animals. There have also been developments within the field of ethiology and human knowledge of animals and animal behaviour has increased. This was the background for the decision to assign to the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food the task of reviewing the legislation and its appropriateness today. The end result was the White Paper on Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare (White Paper No 12 (2002–2003)).

The White Paper was a product of cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs and the Norwegian Animal Health Authority. In addition to these governmental instances, the investigation was open to comments from institutions and organizations concerned with animal protection on different levels, and also the public. The work included five public hearings, investigation surveys, workshops

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/wiztldles?doc=/usr/www/lovdata/all/nl-19741220-073.html&emne=dyrevern\\*&&](http://www.lovdata.no/cgi-wift/wiztldles?doc=/usr/www/lovdata/all/nl-19741220-073.html&emne=dyrevern*&&)  
[Cited 08.08.2007]

and meetings with representatives from the industries, science, veterinarians and politically responsible authorities. The White Paper concluded that:

All actions should be based on the ethical platform, defined by the following statements:

- Animals have an intrinsic value
- Everyone who has animals in their care has the responsibility to ensure the animals' basic needs are met and that they receive necessary treatment
- Animals shall be kept in conditions which give a good quality of life
- Healthy animals shall be a prerequisite in all breeding
- Before new technology is taken into use it must be probable that it will not lead to reduced animal welfare<sup>9</sup>

The White Paper prepares for a new Animal Protection Act, and the foregoing points give a notion of what to expect from this new legislation. In addition, it proposes that a situation of “good animal welfare can be considered as a collective benefit for our society” (Ibid.).

The focus and intention of the White Paper was to enhance the living conditions for animals in Norwegian agriculture by improving the level of competence and knowledge on animals, combined with a proper set of laws and adequate supervision. Hence, the White Paper provides guidance as to how farmers and animal owners should seek to attain this knowledge.

The release of this White Paper started the process of revising the Norwegian animal protection legislation. A Green Paper for the new law was expected to be ready during the fall of 2006 (Martinsen 2007). A phone call to the Department of Food Politics at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food did not, however, give any answers as to when the Green Paper is expected to be ready. The new Animal Protection Act has to be ratified by the Parliament, and will be subjected to scrutiny from the political parties claiming their voters' interests.



The existing legislation is criticized by the Animal Protection organizations in Norway. One main point in this critique is that it does not recognize animals as sentient beings, as recognized by The European Union in 1998. The European Union gave nonhuman animals the status of sentient beings in a protocol directly tied to the Amsterdam treaty<sup>10</sup>. Norwegian animal protection and animal rights organizations have been anticipating this development also in Norway<sup>11</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Public attitudes

When it comes to attitudes towards animals and the protection of animals in the Norwegian society several investigations show that this is something many Norwegians see as important. According to a report by SIFO, based on a poll conducted on 1000 respondents, 36 per cent of the Norwegian population claim to be “fond of animals or particularly engaged with animals” (Berg 2002:25, my translation). However, the report concludes that the level of knowledge of the status and welfare of animals in the majority of Norwegians is “not particularly impressive” (Ibid: 22, my translation). Further, the report shows that pet animals are ranked higher on the welfare concerns than farm animals and fish in captivity (Ibid: 26).

Two out of three the respondents in a survey by Dalen (2002) agree with the position that animals are sentient and able to feel pain and suffering as well as pleasure and happiness. The overall conclusion from this survey is that that the Norwegian public is concerned with good animal welfare, and 57% feel that Norway, generally speaking, should pay *more* respect to the welfare of animals (Dalen 2002:3). Strømsnes, Grendstand and Selle (1995) conclude with roughly

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/lmd/dok/Rapporter-og-planer/Planer/2006/Norwegian-Action-Plan-on-Animal-Welfare.html?id=456113> [Cited 08.03.2007]

<sup>10</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:11997D/PRO/10:EN:HTML> [Cited 03.08.2007]

<sup>11</sup> See among others: [http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20030115b\\_dn.shtml](http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20030115b_dn.shtml) [Cited 08.08.2007]

40 per cent of the respondents in their investigation agree with the claim “morally speaking animals should have the same rights as humans” and nearly 80 per cent of the respondents in a report by Bjørkum, Lien and Bye (1998) acknowledge animals’ ability to experience pain just as much as humans.

According to Francione (2000) similar results are seen in surveys carried out in the United States. As shown in chapter 2, Francione argue that we have what he calls a “moral schizophrenia” about animals when we express our sympathy with them and claim the importance of treating them right, and then go on to exploit them for our own benefit.

### **3.3.3 Summing up**

Although “most Norwegians” have a positive relationship to animals, argue for giving them rights and acknowledge their ability to experience pain, the animal protection and animal rights organizations have not become a “people’s movement”. Martinsen (1996) state that:

In Norway, the work for animal rights has not been the type of idealism that invokes people’s recognition. We think we are animal friendly when we throw some extra fists-full of bedding to the iron-bound cow. Commitment beyond this is often seen as unnecessary and a little hysterical. We think so well of those who make the rules. If the government says that the Norwegian Animal Protection legislation is the worlds greatest, then this means that Norwegian animals have the best conditions in the world (Martinsen 1996:224, my translation).

One of the central questions in this thesis is that Norway suffers from a “national arrogance”, which is connected to the long history of animal protection legislation in Norway, and how this legislation is argued to be one of the world’s best and strongest legislation. This should then logically lead to Norwegian animals having the world’s best living conditions. The government seems to think that the situation of Norwegian animals is not a pressing matter, as seen in the work on the new Animal Protection Act which is yet to be ratified. The Norwegian public have been said to have attitudes towards most animals that one should expect leads to a good life for animals. Still, a significant group of people

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seem to think the opposite. Roughly speaking, the organizations occupied with issues of Animal Ethics in Norway consist of around 10.000 to 12.000 active members<sup>12</sup>. They all seem to conclude with the same thing: *The situation for Norwegian animals is not acceptable.*

### 3.4 Introductory mapping of organizations

This thesis argues that the animal welfare and animal rights have not achieved status on the Norwegian political and environmental agenda. Still, there are those who see this as the most important issue, and who are willing to sacrifice their time and energy for it. This chapter gives an overview of the organizations and group operating in the Norwegian animal welfare and animal rights field. The focus will be on the voluntary field. Hence, actors operating in the political field will be omitted. Still, it would be worth mentioning that the issue of Animal Ethics seems to be of interest for the radical left-wing parties. The marginal grouping the Norwegian Green Youth (the youth-section of the Norwegian Green Party - Miljøpartiet De Grønne) is the only Norwegian political party concerned with Animal Rights<sup>13</sup>.

There are three national organizations in Norway: Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge (The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals), NOAH – For Animal Rights, and Dyrevernalliansen (Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance). Additionally, the Norwegian League for Animal Rights (NLDR) made an important contribution to the Norwegian Animal Welfare and Animal Rights field. Started by the late writer and animal protector Sonia Løchen, NLDR is a non-profit association working for animal welfare and animal rights, largely through informative activities<sup>14</sup>. The NLDR is no longer active as an organization, and

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<sup>12</sup> My own calculations, taking into account that: Dyrebeskyttelsen = circa 8.500 members, NOAH = 1500 – 2000 members, Dyrevernalliansen = 1500 – 2000 “members” and/or contributors. The numbers do not take into account expected cross-memberships.

<sup>13</sup> <http://ungdom.gronne.no/?cat=5> [Cited 05.08.2007]

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nldr.org/> [Cited 08.08.2007]

functions only as publisher of books, videos, brochures and other materials discussing the situation of animals in the society. As the group is no longer active, the NLDR will not be given any more room in this thesis.

Although agreeing on most issues, the three major organizations have somewhat different approaches. The following will take a look at the history, ideology and tactics of these three organizations.

### **3.4.1 The Norwegian Society for the Protection of Animals (NSPA)**

The NSPA is the oldest organization concerned with animal protection in Norway. It was founded in 1859. It is also the largest with approximately 8.500 members<sup>15</sup>. Many of these are actively working to improve the conditions of animals, while others are supporting the organization economically. The organization is concerned both with practical animal protection which can be placed under Animal Welfare and the more diplomatic animal protection which to a large degree falls under the animal rights field (Gram 2007). The NSPA can therefore be said to combine the two directions, and it does not put any effort into distinguishing between the two.

Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge (NSPA) is the general office, and concentrates on influencing politicians and public management through diplomatic channels and by legal means working towards changes in the attitudes of the media and the general public. The NSPA is profiled as a democratic umbrella organization for 25 local groups. While the NSPA are concerned with activities on a diplomatic scale, the local groups concentrate on practical Animal Welfare, relocating animals to good homes and so on. Even though the work of the local groups is important, this presentation will only look at the centralized general office of NSPA. The NSPA's Agenda is as follows:

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- Practical animal protection with relocation of animals through their local groups (Animal protection legislation §6)
  - Diplomatic influence of politicians and governmental management
  - Working towards changes in attitudes with legal means, directed towards the media and the public

(Footnote 15, my translation)

Additionally, the NSPA administrates the “cat register” to help reunite lost cats with their owners. The first point of the Agenda and operating the cat register is evidence of an organization oriented towards the Animal Welfare view. On the other hand, the organization’s head office works diplomatically to influence the enhancing of animal rights. This is interesting because, as previously argued, there is an opposition between these two directions.

Before the publication of the White Paper No 12 (2002 – 2003) mentioned above, NSPA was one of the organizations which were given the opportunity to reply as to how they viewed this report. They argued in their reply for more active animal protection politics, and showed how Norway in comparison with neighbouring countries has not managed to put animal welfare and animal protection on the political agenda<sup>16</sup>. The NSPA questions how it could be that Norway has fallen behind on animal protection, and suggests it is because Norwegians believe that Norwegian animals have the world’s best living conditions. According to the NSPA however, this is not the case (Gram 2007).

The NSPA argue for the legal status of animals, and demand that they should be recognized as sentient beings in the Animal Protection Act. Claims are also put forward to make it clear that the aim of the Animal Protection Act is to *protect* animals from harm. The NSPA criticize the legislation as being more adapted to the needs of business than to the needs of animals (footnote 16). Another critique launched against the existing animal protection legislation in Norway has been

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<sup>15</sup> <http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/organisasjon/informasjon.shtml> [Cited 08.08.2007]

the possibility of exemptions from the law. The law states that every animal should be protected from unnecessary harm, and make possible a discussion on what is meant by “*necessary harm*”. The NSPA argue that “arguments such as science, traditions, culture, sports, entertainment, trading and production of food and clothing, do not exempt people from the commitment of securing animals’ well-being”<sup>17</sup>.

The NSPA have three core values; respect, compassion, and tolerance, and their ideological platform is approved by NSPA’s chief organ: Landsmøtet. The ideological platform of NSPA states that every animal has an inherent value, and should not be valued by the possible use they may be to humans. The NSPA argues for the individual animal’s well-being, and considers every animal as sentient beings that have to be respected and protected. Because of their inherent value, every animal should be given rights according to NSPA (footnote 17). The orientation towards the individual animal gives NSPA a larger focus than the preservation and protection of species and biological diversity. The focus areas of NSPA are laboratory animals, pet animals, fur animals, farm animals, animals for entertainment and animals used in sports. The ideological position of NSPA draws on Singer and Regan, and claim that humans have a special responsibility for animals because of our way of domesticating them and making them dependent on us<sup>18</sup>.

The NSPA receives economic support from the Norwegian government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. According to Gram (2007) the economic support accounts for around 100,000 NoK a year, and is awarded on the basis of the criteria outlined in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food’s “Grants to

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<sup>16</sup> [http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/hoeringssvar/20010616\\_dyrevernloven.shtml](http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/hoeringssvar/20010616_dyrevernloven.shtml) [Cited 08.08.2007]

<sup>17</sup> <http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/organisasjon/plattform.shtml> [Cited 08.08.2007]

<sup>18</sup> <http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/artikler/df1999-1h.shtml> [Cited 08.08.2007]

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organizations”<sup>19</sup>. The relevance of government economic support as a contributor to the status and perception of an organization from the public will be discussed later in this chapter.

Internationally, the NSPA are members of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Nordisk Dyrebeskyttelsesråd, a liaison committee for animal protection organizations in Scandinavia, and Eurogroup, a liaison committee for animal protection organisations in the European Union, where NSPA has observer-status.

The NSPA is Norway’s oldest and largest organization concerned with Animal Ethics. Interestingly, as it was shown above, the organization combines the Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation views. In my interviews with people from the two other organizations it became clear that NSPA has had an important role in the establishment of these other organizations. Both NOAH and The Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance (NAPA) were established by activists previously involved with NSPA (Kleveland 2007, Martinsen 2007). The following will present these two organizations, and take a closer look at their reasons for breaking out from the NSPA.

