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"Animals like us": revisiting organizational ethnography and research

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Abstract

Purpose – Now that the human-animal distinction is increasingly critiqued from various disciplinary perspectives, to the point where some suggest even letting go of the distinction completely, the purpose of this paper is to argue that organizational ethnography should start to explore in more detail what this means for organizational ethnographic research, theory and analysis to include non-human animals in it.
Design/methodology/approach – Revisiting the author's earlier organizational ethnographic work in Zimbabwe on a private wildlife conservancy, an organization that was specifically set up for and around wildlife. At the same time these non-human animals were not taken into account methodologically nor featured at all in the empirical material or in the analysis. What could it mean for the analysis and conclusions if non-human animals would have been part of the equation?
Findings – Since we live in a world shared between human and non-human animals, this also is true for the organizational lives. As scientific research increasingly shows that the distinction between human and non-human animals is more in degree than in kind it is interesting to note that nevertheless non-human animals usually produce deafening "silences" in organizational ethnographic work. Revisiting the author's earlier organizational ethnographic work in this context the author shows how taking non-human animals on board of the analysis radically alters the outcomes of the research.
Research limitations/implications – This paper reports on revisiting the author's earlier ethnographic research, without actually doing the research itself again. In that sense it is a hypothetical study.
Practical implications – Organizational ethnography might have to rethink what it would mean in terms of fieldwork methodologies if it would allow non-human animals as actual agentic stakeholders in the research and analysis. It would at least need to also think in terms of "research methodologies without words" as non-human animals cannot be interviewed.
Social implications – The paper is based on a social justice perspective on human-animal relations. It tries to contribute to an intellectual argument to take non-human animals more seriously as "co-citizens" in the (organizational) life world. This may have wide ranging implications for the life styles, ranging from the types of food we eat, to liquids we drink, to the ways we think about the human superiority in this world.
Originality/value – A highly self-reflexive account of the author's earlier organizational ethnographic work, showing what it means theoretically if we take non-human animals seriously in organizational ethnographic research and analysis. At the same time it shows quite painfully organizational ethnography's speciecist approach to research methodologies and processes of organizing.

Keywords Exclusion, Organizational ethnography, Power, Human/non-human animal distinction
Paper type Research paper

Introduction

It can be generally observed that organizational ethnography has paid very little attention to our organized relations with animals. Even in ethnographic research focusing on organizations specifically set up around or with the aim of drawing

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attention to the non-human animal, their agency and perspective is generally lacking (with an occasional exception like Taylor and Hamilton's (2013) work, providing much needed but still rare empirical research in this emerging field, with a focus on ethnography in chapter 11, pp. 163-179). In an industrial slaughterhouse (Pachirat, 2012), a private wildlife conservancy (Wels, 2003), an animal shelter (Arluke, 1991) or a zoo (Bunderson and Thompson, 2009), non-human animals are a constant, persistent and lasting part of the everyday realities of the organization. Yet, their contribution to the equation is generally silenced (Mazzei, 2007) and ignored (Birke, 2011, p. xvii). No matter the non-human animal context, the focus in these studies tends to be on the interactions between "human animals". Do we miss anything important because of these lacunae? From a rather speciesist perspective it could be argued that we do not miss anything, just as in a sexist male-dominated world it could be suggested that we do not miss anything by excluding women from research and analysis, or in a racist white-dominated world, the perspectives of people with other skin colours might be considered of no consequence. What these examples share is that women, non-whites and non-human animals in organizations are generally all in "subaltern" (Spivak, 1988) and less-powerful positions (Birke, 2002; Bourke, 2011; DeKoven and Lundblad, 2012; Grimm, 2014; Haraway, 2008; Kemmerer, 2011a, b). What we miss by ignoring them in our research is a perspective on everyday realities in organizations as seen from a less-powerful and human superiority perspective (Taylor, 2011a, b, p. 5). With regard to the human/non-human animal distinction, organization ethnography chooses the side of the powerful, the winners, the victors: they persistently choose the perspective of human animals above that of the non-human animal; "[…] those in power […] developed theories about 'others'" (Kemmerer, 2011, pp. 66-67).

In hindsight, my own research (Wels, 2000) also fell "prey" to a one-sided focus on human animals, no matter that the organization was a private wildlife conservancy. In an organizational ethnography of the Save Valley Conservancy (SVC) in Zimbabwe, I focused on the various interlocking reciprocal exchanges in a joint venture between a group of white farmers and a group of local communities organized in a trust. No matter that the subject of the study was a private wildlife conservancy in Zimbabwe; no matter that the fence in the lead title, "Fighting over Fences", refers to a fence for containing an animal, the buffalo; no matter that I drove around in the bush for almost a year during my fieldwork and was excited by the teeming wildlife in the conservancy; no matter that the origins of the SVC are to be traced back to attempts to save the rhino, reflected in the logo of the SVC showing the contours of a rhino and a baobab against the backdrop of a sunset; no matter that wildlife was sometimes literally on our family's doorstep; no matter that we still tell stories about our encounters with wildlife during our stay in Zimbabwe to friends and others we like to impress with our adventures (and hardly, if ever, tell them anything about the actual research on the joint venture or what came out of it) – not a single animal was part of the narrative of my theoretical analysis: there was no room for non-human animals in the reciprocal equation I constructed as my interpretive framework. What would my study of a private wildlife conservancy in Zimbabwe look like if I were to add non-human animals to the agentic (McFarland and Hediger, 2009) equation of organizational life? What would it mean more generally for organizational ethnography if non-human animals were to become part of the perspective on everyday life in organizations? Revisiting my own research in Zimbabwe will illustrate the point that I develop in the first part of this paper, which is that organizational ethnography,

on the basis of increasing scientific evidence, have actually no other choice but to structurally start to include non-human animals in their research and analysis of organizational processes.

