

The ethical value of animals

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Agenda

- 1) The ethical dilemma and the origin of ethical norms (4 min.)
- 2) Philosophical positions towards animal experimentation (5 min.)
- 3) Religious positions towards animal experimentation (5 min.)
- 4) Lund *et al.* survey (5 min.)
- 5) Novo Nordisk survey (4 min.)
- 6) Questions to the audience (7 min.)

The ethical dilemma

Facing an ethical dilemma – e.g. [the use of animals for experimental purposes](#) - one will often experience that this dilemma is already to some extent qualified by a current norm system providing normative ideas*.

The normative ideas may be of [conventional](#) nature ('god tone')

The normative ideas may express a twist towards the [aesthetic](#)

The normative ideas may be subject to [legal](#) consequences

The normative ideas may appear with the authority of [ethical](#) demands ('etiske fordring')

The normative ideas may be subjects to [religious](#) beliefs

The origin ethical norms

Metaphysical (theologian)	Empirical (philosopher)



The origin ethical norms

Metaphysical (theologian)	Empirical (philosopher)
Transcendental	
Non-historical	
Absolute truth	
Good and bad are predefined	
Interface btw God and human	
Free will notion	



The origin ethical norms

Metaphysical (theologian)	Empirical (philosopher)
Transcendental	Reject the transcendental
Non-historical	Cultural formation
Absolute truth	Functional efficacy
Good and bad are predefined	Neither predefined nor conventional
Interface btw God and human	Interiorization
Free will notion	Personal obligation (Superego)



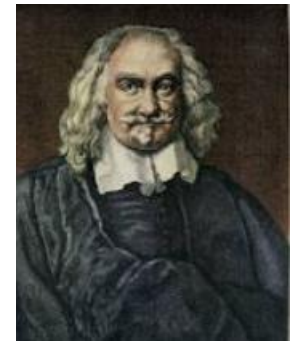
Philosophical positions towards animal experimentation



The Contractarian position

Morality is based on mutual agreement.

- Agreement to the benefit of all parties; when there is no mutual advantage, there are no moral obligations.
- The cooperation forms agreements, and the agreements form the moral obligations.
- Antroposcentric (only the strong part is included in the agreement)

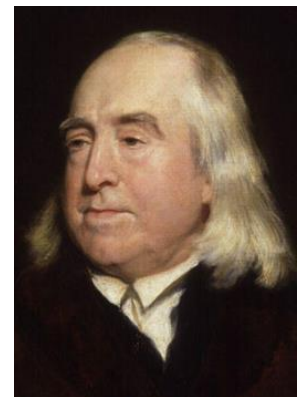


Thomas Hobbes
(1588-1679)

The Utilitarian position

Morality is about maximising the good.

- **Good = welfare or well being**
- **Utilitarianism: act always so as to maximise the sum of welfare (well being) in the world. May happen at the expense of the individual animal (suffering)**

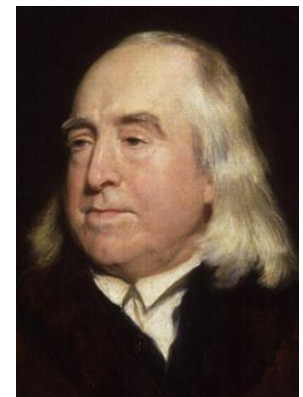


J. Bentham
(1748 - 1832)

The Utilitarian position

Directive 2020/63/EU – Article 38_Project evaluation*

- (d) a harm-benefit analysis of the project, to assess whether the harm to the animals in terms of suffering, pain and distress is justified by the expected outcome taking into account ethical considerations, and may ultimately benefit human beings, animals or the environment;

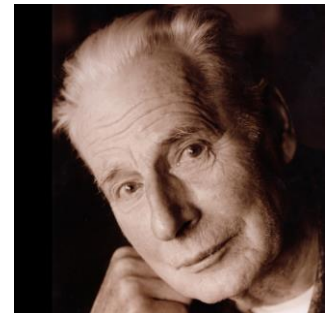


J. Bentham
(1748 – 1832)

The Deep ecology position

Everything is evolved through evolution and therefore possess same moral value

- **Core principle: the living environment as a whole should be respected and regarded as having certain basic moral and legal rights to live and flourish, independent of its instrumental benefits for human use.**



Arne Næss
(1912 – 2009)

The Relational position

Morality grows out of our relationship with one another

- Human beings are always "in response".
- Act from our hearts and minds, acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- Relational ethics is particularistic rather than universalistic
- Relational ethics is phenomenological.