### **3.4.2 NOAH – for Animal Rights**

NOAH was formed in 1989 by a sub-group of NSPA, as a direct result of a search for more radical grounds and forms of action (Martinsen 2007). NOAH was formed by a group of activists with experience in the field of working with environment and animal-rights issues on both a national and an international level (Martinsen 1996). NOAH has five local groups in respectively Bergen, Vestfold, Sogn og Fjordane, Trondheim and Oslo. There has been a decrease

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/lmd/aktuelt/nyheter/2005/Tilskudd-til-organisasjoner-2006.html?id=99416> and <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/lmd/aktuelt/nyheter/2007/April-07/Landbruk-og-mat-Tilskudd-til-organisasjo.html?id=463945> [Cited 31.07.2007]

from 1996, when twelve local groups was evenly distributed throughout the country. The general office is centralized in Oslo.

Focusing on how animals are exploited for human demands, NOAH works as an animal-rights based ideological organisation<sup>20</sup>, and with about 2000 members they claim to be the largest animal rights organization in Norway (Ibid.). Animal Rights was unknown in Norway before the establishment of NOAH, they claim. They also argue for their role as an initiator for the animal rights message, taking the stand that with their influence “[...] the development has progressed towards the goal and saved a number of individual animals along the way” (my translation)<sup>21</sup>.

NOAH also takes credit for discussions on the rights of animals in the White Paper No 12 (2002-2003) (Ibid.). According to NOAH, everyone can be involved in the work for Animal Rights regardless of age, occupation, or background (footnote 20). The strategy stated by NOAH is to influence on every level and towards all groups in society, and through meetings with politicians to influence changes in the laws. NOAH also executes noticeable actions, with the intention to draw media attention to the Animal Rights issue. In addition to this, NOAH informs the public, both in the streets and in other public arenas. They also arrange conferences, hold lectures at schools, write articles, demonstrate and take action, in addition to saving individual animals where needed (Ibid.). Since their establishment, NOAH have been working towards gaining status as a body entitled to comment in relation to the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food on cases related to the welfare and rights of animals. They are also represented in the Norwegian Council for Animal Ethics.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles&action=ArticleFolder.publicOpenFolder&ID=291> [Cited 31.07.2007]

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles&action=ArticleFolder.publicOpenFolder&ID=303> [Cited 31.07.2007]



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NOAH argues against the use of illegal actions to make their cause heard. As we will see in Chapter 5, the early focus of NOAH was “the liberation of animals”, which was mirrored in the first name “NOAH – For animal liberation”. The general view of the first editions of “NOAHs Ark”, a paper sent out to members of the organisation, is that it comes with a strong call for radical actions and animal liberation. Although this has shifted and while this is not supported by the present leadership, it may have contributed to how the organization is perceived by the public.

NOAH’s Declaration of Animal Rights objects to the suppression of nonhuman species, or “speciesism” as argued by Singer (1975). The homepage urges everyone to sign this Declaration to show support for work on animal rights<sup>22</sup>. The Declaration states that animals have an inherent value, and have a right not to be discriminated against. The Declaration also claims every animal’s “right to have a legal status with value of its own and not to be defined as a thing or property” (Ibid, my translation). NOAH has openly supported the Animal Rights-theory by Tom Regan (1983). Their vision is

[...] a world where animals are not imprisoned for the sake of their fur, abused for the sake of research, ridiculed for the sake of entertainment or killed for the sake of meat. It is a vision that we can choose to change into reality (my translation)<sup>23</sup>.

NOAH focuses on the meat industry, the fur industry, the industry of laboratory animals, the pet industry and the entertainment industry. Looking closer at their vision, we can see that NOAH oppose to the use of animals for human purposes. They also react to what they believe is the objectification of animals in our society and argue that the mechanical treatment of animals is morally and ethically wrong. Humans have an obligation towards animals according to their

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles&action=ArticleFolder.publicOpenFolder&ID=347>  
[Cited 31.07.2007]

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles&action=ArticleFolder.publicOpenFolder&ID=346> [Cited 31.07.2007]

view, and should show compassion and consideration, not abuse them. Their vision also challenges people to take action if they agree with NOAH.

Unlike the other organizations presented here NOAH does not receive economic support from the government. The organization is funded through membership fees and donations. This and the active members' collective effort provide the base of the organization, according to NOAH (footnote 20).

NOAH has cooperated with Scandinavian, European and international organizations on several actions and campaigns, in addition to their membership in international networks such as the Fur Free Alliance and InterNICHE (footnote 20).

As we have seen, NOAH was established by people with previous connections to the NSPA. NOAH claim to have introduced Animal Rights to Norway, and also argue to be the largest and only clear Animal Rights organization.

### **3.4.3 Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance (NAPA)**

In 2001 the Norwegian Animal Protection Alliance (NAPA) was established as a project directed towards the work on the White Paper No 12 (2002-2003). The NAPA was established as a foundation by four people with backgrounds from the NSPA and NOAH. The intention was to make use of expert opinions to support their objections in the hearings prior to the release of the White Paper. The launch of this professionalized foundation was criticized by some because it was thought to take the focus away from the practical and activist approaches, which would not give good results (Kleveland 2007). After the hearing on the White Paper it was decided that the NAPA would continue its work, with a main focus on animal experimentation, fur and industrial agriculture, and also consumer-directed work against animal exploitation (Ibid.).

The NAPA's homepage state that their objectives are to advance the interests of animals both in the public and in corporate business. They also seek to prove

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human mistreatment and assault towards animals, and to inform animal rights/animal welfare-organizations, government, media and private individuals of human abuse towards animals<sup>24</sup>. As a part of their statement, the NAPA distances themselves from illegal and violent actions<sup>25</sup>.

According to Kleveland (2007), the NAPA draws on a selection of the leading theorists who have made their contribution to the field, rather than drawing on one or two. To a large degree their ideology corresponds with the Animal Rights-view. Their goal stated on their homepage is “a society where animals are respected as sentient beings with their own rights” (footnote 24, my translation). Their focus-areas are concentrated around fur animals, animal testing, industrial farming and consumer related issues related to the situation of animals. NAPA have a strong focus on animal welfare in their principles, and draws on the Brambell committees “five freedoms”<sup>26</sup>; freedom from hunger and thirst, from physical discomfort, from pain, injury and illness, from anxiety and fear, and freedom to carry out their natural behaviour (footnote 24).

NAPA receives around 100,000 NoK in government support, from the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Kleveland 2007). The support is based on the same criteria as given to the NSPA.

NAPA collaborates nationally with a number of NSPA’s local chapters, Norsk Liga for Dyrs Rettigheter (NLDR) and Manimal. Internationally, they are working together with the European Coalition to End Animal Experiments (ECEAE), WSPA, the European Coalition for Farm Animals (ECFA), Endcap, and Fur Free Alliance.

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.dyrevern.no/om\\_oss](http://www.dyrevern.no/om_oss) [Cited 10.08.2007]

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.dyrevern.no/om\\_oss/Annet\\_om\\_oss/895](http://www.dyrevern.no/om_oss/Annet_om_oss/895) [Cited 10.08.2007]

<sup>26</sup> In 1965 the Brambell Committee, appointed by the United Kingdoms government, concluded with five basic freedoms to be at the base of animal husbandry and animal welfare.

NAPA can be separated from the two organizations portrayed above in two main ways. First, the organization was established as a project directed towards the White Paper No 12 (2002 – 2003). Second, NAPA is a professionalized organization and is not based on members' efforts and contributions. NAPA does not allow anyone other than those with expert knowledge on a subject related to their work to contribute. While NSPA remains the organization with the best reputation, much because of its long history on the field, the focus on professionalism and the structure of NAPA may have contributed to a reputation as more serious than for example NOAH.

### **3.4.4 Some preliminary conclusions**

As pointed out by Stinchcombe (1996[1965]) the time of establishment is important in the structure and appearance of an organization. The organization is established on the basis of what at that exact time is viewed as “modern”, and this in turn will influence the future development of the organization (Strømsnes and Selle 1996:19). Looking closer at an organization's structure and appearance can therefore give a glimpse into the past, and we see both ideological trends and the models of organizations which were perceived as being right at that time (Ibid:19).

The importance of time is visible when looking at the development of the Norwegian environmental organizational field. Some of the oldest organizations, like the Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT), Friends of the Earth Norway, and the NSPA, have the advantage (or disadvantage) of having “historical weight”. While the organizations that were established during the 1970s (e.g. the Future In Our Hands) were influenced by the strong democratic focus of the decade, the organizations established during the 1980s (e.g. Bellona) were influenced by the development of Neo-liberalism and a stronger focus on the market. This came with an increase in the orientation towards direct action as an

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instrument, and often less focus on the democratic “rules of organization” (Ibid:20).

Even supposing this factor has an influence on the development of the organization this is not absolute. If this becomes a problem in an organization, one possible solution is to establish a completely new organization, and according to Strømsnes and Selle this is easier than making the changes in the old organization (Ibid: 19). As shown earlier, NOAH was established by a group of people with prior involvement with NSPA. This was a result of activists’ search for more radical grounds, and while NSPA has been concerned with more Welfare-oriented issues, NOAH is profiled as an Animal Rights organization.

At the same time there was an increase in the public attention and interest for environmental issues, and several new organisations were established during the last years of the 1980s, amongst others Greenpeace, NOAH, Women and the Environment and Miljøheimevernet. These organizations are described as being oriented towards direct actions and demanding results from their actions, and have also functioned as advisors for private businesses. The organizations have become professionalized, and use their knowledge and expertise to affect both public and political opinion. They are also less oriented towards members (Strømsnes and Selle 1996). This shift in how organizations choose to structure and elect leaders has in turn had a negative effect if we look at Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002). They argue that less focus on democratic processes within the organizations has affected the distribution of government funding and in turn public support of the organization because Norwegian society has a focus on governmental friendliness. How the shift away from democratic governance in voluntary organizations affects their status on Norwegian environmental agenda and in the Norwegian society will be discussed more thoroughly in the last part of this chapter.

## 3.5 Key issues

The three national organizations concerned with animal protection and animal rights in Norway examined above have to some extent agreed on some main focus areas, and have been known to cooperate with each other (Gram 2007).

The key issues adopted by the Norwegian Animal Ethics field movement will be highlighted shortly in this part of the thesis. Also, this part will give a brief introduction to the different arguments proposed by the different organisations and groups on why these issues are important enough to be put on the agenda. Three important “campaigns” can be pointed out as common ground for the three organizations. Although the arguments can differ from one organization to another, some similarities is visible. And there are also some clear distinctions.

### 3.5.1 What’s Important?

The *Animal Experimentation (Anti-vivisection)* - campaign focuses on the pain and suffering put upon laboratory animals used in medical and cosmetic testing. The three organizations share the position that this use of nonhuman animals is unacceptable. The organizations claim that because a laboratory animal is living its life in small cages and in a sterile environment, it is deprived of its “five freedoms” and its given rights to be valued in itself. In addition to this, studies have shown that the amount of pressure the animals are under may influence the results.

The use of animals in experiments is often on the grounds of their resemblance to humans, and that we cannot perform experiments on humans. However, arguments are made by animal ethics-organizations that by using nonhuman animals in this way, we have an ethical dilemma in our actions. The arguments by the organizations is that we cannot use nonhuman animals as “models for us”,

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when we at the same time expose them to suffering which we would never allow humans to be put under<sup>27</sup> The organizations argue for the use of alternative methods to gather the information needed in medical and cosmetic research. Developments in computer technology are put forward as a possible solution to the problem. Sophisticated computer programs and mechanical models may be of use in both research and in teaching situations.

The NSPA, NAPA and NOAH have as stated earlier, common objections to the use of nonhuman animals in experiments. However, there are some differences in their approaches to solving the problem. As stated by NSPA they are working on both reducing the amount of animals used in experiments, in addition to working to improve the living conditions of the animals. Both NSPA and NAPA state a focus on bettering the legal protection of animals<sup>28</sup>. They seek to abolish painful experiments and also argue for the use of alternatives to animal experiments. All three organizations focus on informing both the public, other public entities and the government of the situation of nonhuman animals in laboratories. NOAH however, seems to separate themselves from both NSPA and NAPA by taking the position that all animal experiments should be abolished.

The second campaign shared by the three organizations is concerned with the use of animals for entertainment purposes, known as “Tvunget til å underholde” (“Forced to Entertain”). The Norwegian Animal Protection Act §15 prohibits “public showing” of animals<sup>29</sup>. However, exemption from the law may be applied for, and the government may give permission. “Forced to Entertain” is a campaign fronted by NOAH in cooperation with Animal Defenders International (ADI)<sup>30</sup>, which focuses on the use of animals for entertainment purposes, such as in the circus and in zoos. The NSPA and NAPA also support this campaign.