The argument in this paper is structured as follows. I will begin by briefly sketching the academic debate about the increasing scientific evidence that the distinction between human and non-human animals is no longer feasible and, on top of that, is highly reductionist. Second, I will present a framework on reciprocal exchanges that includes non-human animals, alongside human animals, explicitly in the equation, based on the work by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) on the concept of "Zoopolis", originally coined by Wolch (1998) and extended here in application to my own ethnographic work. Third, I will reframe and reinterpret my earlier organizational ethnography on the SVC in this extended framework on reciprocal exchange, re-interpreting my empirical data and showing how that leads to a rather different analysis and conclusions, in which the one case study presented here stands for the broader and more generic argument I try to make. The paper will conclude with some reflections on what this "animal turn" or "species turn" (resp. Weil, 2010; Kirksey and Helmreich, 2010) and advocating taking animals seriously in the analysis of human and non-human meaning-making (cf. Taylor and Hamilton, 2013), means for organizational ethnography.

Beyond the human-animal distinction

In his last couple of years, Jacques Derrida devoted much of his considerable philosophical thinking power to deconstructing the binary distinction between the human and the animal. This led to a posthumous but characteristically densely written collection of essays, edited by Marie-Louise Mallet (Derrida, 2008). In it, Derrida comes to the conclusion that most if not all European philosophy has been biased and speciesist in its assuming and sticking to the distinction between human and animal, and in the process constantly searching and scientifically legitimizing differences in kind rather than degree. This ranges from distinguishing people from animals based on language, emotions, morality, instinct, love, violence, laughing, crying, friendship and empathy, to name just a few. All these concepts were at some stage used in academia to argue for keeping human and non-human animals apart from each other, with humans unique, as if there are no continuities between them but only to "prove" that both were of a different kind. Henderson (2012, p. 121), referring to the American poet Brian Christian (1984-), remarks "(h)umans […] appear to be the only animals anxious about what makes them unique".

With his approach of bridging or even doing away with the divide between human and non-human animals, Derrida joined the chorus of ethologists who are increasingly criticizing the human-animal binary, showing and scientifically proving that human and non-human animals cannot be distinguished from each other in kind but only in degree, and arguing for many more continuities between human and non-human animals (Bekoff, 2007; Bradshaw, 2009; De Waal, 2006, 2009a, b, 2013; Moss *et al.*, 2011; Shanor and Kanwal, 2009). It is a growing chorus, which also comprises other disciplines including evolutionary biology (Henderson, 2012), psychology (Herzog, 2011; Bekoff, 2013), anthropology (King, 2013), geography (Buller, 2014), literary studies (Coetzee, 1999; Woodward, 2010), history (Daston and Mitman, 2005), political sciences (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011), law (Schaffner, 2011) and ethics (from Singer, 1975 to Regan, 2004), animal studies (Weil, 2012), and medical sciences (Serpell, 1986/1996). This list is not exhaustive but presents a flavour of what seems to

be happening in various disciplines as a result of developments in "animal studies". These developments came to a climax and led in 2012 – amongst other things – to a group of scientists formulating "The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness in Non-Human Animals" on 7 July, stating cautiously but with conviction that "the scientific evidence is increasingly indicating that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness"[1].

The trend seems clear and, in its wake, the number of university courses on animal studies has exploded in recent years, particularly in the USA and to a lesser extent in Europe (Gorman, 2012). One of the uncomfortable ethical issues accompanying this increasing scientific evidence that makes a mockery of the once fiercely held human-animal distinction is that it confronts us humans immediately and in the face with the ways in which we generally treat non-human animals in everyday life, in terms of our consumption of non-human animals, and how we think we can decide about their births, lives and deaths in an industrialized, detached, ethically indifferent and "thing-like" way. In this view the distinctions between the human and non-human animal can no longer scientifically be as easily legitimized as they used to be under a Cartesian worldview. This perspective had dominated academia ever since Descartes declared animals to be no more than "machines" (Armstrong and Botzler, 1993), and Christian theologians made us believe that we had to control nature and animals for our benefit (Scully, 2002). We now have to rethink our relationship to animals, which might also have implications for how we go about treating them. The shift shows parallels to that of slavery days when white plantation owners in the South of the USA were obliged to see their slaves as humans, or how in later times men had to adjust to the notion that women could vote or could also be scientists. In the Netherlands the demise of the human-animal distinction has made the time ripe for a new political party, the party for the animals, a first in the world. On its English-language web site, the party for the animals states: "We are a Dutch political party whose highest priority is animal welfare and the respectful treatment of animals. In the Netherlands, we are represented in the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Provincial States, in six city councils and in six Dutch 'water councils' "[2]. Meanwhile, in academia, in October 2013 the Dutch Open University appointed a professor of "anthrozoology", Professor Marie-José Enders, who would focus on research on human-animal interaction in the context of care[3].