H. Richard Niebuhr
(1894 – 1962)

The Rights view position

Ethics of rights go beyond self-interest

- Deontological ethics. Obligation ethics.
- Kant characterized the "Categorical Imperative" as an objective, rationally necessary and unconditional principle that we must follow despite any natural desires we may have to the contrary.
- Man is free when acting in accordance to the categorical imperative (in respect for Moral Law).



Immanuel Kant
(1724 – 1804)

Religious positions towards animal experimentation



Buddhism

Judaism

Islam

Christianity



Buddhism

Awakening and awareness. The *Noble Eightfold Path* and consists of eight right practices:

1. Right View
2. Right Thinking
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Diligence
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

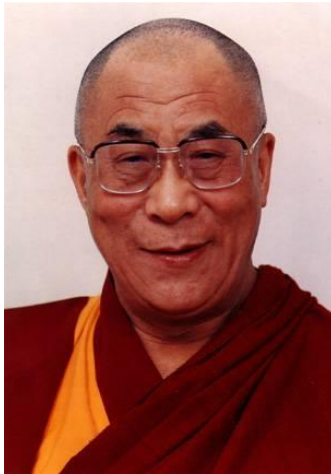
Protect the lives of people and animals. No act of killing is justified.

Prevent profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

Buddhism

”If you can then serve other people and other living creatures, if you can’t then at least desist from causing them to suffer”

Dalai Lama (2002)





Judaism

- and animal rights

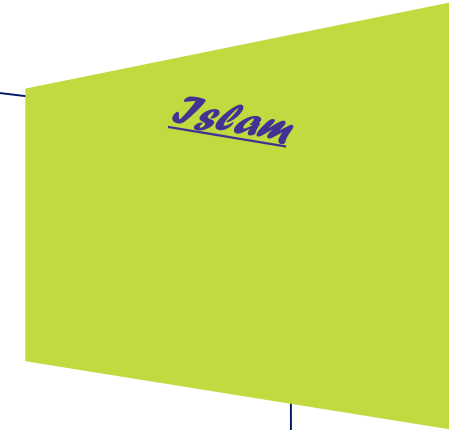
Animal experimentation:

Jewish teaching allows animal experiments as long as both these conditions are satisfied:

- There is a real possibility of benefit to human beings.
- There is no unnecessary pain involved.



Islam
- and animal rights



- a) According to Islam both humans and animals are the creations of Allah and therefore comprise the same intrinsic value.
- b) Humans have the right to kill animals. Animal experimentation is acceptable if deemed necessary.

Christianity and ethics

In Christianity there are no ethical deeds which are always 'good' and will provide justification or redemption (Gal 2, 16-21)

Unethical parables, i.e. Jesus praises the dishonest superintendent (Luk 16, 1-13)

In Christianity there is no everlasting ethics constituting a non-historical truth about good and bad (Kierkegaard)

Christianity is concerned only with love for the fellow man



Man, placed in the center, can decide that use of animals for experimental purposes is acceptable, however the commandment (Matt. 22,39) may carry over to also include our fellow creatures ('the stewardship of man')

Public perceptions



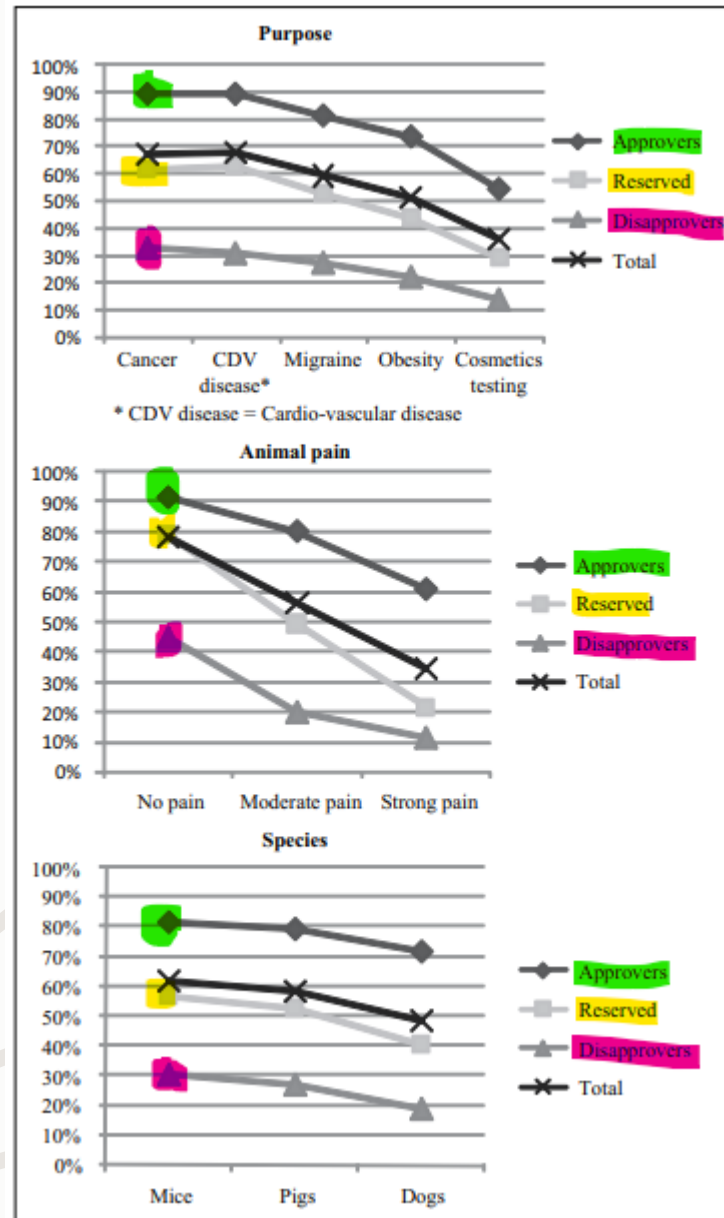
Survey of public perceptions of animal research in Denmark