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<sup>26</sup><http://www.dyrevern.no/Emner/dyreforsok/514/#kritikk> [Cited 10.08.2007]

<sup>28</sup> [http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/faktaark/faktaark\\_dyreforsoek.pdf](http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/faktaark/faktaark_dyreforsoek.pdf) and <http://www.dyrevern.no/Emner/dyreforsok/514> [Cited 10.08.2007]

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.lovdata.no/all/tl-19741220-073-004.html> [Cited 08.08.2007]

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles;action=Article.publicShow;ID=1326> [Cited 10.08.2007]

NOAH criticises how animals in the entertainment industry are being treated. Circus animals for instance are being transported and kept in barred containers used also for their transportation, often in long distances. Second, there is according to NOAH evidence of force being used on the animals to get them to do their tricks and stunts. NOAH argues that this use of animals can not be justified, because it deprives the animals of their physical and social needs, which in turn leads to behavioural problems for the animals. Also, NOAH claim to have documented mistreatment and negligence of animals (“*Tvunget til å underholde*” 2005). NOAH argues for the strengthening the legislation to make it totally forbidden to show off animals in circuses and other entertainment arenas. Also other uses of animals for entertainment purposes are put under critique by the organizations, including animals in zoos, aquariums, rodeos, bull fighting and other fighting using animals like cockfighting. Additionally, the use of animals in the commercial business, such as advertising should be prohibited. Generally, the critique focuses on entertainment which uses force and inflicts pain, suffering, and in the worst cases death, on animals.

The NSPA and NAPA work politically and try to change the public’s attitude to this use of animals. In their reply to the hearing on White Paper No 12, the NSPA argues that the use of animals in circuses should be phased out and that dispensations from the Animal Protection Act §15 should no longer be given<sup>31</sup>. As well as working on a diplomatic level, NOAH has shown an activist-oriented approach. They have been known to take a stand outside circuses to distribute flyers and arrange demonstrations.

The third campaign is called “*PelsUT*”, and is a campaign against fur. This campaign includes both the breeding of fur animals like mink and fox, and sealing. A joint argument from the organizations is that there is no longer any need for fur, because there are so many alternatives. NOAH argues that the

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<sup>31</sup> [http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/hoeringssvar/20010616\\_dyreverneloven.shtml#dyr\\_sirkus](http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/hoeringssvar/20010616_dyreverneloven.shtml#dyr_sirkus) [Cited 08.08.2007]



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decision to buy a fur coat cannot be justified because it is only driven by vanity<sup>32</sup>. The living conditions of bred fur animals, as well as the techniques used for slaughtering, are strongly criticised by the NSPA, NOAH and NAPA. This campaign seems to have joined the organizations together more than the other two campaigns. The NSPA and NOAH work together on this campaign, and in 2006 they were responsible for pressing charges against several farms in four different counties<sup>33</sup>. The White Paper No 12 (2002-2003) concluded that substantial improvements should be achieved within a period of ten years if the fur industry is to have a future in Norway.

The Anti-fur campaign and the actions from anti-fur activists are some of the most radical seen within the field of Animal Liberation. Activists have been known to make use of actions ranging from demonstrations and distributing leaflets, to naked-demonstrations throwing themselves onto catwalks or standing “naked” outside the Parliament with banners (Akkouh 2006). There are also examples of celebrities who pose naked for the Anti-fur campaign. The Anti-fur issue is also one of the issues where the use of more violent methods are seen, like sabotage and vandalism towards fur farms and other industries connected to producing and distributing fur. However, the organizations mentioned above are not responsible for any of these actions.

In addition to the three main campaigns mentioned above, the organizations also focus on industrial farming and hunting. The opposition to *Industrial Farming* is based in the development of increased production with an orientation towards cost-benefit-efficiency, which does not take sufficient consideration of the animals' well-being and rights. A growing consumption has had its effect on the breeding and slaughtering of animals, and this is at the core of the critique from many animal protectors. According to the animal protectionists, there is

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.dyrsrettigheter.no/?module=Articles&action=ArticleFolder.publicOpenFolder&ID=354> [Cited 08.08.2007]

<sup>33</sup> [http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20060206\\_pelsdyrfarmer.shtml](http://dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20060206_pelsdyrfarmer.shtml) [Cited 08.08.2007]

something fundamentally wrong with the whole process of *producing* animals for our use or in other words attributing an instrumental value to the animals. This ranges from how we breed them, how we manage their lives and eventually how we transport them to the places where they end their lives<sup>34</sup>. The NAPA has had a focus on the situation of farm animals since the establishment in 2001, and they “[...] work to help the farm animals. We fight against ways of farming that have been documented as harmful for the welfare of the animals, and provide practical solutions” (Ibid, my translation).

NSPA has been concerned with the issue of *Hunting*, and criticizes hunting for leisure and elimination of natural predators such as bear, wolf, and lynx. Their critique is based on the argument that wildlife too has a value of its own, and is also of unknown value for future generations to come. Moreover, NSPA claim that hunting inflicts considerable pain and suffering on the animals because of the high percentage of accidental wounding<sup>35</sup>. NSPA therefore argues for better training and control of hunters. Also, hunting by traps is seen as highly problematic for NSPA, and they argue for bringing these practices to an end<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.5.2 Tendencies of Collaboration

Why collaborate in some issues, but not in others? One possible explanation is that the three groups have different views on acceptable and unacceptable practices when it comes to animals. Also, there seem to be differences as to how far-ranging the changes should be. The NAPA has to some degree accepted the use of animals in, for example, farming and laboratories, but argues against the use of painful practices and experiments. Both the NSPA and NAPA urge people

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.dyrevern.no/Emner/landbruk> [Cited 10.08.2007]

<sup>35</sup> Myrnel (1995) reports that up to 50% of hunted birds and around 10% of big game is accidentally wounded during hunt-season.

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/faktaark/faktaark\\_fangst.shtml](http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/faktaark/faktaark_fangst.shtml) [Cited 10.08.2007]

to buy organic farmed eggs, because they believe hens from this type of farming have better living conditions. NOAH, however, argues for not buying eggs at all. As we see, the choice not to co-operate with other organizations can be based in differences in views on use/ non-use, a separation that is also found when looking at Animal Welfare and Animal Liberation. As such, it seems that Norwegian Animal Protection organizations often combine the two oppositional philosophies. The critique of this blending of philosophies has, as argued in chapter 2, led Francione (2000) to labelling the current Animal Rights movement “New Welfareism”, and situating it under Animal Welfare.

## 3.6 The Presence of Two Informal Groups

In addition to the three organizations presented above, other actors in the field will be taken into account. Two will be mentioned in this context: The Norwegian branch of the Animal Liberation Front and the campaign named “Steng Løken Gård”, a campaign to close down a farm breeding animals for animal experiments.

### 3.6.1 The Animal Liberation Front

As seen in chapter 1 there has been a call for the liberation of animals. One response was the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), which quickly spread and is now represented with branches in several countries. As we have seen in chapter 2, the ALF have been put on the “terrorist agenda” in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Sweden.

The ALF is characterized by small autonomous groups of activists executing different types of direct actions, all under the Animal Liberation flag. These

groups are informally tied to each other through the Guidelines of the Animal Liberation Front<sup>37</sup>. According to the Animal Liberation Press Office these guidelines have been going through changes all through the history of ALF, and future changes are also expected (Ibid.). At present, the Guidelines of the ALF are stated as follows:

- To liberate animals from places of abuse, i.e., laboratories, factory farms, fur farms, etc., and place them in good homes where they may live out their natural lives, free from suffering.
- To inflict economic damage to those who profit from the misery and exploitation of animals.
- To reveal the horror and atrocities committed against animals behind locked doors, by performing direct actions and liberations.
- To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human.
- Any group of people who are vegetarians or vegans and who carry out actions according to these guidelines have the right to regard themselves as part of the Animal Liberation Front<sup>38</sup>

These Guidelines are followed by the Norwegian branch of the ALF (Dyrenes Frigjøringsfront (DFF))<sup>39</sup>.

The ALF is an international group, which does not focus on membership in a traditional way. People conducting actions towards various institutions thought of as keeping animals from fulfilling their natural lives, and exploiting and abusing them, can be said to have deserved the “right” to call themselves a part of this group. Advice as to how to conduct successful direct actions is given on the homepage of the group<sup>40</sup>, and guidelines can be downloaded<sup>41</sup>. The Norwegian branch of the ALF offers a translated version on their website<sup>42</sup>. This thirty-six page document called “Your guide to the DFF” (my translation) covers

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.animalliberationpressoffice.org/history.htm> [Cited 02.08.2007]

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.animalliberationpressoffice.org/history.htm#guide> [Cited 02.08.2007]

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1121872748&archive=&start\\_from=&ucat=1&](http://www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1121872748&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&) [Cited 15.06.2007]

<sup>40</sup> [www.animalliberationfront.com](http://www.animalliberationfront.com)

<sup>41</sup> [www.animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/primer3.pdf](http://www.animalliberationfront.com/ALFront/primer3.pdf) [Cited 4.8.2007]

<sup>42</sup> [www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com](http://www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com) [Cited 15.06.2007]

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the ALF/DFF Guidelines, reasons for direct actions, how to get started and how to plan direct actions. It also gives advice as to the best way to cover your tracks and avoid being caught.

The character of the ALF and the DFF makes it difficult to conclusively make out the ideology behind the group. However, there are connections to the theories of Animal Liberation and Animal Rights, and references are often made to “speciesism” (Singer 1975) and the case for Animal Rights (Regan 1983). The ALF argue that animals have basic rights, and they are opposed to awarding animals status as human property (Best and Nocella II 2004). Most known is the ALF’s will to conduct radical and often violent direct actions. As David Barbarash, former spokesman for the ALF, states:

We are very dangerous philosophically. Part of the danger is that we don’t buy into the illusion that property is worth more than life...we bring that insane priority into the light, which is something the system cannot survive (Best and Nocella II 2004:23).

Barbarash here argue how the ALF can justify performing violent actions, sabotaging and destroying property and “things”, without paying attention to any moral discussions on this. Above I have given a general overview of the informal group the ALF. The actions and argumentations of the Norwegian branch will be presented in chapter 5.

### **3.6.2 The ”Steng Løken Gård”-campaign**

The campaign to close down Løken farm, a breeding facility for laboratory animals, was initiated by independent activists and individuals with a strong commitment to the issue of laboratory animals. The farm became known in the media when several dog breeders claimed to have been tricked into selling puppies, later discovered on the farm and given back to their breeders (Skogstad 2007, Tønnesen 2007). The campaigners oppose the use of animals as instruments for human gain, and see this as yet another example of human

exploitation of animals. The website for the campaign<sup>43</sup> suggests that a number of methods may be put to use, and that everyone can do their share.

Someone can write readers contributions; others can participate in demonstrations or contribute with money. Some may distribute pamphlets informing about the farm, others can start their own initiatives to help these animals. Everyone can do something (my translation)<sup>44</sup>.

On the 21st of April 2007, NOAH arranged a demonstration outside the farm, connected to the “Laboratory animals’ week” (Haugen 2007). The demonstration was a success according to Martinsen (2007), up until the end when around 30 activists, allegedly from Sweden, broke the police cordon and continued to the farm premises (Holøs 2007). Even though the demonstration was carried out in a peaceful manner, it was this last development that made the news headlines.

“Steng Løken Gård” is a campaign by informal and anonymous actors on the field of Animal Ethics in Norway. The campaign has concentrated on a specific case; a farm producing animals for experiments. The campaign is a part of the “key issues” presented earlier, and has attracted the attention of organizations like NOAH.

### 3.7 Possible explanations for the low status of Animal Ethics in Norway

While the previous part have concentrated on the organizations and other actors working on the field of Animal Ethics in Norway, the purpose of the following part is to give some explanations as to why the issues of protecting and/or liberating the animals have not gained the status expected, both within the environmental movement and in society as a whole. This is the first of the central questions presented in the introduction.

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<sup>43</sup> [www.friedyr.no](http://www.friedyr.no) [Cited 31.07.2007]

<sup>44</sup> [www.friedyr.no](http://www.friedyr.no) : Om kampanjen [Cited 31.07.2007]

### 3.7.1 Animal Ethics in the Norwegian environmental movement

This thesis builds on the assumption that Animal Ethics is not legitimized as an important issue on the environmental agenda in Norway. According to Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002) it is:

[...] a special characteristic of the Norwegian environmental movement that animal protection has the weak position that it has, and that the animal protection movement to a very low degree is an integrated part of the environmental protection (Ibid: 87, my translation).