Noting and trying to bring scientific evidence to the table that human and non-human animals only differ in degree, more than in kind, is one thing. To take the consequences of this realization to the everyday "mud" (Haraway, 2008) of organization research and its methodologies is quite something else. Currently, thinking through, discussing and developing "trans-species research methodologies", i.e. the heart of our ethnographic research endeavour in terms of empirical data construction and basis for any consecutive theoretical interpretation, seems key to me. In this context I myself am particularly inspired by the work of Goode (1995) on "bodily and gestural nonlanguage indexical expressions" (Goode, 1995, p. 100), which he developed researching deaf and blind children, who also did not develop any formal language. In his book Goode explores the methodological problems of his research and "how to use formal language to tell the story of persons themselves without formal language" (Goode, 1995, p. 1). My impression and suggestion is that if you substitute "children" for "non-human animals", we are getting closer to a possible trans species "research methodology without words".

The ideas about indexical expressions date back to the famous ethno-methodologists Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sacks. Key to indexical expressions is their contextual

understanding: only when aware of the contexts in which the bodily expression are used, is one able to interpret its meaning, purpose and direction. While indexical expressions were in first instance developed to understand language (and therefore human) behaviour, it is also applied to "non-oral communication" (and therefore also applicable to non-human animals), by Cicourel (Goode, 1995, p. 101). Indexical expressions are contextual as much as they are bodily. In other words, it is about the "body's expressivity", an approach to understanding human and non-human animal behaviour that has been preached and practiced ever since Darwin's 1872 publication of "Expression of emotion in man and animals". Communication between species, "when species meet" (Haraway, 2008), involve indexical and bodily expressions that are intentional (and therefore conscious); through these bodily expressions, messages are constantly and mutually put across; it is about interpreting emotions that are expressed and communicated in particular contexts. I can imagine that in a process of thorough debate and reflection, with an explicit eye on and attention for the huge power asymmetries involved in these human-non-human systems of reciprocities, this approach could be adapted and developed for multi-species organizational ethnographic research. It could lead to the much needed empirical basis for theorizing about shared human-animal social realities (cf. Taylor and Hamilton, 2013).

To set up the next step in my argument, I now turn to the concept of "zoopolis" (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). I will show how Donaldson and Kymlicka include animals in their theoretical framework based on reciprocal exchanges. I myself also used "reciprocal exchange" as an interpretive framework for my organization research in Zimbabwe, but did not include non-human animals in the reciprocal equations. I will do so now in the second half of this paper.

Reciprocal exchanges and "zoopolis"

Jennifer Wolch coined the concept of "zoöpolis" in a 1998 publication, in which she argued for a renaturalisation of cities, which would include a place for animals as part of the cityscape: "I call this renaturalised, reenchanted city zoöpolis" (Wolch, 1998, p. 124, italics in original). In 2011 Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, wife and husband, took up the concept and tried to apply it to our current society via the rather abstract theoretical angle of linking political theory to animal rights. Donaldson and Kymlicka share with animal rights theory the idea that "all animals with a subjective existence – that is, all animals who are conscious or sentient beings – should be viewed as the subjects of justice, and as the bearers of inviolable rights" (19, italics added). This premise echoes Calarco's (2008, p. 149) call to just "do away" with the human-animal distinction and accept that what applies to humans also applies to non-human animals. Negating the artificial divide fits their observation that "(w)e are part of a shared society with innumerable animals" (Calarco's, 2008, p. 8), and in this context Donaldson and Kymlicka want to explore, almost as in a (utopian) thought experiment, how we might construct, build and live up to such a zoopolis society. In his review Daniel Hutton Ferris considers their book "brilliant" if you share and are fully convinced, like the authors and myself, of "the strong animal rights thesis"; otherwise, you might think of it as "pie in the sky"[4].

Donaldson and Kymlicka distinguish relations between human and three types of non-human animals: those that are domesticated, wild and liminal. The term "domesticated animals" refers to animals like pets and animals we keep in agriculture; "wild animals" refers to animals that live independently of human animals; and "liminal animals" refers to animals that are "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1967), meaning not fully domesticated, nor fully wild, but in between those two categories,

like, for instance, feral cats or dogs. All three categories, according to the authors, must be granted certain inviolable basic rights that can stand the test of fairness and justice: "Citizen rights" for domesticated animals (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, pp. 101-155), "sovereignty" for wild animal communities (pp. 156-209) and "denizenship", a place and status in society between citizenship and resident alien, for liminal animals (pp. 209-251). They treat these three categories of animals as if they are minority cultural groups that deserve protection, borrowing ideas from the disability movement, on which they draw quite heavily.