Lund TB. *et al*; Painful dilemmas: A study of the way the public's assessment of animal research balances costs to animals against human benefits
Public Understanding of Science: Vol. 23(4) 428-444, 2014

Three positions towards animal experimentation were identified:

- **30 - 35%** support the use of laboratory animals rather strongly and require robust arguments if they are to abandon this support (the **approvers**)
- **15 - 20%** reject the use of laboratory animals and will only accept such studies where no pain is involved (the **disapprovers**)
- **Approx. 50%** have no core value and decide on a case-by-case basis weighing the animal costs and human interests (the **reserved**)

Mean approval rate per purpose, pain level and animal species among the three positions (N = 1247)



Attitude stance

Agree with animal experimentation for medical research, if no alternatives
sample 1 (n=1247) & sample 2 (n=1111)

- **93 - 97%** approvers
- **77 - 85%** reserved
- **36 - 42%** disapprovers

Attitude stance

Agree with animal experimentation even when animals suffer seriously, if the purpose is important

sample 1 (n=1247) & sample 2 (n=1111)

- **78 - 100%** approvers
- **0 - 6%** reserved
- **5 - 6%** disapprovers

My survey among Novo Nordisk employees' perception of animal experimentation*

*all participating employees are from the departments of toxicology. Distributed to 28 people and 15 responses were received (response rate = 54%).

NN survey: 4 questions

- 1) Do you think there is an ethical difference between animal species (e.g. rat versus dog)?
- 2) Do you think the intrinsic value of animals is greater, less or equal to the intrinsic value of humans?
- 3) Do you think it is ok that humans perform experimental studies on animals that they would never do on themselves?
- 4) Who or what gives value to animals?

NN survey: 4 questions

1) Do you think there is an ethical difference between animal species (e.g. rat versus dog)?

Mainstream response: Yes

The rationales given were:

- The ethical value is based on the ability to experience pain, cognitive abilities, level of intelligence, place in the food chain, ability to reflect (Pathocentric position)
- Ethical value based on relations to humans (Relational ethics)
- In some species welfare can be maximized by mimicking natural behavior, environmental and housing conditions (Utilitarian ethics)

Particular responses: No

- We have been 'trained' to give different value to different animal species.

NN survey: 4 questions

2) Do you think the intrinsic value of animals is greater, less or equal to the intrinsic value of humans?

Mainstream: The intrinsic value of animals is less than that of humans

The rationales given were:

- Less value than humans as we use them, eat them etc.
- Humans have the right to decide
- Less value of animals due to level of intelligence
- More easily replaced
- Less value because this is what we have agreed on
- Less value because the human being is the most powerful species on the earth

Particular responses:

- Not possible to quantify
- Equally valuable

NN survey: 4 questions

3) Do you think it is ok that humans perform experimental studies on animals that they would never do on themselves?

Mainstream: Yes

The rationales given were:

- Yes, if 3R is applied.
- Yes, if the harm/benefit criteria are met (utilitarian position = the end justifies the means)
- Yes, because humans understand and reflect more.
- Yes, because we (humans) have decided to do this but with as little discomfort for the animals as possible.

Particular responses:

No, it is not ok.

NN survey: 4 questions

4) Who or what gives value to animals?

Mainstream:

- Humans decides the value
- The ecosystem
- Nothing
- Through relations with humans e.g. laboratory animals (=humans give value)
- Through interactions with nature and other animals (wildlife animals)
- The question is stupid 😊 (=my translation of significantly more polite answers)

Thank you for your attention