Even more, as we have seen earlier the NSPA was established already in 1859<sup>45</sup> and thereby launched the issue of animal protection. This was early in both comparative and historical-institutional context according to Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (Ibid.). Animal Ethics and animal protection has become a marginalised group outside the environmental movement. In other countries, claim Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes, “[...] animal protection and environmental protection is to a far grater extent two sides of the same story, but in Norway you can stand for one of them, without standing for the other (Ibid: 89, my translation)

Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002) propose an explanation for the low status of Animal Ethics and animal protection in the environmental movement by looking at the importance of what they call *local community orientation* and *governmental friendliness*. As a part of the Norwegian regional policy it is the prominent way of thinking that the local communities and the rural areas are of benefit in themselves. The goal of settlement in local communities has been a prominent part of Norwegian politics the last decades. According to the Ministry of Local Development and Regional Development the goal in Norwegian politics has been viable local communities, and this is seen as “good development”<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> ”The goal for the district and regional politics is to provide for equal living conditions throughout the country and to maintain the main features in the residential patterns. The government want people to have real freedom to live where they want to. An active and goal oriented district and regional policy is meant to contribute to value creation, work places and welfare where people live.” – URL: [http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/krd/tema/Regional-og\\_distriktpolitikk.html?id=1238](http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/krd/tema/Regional-og_distriktpolitikk.html?id=1238) [Cited 31.07.2007]

The key issues of the Animal Ethics and animal protection field could according to Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes be seen as a threat to the idea of viable local communities, where primary industries, like farming, fishing, the fur industry and also whaling and sealing, are the main sources of income. Furthermore, an organisation perceived as unfriendly towards the Norwegian government will experience difficulties in getting members and making their cause heard. As such, “Closeness to the state is not the problem, but rather the *solution* for an organization that wants to achieve anything other than surviving.” (Ibid: 20).

In a survey of environmental attitudes in Norway Strømsnes, Grendstand and Selle (1996) suggest a co-interference between attitudes towards animal protection and governmental friendliness or scepticism. While the majority of the Norwegian environmentalists can be placed close to the population as a whole, Animal Rights groups like NOAH are situated far to the left, showing that members of these groups are both more animal friendly and more sceptical towards the political system and political institutions than the Norwegian population (Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes 2002:85 – Fig.4.1). NOAH thereby differentiate themselves from the other environmental movements, only accompanied by Greenpeace, one of the world’s largest and most influential environmental organizations, struggling by with no more than 1.000 members in Norway (Ibid:86).

As shown earlier, the two organizations NSPA and NAPA receive economic support from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. This can be seen as another example as to how the Animal Ethics have been clearly separated from the environmental field. The Ministry of the Environment does not support organizations concerned with Animal Ethics economically. This is a factor that may contribute to how the Animal Ethics are perceived in the population. According to Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002), economic support from a governmental institution can contribute to the legitimization of the organization.



By excluding the Animal Ethics organizations, they can also be said to be excluded from the environmental field as “something else” (Ibid: 88).

### **3.7.2 The Dishonourable Animal Protection?**

During my investigations and interviews with people in the field of Animal Ethics, I discovered something I found interesting. It seems there is something about protecting the animals that is considered undesirable or unworthy by many people. Steinar Lem (1996) describes in his article “The dishonourable animal protection” a situation where animal activists liberated bears used for entertainment under horrible conditions in Turkey. A journalist in *Dagbladet* commented on this by saying that maybe the activists should do something for the poor in Turkey instead (Lem 1996). Lem goes on to argue that no other issue attracts so much resistance as protecting the animals. “If you have to be an idealist and worry about anything other than your own and possibly the nation’s economic gains, then you have to attack the hunger in the world” he argues (my translation). According to Lem, the only ones that can justify caring for and protecting the animals are children and older women “with a praiseworthy, but somewhat limited and half-comical indignation towards the torment of minke whale and industrial husbandry” (Lem 1996, my translation). Lem (2007) confirmed this view. Chapter 4 will look at how this is experienced by some of the activists I have interviewed.

## **3.8 Summary of chapter 3**

In this chapter I have presented an overview of the organizations and actors working on the field of radical Animal Ethics in Norway. We have seen that the status of animals in both the government and among the general public is in contradiction with what is argued by the actors in the field of Animal Ethics.

I have shown that Animal Ethics has been excluded from the environmental movements in Norway. According to Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002) this is contradictory to what is the case in other countries. They also suggest explanations as to why this is the case, and argue that the Animal Rights organization NOAH is separated from the environmental movement, the Norwegian government, and the public as a whole because of the low degree of governmental friendliness and their high degree of scepticism towards the state. Further, I have discussed the argument brought forward by Lem (1996) claiming that animal protection in Norway is “dishonourable”, and an issue for older women and children to be concerned with. This has provided explanations as to the low status of animal protection and organizations concerned with this issue.

Although the use of dramatic methods and violent actions became more accepted in the Norwegian public after the Mardøla-campaign, it seems that there is little support for the use of such acts in the case of Animal Liberation. The three national organizations described in this chapter have all without exception argued against the use of violence. However, uncritical use of the term “dyreverner” in media and the public may influence how the organizations are perceived, because it does not separate the legal actions of the organizations and their members from the illegal actions performed by individual activists and informal groups such as the ALF.

As argued earlier, Norway seems to have developed what I have called a “national arrogance” towards the way animals are treated. Both the Norwegian government and the Norwegian population seem to think that the animals have the “world’s best living conditions”. The activists and the organizations, working to improve what they see as objectionable conditions for the animals object strongly to this “national arrogance”.

At the start of the work on this thesis I had an expectation that I would come across evidence that some organizations have become more legitimate than others. As we have seen, the legitimization of an organization is partly connected

to their receiving economic support from the government. As such, the NSPA and NAPA may be argued to have become more legitimate than NOAH. However, all three organizations are recognized as “body entitled to comment”, as seen in the White Paper No 12. The following chapter will look at some of the findings from my interviews, as well as the methodology and analysis of my findings.

## 4. Presentation of the Research Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the choice of methodology in this project, and present some of my findings. The findings will then be discussed. The current chapter is separated from the findings made in interviews connected to the issue of civil disobedience presented in chapter 5.

#### 4.1.1 Methodology and Methodological Challenges

This thesis is a case study, with an interdisciplinary qualitative approach. A case study is defined as “[...] research [that] involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system” (Creswell 2007:73).

According to Creswell, case study research has been criticized for not being a methodology “[...] but a choice of what is to be studied” (Ibid: 73). Creswell, however, chooses to view it as a methodology, and describes it as

[...]a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Ibid:73)

I have studied the presence of radical Animal Ethics, by looking closely at the organizations and the private actors operating in this field in Norway.

Information and data have been collected through library studies and interviews. First of all, I have studied available literature on the subject of Animal Welfare and Animal Rights. Second, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with people concerned with issues in the field of Animal Ethics in Norway.

My interviews have been, to a large extent, informal, semi-structured and open-ended conversations. The choice to make use of this method is supported by

Valentine (1997) who argues that the interview-situation gives the researcher an advantage because it is “sensitive and people-oriented” and allows for interviewees to “construct their own accounts of their experiences by describing and explaining their lives in their own words” (Valentine 1997:111).

I have used my personal interest in the subject as a way of making more of a private connection to the people I have been talking with. I am confident that this has made my contacts feel at ease and more comfortable showing their feelings in my presence. This has been important to me for many reasons; most notably that I wanted to come off more as a private person than an objective researcher.

As Valentine (1997) argues:

[...]all research work is explicitly or implicitly informed by the experiences, aims and interpretations of the researcher who designed the questionnaire or the interview” and researchers should therefore “treat participants in their research as people, not objects to be exploited or mined for information(Valentine 1997:112).

My intention has not been to produce unbiased research but to present my ideas and possible explanations to the people I have interviewed, and get their views in return.

Some of my informants may have expressed personal views and attitudes which are not the same as the official views of the organization they are a member of. Also, I was given a glimpse into an organizational field which struggles with some internal conflicts and frustrations between central people in the organizations. However, one of my informants asked me not to let these conflicts become a central part of the thesis and I will respect this wish.

#### **4.1.2 Preparation for interviews**

Some of my questions were prepared before entering the interviews. The questions I have asked in all of my conversations have covered the *background of the interviewees*, their *connections to other activists* (through organizations or informal groups), their *ideological standpoints* (e.g. possible mentors) and

whether they were *involved in other issues* (e.g. human rights or environmental protection). I also asked what they thought of the *status of Animal Ethics in Norway*, and if they had *any suggestions as to how this could be explained*.

Throughout the conversations other questions came up, however, making my interviews much more interesting than I hoped for. A selection of these questions and the answers I got will be presented at the end.

Starting off with my interviews, I made investigations as to who to contact. For the most part, I chose to e-mail them and ask if they were interested in being of assistance. The decision to make contact through e-mail was made for the simple fact that many of the organisations and informants actually stated on their homepages that this was preferred. Almost everyone turned out to be very positive and helpful, and the ones who never replied I wrote off as “probably not the correct e-mail address”. I had hoped to get in contact with people from the Norwegian branch of the ALF, and through their homepage I was able to make a request for informants on their private mailing-lists. Even with a guarantee of anonymity, I got no response. My next attempt was to e-mail them a short questionnaire. Designed to get as much information as possible with few questions and with my private address if someone wished to send it anonymously back to me, I hoped for at least a couple of answers. Still, I got nothing. In the end, it was only by coincidence that I managed to get in touch with activists claiming to support the Norwegian ALF.

To get in touch with more informants, I have used the “Snowballing”-tactic, which implies that the researcher builds up layers of contacts through an initial contact (Valentine 1997:116). To some extent, this has worked for me. One explanation can be that this has been perceived as an informal, but serious, way of getting in touch. From early on it was clear that I had indeed chosen a field in which illegal activities are being both performed and investigated, and where outsiders are not easily accepted. One of my challenges has been to create trust between me as a researcher, and my informants, especially within the Animal

Liberation Front. With this in mind, I had to make the decision not to make any recordings of my interviews. Instead I chose to make summaries from my interviews shortly after conducting them. I was fortunate to have the help of my informants, who offered to read through my summary afterwards and to make comments and corrections where needed.

Upon request I have granted some of the people I have spoken to anonymity. As the reader will notice, I distinguish between “interviewees” and “informants”. My interviewees are people representing organizations and other actors in the field, but who are also speaking as individuals. My informants are people who did not want to be named.

One of my main questions at the start of this thesis was why Animal Ethics has become a “low status” issue in Norway. I therefore started to investigate how the animal welfareists and animal rightists felt their “fighting cause” was perceived by the public. This was because it would give me pointers as to what the status of animal welfare and animal rights is in Norway.

As stated earlier, I have used my personal interest in the topic as an entering point. Through my work with the thesis I was able to experience for myself what it might be like to be concerned with animal ethics. On more than one occasion I felt that I had to defend my choice of topic for my thesis, and was challenged by the fact that so many other topics may have been “more important”, or even “more accepted”, such as writing a thesis on poverty and famine. All through the work on this thesis I have encountered the same reaction from people asking me what my thesis is about; they all wonder why I have not chosen to write something *important*, something about human problems like poverty or HIV/Aids. I therefore feel I can relate on some level to the people I have interviewed, and know very well how tiring it is to always have to defend my decision. Even though my personal interest and experiences have not made me an objective researcher, as I have stated earlier it has not been the aim of this thesis to be un-biased.

## 4.2 Main research findings

This part will give an overview of some of the findings from my interviews. The findings are for the most part sorted into the order in which my interview-questions were presented. However, as stated above, some of my interviews raised new questions, and a selection of these will be portrayed at the end as “Other findings”.

### 4.2.1 Main interview findings

#### *Background for involvement with animal welfare and animal rights*

I have asked my respondents to answer how they first got engaged in this field. I expected to find that networks of friends and family would influence their involvement. I also expected to see an involvement in the field of animal welfare and animal rights based on a sentimental connection to animals.

Friends and school seems to be of relevance as to how and why activists came into contact and became involved in the issue. One of my interviewees contended that his involvement was built up gradually, and was further heightened when he was given a school paper in high school, where he choose Animal Ethics as a starting point (Interview: S.B 2007).

One of my informants, previously connected to the Norwegian ALF (DFF), used his connection to the punk-rock milieu in the early 1990s. This milieu had according to him an increasing awareness towards injustice and focused on human rights as well as environmental and animal rights, often expressed through lyrics. Attachment to the milieu helped introduce like-minded individuals to each other, and often strong friendship ties were formed which in turn was how my informant became involved in the illegal actions for which he was imprisoned (Interview: A.E 2007). As seen in the statements and principles of the ALF, much of their “success” is attributed to the strong ties and trust



within an activist group, and the findings are therefore not unexpected. This form of activism would not be expected to last very long if the people involved were to inform on each other.

In my conversations with Siri Martinsen, the leader of NOAH, she opened up for the possibility of “self reflections” as a factor of involvement (Martinsen 2007). This has to a certain degree been supported by others.

### *Connections to other activists*

In addition to the formal networks of activists represented in the organizations, some informal networks seem to exist, such as the ALF and “Steng Løken Gård” campaign. My impression from the interviews is that the informal networks consist of friends and acquaintances. Nevertheless, the informal networks operating in Norway are very small, almost non-existent. Some form of network exists around those activists that are still active, and inactive activists may appear on demonstrations and other gatherings.

### *Ideological Influences*

Several of my interviewees stated that, amongst others, Singer and Regan had been of influence in developing their thoughts around the issue of Animal Ethics. Live Kleveland stated that the ideological standpoints of NAPA were drawn from different theorists, and their ideological platform was developed by selecting the “best from the best” (Kleveland 2007). One informant responded that his standpoints were influenced by Deep Ecology and Arne Næss (Interview: S.B 2007). Another informant was unable to state one “mentor”, but described general critical attitudes towards the system and the society as the backbone for their actions (Interview: A.E.2007).