They take from disability studies "its capacity to extend justice and membership to a historically subordinated group", where "we enable agency in light of our varying forms and degrees of dependency, rather than simply wishing the facts of dependency away" (pp. 107-108). These interdependencies between human and non-human animals, and the rights that come with them for the non-human animal, are embedded in an increasing level of reciprocal responsibilities. Domesticated animals, for instance, have the responsibility (to be trained by human animals as many already often do) not to be aggressive so that they can live and be part of zoopolis without violating the freedoms and basic rights of others (pp. 76-77). Wild animal communities in turn must be respected as, in international relations, states have to respect (the boundaries of) other sovereign states, whose rights may not be violated but whose inhabitants also cannot count on all the services that citizenship in another country brings with it, like medical care and insurance and/or (military) protection and safety (pp. 197-205). Liminal animals also live as part of ordinary zoopolis, but have fewer rights to the full array of services that a citizen may expect; "denizens", which is how Donaldson and Kymlicka refer to them, have a limited spectrum of basic rights compared to citizens (pp. 241-242).

Donaldson and Kymlicka support their argument with concrete examples of what a zoopolis might look like. For instance, with regard to the distinction between domesticated and liminal animals: domesticated animals deserve, according to their citizen status, medical attention when ill, and protection and safety from predator-prey relations. This does not count for liminal denizens, who have to live with greater risks; domesticated animals, that is, animal citizens, are in a constant balance between "liberty and autonomy against safety" (p. 242). Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that on the basis of their citizenship status non-human animals deserve inviolable basic rights of safety, residence and protection under the rule of law, in the knowledge that non-human animals, just like large groups of human animals like babies, young children, (certain groups of) elderly people or the mentally impaired, will never be able to live up to the full responsibilities of citizenship. What counts for these particular groups of human animals also counts for domesticated animals – no matter that they will neither vote nor participate directly in the political debate, as the human-animal groups I just listed would/might. All the same, they deserve the same rights as their fellow citizens who are able to live up fully to their responsibilities as citizens.

Since this paper illustrates this argument further down, by revisiting empirical data from my own research on a private wildlife conservancy, it is necessary to briefly explain here how Donaldson and Kymlicka further conceptualize the reciprocal relations between humans and "wild animal communities". They argue that human "relations to sovereign wild animal communities should be regulated by norms of international justice" that will "help us to identify our obligations to wild animals", and that they should be treated accordingly (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 157).

According to Donaldson and Kymlicka, our obligations towards sovereign communities of wild animals spring mainly from the four "vulnerabilities" of wild animal communities that characterize their relations with human-animal communities:

- "(d)irect, intentional violence": "a whole range of violations of animal rights through hunting, fishing, trapping, culling, stocking of zoos, etc". (p. 156);
- "(h)abitat loss": "the continuous encroachment of humans […] into animal-inhabited territory" (p. 156);
- "(s)pillover harms": "the countless ways in which human infrastructure and activity impose risks on animals […]"(p. 157); and
- "(p)ositive intervention": "human efforts to assist wild animals" (p. 157).

Furthermore, from their key notion of justice in relations and exchanges between human and non-human animals, Donaldson and Kymlicka note, with regard to our relations with wild animal communities, that first of all "our historic crimes against wild animals are staggering" (p. 195), especially where their territory has been taken away for human development or where they have been translocated for reasons of human development. This process is portrayed by them as a "forced removal" in the context of South Africa's apartheid regime, with emotional overtones of "ethnic cleansing". This view leads them to the conclusion that wild animals' sovereignty has been breached time and again, and "never have the costs to animals […] entered the picture" (p. 201), let alone that humans ever thought of compensating them for their losses, as is a common consideration in debates concerning human sovereign communities in relation to international justice (p. 200). The authors' ideas of fairness and justice in the exchange between humans and wild animal communities, and also in relation to domesticated and liminal animals for that matter, may go (too) far for many, especially where they argue that "(w)e tend to look at any risk posed by wild animals to humans as unacceptable. However, considering the enormous risks we pose to animals, it is unreasonable to expect zero risk in the opposite direction. Instead, we should accept a certain level of risk" (202), with which they mean that we must, for instance, accept that they might attack us. They continue to argue that "we cannot demand zero risk for ourselves, at the same time that human societies impose extraordinary risks on wild animal communities" (p. 203).

To Donaldson and Kymlicka, relations and exchanges between human and non-human animals can be viewed from the conceptual vantage point of "reciprocity", showing the interdependencies between human and non-humans agents, and critiquing the power dynamics and extreme inequalities in networks of relations. This aspect of morality in reciprocal exchanges is also common in perspectives on reciprocity in anthropology, but in this discipline it restricts itself most of the time to interactions between humans. The anthropologist Van Baal, for instance, defines reciprocity as "doing or rendering something in return for a good received, an act committed, or an evil inflicted. Involved is an exchange in which the term has *connotations of approximate equivalence and equality*" (Van Baal, 1975, p. 11, italics added). In its humanism and secularism this definition hints at issues of morality and fairness. In Mauss's (1950/1966) famous and ground-breaking work "Essay sur le don", he writes about the "obligation to repay", which also has moral overtones and reaches into aspects of caring, especially in the context of the original Maori story of the Hau ("spirit of the gift") in which it is presented. Any breach of the reciprocal code is considered a breach of morality and fairness. What anthropologists wrote on

reciprocity for "humans only", can, following Calarco's call to do away with the human-animal distinction, be equally applied to include non-human animals in the sphere of Donaldson and Kymlicka's argument; "animals like us" (Rowlands, 2002). In order to illustrate this point I now, in the second half of this paper, revisit my own research in Zimbabwe, where I used an interpretive framework around the concept of reciprocity, but applied it to "humans only" as well. In my revisit below I apply it to include non-human animals as well.

