

Publication

The Indignity of Relative Concepts of Animal Dignity: A Qualitative Study of People Working with Nonhuman Animals

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)**ID** 4118098**Author(s)** Persson, Kirsten; Elger, Bernice Simone; Shaw, David Martin**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Shaw, David](#) ; [Elger, Bernice Simone](#) ; [Persson, Kirsten](#) ;**Year** 2017**Title** The Indignity of Relative Concepts of Animal Dignity: A Qualitative Study of People Working with Nonhuman Animals**Journal** Anthrozoös**Volume** 30**Number** 2**Pages / Article-Number** 237-247

The Swiss animal welfare legislation is considered to be one of the strictest such laws worldwide. One unique feature is the inclusion of the concept of dignity of the creature and, more precisely, animal dignity. We interviewed 19 people from Switzerland and Germany about their concepts of animal dignity. Thereby, we investigated whether the very specific concept of the Swiss law is reflected in the minds of those who work with nonhuman animals on a daily basis. The results of our qualitative interviews revealed an awareness of the legal term among Swiss interviewees, but their personal concepts of animal dignity were not based on or similar to the legal definitions. The interviewed participants presented a broad range of concepts, including: similarities to human dignity, replacing concepts such as respect or integrity, and context-dependent, contingent forms of dignity. The applicability or usefulness of animal dignity was questioned by several participants; many judged it to be confusing or difficult. Therefore, we conclude by discussing animal integrity as an alternative concept that reflects the interviewees' ideas of treating nonhuman animals in a respectful and appropriate way, and at the same time does not have the strongly metaphysical connotations of a concept such as human dignity.

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