### *Involvement in other issues*

As shown earlier, there is strong resistance towards attributing nonhuman animals with only instrumental value within the Animal Rights ideology. Proponents of Animal Rights argue for radical changes in society regarding the way we treat nonhuman animals. One of my working hypotheses has been that fundamental system critical attitudes can be seen amongst animal rights activists. It is therefore expected that my findings will show that people involved in animal rights activism are also engaged in other ideological issues such as environmental protection and human rights, in reference to question three presented in chapter 1. My interviewees and informants seem to share the same interest in all issues concerning injustice towards both animals and humans, and even the environment. One informant explained an overall involvement in “*Green politics*”, and argued that his involvement in different issues could be tied together through “the Deep Ecology’s message that life (humans, animals and nature) has an intrinsic value, independent of possible utilitarian value, and the respect for all fellow creatures” (Interview: S.B 2007, my translation).

One of my interviewees maintained that even though her choice of fighting cause was Animal Rights, she did not “hate children or poor people and want them to suffer”. For her, it was a matter of choosing a cause that was right for her (Martinsen 2007). The same was argued by my informant previously connected to the DFF, who argued that because of limitations in time it was in fact necessary to make a decision as to what to fight for. As the activism became increasingly time-demanding, it became clear to him that his involvement in other issues was not possible (Interview: A.E 2007).

### *The status of Norwegian animals*

This thesis suggests that Norwegians suffer from a certain “national arrogance” when it comes to how we believe our animals are being treated, in reference to research question one presented in chapter 1. In Chapter 3 of this thesis focus was put on the current status of Norwegian animals, by looking closer at the

attitudes of both the Norwegian government and the population. This thesis has drawn on the assumption that the situation of animals in Norway is perceived to be quite good by the government and the general public. However, the views of people concerned with animal protection in Norway seem to contradict this.

During my interviews with central people from the three nationwide organizations, NSPA, NAPA and NOAH, a situation was described in which Norwegian animals live under appalling conditions. According to Gram in NSPA, there have not been any substantial changes in the living conditions of animals in the last thirty years (Gram 2007). Gram points to the European Union, which has accepted the status of animals as sentient beings. Whether this has changed the situation of animals in the European Union is unknown. As we have seen, great expectations are tied to the new Norwegian Animal Protection Act, although no conclusive answers have been received as to when this will happen.

### *The status of the ones trying to protect the animals*

As argued above by Lem (1996), there is something “dishonourable” with animal protection in Norway. I have asked my interviewees and informants to describe their experiences of how their cause is being met by other people. One informant told me that he was met with many positive attitudes, but others, which he calls “aggressive ignorants”, reject the inherent value of animals and may react with anger when confronted with the issue of animal rights. Some also argue that humans should be prioritized before animals (Interview: S.B. 2007). He goes to argue that the public opinion is generally more positive if the “Bambi-factor” is present (that is, if the animals in question are “cute” enough to invoke sympathy). From politicians, however, they are often met with “ignorance”, which according to him can be explained with the majority’s anthropocentric worldview (Interview: S.B 2007).

### 4.2.2 Other Findings

As stated above, some of my interviews resulted in the discussion of other interesting topics. The following will give a brief presentation of these.

#### *Attitudes towards violent and illegal actions*

All three of the Norwegian organizations take a stand against the use of violent and illegal means in actions concerning animal protection. The NSPA's position is that these types of actions are totally unacceptable, and according to Gram (2007) violent actions focus only on a short-term perspective and a wish to draw media attention. "Sensationalist journalism" has according to Gram become a problem for the movement, since it puts every form of animal activism and work for animal protection in the same box. When animal activists and "dyrevernere" are portrayed by the media as "crazy" and "hysterical", this puts additional pressure on the serious actors on the field, according to Gram (2007). NAPA's leader, Live Kleveland, also expressed frustration about the activists executing illegal and violent actions. As we have seen NAPA argue against the use of violent actions, and Kleveland agreed with the views that this puts unnecessary focus on the "wrong" parts of their work, and may even influence the public opinion in a negative direction (Kleveland 2007). A grouping like the Norwegian ALF seems to have contributed to media attention that has not been beneficial for the more moderate parts of the field.

#### *How the actions of a few inflict upon how the majority*

There seems to be an understanding among the more moderate part of the field that some of the actions taken by supporters of more radical action forms are damaging the reputation of the whole movement. The damage is especially seen in the media coverage of the radical actions, where "dyrevernere" are portrayed as one homogeneous group. Whether this is a conscious choice by the media is not clear, but this way of presenting a whole field without showing the inner

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complexities has had consequences for the movement which may never be fully understood.

One consequence seems to be how the movement is perceived. In a number of cases, advocates for animal issues in Norway have been seen as sentimental and “fond of the animals”, and are not taken seriously because of their seemingly “emotion based” claims. As argued by Singer (1975) this may contribute to the issues not being taken seriously on the political front.

### *A new form of activism?*

During the last years the animal welfare and animal rights organizations have put a new method into use; to file charges against institutions which in their eyes break the Animal Protection Laws. One example of this was when the NSPA filed charges against the producers of the TV show “Robinson” and the TV channel TV3 in 2003, for failing to respect the Animal Protection Act<sup>47</sup>. Also, NSPA and NOAH have on a couple of occasions converged in filing charges against several fur farms at different locations in Norway<sup>48</sup>. According to Martinsen (2007) this has attracted a great deal of publicity, but has had varying success in changing the living conditions of the animals in question. Martinsen claim that in a couple of cases there have been no investigations of the law breaking conditions that are filed. In one case, Martinsen claims that in one of the districts in question, the police made their statement about the conditions of a fur farm to the media before even receiving the charges from NOAH. And according to Martinsen, the police sergeant claimed that the fur farm was conforming to the rules, and that the conditions of the animals were acceptable (Ibid.).

There is also the question of not misusing the “filing charges” tool, and in turn creating a sort of “inflation” on the case in the media. If too many charges are

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<sup>47</sup> [http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20031017\\_robinson\\_anmeldelse.shtml](http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20031017_robinson_anmeldelse.shtml) [Cited 15.06.2007]

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20060206\\_pelsdyrfarmer.shtml](http://www.dyrebeskyttelsen.no/aktuelt/20060206_pelsdyrfarmer.shtml) [Cited 15.06.2007]

filed and too many press releases are put out, it would be expected that the media would lose interest because it would no longer have a sort of “sensational” impression anymore (Martinsen 2007). The same would be expected of other tools used by the organizations to attract the media’s, and then also the public’s, attention, like the use of nudity or grotesque pictures in actions fronting the “Fur Free” alternative.

### *Economic support from the government*

Both NSPA and NAPA reported to have received monetary funding amounting to around NoK 100,000 a year from the Norwegian government (Ministry of Agriculture and Food). NOAH on their part has only applied for governmental economic support to run their members’ magazine “NOAH’s Ark” but this was turned down. According to Martinsen (2007) the organization has taken pride in this economic independence which has been seen as part of a “rebellious tradition”. However, in expressing her personal view Martinsen states that NOAH should have access to economic support. Their previous application for economic support was directed to the Ministry of the Environment. As we have seen earlier however, this Ministry has not included animal welfare and animal rights on their agenda, and curiously the right place to direct such applications would be the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

### **4.2.3 Examination of findings**

Due to the low response of candidates for interviews, my research findings should not be seen as conclusive. Nevertheless, it is my claim that the interviews provide a representative picture of the views and arguments of a group of people that have remained under researched.

My findings show that people active in the radical Animal Ethics field in Norway seem to get involved in these issues mainly through the influence of friends and

school. Additionally, self-reflections were presented as a possible entering point into this field. However, it would be expected that these self-reflections originate from somewhere, and could possibly be tied to the influence of friends and/or family. I was intrigued to find that informal networks of activists exists, some of them only showing their commitment to the case in larger demonstrations and other gatherings. This could be evidence of several things; however it is my belief that in most cases these inactive activists have changed their level of commitment due to changes in life-situation (for example due to marriage, children and work). This is supported by the evidence of active activists being of a certain age (between 18 and 25), which is the temporary evidence shown by Berg (2007) presented in the following chapter.

I had expected to find stronger evidence of ideological influences, especially as a platform for the organizations. The case seems, however, to be that the organizations to a large degree combine different theorists and make their “own” platform. As in the example of the NAPA, Kleveland (2007) argued that the organization did not draw on one specific theory, but rather a selection. Keeping in mind that Animal Welfare and the Animal Liberation movement have opposing views on use versus no-use, I was surprised to learn that the NSPA combine these two directions in their operations. Also NOAH seems to distance themselves from this separation. They make use of both Peter Singer’s utilitarian view and Tom Regan’s ethics of rights, both of whom by many would be argued to be in strong opposition to each other.

As presented above, several of my interviewees and informants claimed involvement in other issues as well as Animal Ethics. The issues ranged from human rights (and hereunder anti-racism) to environmental issues. This was expected to be a result of general critical attitudes towards the system, as stated in my research question three. My research findings support this to some extent.

It has been argued previously in this thesis that issues of Animal Ethics have not gained status as important in Norway, and have been excluded from the

environmental field. In addition, I have argued that Norway suffers from a national arrogance when it comes to the current situation of Norwegian animals (research question one). The findings in my interviews seem to support this, and both my interviewees and my informants described a situation where the public seem to think that Norwegian animals have the “world’s best living conditions”. The people I have interviewed argued the opposite, and worked to improve the living conditions for Norwegian animals, which is a cause often seen as not worthy (or “dishonourable”, as argued by Lem (1996)). My interviewees and informants have all expressed that they are not always met with respect and acknowledgement when it comes to their choice of fighting cause. The cause is often met with what I for the sake of argument here will refer to as “extreme point arguments”. This can best be described by picturing a situation where an activist concerned with issues of animal liberation is asked what they “do for a living?” upon which the activist replies “I am concerned with animal liberation.” This almost always results in a reaction, as explained to me by my interviewees and informants, of disbelief from the person asking the question. Following this, the activist will immediately be cornered with an “extreme point argument”, demanding answers as to why the activist is not helping *humans* instead of animals.

As explained above, my interviews made way for other interesting questions. One of my most interesting findings was how the organizations have made use of the media and their drive for the most sensational headlines, or what was called “sensationalist journalism”. This has to some extent worked as a spark in getting media’s attention to the problems, but it can also be a two-edged sword. Gundersen (1990) explains how the development of more aggressive sensationalist journalism experienced by the Norwegian environmental movement in the 1980s had a negative impact on the movement, a “boomerang-effect” (Ibid: 109). According to Gundersen, “any PR is good PR” does not apply for serious, hard working environmental organizations. For them this was catastrophic (Ibid: 109).



The organizations have shown strong efforts in trying to take control of the media coverage of different events and actions. This is seen in the campaign to close down Løken Gård, and more specifically the action on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2007, where the media covered only what took place after the joint action. However, the efforts of the organizations have not resulted in higher acceptance from the media and the public. The actions of activists claiming to be part of the Norwegian ALF have had an impact on the more moderate animal protectionists and animal rightists. Several of my informants have expressed frustration and even sadness because they feel their message is being torpedoed by violent actions. This is according to them not the right way to go, and is not working for the best of the animals. In general I am left with the impression that people working in the field of animal welfare and animal rights are extremely passionate for their cause.

While both the NSPA and NAPA work for a radical cause using non-radical means, activists from NOAH use more radical means. Still, they seem to have a clear perception of what is acceptable in Norwegian society. Interestingly, NOAH has a history of supporting illegal actions. Several NOAH activists were during the 1990s suspected of illegal actions towards the fur industry and several slaughterhouses. It seems that however hard NOAH has worked to rid themselves of this reputation, they still have not succeeded. It can therefore be concluded that the actions of a few activists have had massive impacts on the whole field of Animal Ethics in Norway.

While the organizations distance themselves from illegal actions, new methods of activism have been invented. One such method is the use of the legal system in filing charges against people breaking the Animal Protection Act. The NSPA, NOAH and NAPA have all used this method, both for drawing attention to a case and also to set an example. However, this method should be used with caution, as recognized by Martinsen (2007). The method may become victim of inflation, and the organizations should therefore only use the method in the most serious

cases. This, in turn, can be argued to be exactly the opposite of the intention of Animal Ethics in the first place, which is to fight for acceptance of the value of the individual animal.

This thesis has argued that economic support from the government may influence how an organization is perceived by the public. Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002) see it as problematical that the government may grant economic support to selected organizations, often those who have the expertise to formulate adequate applications. This can contribute to the legitimization, and possible exclusion, of an organization. It can also contribute to the organizations reputation as unfriendly towards the government, if the organization is denied such economic support (Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes 2002). As seen above, NOAH is the only organization of the field of Animal Ethics that does not receive economic support from the government.