An organizational ethnography in the wildlife industry in Zimbabwe

"Private wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe" (Wels, 2013) is an organizational ethnography (Ybema *et al.*, 2009) on a joint venture between a private wildlife conservancy and its neighbouring communities. It was a case study of the SVC in Zimbabwe, at the time – the mid 1990s – comprising some 3,300 km^2 in the southeast Lowveld of Zimbabwe. The SVC, a private wildlife conservancy, consisted of 24 cooperating white farmers pooling their land and other resources in order to create a viable space large enough to have wild game tourism's so-called "big five" (lion, buffalo, elephant, rhino and leopard) for both consumptive (hunting) and non-consumptive tourism. The SVC is a strong adherent to and believer in the "sustainable use" of wildlife (Prins *et al.*, 2000), also referred to as "wildlife utilization" and, with an ironic double meaning not intended in its publications, "making wildlife pay" (the double meaning being that next to wildlife "making money", wildlife usually are made to "pay" with their lives through hunting). The communities living and surrounding the conservancy were organized in a trust. The conservancy and the trust had a formal joint venture agreement based on the idea that through this cooperative structure the communities could also benefit from this wildlife tourism venture[5]. I researched, analysed and interpreted the various aspects of this cooperative structure and its corresponding processes in a framework built around a conceptual framework of various reciprocal exchanges taking place between the cooperating parties and partners on various levels, ranging from the national level of government to the local level of individual farmers and neighbours (Wels, 2000, chapter 1).

The PhD was entitled "Fighting over fences" signifying the reciprocal exchange processes, both positive and negative (Sahlins, 1972), taking place between the joint venture partners. The fence around the conservancy separated and united the joint venture partners. It was a clear symbolic marker of the processes I tried to disentangle in the broader socio-economic, sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of Zimbabwe at the time. At the same time, the fence was a material and physical reality, made conditional for SVC's wildlife operation by the veterinary services in Zimbabwe, encircling and enclosing the SVC for 345 kilometre through thick bush (Wels, 2000, p. 248). It was a huge undertaking and a huge financial investment to erect the fence, and it required substantial organization to maintain it. The veterinary services asked for a so-called "buffalo fence", a double fence with a perimeter enclosure of 1.9 metres in height and an inner fence 7.5 metres inside the perimeter fence, 1.2 metres high, with stipulated wiring type and voltage (this latter for the perimeter fence) (Wels, 2000). The fence had to be patrolled and checked on a daily basis and breaks had to be repaired immediately, in order to keep the endemically tuberculosis-carrying buffalo (hence the name of the fence) inside and separating them sufficiently (hence the 7.5 metres between inner and outer fences) from domesticated livestock, farmed for the export market. In this context the SVC required a license from the veterinary services that would allow them to buy and import buffalo for the hunting operations in the SVC,

considered economically crucial. The buffalo fence was equally important for the neighbouring livestock farmers, who focused their business on exporting their beef to Europe and on consumption in the local communities.

The "system of reciprocities" among the various levels, parties and partners involved in the SVC were at the heart of my empirical material, which consisted of numerous texts derived from reports, articles, books, policy documents, interviews, newspaper clippings, minutes from meetings, conversations, observations and the like (Wels, 2000, pp. 51-93). To give a flavour of the empirical data, I will present a few snippets of the data set, specifically chosen to show how non-human animals were excluded from the kind of "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) I wanted to present. In a first vignette, I will give an impression of my data about the genesis of private wildlife conservancies in Zimbabwe, in which the rhino, threatened in its very existence by incessant poaching and "an animal like us", played a crucial role:

> First vignette: The project leader of the Rhino Conservation Project […] is Raoul du Toit. His official title is Project Executant Rhino Conservation Project. He now works full time for the WWF Zimbabwe again, but used to be seconded to the DNPWLM [Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management]. The WWF offices in Harare are situated in a quarter where the majority of the embassies are located as well as several offices from multilateral organisations like the IUCN [International Union for Conservation of Nature]. The office is conveniently placed on the corner where Lanark Road debauches on busy, four-lane Second Street. The office itself is housed in a stately old home with parking space in front of it, often full with Landrovers and other four-wheel drive vehicles with the familiar and world famous panda-logo on their doors. A visitor entering the building through the main entrance comes face to face with a big wooden bookcase with glass doors, largely filled with written documents held together by plastic spirals, indicating its report status, even before the reception counter in the left corner of the hall is discerned. Because these houses were originally not designed for efficiency or to be divided into offices in an orderly and mathematical manner, it is not easy to find the way to a particular office. To find Du Toit's office, I went into the building on ground floor and then had to go out again, go along a tiny corridor in order to enter his cramped office with orderly registered files piled up against every wall. In 1989, in line with Rhino Conservation Strategy, he was looking for private land on which to house "his" rhino. The spot had to be sufficiently far away, geographically, from the Zambian border where it was believed the poachers came in. The Lowveld seemed to fit this criterion and luckily the climatic conditions were close to those in the Zambezi Valley. Finally, as the Lowveld is in Region IV and V, it is gazetted for wildlife as a form of land use. The Lowveld was an ideal spot. The same year, 1989, he was also, strictly coincidentally, asked by the landowner of Senuko to evaluate Senuko to assess its wildlife production potential. There was immediate rapport between these two men which "did the trick". The landowner of Senuko suggested that they might breed rhino on Senuko. Than [sic] they remembered there were also rhino on Humani. This naturally led to the idea of joining Humani and Senuko and using this combination to try and convince other property owners to join them as well (Wels, 2000, p. 231).