### 4.3 Summary of chapter 4

In this chapter I have discussed some of the methodological issues I encountered when working with this thesis. Moreover, I have presented an overview of the findings from my interviews with actors on the field of animal ethics in Norway. Although these findings cannot be seen as conclusive, it has provided useful information for further debate. Research questions one and three have been of interest in this chapter. As we have seen, my interviewees and informants confirmed their interest in issues concerning injustice, towards for example humans, animals and the environment. The interesting conclusion to this was that the people I have interviewed argued that their connections to animal ethics a deliberate choice of fighting cause. In relevance to research question one, regarding Norway's "national arrogance" towards animals, my interviewees and informants presented arguments of the situation of animals as not being as good as they argue we are led to believe by the government. In addition, I have

presented arguments that the status of “dyrevernerne” is “dishonourable” as stated by Lem (1996, 2007). The low status of issues of animal ethics was presented in chapter 3, and has been confirmed in my interviews with people from the field of animal ethics.

An interesting finding in this chapter has been that there has been a development of new methods, or a new form of activism, by the organizations. The organizations have increasingly used filing charges against people they argue violate the Animal Protection Act. This is an instrument that should be used with caution, because of the risk of devaluation.

The organizations portrayed in this chapter have all argued against the use of illegal and violent actions. Both NOAH and NAPA have declared their opposition to violent and illegal actions. Interestingly, there are informal groups of people that argue for the use of such methods. The following chapter give attention to these groups, and discuss animal liberation actions as civil disobedience. My arguments will be supported by presenting research findings from my interviews with the police authorities and a Norwegian ALF-activist. In addition, a range of arguments drawn from the Norwegian ALF website will be presented.

## **5. Animal Liberation in Norway - acts of civil disobedience?**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the actions of radical animal liberation activists in the context of the concept of civil disobedience. Hagtvet (1981) questions how far our “[...] duty to be obedient towards the authorities” goes (Hagtvet 1981:19, my translation). Singer (1974) also questions this and asks “Why, or under what conditions and circumstances, ought we to obey the law?” (Singer 1974: v). The focus of this chapter is those who are breaking the law, and society’s reactions towards these “disobedient” citizens. There are few examples of civil disobedience performed in Norway. One possible explanation can be that close connections to the “people in power” (i.e. state friendliness) seem to argue against the use of violent direct actions in countries such as Norway, as argued by Arne Næss (1999). At least, it seems that there are only a few selected causes which allow for civil disobedience, like for instance human rights and environmental protection.

The chapter will start with a definition of civil disobedience, drawn from Hagtvet (1981), before presenting the contribution made by Persen and Johansen (1998) discussing the concept of civil disobedience taking into consideration five demands. The argumentations put forward in this chapter will rest on the above mentioned arguments. It is important to mention that these are not objective contributions. While Hagtvet represents the outsider-position, Persen and Johansen clearly represent an insider-position to the discussion. The chapter present research findings not covered in chapter 4. As explained above, I have made the decision to separate my findings, because this in my opinion will give a more complete coverage of the field of Animal Ethics in Norway. In light of the

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discussion of the uncritical use of the label “dyreverner” discussed in chapter 3, this is also a suitable distinction.

## 5.2 What is civil disobedience?

Civil disobedience illuminates the conflict between the legal and the legitimate, or in other words what is stated in the laws and what is morally valid and acceptable. When conflicts between legal and legitimate appear, some would argue that the individuals in a society have an obligation to act upon it and make it clear that changes are needed (e.g. Singer 1974). Civil disobedience is defined by Hagtvet (1981) as “[...] limited [illegal] actions with the goal to capture the public’s attention about perceived injustice – an injustice which the political system has not managed to make right” (Hagtvet 1981:18, my translation). A person or a group conducting a civil disobedient action is consciously breaking the law on a point-by-point manner, according to Hagtvet (Ibid.). Civil disobedience should be separated from crimes with the sole purpose of gain, because, as Hagtvet argues, it implies other reasons for breaking the law. People who conduct civil disobedience will do so because of their conscience and conviction of a particular cause (Ibid.).

Persen and Johansen (1998) defines civil disobedience as “conscious, non-violent, illegal actions executed in openness, with a goal to influence social or ethical conditions that are perceived as serious by the participants[of the action]” (Persen and Johansen 1998:24, my translation). The cause of the actions will be seen as so important by the participants (activists) that breaking the law is both necessary and needed (Persen and Johansen 1998). According to Persen and Johansen (Ibid.) however, every civil disobedient action should meet certain demands. These demands will be briefly presented here, and then drawn upon further below.

First of all, the action should be conducted with as high a degree of *openness* as possible, to ensure the dialogue between the parties of a conflict, and also to give the action a “face”. By focusing on a high degree of openness, Persen and Johansen (1998) argue that the civil disobedient action is more applicable as a communicative tool, and that:

[...] actions that are carried out in complete secrecy prevent every dialogue between the parties in a conflict. Secrecy decreases the possibilities of using the actions as a communicative means, a dialogue, and thereby makes it difficult to convince more people of the justifiability and sensibility of the cause one is fighting for (Persen and Johansen 1998:26, my translation)

When the demand for openness is not met, the focus of the debate may drift to the form of action rather than the issues behind the action. The demand for openness is therefore important with respect to both the media coverage and to the changes in the public opinion. According to Persen and Johansen (1998) the demand for openness in civil disobedience is the most important one, because it seems meaningless (to them) to function in civil society without openness. This is a way of separating civil disobedience from other forms of illegal political activities. Secondly, a civil disobedient action should be non-violent, following the theories of non-violence derived from Ghandi. Arne Næss (1999) argues for the use of Gandhian principles of non-violence in actions. There is, according to Næss, less need for non-violent action forms in Scandinavia than in for example the US, because the democratic system of Scandinavian countries makes it less necessary to perform non-violent actions to get a point through (Næss 1999). Still, there are a number of examples of radical activists making use of what in their eyes are seen as non-violent methods, such as sabotage and vandalism.

A non-violent action requires that no humans are hurt or killed. Also, non-violence should avoid “psychological violence” and not attack individuals in the conflict. The third demand handles the disobedient aspect of a civil disobedient action. Persen and Johansen (1998) distinguish between direct and indirect civil disobedience. Direct civil disobedience is when the actual law is broken, in which discontent is shown. With indirect civil disobedience, the laws that are broken are not the same as those wanted changed.

Finally, the fourth demand concerns the activists' *Serious Conviction*, and states that the action should be carried out after "careful considerations" (Persen and Johansen 1998:45). Whether or not the action is "carefully considered" by the activists would be close to impossible to control or measure, and depend to a large extent on the arguments and reasons behind the activist's decision to conduct the action. As every activist may have different arguments and reasons for their actions, this demand goes into the individual psyche or consciousness, and theorists like Hengren (1990) have according to Persen and Johansen (Ibid.) chosen to disregard this demand in his definition of civil disobedience. Still, this demand is fulfilled when a real and strong commitment exist, according to Persen and Johansen (Ibid.). The fifth and final demand stipulated by Persen and Johansen is the demand for a *Social and/or Ethical aim*. This demand requires the activist not to act on the basis of personal and private matters, but with an aim to influence societal development in a positive direction, or what is believed to be a positive direction by the activist.

When looking closer at the five demands portrayed above, some questions arise. It is difficult to see how Persen and Johansen intend to implement these demands into civil disobedient actions. Especially the fourth and fifth demand seems difficult to implement because it makes room for the private thoughts and rationalizations of individuals, which are impossible to measure. And while Persen and Johansens see these five demands as important in defining civil disobedience, Hagtvet (1981) argues for the importance of not having too stringent demands in the definition of civil disobedience. Hagtvet sees civil disobedience as such an important tool that strong demands would make it more difficult to make to make use of (Ibid.).

### 5.3 Civil disobedience as an expression

Several difficulties are raised when trying to explain the reasons and reasoning behind civil disobedient actions. Although the disobedient citizen may feel that his or her actions are legitimate, society may not feel the same way. Here, society is represented by the law and the enforcers of the law (police authorities and the judicial system). This chapter will focus on two ways of legitimizing civil disobedience, as laid out by Hagtvet (1981).

First, the reason to perform civil disobedience may be political. This way of legitimizing civil disobedience operates under the precondition that the citizen may break the law, if the citizen is not able to be heard. According to Hagtvet “[...] the obedience is contingent of the actual possibilities a minority has to be heard”, and “only as far as the minority is able to be in a majority-position is the duty to be obedient absolute” (Hagtvet 1981:45, my translation). In a situation where the minority is not heard, a citizen may legitimately break laws that are perceived to be unjust. In addition, the government are not seen as being in the position to demand obedient behaviour if a “group is systematically being ignored” (Hagtvet 1981:49). However, challenges are tied both to the concept of a minority and to a groups experience of being ignored, which makes the political reason behind a civil disobedient action difficult.

The second reason for civil disobedience is ethical. This reason takes the position that the law is not set outside of moral judgement. Hagtvet states that:

That ethical norms have precedence before juridical have been recognized, at least within Norwegian legal philosophy, and such a view has also been supported by modern moral philosophy (Hagtvet 1981:53, my translation).

The ethical reasoning behind the choice to conduct an act of civil disobedience is based in the utilitarian view on how to maximize the benefits of a society. As follows, if a civil disobedient act has the intention of benefiting the society on a long-term, such actions may be justified, at least if they take into consideration



the possibilities of success according to Hagtvet (1981). This does not, however, say anything about what's legitimate cause for civil disobedience.

According to ALF's own statements (on their website), their decision to perform their actions in the way that has been witnessed are strongly influenced by the perception of a society in which animals are not being heard and respected. The ALF's fight to liberate the animals could therefore be seen as based in the political reason, where the previously law-obedient citizen is allowed to disregard the actual law. The group of people concerned with the liberation of animals could also be seen as a minority themselves, and may claim that their voices are not being heard and that breaking the law is legitimate.

## 5.4 Acts of civil disobedience in Norway

### 5.4.1 Brief introduction

As explained earlier, differences in defining civil disobedience may give different results when labelling actions as "civil disobedience". The following will not take into consideration the debate on whether or not the action rightfully could be called one of civil disobedience, but give a brief overview of this presence of the form of action in Norway. The focus will then narrow, and I will concentrate on giving an overview of the actions of the Norwegian branch of the ALF.

Persen and Johansen (1998) argue that civil disobedience has deep roots in the Norwegian history, from the fight for freedom of religion by Hans Nielsen Hauge (circa 1798), the refusal to serve military duty, to the workers' movement and their use of civil disobedient actions. In 1970 the "Green Disobedience" emerged, with the actions of Mardøla and Alta, which to Persen and Johansen (1998) set the stage and made civil disobedience a more accepted political form of action. The Norwegian environmentalism movement in particular have used

civil disobedience in actions. For example against gas power plants (e.g. Snøhvit)<sup>49</sup> and also against the military's plans to establish a practice field in Åmot, Hedmark<sup>50</sup>. The environmentalism organisations Nature and Youth (Young Friends of the Earth Norway) and Bellona have used civil disobedience in several of their actions, often been concerned with cases of industrial pollution (Persen and Johansen 1998, Brostigen 2003). Looking closer at the animal protection arena, acts of civil disobedience have, with some possible exceptions, carried out by proponents of Animal Liberation and Animal Rights. This seems certainly to have been the case in Norway.

#### **5.4.2 Dyrenes Frigjøringsfront (DFF): Actions in Norway**

It is difficult to draw any final conclusions as to where to place the responsibility for several of the actions seen in Norway, amongst others against the Norwegian fur industry and the industrial farming represented by some slaughterhouses. Responsibility for several of these has been placed upon, or claimed by, the Norwegian ALF (DFF). In cases where responsibility has been placed on DFF, this is often because of findings on the scene, like graffiti displaying "DFF" and/or other slogans for the DFF. In addition, the website<sup>51</sup> has published press releases from different groups claiming responsibility for mentioned actions. This thesis will not come to any conclusions as to where responsibility lies or whether or not the actions claimed to be by the DFF are actually the work of an DFF group or not. Still, as shown in the presentation of the group in chapter 3, the demand is for the group to follow the ALF/DFF guidelines.

The media is a useful tool when exploring what has happened in society, although it may not give a complete coverage. The following will give a presentation of the media coverage of animal liberation actions by two large,

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49 <http://www.ngo.grida.no/fmg/> [Cited 15.06.2007]

50 [http://nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/nrk\\_hedmark\\_og\\_oppland/3642219.html](http://nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/nrk_hedmark_og_oppland/3642219.html) [Cited 15.06.07]

national newspapers in Norway; Dagbladet and Aftenposten. In addition, the “activist diaries” from the DFF-website has been used as supporting evidence to conclude whether or not the DFF actually claimed responsibility for the action. However, as the website also argues, not all actions have been reported and the activist’s diaries are incomplete.

Some limitations have been done as to what should be mentioned in the following part of the thesis. The actions covered in this part are the ones that I consider the most serious, and often the most violent. This includes liberating animals, either from fur farms or from laboratories, different types of vandalism and other material destruction, and the most violent action seen in Norway so far; the use of arson and fire bombs.

The media may give some pointers as to what stirs in a society, also with respect to some of the marginalised views and radical actions. Additionally, it could be argued that radical groups like the DFF, and also less radical groups and organizations such as those mentioned in Chapter 3, have been known to make use of the media and publicity to draw attention to their cause. However, the information from the media should be used carefully because it may not always show the actual extent of the actions. Some may argue that the backbone of the media is to handle “breaking news”, and this may in consequence lead to some less breaking news to be left out. It would therefore not be wise to view the media’s coverage as the actual truth. This should be taken into account, but is not considered in the following overview of Norwegian activism.

The DFF was especially active in the late 1990s, and most of my findings can be placed in the time period from 1996 to 2004. Several actions with different degrees of seriousness were executed. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1996, Dagbladet reported criminal damage to a shop in the city of Tønsberg. Activists had

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<sup>51</sup> [www.dyrenesfrigjøringsfront.com](http://www.dyrenesfrigjøringsfront.com) [Cited 15.06.2007]

smashed in windows and thrown red paint into the shop, destroying fur coats and other products to the tune of around 60,000 NoK (Gundersen 1996). According to the article the activists also sprayed the logo of DFF on the walls. Later that same year, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, Dagbladet reported that activists had released over one hundred mink from different mink farms in Rogaland. Three shops in Oslo were also vandalised by putting glue in the door locks. Supporters of the DFF claimed responsibility for both of these actions, according to Dagbladet (Kolberg 1996).

The year 1997 seems to have been the most active year for the Norwegian DFF-activists. People claiming membership of the DFF claimed responsibility for several acts of vandalism, sabotage, and arson in the Bergen area. On January 4<sup>th</sup>, Vestlandske Eggentral's head office suffered over 50,000 NoK worth of damage (Jensen 1997a). Jensen (Ibid.) reported in this article that one of the activists stated "We put no limits when it comes to material damage" (my translation). On July 17<sup>th</sup> 1997 activists set fire to a slaughterhouse, Fatland Bergen AS, and two cars outside the slaughterhouse. A press release stated that "As long as animals are being mistreated and killed, the DFF will continue this fight, and the actions will not end until the torture ends. Everyone involved in animal abuse is therefore warned" (Jensen 1997b, my translation). Activists responsible for the actions against Vestlandske Eggentral and Fatland Bergen AS later admitted this during police interrogations (Dagbladet 31.10.1997) and three people was sentenced to jail for "harmful effects by arson"<sup>52</sup> (Henriksen 2007). The actions have been claimed acts of the DFF on the website<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> § 148 cover "various acts of premeditated crime that leads to harmful effects, such as arson, collapse, explosions etc., in which loss of human lives or extensive destruction of others' property may be the consequence, or that leads to this. Convictions under this paragraph may lead to imprisonment for 2 and up to 21 years" [my translation].

[URL: <http://www.lovdatab.no/cgi-wif/wiftdles?doc=/usr/www/lovdata/all/tl-19020522-010-018.html&emne=%a7+148&&>] [Cited 15.06.2007]

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.dyrenesfrigjøringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1122165896&archive=&start\\_from=&ucat=1&](http://www.dyrenesfrigjøringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1122165896&archive=&start_from=&ucat=1&) [Cited 15.06.2007]

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After these actions and the following convictions it seems the activism was subdued, at least for a period of time. This is also in accordance with observations on the DFF-website, where the activist diaries show much less activity, at least regarding the most violent actions, between 1997 and 2002. The actions in this period were limited to small-scale vandalism, from gluing the locks in fur shops, drawing graffiti and slogan paintings, to releasing animals from fur farms and laboratories. This relative silence lasted until March 9<sup>th</sup> 2003 when two factories, one in Hamar, Hedmark and one in Treungen, Telemark, producing fodder for fur animals, were attacked. Dagbladet reported that five cars and two boats were destroyed with fire bombs. The costs were estimated to have been between 2 and 3 million NoK. The DFF admitted responsibility for the actions in an e-mail to Dagbladet and claimed: “the factories play a fundamental role in the Norwegian fur industry’s assaults, and are therefore a strategic target in the fight against the Norwegian fur industry” (Tangnes and Blomquist 2003, Altmann 2003, my translation). Two more incidents of arson were seen before 2003 ended, one in Gol, Hallingdal in July and one in Otterøya, Namsos in August. Both claimed by the DFF in press releases to the media and on the DFF-website (Stokkan 2003). The year 2004 started off with threats of escalations in the actions against the fur industry by DFF (Aftenposten 01.01.2004, Dagbladet 02.01.2004). The DFF executed several sabotage actions that year with the intent of causing financial hardships for shops selling fur, slaughterhouses, and McDonalds. In April 2004 Aftenposten and Dagbladet reported that two people had been charged for the actions in Treungen, Telemark which had been carried out on March 9<sup>th</sup> 2003. The accused were both males, in their twenties. One of them was of Swedish nationality (Johansen 2004, Altmann 2004).

The year 2004 is the last year of entries in the “activist diaries” on the DFF-website, and the media reported no incidents connected to such activities up until February 2006, when the offices of a company planning to develop facilities for fur production (Kaldsvarden Næringspark AS) in Hå, Rogaland was attacked (VG Nett 25.02.2006, Stavanger Aftenblad Nett 26.02.2006). The action seems

to have been passed in silence by the rest of the media. Furthermore, not much activity has been reported between 2005 and to the present (2007), and the only contributions from animal protectors that seem to get attention is when they get “almost naked” in front of the Parliament, or when they carry out similar activities (Akkouh 2006).

Efforts have been made by the Norwegian police authorities to investigate these actions, and in 2003 *the Investigative Unit for Fur-related crime* was established. This worked as a centralised unit with its main base in Telemark Police Precinct. As explained earlier, the ALF/DFF functions as an informal network of groups. This has not been working to the police authorities’ advantage. The Investigative Unit struggled with the lack of evidence left on the crime scene, and had to dismiss several of their charges. Two years after it was established the Unit was closed down (Ravndal 2005).

A lack of evidence has been a recurring problem in all of the investigations of crimes related to animal rights activism. Although the DFF claim responsibility for several actions there has been little solid evidence to warrant prosecution against individual DFF-supporters. The investigations encountered problems in unveiling central leaders, and there were no formal networks to uncover (Berg 2007).

## 5.5 Animal Liberation activism - The case of DFF

The aim of this part is to provide an overview of the findings from my interviews and other research. As explained earlier, I chose to separate between the organizations and the DFF, mainly because of practical reasons but also because I felt this was appropriate in the light of the discussion of the generalizations of the field from other contributors (e.g. newspapers).

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### 5.5.1 Main research findings

In Norway there have been few convictions for crimes related to animal liberation or animal rights activism. People connected to this form of activism have mainly been convicted for damaging property and violation of the Police Law §5 (refusal to comply with Police orders). In addition to this, three people were convicted of causing damage by arson in the 1997 action against Fatland slaughterhouse in Bergen. Few have been convicted for such crimes, perhaps between five and ten people in total (Henriksen 2007). The actions seem to be more or less evenly distributed between genders, but male activists seem to be responsible for the most serious causes. The general age of people convicted for the most serious crimes is between 20 and 30, and it is predominantly people with connections to the large cities that are represented, according to Henriksen (2007).

It is difficult to draw any conclusions as to why young people choose a radical and violent form of expressing themselves. There is a tendency that people connected to animal liberation activism also are connected to previous violent behaviour, also called a “criminal career”, even before entering the animal liberation milieu (Berg 2007). Lines may also be drawn between violent animal rights activism and other forms of violent activism. Incidents have been seen where people known from DFF-actions have been involved in violent anti-racism demonstrations (Bergens Tidende 12.01.2004). This was confirmed by Berg (2007). It may be argued that animal rights, animal liberation and activism is only exhausting already aggressive behaviour. However, it would be almost impossible to conclude this based on the few cases we have seen in Norway.

Activism connected to animal liberation has been concentrated around the radical left-wing, and is seen in anarchistic milieus like the Blitz<sup>54</sup>. Extensive use of

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.blitz.no/nettverket/> [Cited 15.06.2007]

provocative language and agents are seen, like comparing animals in captivity and laboratory animals with the “Holocaust” and “Bergen-Belsen”. Evocative pictures from these prisoner camps are compared with the situation of animals in human captivity, and could be seen as an effective instrument in creating the desired shock effect (Berg 2007).

One of my informants explained that the use of violent and radical actions was not the only instrument these activists used. Many of them distributed leaflets and participated on information stands. Some would also be active members of the organisation NOAH. Although NOAH today distances itself strongly from any form of violent activism, the early development of this organisation was not at all clear on this point. The first issues of NOAH’s Ark show how the organisation started off with strong focus on “Animal Liberation”, and was even called “Noah – The animal liberation front” in 1991 (NOAH’S Ark Nr. 5 1991). In the 6<sup>th</sup> issue an article by Thomas Robsahm, who in 1992 directed the movie “Black Panthers”, presenting a positive description of the actions of a group of animal liberators. In the article “Liberate!”, Robsahm portray the Swedish ALF and their actions, and the article is closed off with a clear call for action from Norwegian sympathizers of the ALF guidelines: “...a last question to us law-abiding Norwegians: When shall we too lose our patience?” (Robsahm 1991, my translation). Later issues of NOAH’s Ark also showed a strong focus on the call for animal liberation, with different means, but during 1994 it seems to have become more oriented towards informative articles and more publicly accepted forms of action.

The alleged connections between the DFF to NOAH in the 1990s are also seen in the media coverage of the actions against Fatland AS in 1997, where several of the central members of NOAH Bergen was arrested under the suspicion of being responsible for the action (Dagbladet 08.10.1997). They were later cleared of all charges (Dagbladet 31.10.1997). Since mid-90s, NOAH has, with varying success, been working hard to rid themselves of the connections to the DFF and



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the illegal actions. In chapter 3 I argued that uncritical use of the label “dyreverner” has to some extent worked against the Norwegian organisations concerned with issues of animal protection and animal liberation. The media and society in general may be under the perception that the ties between these organisations and the violent and illegal acts of the DFF are carried out by the same people. However, this is not a conclusion supported by my findings. The ties seen in the early 1990s between NOAH and DFF appear to have vanished, and NOAH has distanced themselves from any form of violent or illegal activity for at least the past ten years (Martinsen 2007).

According to my informant, a former member of NOAH, one of the reasons for his decision to take illegal action was a feeling not being able to get through with the more accepted tools. This DFF-activist criticized NOAH for not applying the appropriate instruments to create changes needed. Although the society’s reaction was severe he claims he does not regret his actions, and in the case against him he argued that his actions were based in defence of innocent animals. During his time in prison he also developed connections to the international animal activists’ milieu, and he claimed that he was receiving up to twenty support letters a day through activist support networks such as Bite Back<sup>55</sup> and No Compromise<sup>56</sup> (Interview: A.E 2007). These networks can be argued to give activists status as martyrs. This could also be a type of action for those who support the cause and the means, but who do not wish to perform illegal actions themselves.

### **5.5.2 Arguments from the DFF**

One of the intentions of this thesis was to show the reasoning and rationalisations behind the actions of radical activists. Regrettably, and in spite of my efforts, it

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.directaction.info/prisoners.htm> [Cited 10.07.2007]

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.nocompromise.org/resources/prisoners.html> [Cited 10.07.2007]

has not been possible to get interviews from more than one activist supporting the DFF-guidelines. As such, this interview cannot be seen as giving conclusive answers to the questions I had. However, on close inspection of the DFF-website, some arguments for action can be drawn out, and an assumption could be made that most DFF-activists support these arguments. The DFF-website claims to speak for the DFF-activists. The following will give an overview of some of the arguments and rationalisations made on the website.

The DFF-website states their long-term goal to be the termination of all oppression of animals, and their short-term goal to save as many animal lives as possible. The intention of their illegal direct actions is to achieve the liberation of animals<sup>57</sup>. According to the Website “[...] the activists are most often reflective, able people, who work out from a thought-through ideology, supported by a great many arguments” (Ibid, my translation). The DFF-activists’ illegal direct actions are instruments used for their argued suitability applied to the particular situation. They acknowledge that different methods may be put into use in different situations (Ibid.), but argue that illegal direct actions in the case of for instance a slaughterhouse or a fur farm or a shop selling fur are the most effective. Their arguments are based on the economic damage such actions inflict on a company, and in turn it is their argument that it is economic profit that matters the most for these companies (Ibid.). By “[...] hitting them where it hurts the most, and in a language they understand”, the DFF-activists may be able to force the changes they believe are needed (Ibid, my translation).

Through direct action we also do what we wish to achieve. We want the fur shops and slaughterhouses gone, so we destroy them. We want the animals not to be exploited, killed and abused, and therefore we liberate them. It’s not enough with more strict regulations; the animals have the right to total freedom from slavery (Ibid, my translation).