The second vignette shows the organizational discourse in which the management of the conservancy thinks about sentient beings that are going to be killed for financial profit, or "hunted" as it is referred to in the language of true sportsmanship:

> Second vignette: In order to understand the role and impact of buffalo in the context of the SVC [Save Valley Conservancy] and the consequences for the organisational co-operation between the SVC and its neighbours, it is necessary to describe three related aspects. The first of these is the quota-setting of buffalo for hunting purposes. Only with a sufficiently large herd of buffalo it is possible to realise an economically viable offtake [sic] through hunting.

> The second aspect is the way the SVC tried to fiancé its restocking operation. This not only applies to buying buffalo, but also other species considered to make the area (more) attractive to potential (hunting) tourists. In all the routes it tried to fund their restocking programme, the organisational co-operation with the neighbouring communities was put forward as an important aspect of the application. Thirdly, and evenly fundamental to understanding why the organisational co-operation with the neighbouring communities is considered so crucially important to the sustainability of the SVC, is the relation between the SVC and the DNPWLM in relation to buying buffalo. The market price for buffalo trophies depends on their quality, which is strongly related to their size. In order to make the hunting business sustainable, it is necessary to set quota for the offtake [sic] of animals, to guarantee that "wildlife populations maintain themselves and continue to survive biologically into the future", so that they may also be hunted in future years and remain economically viable (Wels, 2000, pp. 260-261).

A third vignette shows how pervading (dead) animals feature in the social identity construction of one of the participating farmers/hunters in the cooperative structure of the SVC:

> Third vignette: All his life Roger has bought, reared, invested in and hunted wildlife commercially with clients on Humani. Their whole house and its atmosphere "speaks" of hunting. In their living room trophies look down on you from every angle and every trophy has its own story to tell. There is a huge lion skin and head spread out over the main wall. When alive that lion had killed some twenty-seven head of cattle on Humani before Roger shot it. The lion faces a big leopard, likewise spread out, which was shot some twenty years ago. Before you pass under a sort of archway into the kitchen, you look straight into the eyes of a waterbuck. Not a particular big trophy, but the first trophy ever shot by his son. The huge mantelpiece is decorated by two large elephant tusks from an animal which were [sic] shot by National Parks personnel in 1975 after major complaints had come in from several neighbours about Roger's game destroying their cattle fences and waterpipes. National Parks shot some 300 at the time, partly from a helicopter. He told me that he tried to sue them, but that he lost the case. After most of "his" elephants were shot, he tried to rebuild his population and by the time the SVC started in 1991 he had managed to build up a new population of about sixty head again. The wastepaper basket in the living room is made of an elephant leg (Wels, 2000, p. 219).

The three vignettes together are representative of the larger data set in terms of showing how people in this joint venture and organizational network spoke about non-human animals, how they were key to their operations and social identity construction, and how they were utterly neglected, ignored and excluded as actor; in effect becoming rather reductionist and "thin descriptions" in Geertzian terms. While describing the interactions between human actors in some detail, the non-human animal is not cast as an agential actor or as a full participant in the "story". Non-human animals do figure prominently in the conversations and meetings, but always to be talked about, never to be listened to, nor any other attempt made to include them in the relationship as agents in and of themselves. They are viewed as an economic asset, a mode of production in terms of populations and reproduction numbers, hunting quotas, investments, projects, trophies, risks or liability. Being subjected to an economic rationality, animals are instrumental to a business dominated by humans and "for humans only". In business discourse non-human animals are excluded, which shows parallels to the position of women and slaves in earlier times.

Interestingly, I did not problematize the ways of speaking about animals in my previous publications based on this research. Actually I followed suit in that speciecist discourse in my research and writing. In fact, and more pertinent to the argument set out in this paper, I blatantly omitted animals from my account of reciprocal exchanges

within the arena of the joint venture. The "fighting over fences" concerned animals, but for the description of the "fights" the animals seemed, ironically, of no concern. Cast in a role somewhere in the margins, the non-human animals' impact on the processes, as well as the effects of the processes on non-human animals, remained out of sight. This rather common anthropocentric and speciesist account allowed me to obtain my PhD in the social sciences as "(t)raditional theories presume human superiority" (Taylor, 2011b, p. 218).

What will happen if I introduce non-human animals into the reciprocal equation as Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) suggest?

An ex post analysis in organizational ethnography

In terms of constructing empirical data, one thing is sure: I could not have interviewed the animals the same way I interviewed farmers and members of the local communities, and I could not have been looking for textual clues to their behaviour or opinions. For them I would have needed "methodologies without words" (Wels, 2012, 2013) to get an animal perspective on the construction of the private wildlife conservancy. At the moment there seems a lack of established research and fieldwork methodologies to do justice to the perspectives of animals in organizational ethnography, although promising but more conceptual attempts are made in the field of Actor-Network Theory (Taylor, 2011a, b, pp. 209-217). But I do not have those data and do not want to fictionally "invent" them here. Here, I will present an ex post re-interpretation of the data set I constructed during my fieldwork in 1998. I take the same data and interpret them from the perspective of Donaldson and Kymlicka's (2011) ideas on "Zoopolis" and the role that reciprocity plays in that theoretical argument in relation to "wild animal communities".