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[http://www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1121872748&archive=&st\\_art\\_from=&ucat=1&](http://www.dyrenesfrigjoringsfront.com/default.php?subaction=showfull&id=1121872748&archive=&st_art_from=&ucat=1&) [Cited 15.06.2007]

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DFF defends their actions even though the underlying ideology behind is not shared most people in society. They claim that:

The activists fighting against slavery [in North-America] did get neither sympathy nor support from the majority in the population. But as animal rights activists, they still acted, because they felt compelled to do something to change the oppression (Ibid, my translation).

Additionally, they argue that their illegal actions do not threaten democracy but strengthen it by including nonhuman animals as equals in society. DFF claims to be “the Voice of the Voiceless”, and they argue that they fight for those who cannot fight for themselves in their direct actions (Ibid.). They also argue that they are at liberty to break laws because they are following another, and DFF refer to the Norwegian Animal Protection Act which according to DFF states that “[...] you have a right and an obligation to aid animals in distress, if necessary in defiance of the laws” (Ibid, my translation). This may be their interpretation of section 6 of the Norwegian Animal Protection legislation which states that “If someone should come across an animal that is visibly sick, hurt or helpless, he should help the animal to the highest extent possible” (my translation)<sup>58</sup>. For a DFF-activist “[...] it is the moral conviction that it is right to aid animals in distress which legitimates breaking the law” (Ibid, my translation). Openness about DFF-actions has been limited to press releases on the DFF-website and to those given to the media. According to the website, the DFF-activists are more effective when they don’t stay behind and take responsibility and punishment for their actions. In addition, they do not believe that their actions are wrong, and they contend that it is the abuse of the animals that should be punished (Ibid.).

### **5.5.3 Can DFF-actions be defined as civil disobedience?**

As shown above, Persen and Johansen (1998) argue for five demands for an action to be labelled as civil disobedient. This part will go deeper into these five

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.lovdata.no/all/hl-19741220-073.html> [Cited 15.06.2007]

demands, by using the case of DFF as an example. Persen and Johansen (1998) argue that openness in civil disobedient actions is a necessary precondition for using it as a tool for communicating the cause to the public, and that the openness will lead to a more positive response in terms of public opinion. However, openness can be relative and include different varieties of activism. There is according to Persen and Johansen (1998) a difference between openness on a group level and openness on an individual level. In the example of the ALF, both internationally and also in Norway, we see that individuals use masks to cover their identity in their actions. As such, communication is limited to:

[...] painted messages on buildings and, sometimes, partially anonymous press releases to the press and companies. They try almost without exception to avoid getting caught by the police, and have as little openness as possible (my translation) (Persen and Johansen 1998:28, my translation).

A non-violent action requires that people are not hurt or killed. Also, non-violence should avoid “psychological violence” and not attack individuals in the conflict. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2007, activists demonstrating against Løken gård went behind the police cordon and yelled abusive words towards the people living and working at the farm (for example, words like “murderers”). This could be seen as an example of psychological violence, and should according to Persen and Johansen (1998) not be used as an instrument in a civil disobedient action. Discussion may also be made about to what extent one should avoid inflicting pain on all living creatures, and also on nature.

Persen and Johansen (1998) separate between descriptive and normative violence. According to this, “[...] an action that is descriptively violent could be regarded non-violent from a normative point of view” (Ibid: 30, my translation). As such, whether or not an action should be considered non-violent depends on the situation, and also depends on the arguments and rationalisations behind the action. The actions of the ALF are often seen as violent, and therefore outside of the civil disobedient definition of Persen and Johansen (1998). However, the ALF themselves argue that they in fact do not use violence in their actions, and this is supported by their view that “objects” and “property” should not be

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included in the non-violence-demand. This is because things are “dead” or “lifeless” and are not able to feel any pain. According to Persen and Johansen (1998:29), theorists such as Bernt Hagtvet, Joseph Raz, Christian Bay, and Sigmund Kvaløy Setereng have all omitted this demand in their definitions of civil disobedience. Hagtvet argue that some sort of violence may be justified, and that there should be a rational debate around the justifiability of violence in an action (Hagtvet 1981:27).

The third demand handles the disobedient aspect of a civil disobedient action. Persen and Johansen (1998) separate between direct and indirect civil disobedience. Direct civil disobedience is when the actual law is broken, in which discontent is shown. With indirect civil disobedience, the laws that are broken are not the same as those that the activists want to be changed. This is seen for example in the actions of DFF, where the focus has been on a system that is perceived as wrong, and that the Animal Protection Laws are insufficient or even non-existent. To be considered as a civil disobedient action the activist has to break a law. This is in order to put the focus on and change a law or a decision that is seen as unjust or harmful (Persen and Johansen 1998:39). The action is directed towards a political resolution. In the case of ALF, actions have been directed towards fur farms and dealers, slaughterhouses or animal testing facilities and circuses, which as we have seen above, in Norway have exemption from the Animal Protection Act in order to continue their business. One of my informants, belonging to the DFF, claimed that his actions were not illegal because they were carried out for “emergency reasons”. He stood charged for arson in his trial. His claim was disallowed, and he was convicted for the crime in which he stood charged.

According to Persen and Johansen (1998) the demand for disobedience depends only on the intentions of the activists themselves, and is not to be questioned by the police, the court, the media or the opponent (Ibid: 41). This demand is fulfilled if the activists themselves are aware of the possible consequences of

their actions. As we have seen above, DFF-activists are well aware of the illegality of their actions, and they argue for the necessity of such illegal actions to force the changes they see needed.

As previously mentioned, Persen and Johansen also argue for serious conviction as their fourth demand. The action should be carefully considered and be based on the arguments and reasons of the activist, which as we have seen would not be easy to control, because of the expected differences in the arguments and reasons of every individual activist. Persen and Johansen state that the demands are fulfilled if the activist shows a real and strong commitment, and as far as I can see this is the case with the DFF-activists. Also, the actions should be performed with the aim of changing a system that is believed to be wrong, and not for the personal gain of the activists. This fifth demand leaves it up to the activists themselves to decide what's important enough to fight against, and is a demand that is difficult to introduce.

Persen and Johansen (1998) state that actions that are not in accordance with these demands should not be labelled as "civil disobedient". However, the term *private* disobedience is launched. This may be seen as a form of civil disobedience, but one which does not meet all of the five demands. In particular, one of the above mentioned points seems to be left out in a private disobedient action; the demand for openness. The actions of ALF activists are excluded from Persen and Johansen's definition of civil disobedience. However, in Hagtvet's (1981) opinion, a definition of civil disobedience should not be subject to extensive demarcations because this may not be in the best interest for the form of action and tool that civil disobedience is (Ibid.).

While Hagtvet (1981) views civil disobedience as "difficult", Persen and Johansen (1998) view it as "necessary". As we have seen, there is no easy answer to the question of the necessity of civil disobedience. It could (and should) be expected in a democracy that minorities will "rise up" against the state and demand changes where it is believed needed. It has been done, and will be done

in the future. Whether this is “good” or “bad” for democracy depends on what expectations each of us have of our democratic system, and what we want it to represent. Hebert and Jacobsson (1999) write: “[...] the movements practices solidarity in every day life, which may strengthen rather than weaken both the welfare state and democracy” (Ibid: 9, my translation). Many would see this as a “good development”.

## 5.6 Summary of chapter 5

This chapter has been concerned with the presence of the most radical direction within the Animal Ethics in Norway, and has discussed the direct actions of DFF-activists as acts of civil disobedience. The definition of civil disobedience was drawn from Hagtvet (1981) and stated that it is a limited action that has a goal of drawing attention to a case of perceived injustice and by doing so, create changes that for instance political reforms have not managed.

Following this, Persen and Johansen (1998) argued for five demands that should be applied before labelling a direct action “civil disobedient” A civil disobedient action should be open, non-violent, illegal, performed on the grounds of serious conviction and have a social and/or ethical aim. These five demands were then applied on the case of DFF-actions in Norway. In many aspects these direct actions are not in accordance with the demands. For example, a DFF-action is not open, and not non-violent according to the definitions on these terms by Persen and Johansen (1998). They are, however, illegal, as well as a result of serious conviction and show an underlying desire for changes that are not driven by personal gain.

While Persen and Johansen argued for a definition with strong demands, Hagtvet (1981) defended a more inclusive definition, without the demands mentioned above. By demanding too much and having too rigid criteria in defining civil

disobedience, one risks exclusion of the entire form of action. One could therefore argue that civil disobedience as a form of action is an important instrument, although an instrument that should be used with caution.

The illegal and by many accounts un-open actions, although not defined as such by the activists themselves, could be seen as a way of communicating a general displeasure with how society is perceived by a group of people. This chapter has presented the presence and actions of the informal group DFF. The group was most active throughout the 1990s, and conducted several illegal and violent actions, arguing strongly for animal liberation. The DFF use extreme variations of direct actions, and has to a large extent been suffocated by the society's reactions. This chapter has discussed whether or not the direct actions performed by supporters of the ALF-guidelines can be claimed to be civil disobedience. These actions break most of the five demands argued by Persen and Johansen (1998), however, as I have shown these demands are vague and should be discussed further before concluding anything. Nevertheless, as Hagtvet (1981) argue, civil disobedience is an important instrument and should not be subjected to rigid criteria.



## 6. Conclusions

The field of animal ethics, and more specifically animal liberation, in Norway has been a field that have attracted both media and public attention through the radical and sometimes violent direct actions performed. In spite of the radical ideology and actions, and in spite of the somewhat high numbers of activists involved, this has not resulted in the field becoming a popular field of study. The situation seems to be that the field of animal ethics in Norway has been neglected in social science research.

The aim of this thesis has been to give an overview of the presence of radical Animal Ethics, and more directly Animal Liberation activism in Norway. The thesis has been divided into four chapters, designed to function independently. The red thread in this thesis has been the presence of radicalism in society, which in chapter 2 was shown by presenting the issues of radical environmentalism and animal ethics. This chapter gave an overview of the radical ideology, actions and groupings, as a platform for the following chapters.

I wanted to look at both the organizations as well as the actors on the field. In chapter 3, I presented the three organizations working on the field of animal ethics in Norway: The NSPA, NOAH and the NAPA. It was also shown how both NOAH and the NAPA were established by people breaking out of the NSPA. As seen the decisions to break out of NSPA and form new groups was made on different grounds. While NOAH was established by a group of people looking for more radical grounds and wanted to perform more radical actions, NAPA was at first established as a project directed towards the White Paper No 12. From thereon the decision was made to create an entire new, professionalized organization. It was argued that from the standpoint of organizational theory the creation of new organization can be explained by looking at historical factors. The time of establishment of an organization influences how the organization is structured and the appearance, and can therefore be of relevance when the

decision to create a new organization is made. The decision to create a new organization could be a result of it being easier to do so, than to create changes in the old organization.

Even though there are differences between the organizations on the field of animal ethics in Norway, I have shown that the three organizations have been known to work together in some key issues. Three of these issues were in this thesis presented as “campaigns”; the anti-vivisection, “forced to entertain” and the “pelsUT” are all campaigns in which the organizations all seem to have joint attitudes and efforts to work against.

This thesis has argued that the animal ethics have been excluded from the environmental agenda in Norway, a situation which puts the Norwegian animal ethics in a distinctive position when compared to other countries, as stated by Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002). This is explained by looking at the local community orientation and governmental friendliness-argument. We have seen that the issues presented by animal rights can be perceived as a threat to the local communities in Norway, who often rely on primary industries such as farming, fishing, whaling and fur production. These are all industries the animal protection organizations want to put under stricter control, or even abolish. When the organizations focus on these industries they risk being perceived as hostile against the district and regional policies that have become so important in the Norwegian politics. Bortne, Selle and Strømsnes (2002) also argued that the lack of governmental friendliness (high degree of scepticism towards the government) can result in the downfall of the organizations concerned with Animal Ethics.

Chapter 4 was devoted to the methodology and research findings in this case study. The findings in my interviews have to a large degree supported my three research questions presented in chapter 1. First, I have shown that my interviewees and informants argue that there is indeed an incongruent relationship between the public perceptions of, and the actual the living conditions of Norwegian animals. Second, my interviewees and informants

support the argument made in research question two, stating that Animal Ethics have become an illegitimate issue to be concerned with, both as a part of the environmental agenda and as a cause. In research question three, which state that people engaged in Animal Ethics, are involved with other ideological issues also. I have argued that this is evidence of more general system-critical attitudes.

I have chosen to separate between the organizational field in Norway and the informal group DFF. As we have seen, the Norwegian branch of this group, the DFF, has been tied to several violent and illegal actions. The 1990s was an especially active period for DFF, and several activists were convicted for damage by arson. In chapter 5 I presented a discussion of the direct actions of DFF as acts of civil disobedience. The actions of the DFF has been some of the most radical and violent actions in the Norwegian history. Nevertheless, it is an under researched area in social sciences.

The time is not yet set for a new Animal Protection Act in Norway. This is connected to uncertainty for the organizations and actors portrayed in this thesis, and presents challenges to the organizations in their future work. It also provides opportunities for further research in this field.

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