To show what this theoretical framework means for the interpretation of my original empirical data from the SVC, I focus on three core issues that form the heart of SVC operations and were at the core of the two animal-excluding vignettes presented above, "sustainable use" – "translocation" – and "hunting" of wildlife. As we will see, this leads, maybe predictably, to an almost diametrically opposed analysis as compared to the original theoretical interpretation of my data on the SVC.

"Sustainable use"

In the context of the SVC, "wildlife utilisation" is done through "making money" out of wildlife through industrialized practices like keeping and breeding wild animals for their skins (for instance, crocodiles, but also other animals like the South African sprinkbok) or for their meat (venison) and, if numbers would allow, "harvesting" ivory and horns in the case of elephants and rhinoceroses. Hunting is also a strategy within the context of sustainable use, which I will consider separately below because, although it is approached in a business-like way similar to the economic exploitation of wildlife I describe here, hunting is not structured as an industrialized practice. It seems quite clear that interpreted from the perspective of the "inviolable rights" of animals, which the zoopolis paradigm adheres to, there are many angles from which to critique the operations of the SVC. The fundamental choice of Donaldsen and Kymlicka to "do away" with the human-animal distinction, which means that inviolable rights "do not stop at the boundaries of the human species" (Donaldsen and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 21) and which makes it possible for them to substitute the word "animal" for "human" and the other way around in any given situation or formulation, makes it quite clear how problematic the concept of "sustainable use" is. Would anyone dare to suggest – in relation to the above-mentioned first three "vulnerabilities" and in the

contexts of equity of human and non-human animal before the law (Grimm, 2014, pp. 215-227) and substituting the word (non-human) animal for human (animal) and "international justice" – making money from humans by granting hunting permits to hunters to hunt them for trophies? Would anyone dare to suggest, under "normal circumstances", encroaching on or entering the sovereign territory of other human animals, for reasons of "sustainable use", without asking? Or develop infrastructure that would endanger or put other human animals at clearly identifiable risk? All are rhetorical questions with a clear imperative for the "right" answers. Only the fourth area – "positive intervention" – can be answered in the affirmative, as there are a myriad of ways, in which it can be imagined what kind of assistance and help human animals could give to wild animal communities.

"Translocation"

In the process of the colonization of Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), wildlife was basically wiped out by white hunters. The area of the SVC in the southeast Lowveld of Zimbabwe was no exception and was made into a cattle-ranching area. In the 1990s, due to climatic conditions and changing geo-political relations, cattle ranching was no longer considered an economically viable activity in the Lowveld, and the "sustainable use" of wildlife was suggested as an alternative industry, a so-called "wildlife-based mode of production" (Brandt, 2013). This required that the area that had earlier basically been "cleared and cleansed" of wildlife for reasons of making cattle farming possible (including killing wildlife as a means of tsetse fly control, see Mavhunga and Spierenburg, 2007) be restocked with wildlife. This restocking took place by bringing in wildlife from other wildlife areas in Zimbabwe by means of translocation. The SVC prides itself in being one of the pioneers in the translocation of wildlife in Southern Africa. In an economic discourse, this makes much sense and fits very well into texts of business plans and the costs involved in making the SVC into an economically viable business; it makes sense in terms of investments and the expected return on investments (primarily by way of hunting). But it makes hardly any sense in terms of the zoopolis paradigm, as it basically refers to processes of "forced removals", the broadly condemned practices of the apartheid government in South Africa towards people of colour (Murray and O'Regan, 1990). In the SVC, the non-human animals were not treated as reciprocal equals by asking for their consent to be translocated or in considering its implications in terms of breaking up families, interspecies' neighbourhood networks or migration routes. They were just forced into translocation. And again, as with the issue of sustainable use, there would have been many reasons why and how humans could have assisted non-human animals in standing up for their inviolable rights as equals in the reciprocal equation. It would require what Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011) suggest at the end of their chapter on our relations with wild animals and their proposed territorial sovereignty: "(t)he answer lies in some form of proxy representation by human beings who are committed to the principles of animal sovereignty" (209). Maybe political parties like the Netherlands' party for the animals can act as the possible "ombudsperson or advocate" that the authors suggest.

"Hunting"

Hunting or "consumptive tourism" is the biggest money-maker in the wildlife industry, and the whole economic rationale behind most private wildlife conservation and game farming is that hunting will bring in the money and profits (Brandt, 2013; Snijders, 2014; Wels, 2003). A flagship community conservation project like CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe was entirely built on the notion that hunting would make them profitable

(Child, 1995). This also was true for the SVC and they strategized mainly on the most sought after big-game animal that hunters, most of them from Europe and the USA, are after, the Cape Buffalo. The buffalo is considered the "epitome of wild Africa" (Wels, 2000, p. 259). Trophy prices for buffalo between 1986 and 1993 rose 62 per cent from US $654.00 per head to US$1084.00 (and my research on the SVC was in the second half of the 1990s). From an economic point of view a "winner"; from a "sustainable use" point of view (see above) a "winner"; but from a "zoopolis" point of view considered a definite "no go", similar to the reasons mentioned in the section on "sustainable use". If anything can be counted as falling under the first "vulnerability" that Donaldson and Kymlicka distinguish – "direct, intentional violence" – it is hunting. Bringing in animals, breeding animals, caring for animals, even loving nature and animals the way that many hunters are eager to portray themselves as doing, just in order to be able to hunt down these "loved ones" in order to kill them and hang their corpses in the trophy room, is against everything "polis" stands for. It is the ultimate consequence of considering sentient beings as "property" on the same level as a car, a painting, or any other material objects (see Grimm, 2014), or on the same level as, in earlier days, many people in the centres of colonial power looked upon slaves and black people more in general (Magubane, 2007). The author and animal activist Mark Bekoff once said in an interview about the kind of "love" that is spoken about above: "A lot of people say they love animals but do horrible things towards them. I always say, I'm glad they do not love me"[6].

No matter how different the outcomes, what remains is that by including non-human animals in the equation and "doing away" with the human-animal distinction, it shows how the excluded, silenced and less-powerful (or powerless) party in any reciprocal relationship, human and non-human alike, suffers in terms of receiving equal justice or voice.

Conclusions

Organizational ethnography has generally silenced non-human animals in their (empirical) research (methodologies) and interpretive frameworks mainly as a result of taking the binary human-animal distinction for granted (although there are signs that the times are changing with (social) research including non-human animals more and more, like referenced in the introduction, but also for instance in the exciting work of Moore and Kosut (2013) on urban bee-keeping). This has resulted in a discourse where non-human but sentient and conscious animals have been considered on the same level as machinery, office space, investment portfolios and other materials humans can own. It made non-human animals "killable" (Haraway, 2008) in industrialized ways and "hunt-able" for sports, which caused suffering and injustices to animals beyond imagination, by Patterson (2002) provocatively characterized as an "Eternal Treblinka" (in Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 2). We definitely do not consider them *het geniale dier* (the genius animal) that René ten Bos made them out to be (Ten Bos, 2008). The rethinking of my own earlier organizational ethnography has consequences for how we might have to rethink organizational ethnography more generally. Since we live in a world shared between human and non-human animals, this also is true for our organizational lives (see for interesting organizational ethnographic research Damian O'Doherty's work at Manchester Airport and especially on the role of Olly the "airport cat"[7]). If not through food, such as in office canteens offering all kinds of animal-related "treats" for breakfast, lunch, drinks and dinners, then it is through space we share with other sentient non-human animals whom we consider encroaching on "our" space, like mice and rats, and whom the "pest" label calls on us to "control" or, if

that fails, "exterminate"; or through those we leave behind in our private spheres, being our cats, dogs, birds or any other non-human animal, as professional life and environments usually do not allow for non-human animals – all this produces deafening "silences" in our organizational lives. If we allow our fellow "critters" (Haraway, 2008) in, this will alter our data constructions, research methodologies and, equally important, our interpretive analyses.

With an eye on current dynamics in society there is an urgent need for such an approach, in ways combining academic and advocacy work, as progressive and contemporary organizations, like Google, Amazon and Ben and Jerry's, are increasingly allowing human and non-human animals to share office spaces (Venhuizen, 2014). But also elsewhere in society we can see it coming: The role of animals in the huge care industry, like hospitals, old-age homes, care farms[8], hospices and the like, is on rapidly the increase, with Animal Assisted Therapy fast becoming a household concept (Fine, 2010). In other words, non-human animals enter our organizations from all sides, and organizational ethnography should lead and follow suit by acknowledging them, first of all, and then making room for them in our research approach, data sets, our descriptions, and our interpretive frameworks: all short for "bringing animals like us into the equation".

Notes

1. http://io9.com/5937356/prominent-scientists-sign-declaration-that-animals-have-conscious-awareness-just-like-us, accessed, 6 September 2014, italics added. 'The group consists of cognitive scientists neuropharmacologists, neurophysiologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists — all of whom were attending the "Francis Crick Memorial Conference on Consciousness in Human and Non-Human Animals". The declaration was signed in the presence of Stephen Hawking, and included such signatories as Christof Koch, David Edelman, Edward Boyden, Philip Low, Irene Pepperberg and many more' (http://io9.com/5937356/prominent-scientists-sign-declaration-that-animals-have-conscious-awareness-just-like-us accessed 6 September 2014).
2. www.partyfortheanimals.nl/ accessed 13 April 2014.
3. www.ou.nl/web/psychologie/anthrozoologie only in Dutch, accessed 13 April 2014.
4. Blog by Daniel Hutton Ferris, available at: http://politicsinspires.org/votes-for-animals-a-new-book-moves-animal-welfare-from-ethics-to-politics/ accessed 5 May 2014.
5. I write this in the "past tense" as this has all taken a different twist as a result of the political and economic turmoil in Zimbabwe.
6. www.enrichment.com/content/enrichmentcom-interviews-marc-bekoff-author-emotional-lives-animals accessed 10 May 2014.
7. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/manchester/8468555.stm accessed 2 May 2015.
8. A concept for the therapeutic use of farming practices (Elings and Hassink, 2006).

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